Peace on G-d's terms: The ideological project of Christian Zionism

James Alton Croker III.
University of New Hampshire, Durham

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholars.unh.edu/thesis

Recommended Citation
https://scholars.unh.edu/thesis/72
Peace on G-d's terms: The ideological project of Christian Zionism

Abstract
This study examines the Christian Zionist movement. It identifies the motivations, composition, and objectives of the Christian Zionist movement in order to illuminate the interest group's influence on U.S. foreign policy making on Israel. The movement's influence results from the framing of its ideology as a political project, through which the movement is able to capitalize on a pre-existing pro-Israel opinion bias among Evangelicals, construct a community of believers from these individuals, and mobilize that community into action. This argument shows that classic realist accounts, such as that put forward in Mearsheimer and Walt's work, do not account for a definition of the national interest that is not characterized in terms of realpolitick, and are therefore inappropriate when discussing Christian Zionists. The national interest in the view of Christian Zionists is framed in terms of their ideology, which realist analysis cannot incorporate.

Keywords
Political Science, International Law and Relations, Sociology, Ethnic and Racial Studies

This thesis is available at University of New Hampshire Scholars' Repository: https://scholars.unh.edu/thesis/72
PEACE ON G-D’S TERMS:
THE IDEOLOGICAL PROJECT OF CHRISTIAN ZIONISM

BY

JAMES ALTON CROKER III
BA, Religion, Wright State University, 2006

THESIS

Submitted to the University of New Hampshire
in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts
in
Political Science

May, 2008
INFORMATION TO USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleed-through, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

UMI Microform 1454993
Copyright 2008 by ProQuest LLC.
All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

ProQuest LLC
789 E. Eisenhower Parkway
PO Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346
This thesis has been examined and approved.

Thesis Director, Jeannie Sowers, Assistant Professor in Political Science

Lawrence C. Reardon, Associate Professor of Political Science

Marla Brettschneider, Professor of Political Science & Women’s Studies

5/07/08
Date
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my mother who spent countless hours teaching me faith; to my grandmother, who is my inspiration; to my precious Athena, who is the source of my motivation; and to those who struggle in religious vocations and education. It is also dedicated to the memory of Elias Abdallah; overcommitted theorist and fallen friend.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are numerous persons to whom I am indebted to for their help, support, insights, and critiques provided in the quest to complete this project. A sincere thank you goes to the Department of Political Science at the University of New Hampshire. Special thanks are offered to the members of my thesis committee Professors Jeannie Sowers, Chris Reardon, and Marla Brettschneider for their commitment to this project’s success. You have my deep gratitude and respect. Thanks are also due to those teachers who have meant so much throughout my academic life. Love and respect go out to Miss Noel Kupras-Bauer, Dr. Vivian L. Hobbes, Professor Donna Schlagheck, Professor John Feldmeier, Prof. Ava Chamberlain, and Professor Valerie Stoker. I am deeply indebted to the staff of the Institute for Recruitment of Teachers, Professor Warren Brown, Mr. Dovev Levine, Dean Harry Richards, and Associate Dean Cari Moorhead. Thank you also to the staff of Diamond Research Library, and my colleagues at UNH. Deep thanks also go out to my family who has humored me in my unending quest for knowledge; thank you for your patience, love, and support.
FOREWARD

This project grew out of a lifetime of pure fascination with Evangelical Christianity and its obsession with American politics. The primary purpose of this project is to build upon the work of distinguished academics John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, and several others, on the role lobby groups play in the construction of U.S. foreign policy on Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. The work contained in this thesis is the culmination of research that took place from 2006-2008 at the University of New Hampshire, in the Department of Political Science.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION ........................................................................................................ iii  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ......................................................................................... iv  
FOREWORD .............................................................................................................. v  
LIST OF TABLES ...................................................................................................... viii  
LIST OF FIGURES .................................................................................................... viii  
ABSTRACT ............................................................................................................... ix  

CHAPTER PAGE

INTRODUCTION ........................................................................................................... 1

I. WHOSE POLICY IS IT ANYWAY? ................................................................. 8
   The Problem ........................................................................................................ 8
   The Premise ....................................................................................................... 13
   The Gap ............................................................................................................ 16
   Breaching the Gap ............................................................................................ 19
   Conclusion ........................................................................................................ 21

II. PREACHING TO THE CHOIR .................................................................... 22
   Why do Americans Tend to Support Israel? .................................................... 22
   Testing the Theories ......................................................................................... 26
   Variable Definition and Measurement ............................................................... 26
   Interpretation ..................................................................................................... 37
   Conclusion ........................................................................................................ 38

III. THE IDEOLOGICAL PROJECT ................................................................. 40
   Only in America ................................................................................................. 40
   How Can a Christian Be a Zionist? ................................................................... 41
   What Makes a Christian Zionist? .................................................................... 46
   The Ideological Framing ...................................................................................... 49
LIST OF TABLES

TABLE PAGE
Table 1: OLS Regression................................................................. 36

