Is Israel a Foreign Policy Issue or a Domestic-Religious Issue?
An Empirical Analysis of Constituency Influence on Senatorial Sponsorship of Pro-Israel Bills

Daniel Arnon
Economics
The University of North Carolina at Asheville
One University Heights
Asheville, North Carolina 28804 USA

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Bruce Larson

Abstract

Foreign policy issues seem remote to most people, and therefore they don't care about them. Politicians are given more leeway on foreign policy issues, than on domestic issues that their constituencies care about. Israel has been receiving increased attention from Christian religious communities in the United States over the last few decades. Using empirical analysis, this study explores whether Israel should be considered a religious-domestic issue or a foreign policy issue from a political standpoint.

1. Introduction

Decisions on foreign policy issues have traditionally been made with little influence from the public, because they view these issues as remote. The interest of the general public in Israel has increased over the years, especially with the growing tide of Christian Zionism being preached in many evangelical and conservative churches.

In every session of Congress senators consider multiple bills and letters with regard to Israel, and vote on them. Israel has traditionally been viewed as a bi-partisan issue, which both Republican and Democratic senators widely support. But with the increased attention Israel is receiving from conservative Christians, who constitute 20-25 percent of the United States population, the question arises as to whether senators will respond to their constituencies on this issue.

In order to retain political support, senators must respond to their constituency's desires. Like any person competing in a market for votes, they will try to maximize their personal preferences while considering their institutional restraints. Since Israel is considered a foreign policy issue in which people take little interest, it should not restrain senators from acting according to their personal interest, and senators will likely be motivated by their own personal ideology and preferences on this issue, rather than their constituency's preferences.

This paper measures the influence of constituencies' influence over senatorial sponsorship of pro-Israel bills. By taking into consideration both the senators' ideology and their constituencies' preference, I show that the Israel issue matters to constituencies enough to influence the senators' actions in Congress. In addition I show that Israel should be considered a domestic policy issue rather than a foreign policy issue, because to its influence on the senators' actions.

2. Theory

Politicians operate in a market for votes. They are therefore bound by the same rules of the market, as individuals are, and attempt to maximize their self interest. The self interest axiom presumes that people are rational. This means that people have greater regard for their own interests than of others', and when they are conflicted they will sacrifice other people's interests instead of their own. Political agents act "solely in order to attain income, prestige and power. They treat policies purely as a means to the attainment of their private ends, which they can reach by being elected" (Downs 1957, 28). Office seekers therefore will craft their policy positions based on their budget constraint. On issues that they feel less accountable to voters, they will have more leeway to act according to their true preferences, their ideology and desire to get reelected, rather than responding to public opinion.

In determining whether to sponsor a bill or not, an official seeks the optimal choice on their indifference curve within their budget constraint. Their Indifference curves are composed of their unrestrained preferences, which is their ideology. Their budget constraints are composed of the wishes of their general electorate, and their core supporters who will fill up their war chest. In Figure 1, a senator's budget constraint and preferences are illustrated. They will seek the optimal choice C, this point is the indifference curve that is the farthest out, but is still within her budget constraint.
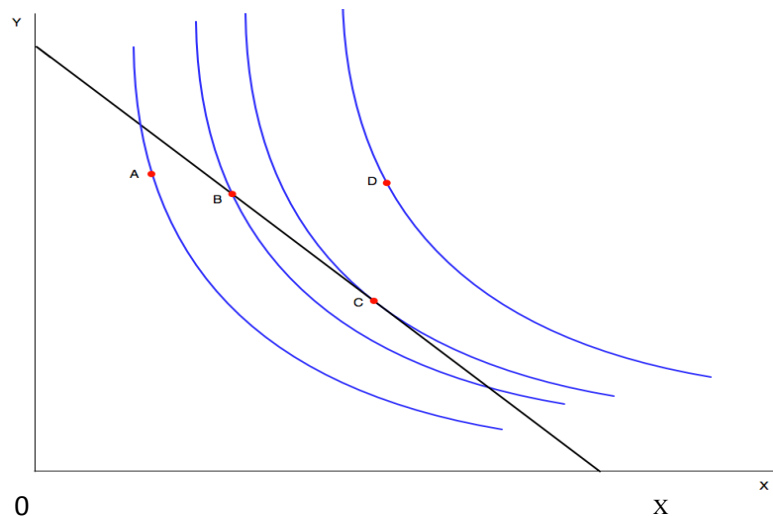

Figure 1: Optimal point on a budget line

On any given issue, the office seekers' preferences can be seen as two dimensional (preference X, preference Y). Ideologically, they either support it or oppose it. The degree of support or opposition is represented by the indifference curve. But since the office seeker's true goal is to get reelected, they must conform to their budget constraints, and act accordingly. Their budget constraints are composed of the desires of the general electorate. But since the office seekers also needs to fill their political "war chest" in order advertise during elections, they must take a stand on issues that certain people are passionate about, and will donate money to the office seeker for the stand they take on this issue.

