

## **Framing of Israeli-Palestine Conflict by Students Activists in the USA.**

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### **Research Domains**

Higher Education policy (HEP)

### **Abstract**

Most higher education institutions would agitate for an activism-free campus. Governments would likely prefer a silent higher education space with inactive student bodies. However, the 21st century has witnessed a surge in student activism globally, caused mainly by sociopolitical sagas. Using content analysis methodology, the study examines Snow and Benford's (1998) core framing tasks (diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing) to analyze four media articles that publish student activism in the USA and draw themes from students' responses to this issue. The preliminary findings of this study are significant, showing differences and similarities in the student activist core framing task. Moreover, the study reveals that students perceive universities as solid forces that could potentially impact the Isarel-Palestine war. The study underscores the importance of understanding student activism, as it can profoundly affect societal and institutional levels.

### **Full paper**

#### **Literature Review**

Students have continued to protest from medieval Europe on several issues of interest (Boren, 2013; Luescher, 2017; Linder et al.; Rudolph, 1990), emanating from institutional and national-level discussions (Linder et al., 2019). Therefore, Student activism is not new (Linder et al., 2019). Luescher asserts that in the 20th century, student activists have effectively brought about transformation at the national and institutional levels, especially those focused on the latter, which tends to be usually productive. Linder et al. mention some notable student activism in the United States, including the World War 11 protest. Students have framed their activism over the years. Though there is scarce literature on the use of organizational theory core framing task to delve into the consistency, similarities, and differences in student activism, most research discusses how they strategies and articulate their views. Linder et al. assert that though historically, student protests vary in formation, structure, and intensity, the motivating factors of such activism vary, although the goals are similar.

#### **Research Questions**

How do student activists identify and articulate the sources of causality and culpability regarding the Israeli-Palestine conflict?

How do student activists frame their strategies?

## **Theoretical Framework**

According to Benford and Snow (2000, p. 612), framing processes concerning the operation of social movements have animated an increasing amount of conceptual and empirical scholarship.

They contend that references to frames point to a dynamic process involving conflict and agency. The primary source of the idea of framing is Goffman (1974), who proposed that it is a schema of interpretation that allows people "to locate, perceive, identify, and label" events in both their personal and public lives (Benford & Snow, 2000, p: 614). Benford and Snow concentrate on three framings of protest movements: action mobilization, prognostic, and diagnostic (Part et al. 2012). Diagnostic framing concentrates on development and articulation and depends on determining the probable cause of cause or blame (Benford & Snow, 2000; Part et al., 2012). The process of prognostic framing requires formulating a suggested course of action and mobilizing the necessary resources for achieving set goals (Benford & Snow, 2000; Part et al., 2012). Motivational framing entails logic for group action and determining suitable motive vocabulary (Benford & Snow, 2000; Part et al., 2012). Student activists, in their quest to significantly impact their audience, frame their task and what constitutes their concerns, who can be held accountable, how to effectively package their message, and how their concerns can be addressed. This study analyzes the Israeli-Palestine student protest movements using these three task frames.

## **Significance**

Research into student activism gives a comprehension of how students react to, understand, and interpret environmental stimuli (Boren, 2013), which is crucial to student's success and the development of higher education institutions and the nation. Using Benford and Snow's theoretical core framing task paints a holistic picture of how student activists are framing their concerns, strategies to achieve their goals, what is causing their discomfort, and how to resolve it. Framing, therefore, makes occurrences meaningful (Benford & Snow, 2000). Through this study, higher education institutions will have a broader view of student activism in the context of the ongoing Israeli-Palestine war and examine the consistency and variances of the three framing tasks of protestors to guide management decision-making. The study contributes to the scarce literature on this topical topic.

## **Methodology**

Several institutional characteristics contribute to the probability of student activism occurring, including the type, size, prestige, and location (Luescher, 2017). The study examines students' protest activities in

two major public universities (UC Berkeley and University of Michigan) and one private Ivy League university (Columbia University). These universities were selected as it has been a hot spot for student activism concerning the Israeli-Palestine war and are listed in The New York Times as part of institutions where campus protests have led to arrests and detainments. The research employs a qualitative approach to investigate student protests to enhance higher education stakeholders' understanding of how activist interpret their experiences. Understanding how people make meaning of their lives and interpret their experiences is the goal of qualitative research (Merriam, 2009; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Content analysis is used to investigate student protestors' diagnostics, prognostic, and action mobilization frames as reported in four media reports (The Chronicle of Higher Education, The Michigan Daily, CBS News, and Columbia Daily Spectator). Through content analysis, the various universities, dates, and size of the protest, groups of activists, their activism strategies, and vocabularies used that indicate how they had framed the three-core task are synthesized.

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