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE PAGE
Figure 1: American Opinion of Israel.................................................. 23
Figure 2: Support for Israel, Histogram.............................................. 27
Figure 3: Difference in Support for Israel Between Non-Jews and Jews........ 28
Figure 4: Percentage of Christian Respondents who are 'Born Again'........... 30
Figure 5: Difference in Support for Israel Among American Christians........ 31
Figure 6: Religiosity’s Affect on Support for Israel................................ 32
Figure 7: Difference in Support for Israel by Party Affiliation.................. 34
Figure 8: Difference in Support for Israel Among Non-Republicans and Republicans..... 35
ABSTRACT

PEACE ON G-D'S TERMS:
THE IDEOLOGICAL PROJECT OF CHRISTIAN ZIONISM

by

James Alton Croker III

University of New Hampshire, May, 2008

This study examines the Christian Zionist movement. It identifies the motivations, composition, and objectives of the Christian Zionist movement in order to illuminate the interest group’s influence on U.S. foreign policy making on Israel. The movement’s influence results from the framing of its ideology as a political project, through which the movement is able to capitalize on a pre-existing pro-Israel opinion bias among Evangelicals, construct a community of believers from these individuals, and mobilize that community into action. This argument shows that classic realist accounts, such as that put forward in Mearsheimer and Walt’s work, do not account for a definition of the national interest that is not characterized in terms of realpolitick, and are therefore inappropriate when discussing Christian Zionists. The national interest in the view of Christian Zionists is framed in terms of their ideology, which realist analysis cannot incorporate.
INTRODUCTION:

The American mythos holds that every voice is equally important, and that policy formation is purely a 'numbers game', where whichever side of the debate has the majority is the winner. Superficially, this is how laws and policies are decided upon. In this view, the evolution of interest groups was a natural, predictable political phenomenon. However, from the earliest stages of the American democratic experiment there have been exceptions to the rule. The alleged power of the majority has been second to the more significant power of the minority. Namely, those individuals and groups with significant amounts of political (and fiscal) capital have been able to access the officials who make policies at a higher level than the average citizen and steer legislators to construct policies that advance private interests over public ones. The perpetrators of this steering have been the so-called special interests that, rightly or wrongly, have become synonymous with governmental corruption and the subversion of the democratic process.

Today, special interest groups are the targets of politicians seeking to frame themselves as political reformers. Politicians prey on the public’s distaste for unpopular policies and their outcomes, and accuse their opponents of instituting those policies at the pleasure of powerful special interest groups. The premise of such criticisms is that the special interest never mirrors the public sentiment. In truth, every side of every issue has special interest groups advocating for it. Numerous scholars have shown how interest groups and individuals seek political capital to 'sway' policy makers and influence the
outcome of the policy making process. The existing body of literature examining interest
group politics produces an image of the American policy making machine operating on a
system of quid pro quo, where powerful lobby groups purchase legislation that is
conducive to their interests through campaign contributions, voter mobilization, and
ethically dubious ‘perks’. \(^1\) While these methods are generally legal and the interest
groups themselves do in fact represent actual voters, it is easy to see how the public is
distrustful of them. This distrust is increased when scholars argue that it is possible for
an interest group to exert enough influence on the policy making process that it
contributes to the development of policy at odds with the national interest, and possesses
enough capacity to silence opposition to that policy.

This thesis examines one attempt to shape a U.S. foreign policy that is criticized
as not only opposed to the national interest, but also supposedly undermines the principle
of religious separation: the work of the Christian Zionist lobby to maintain a pro-Israel
U.S. foreign policy. \(^1\) John Mearsheimer and Stephan Walt’s work, *The Israel Lobby and
U.S. Foreign Policy*, makes the argument that the pro-Israel Lobby \(^2\) is the most important
influence on the policy making process, and that the resulting policy stream violates the
*national interest*. \(^3\) Their argument rests on realist articulations of the national interest,
and on the assumption that the Lobby focuses on a set of issues to which the public is

\(^{1}\) John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York:
Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007). For the purposes of this study, Mearsheimer and Walt’s understanding of
pro-Israel is used. *Pro-Israel* denotes high levels of military and economic aid, favorable lending terms,
supportive votes in international organizations, highly entangled military alliance, de facto support for
settlement activities and security policies and understanding the conflict to be the product of violence by
Palestinians.

\(^{2}\) Ibid, 5. The *Lobby* in Mearsheimer and Walt denotes, “the loose coalition of individuals and
organizations that actively works to move U.S. foreign policy in a pro-Israel (see above) direction….it is
not a single, unified movement with a central leadership, and it is certainly not a cabal or conspiracy that
‘controls’ U.S. foreign policy. It is simply a powerful interest group, made up of both Jews and gentiles,
whose acknowledged purpose is to press Israel’s case within the United States and Influence American
foreign policy in ways that its members believe will benefit the Jewish state.”

\(^{3}\) Ibid, 4.
generally politically indifferent. While Christian Zionists are included in their work on the Lobby, Mearsheimer and Walt’s argument relegates the movement to almost periphery status, and emphasizes the influence of American Jews. This argument is directly contradicted by Stephen Zunes’ argument that Christian Zionists “are, at this point, more significant in the formulation of U.S. policy toward Israel than are Jewish Zionists.”4

Christian Zionism is foundationally a theopolitical ideology,5 whose adherents understand their theological origins to affect political purposes. It is characterized by the belief in the teleological need for a political nation state of Israel, composed of Jews, in the biblical geography of Ancient Israel, along with a religious community practicing traditional pre-rabbinic temple worship, in a restored temple, on the Temple Mount, as pre-requisites for Jesus Christ’s return and the establishment of His kingdom on Earth. Christian Zionist political action is aimed at providing material, financial, and political support for the state of Israel, for Israeli policies aimed at expanding territorial hegemony, and for complete Jewish sovereignty over Jerusalem. This political action is accomplished through lobbying activities by organized political action committees, cues from religious elites, the promotion of candidates who espouse a pro-Israel stance, and direct financial assistance to rightist pro-Israel Zionist groups6 in the U.S. and in Israel for increased settlement efforts in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs).