Traditionally, voter preferences on foreign policy issues have had little influence on legislators' voting preferences. Among the factors identified by scholars which influence US foreign policy-making are experts' opinions, organized interests and constituencies, yet it is generally considered that the constituency has a significantly smaller impact on foreign policy since the constituency takes little interest in this matter (Rosenson et al., 2009, Jacobs and Page, 2005, Peabody and Polsby, 1963). Some more prominent factors influencing legislator's congressional actions are their personal policy preferences , cues given by the president, and interest groups who can "use their members' votes, campaign contributions, threatened or actual capital flight, labor strikes, and other tools to affect the electoral benefits and costs to elected officials of choosing alternative policies" (Jacobs and Page, 2005, 117). Recently scholars have begun to pay attention to the impact of religion on shaping individuals' opinions on foreign policy matters, discovering a greater connection between foreign policy preferences and faith.

Conventionally, denominational and religious belonging creates groups of people with distinctive politics, labeled by John C. Green "the old religion gap", and it has been a strong predictor of political preferences in the United States However Green has shown that religiosity, the degree of belief and religious behavior, is a stronger predictor of political preferences. Religiosity is best measured by weekly church attendance and biblical literalism (Green, 2007, 66).

3. Variation in Senatorial Sponsorship of Pro-Israel Bills

The issue of supporting Israel has become a central issue in American politics. The close relationship between Israel and the United States has been a feature of American and Israeli politics since Israel's foundation. Israel was viewed as a liberal and democratic ally in the predominantly authoritarian Middle East, and was viewed as an outpost of Western values during the Cold War. But the growing criticism of Israel from human rights movements with changing interests in the region resulted in Israel seeking new political allies in the United States. Evangelicals, who sympathize with the State of Israel for religious reasons rather than for their liberal values, became a convenient partner (Clark, 2007).

While polls have demonstrated a consistent public sympathy for Israel (Cavari, 2013, Guth and Kenan, 2011), what it means to be pro-Israel is increasingly difficult to define. The pro-Israel organizations and lobbies have predominantly aligned with Israel's elected governments, who have been mostly right of center in the last two decades. AIPAC, the most known and influential pro-Israel lobby, states its mission is "to strengthen, protect and promote the United States-Israel relationship in ways that enhance the security of Israel and the United States" (AIPAC, 2013, Web) but it has been criticized for providing blanket support for Israel's elected governments and policies, while disregarding United States interests (Mearsheimer and Walt, 2007). The recent differences expressed between Israel's Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, and President Obama illustrates the growing gap between Israel's right wing policies and the U.S's global interests.[1] For this paper I will use the broadest definition of pro-Israel bills, which includes support of Israeli policies and support of strengthening the United States-Israel ties both militarily and politically.

The support of Israel, however, is a unique foreign policy issue, where constituency preferences influence their legislators' actions. Previous researchers have focused on the influence of the constituency's religious composition and have found that only the Jewish constituency influences legislative activity with regard to Israel (Rosenson et al., 2009).

A surge of Christian-Zionism in the US has recently led to a strengthening of the evangelical communities' religious and emotional ties to Israel. Their growing support of Israel has led to the formation of political lobbies and organizations which mobilize churches across the United States to support monetary and political assistance to Israel. Historically Israel has been supported equally by both political parties in Congress, but the mobilization of the Christian Right as a strong Republican voting bloc has made such support politically divisive, and bi-partisan support of Israel has begun to decline.

Each year senators vote on bills and sign letters that directly support or oppose Israeli policy. The long held notion of a "Special Relationship" between Israel and the United States has led to the United States contributing $118 billion in economic aid to Israel since founding in 1948 (Congressional Research, 2013, 2) . A Gallup poll from March 2013 found that the sympathies of the American public are consistently with Israel, making the United States economic aid consistent with public support (Gallup, 2013, Web).

The Senate's structure of two delegates from each state allows a comparison of the connection between constituency characteristics that vary geographically with their senators' record on the Israel issue. Between 2005 and 2011 the public support of Israel has never dropped below 52 percent, indicating a majority support for Israel in the American constituency. As a result, many senators have acted to support Israel in congress, mirroring the general support of the public. But since many of the pro-Israel issues, like military aid, are passed in committees, and at times votes are recorded by voice due to wide support, using the roll-call votes would not be an accurate indicator of support for Israel. As Rosenson et al. (2009) have done, I will use sponsorship of pro-Israel bills as a proxy for support of Israel. For example in the 112th Congress (2011-2013), seven Senate Bills, and one letter were issued with regard to Israel. Of the eight proposals, all were pro-Israel, two were sponsored and co-sponsored by over seventy senators, three were passed with unanimous consent, and the other four were sent to committee. The bills that received broad support were designed to pressure the administration to defend Israel in the U.N. or to boost military support for Israel. While these received bi-partisan support, three of the four bills that were referred to committee, were sponsored almost solely by Republicans, and dealt with more contentious issues, like moving the Israeli em-

bassy to Jerusalem. Table 1 shows the legislative efforts with regard to Israel in the 112th Congress, and the partisan composition of sponsorship. It should be noted that not all bills measured in my data set are considered pro-Israel, and the bills sponsored in the 112th Congress do not necessarily represent all the bills in the data set but rather, this table indicates to the usefulness of sponsorship as a measure.