5 Theopolitical is to be understood as being an issue or ideology that is politically salient, but is also intimately entangled with religious life. This is based on the idea expressed in Robert O. Smith, “Between Restoration and Liberation: Theopolitical Contributions and Responses to U.S. Foreign Policy in Israel/Palestine.” Journal of Church and State 46, no. 4 (2004).
6See Marla Brettschneider, Cornerstones of Peace: Jewish Identity Politics and Democratic Theory (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1996). It is important to note this distinction. As will be discussed later, there is significant movement in approval ratings on Israeli government policies among American
While the Christian Zionist Movement was included in the loose network that composes Mearsheimer and Walt’s *Lobby*, the movement espouses motives and end goals that distinguishes it from the Jewish and neo-conservative elements. These groups all work collaboratively, but their influence and objectives differ. Christian Zionists and the rest of the *Lobby* agree that a pro-Israel foreign policy is in the national interest. However, the national interest for Christian Zionists moves beyond the *realpolitik* issues Mearsheimer and Walt argue drive the *Lobby*’s most significant organization, the American-Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), into the realm of theology, eschatology and teleology that characterizes the ideological project of Christian Zionism. Christian Zionists include values and beliefs in their articulation of the national interest that are not adequately accounted for in the realist premise of Mearsheimer and Walt.

**How does the Christian Zionist movement mobilize the U.S. public from being generally but quiescently supportive of Israel, to a place of agency aimed at influencing policy formation?**

This thesis identifies the motivations, composition, and objectives of the Christian Zionist movement, as defined both by existing scholarly research and by internal movement voices and literature, illuminating how the movement’s political project is ideologically framed. This analysis shows how Christian Zionism’s capacity to influence foreign policy is rooted firmly in this ideological framing, and is manifest in the *special relationship* between the movement and Israel. Mearsheimer and Walt’s characterization of this process as simply an attempt to control public discourse is

---

Jews. This is due in large part to the Jewish Peace Movement that has emerged among Jewish “progressives” in Israel and throughout the Diaspora community. This movement has word extensively to articulate a different definition of pro-Israel. While this movement has seen a transition and shift in Jewish pro-Israel opinion, there has not been a shift in the pro-Israel policy advanced by the *Lobby*; this suggests importance of non-Jewish elements in the continued efforts to advance the pro-Israel policy regime.
insufficient and reveals a minor problem in their argument, which is premised on a
general sense of apathy on a policy issue among the electorate. The fact that Christian
Zionists possess significant capacity to shape public discourse stems from the inherent
pro-Israel bias in public opinion that underlies that apathy, and the significant
relationship that religious identity plays in determining an individual’s pro-Israel
sentiments.

Chapter One provides background information for the research and a general
overview of the literature in which this research is grounded. A significant amount of
research has framed pro-Israel U.S. policy as serving the national interest as articulated
by realists. Mearsheimer and Walt extend realist analysis of policy into the realm of
domestic politics. They frame the Lobby’s policies goals as increases of relative power
for the U.S and Israel, but they argue that the policies the Lobby’s efforts produce violate
realist understandings of the national interest. What these realist scholars miss in their
“guns and butter” analysis of the Lobby is the role religious ideology plays in Christian
Zionism. These scholars overlook the role religious ideology can play in policy
formation. This section highlights the work of Jonathan Fox, which identifies the false
assumptions that lead social scientists to dismiss the power of religion. This chapter also
defines the operative concepts and variables, and outlines the general methods of
analysis.

Chapter Two shows that Christian Zionists are, for the most part, “preaching to
the choir”, by showing the presence of a pro-Israel bias in American public opinion. This
analysis contradicts Mearsheimer and Walt’s assumption that attempts to control the
public discourse on Israel focus on an issue to which the general public is apathetic.
Statistical analysis shows that there is a significant relationship between religious identity in terms of the Born Again Christians who compose the Christian Zionist movement, and support for Israel. This relationship suggests a possible causal relationship between Christian Zionist ideology and the pro-Israel sentiment of those who believe the ideology.

Chapter Three answers the questions, “What is Christian Zionism and what does it want?” To answer these questions this study examines the group’s composition, history, and ideology as presented by academics, movement members and elites, and the movement’s own literature. This chapter explores what unifies and distinguishes Christian Zionism from expressions of Jewish Zionism. In doing so, it is clear how and why these diverging groups choose to collaborate in some of their policy advocacy. This chapter presents the agenda of Christian Zionists as an ideological project framed for its community as a political project for political action. This framing is accomplished through ministry activities. This project and the policy it aims at producing is what distinguishes the group from the other elements of Mearsheimer and Walt’s Lobby, and requires a different reading of the national interest than is offered by these theorists.