Table 1: Pro-Israel sponsorship of bills in the Senate – The 112th Congress

Bill/letter Name	Pro-Israel Bill? (yes/no)	Number of Sponsors and Co-Sponsors	Number of Republicans	Number of Democrats	Latest Major Action
S. Res 185	Yes	92	45	47	Passed
S. Res 138	Yes	35	17	18	Passed
S. Con Res 23	Yes	34	31	3	Referred to Committee
S. Res 2325	Yes	21	8	13	Referred to Committee
S. Res 2165	Yes	73	35	38	Passed
S. Res 1622	Yes	6	6	0	Referred to Committee
S. Res 1595	Yes	19	19	0	Referred to Committee
Gilibrand Letter	Yes	17	9	8	Sent to Secretary of State

This study estimates the factors contributing to senators' sponsorship and co-sponsorship of bills and letters in support of Israel based on their constituency's religious affiliation and religiosity, and the senator's party affiliation. Section IV outlines the possible explanations of the variation in senatorial sponsorship of bill. Section V shows the model in terms of a general theory of senators' sponsorship. Section VI interprets and discusses the empirical results.

4. Explaining the Variation in Senatorial Sponsorship

While attempting to predict the factors influencing senatorial sponsorship of pro-Israel bills, I must take into consideration both the preferences and the constraints that they face. The senators' preferences can be measured through their political ideology, whereas their constraints can be measured through their constituency's preferences, and their desire to fill up their "war chests" in order to get reelected again.

4.1 Political Ideology

Senators will seek to maximize their own personal preferences, within their given constituency restraints. If there are no constituency restraints, senators will act according to their own personal political ideology. The general perception of the Israel issue is that it is a bi-partisan one, in which both Democrats and Republicans support Israel. Recent studies have shown that Republican senators are more likely to be pro-Israel. Furthermore, it has been shown that the more conservative a senator, the higher the likelihood of supporting pro-Israel bills in Congress (Rosenson et al., 2009). We can expect these results to hold in this study.

4.2 Constituency Influence

We can expect self interested senators, who want to be reelected to respond to their constituencies on issues they care about. If the senator's constituency cares about Israel, we would expect the senator to sponsor bills accordingly in support of Israel when the issue arises. According to Green (2009), the individuals who are likely to support Israel are evangelicals, Jews, and/or those who score highly on the religiosity scale. Recent polls have found that religious denomination strongly informs Jews' and White Evangelicals' opinion on Israel (Green, 2009, 111). The strong tie of their religious literature to Israel suggests that these religious denominations will view Israel sympathetically. Furthermore, it has been shown that the more strongly religious and traditional are more likely to support Israel (Guth and Kenan, 2011,27).

Rosenson et al. (2009) suggest that foreign policy towards Israel is influenced by constituency characteristics and the religious identification of the legislator, whereas others argue that constituencies take little interest in foreign policy issues ((Jacobs and Page, 2005), and Israel is no exception. Rosenson et al. (2009), examined sponsorship of pro-Israel bills during the period of 1993-2002 and found that "the size of state-level Jewish constituencies has a pronounced effect on senatorial support for Israel", while the size of evangelical constituency had little effect. They concluded that "legislative policy on Israel is largely elite-driven; senators are influenced by their own values and personal group affiliations and loyalties, perhaps by party leaders' electoral strategies"(2009, 85).

4.3 Political Contributions

The pro-Israel lobby has received much attention from scholars and the media in the last decade, and is perceived as having extensive influence on US foreign policy towards Israel (Mearsheimer and Walt, 2007). Strong contributions from a lobby allow for senators to fill up their "war chest", and increase the effectiveness of their political campaigns to get reelected. Senators who will receive contributions from the Israel lobby would be likely to be more supportive of Israel. It is important to note that whether political contributions influence a senator's position, or whether political contributions are made for senators who already support take that position in order to reinforce it, is beyond the scope of this paper. Regardless of the causation question, we can observe that political contributions will have an effect on the budget constraints of the senator, and is therefore are important for this study.