Chapter Four of this work examines the economic value of this ideology. It mirrors Mearsheimer and Walt’s analysis of the ‘special relationship’ between the U.S. and Israel, and examines the ‘special relationship’ between the Christian Zionist movement and Israel, illustrating how the movement’s ministry efforts impact Israel. This chapter examines Christian Zionism’s ‘blessing’ of Israel. While relatively minor when compared to the Diaspora philanthropy and U.S. military and economic aid, the funding streams from Christian Zionists, like traditional Zionist philanthropy, are shown

---

7 Ministry activities include religious broadcasts, literature, conferences, sermons, Sunday school programs, holy land tours, religious crafts, and fundraising.

8 This is classified within the movement as ‘blessing’ Israel.
to be classifiable as ideological rent, which is a major element of the advocacy project of the group. This section looks at the funds contributed by Christian Zionists to Israel, and highlights the type of programming their philanthropy targets. In doing so, it becomes clear how embedded this “blessing” of Israel is to the ultimate Christian Zionist agenda.

The final section of this thesis seeks to make sense of the national interest as Christian Zionists have framed it, and examine whether or not the pro-Israel policy regime contradicts it. The failure of Mearsheimer and Walt is to not adequately incorporate the power of ideology in their analysis of interest group influence. For Christian Zionists, the national interest is not framed in terms of the realist realpolitick, the national interest is framed in terms of religious ideology. For Christian Zionists, the terms for a just and sustainable Middle East peace are G-d’s terms as they understand them to be articulated. This is in essence the divine interest, and the divine interest is central to the Christian Zionist construction of the national interest.

This thesis presents a more complex picture of how Christian Zionism shapes U.S. policy than Mearsheimer and Walt do. The Christian Zionist lobby draws its influence from its status as an ideological project, in which religious identity and belief are the points of access by which the group is able to shape the public discourse. The ideological project is evident in the ministry’s effort to ‘bless’ Israel, and the manner in which the movement constructs its understanding of the national interest. To understand this construction, one must understand the movement.
CHAPTER I

WHOSE POLICY IS IT ANYWAY?

The Problem

There is a general consensus among academics, policy experts, politicians, and the general public that the foreign policy of the U.S. is overwhelmingly pro-Israel. The friendship that characterizes the bilateral relationship is evident in direct foreign assistance, military aid, and political support. Direct economic aid to Israel from the U.S. totaled $240 million in fiscal year 2006\(^9\) and direct foreign assistance remains steady at approximately $3 billion annually.\(^{10}\) Moreover, a recent arms agreement between the U.S. and Israel includes a military aid package providing $30 billion over the next 10 years.\(^{11}\) Political support is seen in the U.S. diplomatic position on Israel in the United Nations (UN). Between 1972 and 2006 the U.S. vetoed 42 U.N. Security Council resolutions it viewed as critical of Israel, and the U.S. continues to support Israeli military and anti-terrorism activities.\(^{12}\) This support for Israel has proven problematic for the U.S. because it is perceived as U.S. approval for controversial Israeli policies regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

\(^{10}\) Mearsheimer and Walt, the Israel Lobby, 24. They total U.S. Aid to Israel at $154 Billion, as of 2005 in 2005 dollars. They quote Rep. Lee Hamilton who reported annual U.S. Aid figures at $4.3 Billion.
\(^{11}\) “Israel hails U.S. Military Aid Rise”, Available from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/6920988.stm>
\(^{12}\) Mearsheimer and Walt, the Israel Lobby, 40. These vetoes exceeded the total vetoes of other SC members for the same period and over half of U.S. vetoes for the period.
The international community has classified many Israeli policies as being in violation of human rights, and the U.S. is seen as being complicit.ii Within the U.N., international opinion has repeatedly been shown to be highly critical of Israeli settlement expansions, its water resource allocation policies, and its security protocols. Scholars like Bayefsky13 and Shattan14 highlight the emergence of an anti-Israel bias within the international community. Glaring inconsistencies within U.S. foreign policy as it relates to Israel has also been highlighted when examining U.S. policies on human rights in general. Scott Turner focuses on U.S. policies specifically seeking to undermine international institutions in order to advance a pro-Israel U.S. policy.15 He emphasizes U.S. opposition to the International Criminal Court and the rulings of the International Court of Justice, while it simultaneously attempts to develop U.N. Security Council resolutions and military actions on the grounds of human rights violations. For Turner, the placing of international human rights initiatives second to the U.S.’s strategic interest is resulting in a reduction of U.S. hegemonic power and risks allowing the U.S. to be criticized as a human rights violator. He argues that U.S. ‘soft power’ is diminished, resulting in a decline in international prestige. Why would a state engage a foreign policy that is controversial and undermines its moral standing in the international community?

This can only be answered from a realist perspective, which denies moral imperatives as legitimate sources of foreign policy. Classical realists, like Hobbes,16 focus instead on the prominence of self interests and the need for social contracts to

guarantee protection from other actors seeking the advancement of their own self interest. Realists continue to perceive power and security to be the primary concerns of states. Jervis acknowledges that states will seek a high measure of security, by engaging foreign policies that best protect themselves. States pursue international dominance because it is the only way to ensure their own security, that is to say, hegemony is a means to an end and hegemony characterized by continuous conflict would not guarantee security. Rather, the state will rationally assess the dynamics of a given situation and choose the course of action that will provide the greatest guarantee of physical and material security. Another way to understand this phenomenon is to say that states can be expected to maximize their relative power.