This model explains the sponsorship and co-sponsorship records of United States senators between 2005-2011. It evaluates the influence of the senators' political ideology, their constituency's preferences and the amount of lobby contributions senators received from the Israel lobby on sponsorship of pro-Israel bills. This study improves upon previous efforts by accounting for the religiosity factor of the constituency, and examines whether the "new religion gap" of religious behaving and believing influences the senators' sponsorship of pro-Israel legislation.

5. Senator Sponsorship of Pro-Israel Bills and Letters (Model)

The senator sponsorship model is estimated as:

Equation 1: Senatorial Sponsorship Model

$$Y_i = b_0 + b_1 Cons_i + b_2 EvPop_i + b_3 JewPop_i + b_4 ChurchAtt_i + b_5 LobCont_i + b_6 Cong_i + \varepsilon_i \tag{1}$$

5.1 The Dependent Variable

Senatorial sponsorship scores were compiled by The US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation, an advocacy group that aims to challenge US policy towards Israel. Among other actions it "grades Members of Congress on their positions on major pieces of legislation and other policy statements, such as Dear Colleague letters, which relate to United States policy toward Israel/Palestine." (End the Occupation, Web). By using their individual score card for each senator between 2005-2001, this study counts the sponsorship of bills and letters in each session.

The dependent variable is the score of each senator serving in the Senate since 2005 for their respective two-year sessions. Each sponsorship of a pro-Israel letter or bill gave the senator a +2 score, and each co-sponsorship gave the senator a +1 score. Sponsorship of bills opposed to Israel or pro-Palestinian bills scored -2 and co-sponsorship scored -1[2].

5.2 The Independent Variables

Pro-Israel lobbies and organizations have maintained strong ties with both political parties, and have attempted to keep the Israel issue bi-partisan. But Rosenson et al. (2009) found that the strongest supporters of Israel in the Senate are likely to be conservative Republicans, and I expect their findings to hold. The variable used for political conservatism, *Cons*, is based on the DW- Nominate scores, which measures political conservatism in each session of Congress (Voteview.com, Web). The scores are on a one to negative scale, where one means the most conservative, and negative one means the most liberal.

Hypothesis 1: The higher a senator scores on the conservatism scale, the more pro-Israel bills the senator will sponsor and co-sponsor.

Although the Jewish population in the United States is small, it has a history of political mobilization, and has shown a pronounced and positive influence on senators' sponsorship of pro-Israel bills. We would expect states that have a larger Jewish constituency to positively influence the sponsorship of pro-Israel bills. The variable *JewPop* represents the percentage of each state's population that is Jewish.

Hypothesis 2: The higher the percentage of Jewish population in a state, the more pro-Israel bills their senators will sponsor or co-sponsor.

Previous research has suggested strong emotional and religious ties between the American evangelical community and Israel. 71.6 percent of White Evangelicals believe that God gave the land of Israel to the Jews, and 59.7 percent believe that the state of Israel is the fulfillment of biblical prophecy (Green,2009). Although previous research has suggested that the percentage of a state's Evangelical population would not influence senatorial sponsorship of bills, with the increased mobilization of the evangelical population on pro-Israel issues and the formation of a strong Christian political lobby, we might expect a positive effect of the evangelical population on sponsorship of pro-Israel bills. The variable *EvPop* represents the percentage of each state's population that identifies as evangelical.

Hypothesis 3: The higher the percentage of evangelical population in a state, the more pro-Israel bills their senators will sponsor or co-sponsor.

Frequency of attendance at worship is strongly associated with religious salience and traditionalism (Green, 2007). Furthermore, individuals who score highly on the religiosity scale are more likely to sympathize with Israel, and their religious beliefs are more likely to influence their political opinions (Green, 2009). I would expect that states that have a large church attending constituency to positively influence the sponsorship of pro-Israel bills. Therefore a state's percentage of the population that attends church at least once a week will reflect the state's traditionalist population and may influence senators' sponsorship of pro-Israel bills. The variable *ChurchAtt* represents the percentage of each state's population that attends church at least once a week.

Hypothesis 4: The higher the percentage of weekly church attending population in a state, the more pro-Israel bills their senator will sponsor or co-sponsor.

Since senators' goals are to get reelected, they must ensure that their political "war chest" is filled. The Israeli lobby makes contributions to politicians running for re-elections, providing them with material support for their campaign. I would expect the more contributions a senator receives from the Israel lobby, the higher the likelihood that the senator will support pro-Israel issues in the Senate. The variable, *LobCont,* is the annual contributions in dollars senators receive from the Israel lobby (divided by 10,000).

Hypothesis 5: The larger the contributions a senator receives from the Israel lobby, the more pro-Israel bills the senator will sponsor or co-sponsor.