Power is not military might alone. K.J. Holsti notes that, “the definition of power is often synonymous with the elements of national power, which is the physical assets a nation possesses.” He argues that power should be understood as a quantity that is relatively defined. It is characterized by the process of influence in a relationship between multiple states and is advanced by material or intellectual capabilities that allow for inducement of actions by an outside party. In this light, the national interest of a given state is to increase military, economic, and diplomatic power, which is its relative ability to coerce other states into meeting its own self-interested motives. If the realist assumption that increased power is the primary motive of states and their definition of national interest are both accepted, then the question becomes whether or not a pro-Israel

19 Ibid.
policy reflects the national interest and somehow increases the amount of power the U.S. holds.

Significant amounts of research have shown how, historically, a pro-Israel policy was judged to be consistent with the national interest, when the national interest was synonomous with anti-communism. During the Cold War the president and the State Department used an alliance with Israel as part of a larger strategy to balance the power of the Soviet Union through containment. In this system, Israel stood as a liberal democracy in a region where the Soviets were seeking to gain power. As Edward Fernandez notes, Arab regimes often looked to the Soviet Union for military assistance (when the U.S. did not supply it) to combat Israel. Moreover, communist movements in Arab states were pronounced, and Western politicians feared these states would adopt communist regimes. Post-colonial movements in Arab states were ALSO pronounced, and Western politicians misread the political character of these movements and wrongly feared these states would adopt communist regimes. This lead specifically to the policy of containment, which Gelvin asserts was the paramount policy goal of Washington in the Middle East.

As Gelvin notes, a U.S. policy of containment was originally structured under the Truman administration to emphasize a balance of power in the region, but shifted to promoting an Israeli military power equal to the sum of its regional neighbors. This shift occurred immediately before the 1967 war, when U.S. military aid to Israel increased

---

20 Containment was the process by which the U.S. sought to prevent the expansion of communism and the influence of the U.S.S.R through the development of proxy states amenable to U.S. interests.
21 Fernandez, “The United States and the Arab-Israeli Conflict,” 43.
22 Gelvin, The Modern Middle East, 259-262.
from $12.9 million in 1965 to $90 million in 1966.\textsuperscript{23} The 1967 war marks a critical shift in U.S. aid to Israel, largely due to ideological sympathies with the Israeli state, leading up to the U.S. government replacing the Jewish Diaspora as the primary source of rent to Israel in 1971.\textsuperscript{24} Beinin notes that it was under Secretary of State Henry Kissinger that the U.S. engaged a policy of establishing proxy states to fight the battles necessary to maintain the containment strategy. The result was a heavily aided Israel, to prevent regional dominance by a single state or a collective of states with strong anti-Western policies. This is the view expressed by Secretary of State George Shultz, who articulated that U.S. policy would, “make clear to the world-through our material and moral support for Israel…that we are a permanent, steadfast and unshakable ally for the state of Israel.” Shultz outlined the historical origins for the U.S. policies in support of the state of Israel that were framed ideologically.\textsuperscript{25}

Currently, military and economic aid has been used to combat and contain Islamist political movements in the OPTs and to prevent ‘hostile’ regimes from gaining regional dominance.\textsuperscript{26} The effort to contain communism, anti-western nationalism, and Islamist ideology are based in neo-conservative idealism and underpins current foreign policy efforts to promote democracy, economic liberalism, and Western cultural norms. While historical and contemporary motives remain largely reflective of the U.S.’s stated policy goals for the region, those policy goals are constructed in large part due to the ideological framing of the U.S.’s conflict with ideological movements like communism,

\textsuperscript{23} Mansour, Beyond Alliance: Israel in U.S. Foreign Policy, 190.
\textsuperscript{25} Shultz, “The United States and Israel.”
\textsuperscript{26} See Mearsheimer and Walt, the Israel Lobby, Part II.
nationalism, and Islamism that are seen to threaten its access to necessary resources and promote regional security threats. Israel is important not only because of its proximity to the oil wealth of the Gulf States, but because of the ideological and political threats that emerge when those resources are under the control of regimes and individuals who disagree with the ideological orientation of the U.S.

The Premise

The Power to Influence

For realists, the U.S. holds the unique position of being the dominant international actor involved in attempts at developing a resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, due in large part to its status as the international hegemon in a unipolar world. It is also Israel’s most important ally. As noted, the U.S. has been subject to significant amounts of criticism that its foreign policy regime is overwhelmingly pro-Israel, which prevents the U.S. from being viewed as an ‘honest broker’ in peace efforts between Israel and the Palestinians. Regardless of international opinions on the ethics of the special relationship, such a relationship can be expected when it benefits the national interest of the state. However, Mearsheimer and Walt argue that U.S. support for Israel violates the national interest.

Mearsheimer and Walt argue that U.S. policy on Israel has undermined the objectives of the global war on terror, lead the U.S. into an unnecessary war in Iraq, put the U.S. at a diplomatic disadvantage in relations with Iran and Syria, and has removed the moral authority of the U.S. in international affairs because of its (perceived) support of ethically questionable practices by the Israeli government in how it deals with the
disputed territories of Palestine. They acknowledge power and security to constitute the national interest. However, they highlight these problems as evidence that the pro-Israel policy neither reflects the national interest nor operates as a means of achieving it. If policy critics are correct and the direction of U.S. foreign policy on Israel is in conflict with the national interest, it is then necessary to determine what factors lead to the formation of such a policy.

Mearsheimer and Walt's answer is framed at the domestic determinants level of analysis. Their analysis holds that foreign policy is formulated by a broad range of individuals, agencies, and groups, and that lobbying organizations have the greatest ability to influence all of these policy makers. In engaging a domestic determinants level analysis it is necessary to look at the various groups whose aim is to shape the direction of policy formation, specifically the various interest groups and lobbying networks that characterize the U.S. political system. In the case of the U.S. and the state of Israel, Mearsheimer and Walt look to the coalition of organizations and individuals who engage to shape a pro-Israel foreign policy. For the purposes of this work, interest group is defined as a coalition of individuals and organizations that advocates for a certain policy position and actively seeks to influence policy formation in favor of that position. Mearsheimer and Walt argue that the ability of pro-Israel interest groups to lobby elected officials, make large campaign contributions, mobilize voters, and influence public opinion serves as a source of power and influence for these interest groups. These groups

---

27 Mearsheimer and Walt, *the Israel Lobby*, 337. They identify three specific policy goals that compose the U.S. national interest, these are: maintaining access to Middle East oil resources, preventing Middle East states (excluding Israel) from acquiring weapons of mass destruction, and eliminating the threat of international terrorism. Their argument is that the current pro-Israel policy, and the limited ability of policy actors and the public to criticize that policy, prevent the U.S. from meeting these goals.

28 Ibid. This definition is based on Mearsheimer and Walt's definition of the *Lobby*. 

14
then use this power to influence the individuals who formulate foreign policy, thereby ensuring its direction regardless of whether or not it conflicts with the national strategic interest.²⁹

Much of the scholarly research on the special relationship has focused on how U.S. foreign policy is formulated, and emphasizes the influence of interest groups, especially AIPAC and American Jewish groups. Mearsheimer and Walt were not the first scholars to identify the *Lobby*, or even first to measure its level of influence. However, their inquiry is unique in that it comes from prominent realist theorists who emphasize the primary status of the state as an international actor. Mearsheimer and Walt's analysis still acknowledges the state as the most important international actor, but they emphasize the decision making process of a state can be skewed by an interest group with a high level of capacity. Their work is also unique in that it acknowledges the role lobbying efforts by the Christian Right, specifically the Christian Zionist movement, have had in contributing to foreign policy formation.

Grace Halsell argues President Reagan was personally committed to the dispensationalist ideology of Christian Zionism and looked to the coming of Armageddon more than a peaceful resolution between Israel and its Arab neighbors.³⁰ With the election of President George W. Bush, scholars have argued that the Christian Right has attained a level of influence over policy formation they have never held before, because of the president's identification as an Evangelical and the realities of a post 9-11 environment. In this light, scholars cite previous distancing of the administration from its highly touted Quartet Based Road Map to Peace as evidence of interest group

²⁹ Ibid.
influence on the administration’s policy making. It seems it is accurate to say the Christian Zionist movement possesses the capacity to influence foreign policy formation; this influence comes from the movement’s ideology. Mearsheimer and Walt’s analysis is correct in pointing to interest groups at the domestic determinants level as a major force in the formation of U.S. foreign policy. Where their analysis is flawed is in missing religious ideology as the source of that power. They miss this because of a bias in social science, especially among realists in the field of international relations, which overlooks religious faith as a political force. Should religiously oriented interest groups be considered in discussions of policy formation?

The Gap

Leaving Religion Out

Scholars have been somewhat reluctant to examine the relationship between religious belief and the development of U.S. foreign policy. This hesitancy has put international relations scholarship at a severe disadvantage, when the policies of a state are meant to address issues that are best understood as theopolitical. The presence of theopolitical issues in the international arena has sparked lobbying efforts from religiously based interests groups, most notably Evangelical Christians. Its lobbying efforts in the foreign policy arena have focused on numerous issues including human rights, humanitarian aid, and abstinence based anti-HIV/AIDS programs. The

Israeli/Palestinian conflict is understood by many in the Christian Right as a theopolitical issue. Christian Zionists understand Israel to be the most important issue theologically and politically. They focus their lobbying efforts to accomplish politically what they are obligated to do theologically.

Scholarly work on the influence of religious movements on foreign policy formation is seriously lacking. Jonathan Fox's work seeks to determine why religion is overlooked by some academics as a major influence on international relations, and to illuminate those influences which are often overlooked. While Fox acknowledges religion is only one factor among a complex milieu of factors that can influence international political events, he argues that more scholarship is necessary to illuminate the effect religion has independently of other factors. In this work, Fox identifies three a priori premises of social science inquiry, which he considers to be fallacies, which have prevented scholars and policy makers from adequately understanding the role religion plays in international relations.