During each two year session of Congress numerous bills and letters were sponsored on different issues in response to political and military events occurring in Israel and the United States at the time. In order to control for these effects each session of Congress is accounted for separately. The variables for Congress are dummy variables and equal to one if the senator served in that Congress and zero if he/she did not. These variables are designed to evaluate the effect of each session on the model. The 109th Congress serves as the basis for comparison, and therefore is does not show up in the tables below. The variable Cong110 represents the 110th Congress (2007-2009). The variable Cong111 represents the 111th Congress (2009-2011). The variable Cong 112 represents the 112th Congress (2011-2013). In each session of Congress all senators who served in that session were counted, which at times reached more than 100 senators (due to resignations and deaths)

   The data for the independent variables come from the United States Religious Landscape Study - Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life. This survey is "based on interviews with more than 35,000 American adults. It details the religious makeup, religious beliefs and practices as well as social and political attitudes of the American public" (2013, Web) This study uses the survey's state by state data on religious beliefs and practices. The data for political conservatism come from the DW-nominate scores of the congresses measured, as appears on voteview.com, affiliated with the University of Georgia. The data for political contributions to senators from the Israel lobby come from The Center for Responsive Politics, a research group tracking money in United States politics. The partisan affiliation of senators and congressional scores came from the previous data set of the advocacy group "US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation".

6. Empirical Results

Table 2 provides summary statistics for the dependent and independent variables. Table 3 provides the results from the model. The Model uses all the independent variables – Political conservatism (Cons), Percentage of evangelical population in the state (EvPop), percentage of Jewish population in each state (JewPop), percentage of weekly church attending population in each state (ChurchAtt), political contributions from the Israel lobby in dollars, divided by 10,000 (LobCont) and Congresses 110 – 112, where the 109th congress serves as the baseline for comparison (2005-2013). Table 4 provides the correlation coefficients for all the variables included in the model.

Table 2: Summary statistics for the dependent and independent variables:

	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Score	2.60	2.00	2.20	-4.00	9.00
EvPop	26.70	25.00	12.70	7.00	53.00
Cons	0.02	-0.14	0.43	-0.64	1.00
JewPop	1.30	1.00	1.30	0.50	6.00
ChurchAtt	38.90	38.00	9.30	22.0	60.00
LobCont	4.35	0	10.22	0	127.83

Table 3: Model 1 - Coefficient estimates of influence on senatorial sponsorship of pro-Israel bills

Model 1	
Intercept	1.11 *
	(2.78)
Cons	1.53 *
	(7.13)
EvPop	-0.01
	(-1.26)
JewPop	0.20 *
	(2.98)
Church Att	0.03*
	(2.4)
LobCont	0.04*
	(4.9)
Cong110	-1.66*
	(-7.8)
Cong111	2.25*
	(10.54)
Cong112	0.72
	(3.378)
Adjusted R^2	0.52
n	405
F-Significance	53524
df	395

Note: Significance codes: t-stat>1.96: "*"

Table 4: Correlation Coefficients of dependent and independent variables

	Score	Evangelical Population	Conservative	Jewish Population	Church Attendance	Lobby Contributions
Score	1.0					
Evangelical Population	0.08	1.0				
Conservative	0.22	0.48	1.0			
Jewish Population	0.05	-0.43	-0.40	1.0		
Church Attendance	0.16	0.67	-0.08	-0.27	1.0	
Lobby Contributions	0.11	-0.12	-0.13	0.2	-0.08	1.0

The empirical results show strong support for the a priori expectations in all variables except evangelical population. Political conservatism and lobby contributions were both robust estimators, and church attendance and Jewish population both were statistically and substantively significant. Evangelical population had very little influence on the model.

7. Discussion of the Variables

7.1 Political Conservatism

All else equal, the model predicts that the more conservative a senator, the more likely to sponsor and co-sponsor pro-Israel bills. This is consistent with Table 1, which showed that some bills received bi-partisan support, while some bills which pertained to more contentious issues, were solely supported by Republicans. We can conclude that the political conservatism of a senator is an important determinant of pro-Israel bill sponsorship.

7.2 Jewish Population

The coefficient on Jewish Population in a state was statistically significant. The model predicts that all else equal, a rise of one percent in the Jewish population will increase the senator's sponsorship score by 0.2. The model predicts one more pro-Israel bill to be sponsored in a state with the highest Jewish population (six percent, New York for example), than a state with the lowest measured Jewish population (0.5 percent, Kentucky). The Jewish population in most states is very small. Only five states had a Jewish population above two percent of the total population, and another six states had a total Jewish population of two percent.[3] We can conclude that senators in a state with a relatively large Jewish population are responsive to the sympathies of American Jews towards Israel, which is consistent with previous research.

7.3 Evangelical Population

All else equal, the model predicts that the size of the evangelical population in a state has very little impact on sponsorship of pro-Israel bills. The negative coefficients may be a result of multicollinearity, and may account for the more liberal or less practicing evangelicals in each state (as noted earlier, only 70 percent of evangelicals sympathize with Israel).