Fox holds that the primary reason religion is overlooked in the study of international relations is the rejection of religion by social scientists in an effort to provide rational expectations and guidelines for human behavior. He highlights the legacy of the enlightenment tradition, which believed reason and rationality would replace the authority of religious traditions and beliefs. Scholars including Voltaire, Comte, Durkheim, Weber, and Marx all concluded that "religion was a declining force in

---


the world...that would eventually disappear." That Enlightenment tradition, he argues, extends into the twentieth century. When political science shifted from historicizing political events to theorizing and predicting political behavior, political scientists erroneously "believed that modernization would reduce the political significance of primordial phenomena [including] ethnicity and religion," international relations theorists mistakenly assumed that "the era in which religion caused war was over.""35

His second argument holds that social scientists in general, and international relations scholars specifically, operate from the presupposition of a trend toward secularization in society, and this false presupposition has missed the reality that modernization has actually lead to a resurgence of religion and religiosity, especially in the 'less developed world'. Fox accepts the argument that the processes of modernization has left individuals feeling "alienated, disoriented, and dislocated," and therefore have been left "more open to the overtures of religious movements."36 However, he emphasizes that fundamentalist movements do not completely reject the trappings of modernization. He highlights the reality that these movements use modern organizational, communications, and propaganda techniques along with political action. This capitalization on the products of modernity has therefore allowed fundamentalist movements to come into more direct conflict with secular society at large. He goes on to argue that most social scientists operate from a classical liberalist paradigm where the state and religion are relegated to separate spheres. This is an egregious mistake in Fox's view because it fails to acknowledge the fact that much of the world never experienced

34 Ibid, 54.
36 Ibid, 56.
this particular value inculcation. In essence, political scientists and international relations theorists are looking at the world through the wrong lens.

The third major misconception Fox seeks to debunk rests in the desire of social scientists to engage in quantitative analysis. He highlights that these scientists are often criticized for excluding variables from their analysis that are difficult to measure. The difficulty in measuring religion as a quantitative variable, in this view, from a lack of qualitative scholastic research that would allow for a proper ‘operationalizing’ of religion as a variable, and the impossibility of ‘measuring’ religious beliefs as motives for political action.

Fox does identify three ways in which religion can be seen to influence international politics. The first way is in the religious view and beliefs of policy makers and their constituents. The second is that religion can provide legitimacy in supporting or critiquing governmental actions and policies domestically and abroad. The third rests in the reality that many religious conflicts and phenomena proliferate into international issues.\(^37\) If one accepts Fox’s assessments of how religion influences international political phenomena, it becomes clear that the role religious groups play in shaping U.S. policy is in need of greater analysis. Is a fundamentalist movement at work in the U.S. policy formation system, and what characterizes if it is?

**Breaching the Gap**

**Bringing Religion Back In**

Realist analysis may arguably be the most appropriate theory method for understanding the international environment and the primacy of the state in the international system. However, it misses the importance of domestic determinants in how

\(^{37}\) Ibid, 59.
the state develops its policies. Mearsheimer and Walt provide a clear exemplification of the theoretical space interest groups occupy in the explanation of domestic policy determinants. What they miss is the value of an ideological framing of political action in mobilizing the population to action. Moreover, their work is premised on the assumption of apathy on the part of the population in terms of the extension of pro-Israel policy. They miss the reality of pro-Israel opinion bias among the Christian Right, which is likely caused by the Christian Zionists' ability to shape the public discourse. This project aims at illustrating that point. How does the Christian Zionist movement mobilize the U.S. public from being generally but quiescently supportive of Israel, to a place of agency aimed at influencing policy formation?

In the work, "Religious Fundamentalisms and Global Conflict", Scott Appleby analyzes the trend towards fundamentalist movements, and argues that fundamentalism is characterized by a desire to connect with spiritual roots, it capitalizes on the concept of minority status by calling for return to "traditional values" from the fringe. Appleby rejects the notion that fundamentalisms are either technically new religious movements or orthodox, conservative or traditional expressions of religious faith. Rather, he sees them as new approaches to existing religious traditions, that center on the concept of revivalism. In discussing the Christian Right in American politics, Appleby emphasizes the culture war concept that stems from an assault on traditional American values by Liberal progressivism. The Christian Right is said to emphasize the negatives of modern society and place contemporary dynamics in a false dyad with a romanticized notion of America's religious (Christian) past.

Conclusion

This chapter provides an outline of the existing research on realist understandings of pro-Israel U.S. policy and the influence of interest groups on policy construction. It also, highlights the gap in that literature that comes from realist dismissals of the role religious ideology can play in international relations. It is this space that this thesis seeks to fill. The following chapters show that in mobilizing as an interest group, Christian Zionists are able to move the pro-Israel public from apathy through a specific process. First, they frame their ideological project as a political project. Second, they construct a community of believers in that project, from a population who possesses a pro-Israel opinion bias. Third, they consistently rearticulate their ideological project’s political frame while they simultaneously create a spirit of community among the members. Finally, they incorporate their community of believers in the ground work of their ideological project’s political action, making movement members into political actors.