7.4 Church Attendance

The coefficient on weekly church attending population of a state was statistically significant and indicates that all else equal, a rise of once percent in the weekly church attending population will increase the senator's sponsorship score by 0.03. This may seem substantively insignificant, but when taking into consideration the range of the percentages of weekly church attending population (22 to 60 percent), the model predicts that a senator from a state with a high percentage of weekly church attending individuals will sponsor or co-sponsor one more pro-Israel bill in Congress than a senator from a state with a small church attending population.

7.5 Lobby Contributions

The coefficient on lobby contributions was also statistically significant indicating that for an increase of $10,000 in political contributions from the Israel lobby, the senator's score on sponsorship will increase by 0.04. When we observe the range of contributions senators' receive from the Israel lobby we can see the impact of lobby contributions on the model. Some senators received zero contributions, but some received amounts upwards of $100,000. The mean of contributions was $43,500, but the standard deviation was high at 10.22. We can conclude the lobby contributions are an important determinant in the senators' overall sponsorship score, once it reaches a certain level.

7.6 Congresses

The coefficients for each of the Congresses were statistically significant. Since the baseline for comparison of Congresses (the 109th Congress) was chosen randomly, there is little substantive significance in the signs or strength of these coefficients. Separating the effects of each Congress allows the model to respond to the issues that arose, with regard to Israel during each session. For example, the 111th and 112th Congresses included seven and eight bills respectively and included only pro-Israel bills, whereas the 110th Congress had six bills with regard to Israel of which only three were designated pro-Israel bills. Each session of Congress responded to issues that arose during the

term, and this model allows us to view the sponsorship and co-sponsorship of senators during each session separately.

8. Discussion of Results

Previous research found that the only religious constituency that influences senatorial sponsorship of pro-Israel bills was the Jewish constituency (Rosenson et al., 2009). Their model was based on the "old religion gap" of denominational belonging, and did not include a variable that controlled for the influence of religiosity. In this study I found that the weekly church attending constituency also influences senatorial sponsorship of pro-Israel bills.

This study shows that the most important constituency variables influencing senatorial sponsorship of pro-Israel bills are the presence of a relatively large Jewish constituency and/or a large church attending constituency. It also found that the size of the evangelical population in a state had little impact on the sponsorship of bills. The political ideology variable found that the more conservative a senator, the higher the likelihood of sponsoring and co-sponsoring more pro-Israel bills. With regard to the political contributions variable, the more contributions senators received from the Israel lobby, the higher the likelihood of sponsoring and co-sponsoring pro-Israel bills.

The effect of the size of the Jewish constituency is to be expected given that the Jewish community is highly mobilized and has been involved in the American political process for a long time. Jews have consistently voted for the Democratic Party by large majority (65 to80 percent of Jews have voted for the Democratic Party since 1980), and have been avid supporters of Israel in United States politics. However, the Republican Party is a stronger supporter of Israel in these Congresses. A possible explanation is that most Jews do not view Israel as their main policy concern when they vote. Furthermore, the definition of supporting Israel has become wider within the Jewish community. It now ranges from unwavering support for Israeli policies to supporting American pressure and allowing congressional criticism of Israel as a legitimate method for ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. American Jews, who consider criticizing Israel a legitimate policy issue, would still consider themselves pro-Israel. The model I used in this study does not consider bills critical of Israel as pro-Israel, though many Jews may consider them so. This may explain the continuing support of Jews for the Democratic Party, but it is outside the realm of this study.

The small effect of the evangelical constituency on pro-Israel sponsorship of bills shows that the evangelical community should not be considered monolithic in its doctrine or its faith. Despite the heavy mobilization of organizations within the evangelical community, we see that it has little impact on senatorial sponsorship of bills. One possible explanation is the difference of opinions within the evangelical community with regard to Israel. Another explanation is the problem of how to define evangelicalism. As mentioned earlier, the definition used in the Pew poll for evangelical was based on the denomination of the church, but not the doctrine or the adherence of its attendants. It becomes more difficult to measure the impact of the denomination on political opinions and on support of Israel without understanding the religiosity and doctrine of the adherents.

Weekly church attendance is a stronger predictor of political opinions, because weekly attending church-goers will be more likely to have been consistently exposed to the church's message, and are more likely to respond to it. The Christian theological connection to Israel and its Biblical ties is likely to increase emotional and religious ties to Israel. A weekly church attending congregation that receives its cues at church and sympathize with Israel have the potential to become a mobilized and effective constituency, to which senators must respond. This may explain the stronger impact of church attendance on senatorial sponsorship of pro-Israel bills. Furthermore, Israel's role in prophecy, known as pre-millenial dispensationalism, and its explicit promises from God to the people of Israel are likely to predispose weekly churchgoers to stronger empathy with Israel, especially since belief in prophecy, biblical literalism and weekly church attendance among the evangelical traditions are highly correlated.

Using this model I can attest to the influence of the constituency on the predicted amount of pro-Israel bills sponsored and co-sponsored in each Congress. For example, the predicted score of a Republican senator scoring 0.6 on DW-nominate, from a state with the highest weekly church attending population (60 percent), and the mean Jewish population (1.28 percent), receiving political contributions of $40,000 in the 110th Congress, will be two, whereas the predicted score for the same senator with the lowest church attending population (22 percent) will be just below one. This indicates that weekly church attending population, within its range, has similar constituency effects to the Jewish population in a state.

The political ideology and political contribution variables I measured were both statistically and substantively significant. It has long been held that support for Israel is a bi-partisan issue, but this study concludes that there is more support for Israel from the Republican Party than from the Democratic Party in the Senate, and that the more conservative a senator, the more likely they are to support Israel. This is consistent with the Republican base that is

more religious than the Democratic base. This is also consistent with Rosenson et al. (2009) who found similar results for party affiliation in a prior period. The significance of the political contribution variable fits the model's assumption of the self interest axiom. senators will try to maximize their ability to get reelected through political contributions. As mentioned earlier, whether the political contributions influence a senator's position, or whether political contributions are made for senators who already support Israel is beyond the scope of this paper, but it is clear that there is a positive relationship between political contributions from the Israel lobby and the senators' score. In order to find the outer most indifference curve within their budget constraints, senators will try to find a position on this issue that fits their personal ideology and their political platform. Since the Israel issue is becoming more constituency oriented, who have the ability to get them reelected, they can accept contributions only if it fits their constituency's interest.

Controlling for Congresses shows the impact of each Congress on the overall likelihood of sponsoring and cosponsoring pro-Israel bills. Of the five sessions, only in the 109th and 110th Congresses bills received both positive and negative scores (pro-Israel and not pro-Israel bills), and showed a wide range of issues sponsored in the bills. The 113th Congress had a very small sample and included only three bills, one of which received wide bi-partisan support (52 co-sponsors, of which 26 were Republican and 26 were Democrats), and two bills that were sponsored by only several Republican senators. The large variation on issues (in the 109th and 110th Congresses), and the existence of bills that scored both positively and negatively for senators may explain the statistical significance of their coefficients. The small amount of bills sponsored in the 113th Congress may explain its statistical significance. The 111th and 112th Congresses had only pro-Israel bills pro-Israel and showed less statistical significance in the model. This may suggest that when there is little variation in the support of Israel, the model is less successful in accurately predicting senators' support of Israel.

9. Reconsiderations

The data for the dependent variable may be biased due to the political stance of the advocacy group. The definitions it uses of pro-Israel bills include any that are not critical of Israel's policies. The use of this data set, which may contain a bias in opposition to Israeli policy, only serves the purpose of this paper, because it uses the most stringent definitions of support of Israel, and therefore serves to emphasize the senators' policy making positions.

Another potential problem that occurs within the data set is the use of the term evangelical. The term is defined differently by many scholars. Marsden defines evangelicalism as "a style as well as a set of Protestant beliefs about the Bible and Christ's saving work that has touched virtually all denominations" (1991, 2). The survey by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life determined evangelicalism based on the denomination of the church the responder belongs to. This definition is consistent with Green's use of religious belonging, and responds to his data adequately, but tells us nothing about the doctrine of the church. This makes it difficult to determine the doctrine which an individual classified as evangelical follows, according to this survey.

10. Conclusions

This study assumes that senators behave according to the self interest axiom. By testing for the political ideology, political contributions and constituency variables, the model shows an outline of senators' budget constraints and indifference curves. They are restrained by the will of their constituency in order to get reelected, and will seek as much leeway as possible on other issues that fits their personal ideology. The model shows that senators respond to both their budget constraints and their indifference curve. The more conservative a senator the higher the likelihood of supporting Israel. This is consistent with my assumptions about the senator's personal ideology. The more political contributions a senator receives from the Israel lobby, the higher the likelihood of supporting Israel. It is important to note, that the results of my model show that this is significant only at the higher levels of contributions.

With regard to the constituency variable the results of this study suggest that the weekly church attending constituency influences senatorial support for Israel. Furthermore, it suggests that constituency preferences on Israel have some influence on senators' support for Israel, contrary to previous efforts finding very little evidence for constituency effects on foreign policy making in the Senate. A possible explanation is that Israel cannot be seen purely as a foreign policy issue. Since Israel can also be considered a religious issue, separating domestic policy and foreign policy becomes impossible, due to the strong constituency concern. The impact of religion on political preferences, and the strong ties between Judeo-Christian traditions and Israel, shows that Israel should also be considered a do-

mestic religious issue. Previous research had already shown that Jewish constituencies impacted their legislators' preferences on Israel and had shown the evangelical constituencies had very little impact. By adding religiosity, measured by church attendance, we can now see the influence of religious constituencies on their legislators' preferences concerning Israel. We can conclude that constituencies who care about this issue will have an impact on senatorial sponsorship of bills, and since 39 percent of Americans attend church at least once a week, the impact of this constituency is strong and should be taken into consideration in policy making.

It is necessary to measure additional elite level variables like religious affiliation of senators, religiosity and the degree of delegation given to a senator (measured by the margin of victory in recent election bid) should be added to the model in order to see their impact on pro-Israel bill sponsorship. Furthermore, it may be interesting to measure the impact of major events in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and their impact on senatorial sponsorship of Pro-Israel bills.

11. References

1. Aipac.org. 2013. *Our Mission*. [online] Available at: http://www.aipac.org/about/mission [Accessed: 3 Dec 2013].

2. Cavari, A. 2013. Religious beliefs, elite polarization, and public opinion on foreign policy: The partisan gap in American public opinion toward Israel. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 25 (1), pp. 1--22.

3. Clark, V. 2007. *Allies for Armageddon*. New Haven [Conn.]: Yale University Press.

4. Downs, A., 1957. *An economic theory of democracy*. 1st ed. New York: Harper.

5. Endtheoccupation.org. 2013. *US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation : Congressional Report Cards*. [online] Available at: http://www.endtheoccupation.org/section.php?id=202 [Accessed: 3 Dec 2013].

6. Gallup, I. 2013. *Americans' Sympathies for Israel Match All-Time High*. [online] Available at: http://www.gallup.com/poll/161387/americans-sympathies-israel-match-time-high.aspx [Accessed: 3 Dec 2013].

7. Green, J. 2007. *The faith factor*. Westport, Conn.: Praeger Publishers.

8. Green, J. 2009. The American Public and Sympathy for Israel: Present and Future. *Journal of Ecumenical Studies,* 44 (1), pp. 107-121

9. Guth, J. and Kenan Jr, W.. Religious Factors and American Public Support for Israel.

10. Jacobs, L. and Page, B. 2005. Who Influences U. S. Foreign Policy?. *American Political Science Review*, 99 (1), pp. 107--123.

11. Jewishvirtuallibrary.org. 2013. *Jewish Voting Record in United States Presidential Elections | Jewish Virtual Library*. [online] Available at: http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/US-Israel/jewvote.html [Accessed: 3 Dec 2013].

12. Marsden, G. 1991. *Understanding fundamentalism and evangelicalism*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans.

13. Mearsheimer, J. and Walt, S. 2007. *The Israel lobby and US foreign policy*. New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

14. Mittleman, A., Johnson, B. and Isserman, N. 2007. *Uneasy allies?*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

15. Opensecrets.org. 2014. *Pro-Israel: Money to Congress | OpenSecrets*. [online] Available at: http://www.opensecrets.org/industries/summary.php?cycle=2014&ind=Q05 [Accessed: 6 Mar 2014].

16. Peabody, R. and Polsby, N. 1963. *New perspectives on the House of Representatives*. Chicago: Rand McNally.

17. Religions.pewforum.org. 2013. *United States Religion Map and Religious Populations - United States Religious Landscape Study - Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life*. [online] Available at: http://religions.pewforum.org/maps [Accessed: 3 Dec 2013].

18. Rosenson, B., Oldmixon, E. and Wald, K. 2009. US senators' support for Israel examined through sponsorship/cosponsorship decisions, 1993--2002: The influence of elite and constituent factors. *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 5 (1), pp. 73--91.

19. Salleh, M. and Zakariya, H. 2012. The American Evangelical Christians and the US Middle East policy: A case study of the Christians United for Israel (CUFI). *Intellectual Discourse*, 20 (2).

20. Sharp, J. 2013. *United States Foreign Aid to Israel*. [report] Washington D.C.: Congressional Research Service.

21. Spector, S. 2009. *Evangelicals and Israel*. Oxford [u.a.]: Oxford Univ. Press.

22. Voteview.com. 2014. *DW-NOMINATE Scores.* [online] Available at http://voteview.com/dwnominate.asp [Accessed 6 Mar 2014]

23. Weber, T. 2010. American Evangelicals and Israel: A Complicated Alliance. *The Protestant Jewish Conundrum*, pp. 141--157.

12. Endnotes

1 Several of the differences include the accord on Iran's nuclear program, Israel's policies of settlement in the West Bank and United States policy toward the Arab world in light of the so-called Arab Spring.

2 In the original data set, senators' scores were negative for pro-Israel bill sponsorship, and positive for bill sponsorship opposed to Israeli Policy. In order to make more intuitive sense, the scoring was reversed to give a positive score for pro-Israel bill sponsorship.

3 States that had lower than 0.5% Jewish population were counted as 0.5 in the data set.