The following chapter will take up a key issue in Mearsheimer and Walt’s argument that the Israel-Palestinian issue is one to which American opinion is indifferent. The data examined in this chapter illustrates the existing pro-Israel skew of American public opinion. Mearsheimer and Walt recognize this skew, but they attribute it to the Lobby’s capacity to shape public discourse on Israel. Their argument underestimates the endemic nature of this opinion among Americans, and wrongly attributes to interest group influence what emerges from ideology.
CHAPTER II

PREACHING TO THE CHOIR

Why do Americans tend to support Israel?

For decades, various U.S. administrations have sought to use the international influence of the U.S. as the source of a peaceful resolution between Israel and the other parties at conflict. While the U.S. has tried to maintain the image of an ‘honest broker’ in these peace efforts, criticism has emerged that much of the failures of these attempted peace efforts are attributable to the pro-Israel posture of U.S. foreign policy. A large body of scholarly research has shown that a pro-Israel posture of U.S. foreign policy can be discerned in the high amounts of economic and military aid to Israel, and the use of vetoes in the U.N. Security Council to prevent the passage of resolutions critical of Israel.

Why is U.S. foreign policy pro-Israel?

Mearsheimer and Walt argue that the interests promoted by the Lobby are not just opposed to the national interest, they also run contrary to the national sentiment. “Other special-interest groups have managed to skew U.S. foreign policy in directions they favored, but no lobby has managed to divert U.S. foreign policy as far from what the American national interest would otherwise suggest...” They assert that “special-interest groups enjoy disproportionate power when they are committed to a particular issue and the bulk of the population is indifferent.” They argue that this is specifically

39 Mearsheimer and Walt, the Israel Lobby, 63.
40 Ibid, 140.
applicable in foreign policy, because the issues are generally ones on which public opinion is not engaged. "Policy makers will tend to accommodate those who care about the issue in question, even if their numbers are small, confident that the rest of the population will not penalize them." They assume this general sense of apathy is present in American opinions on Israel and its conflict with the Palestinians. This particular assumption explaining the power of the pro-Israel special interest groups seems incorrect when examining American public opinion data. Figure 1 illustrates that American public opinion tends to favor Israel, especially among individuals who self identify as born again. In this light, the influence of the Lobby seems to come from a significant element of the population that agrees with their aims, rather than coming from the Lobby's concern for an issue on which Americans are generally unconcerned.

![American Opinions on Israel](image)

Figure 1

---

41 Ibid.
If it is accurate to assume that American public opinion is generally pro-Israel, the question remains: What causes public opinion to be pro-Israel? To answer this question, four possible sources of pro-Israel sentiments are examined: religious identity, religiosity, and political party affiliation. The first explanatory theory argues that religious identity determines an individual’s level of support for Israel, and produces two hypotheses. The argument that religious identity determines the level of an individual’s support for Israel is the basis for much research examining the relationship of the Jewish Diaspora to the state of Israel. As Eizenstat shows, American Jews have a ‘particular interest’ in foreign policy as it relates to the Middle East. The sense of communal obligation engendered by Zionist ideology was emphasized by the Israeli government. Eizenstat notes, “[Israel’s] first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion...stressed the need for [American Jews] to provide economic, political, and moral support for the fledgling Jewish state...Israeli governments expected unquestioning loyalty and full support from American Jewry...” 

With a firm relationship between Zionist ideology and support for Israel among American Jews, the first hypothesis can be constructed. **H1: Jewish Americans will have a higher level of support Israel than non-Jews.**

The possible influence of religious identity on level of support for Israel extends beyond Jewish identity, and provides the second hypothesis. Christian identity also influences levels of support for Israel, specifically among Christians who identify as

---

42 Eizenstat, “Loving Israel, Warts and All,” 90. The reality of such, ‘unquestioning’ support for Israel is not accurate. As noted earlier, there is an active and relatively influential movement in the Jewish Left that sees pro-Israel policy as being opposed to what the Lobby strives to create. Favorability ratings of Israeli policy regarding settlements and security are steadily declining among Diaspora and Israeli Jews. Contributions to ‘traditional’ Zionist organizations are down and donations to NGOs and aid programs continue to rise. Voices from the Jewish Left have struggled unflaggingly to expose what they see as a bias in Media sources that skew reporting in favor of Israeli policies they find reprehensible. But, again, the shift in public opinion has not manifested any change in the project of Jewish organizational elements of the Lobby, or in the U.S.’s pro-Israel policy regime.
‘Born Again,’ and are classifiable as Christian Zionists. The importance of ‘Born Again’ identity in terms of support for Israel can be found in the ideology of Christian Zionism. If this relationship is significant, one can expect to see ‘Born Again’ identity as influencing support for Israel.

**H2: Born Again Christians will have a higher level of Support for Israel than non-Born Again Christians.**

The second explanatory theory examines the impact of an individual’s level of religiosity on their support for Israel. This theory also relies on the ideological foundations of Zionism and Christian Zionism, but argues that the individual’s level of commitment to his/her religion predicts their level of support for Israel. This theory suggests that elite cues from religious leaders have the power to cause shifts in the political opinions of their parishioners. This theory is one of the principle arguments of Mearsheimer and Walt, in discussing the power of the Israel Lobby, and is the primary research question of Jeremy Mayer in his article. They assert that the ability of religious leaders to affect changes in public opinion increases as church attendance increases. If the argument of Mearsheimer and Walt and the findings of Mayer are correct, higher levels of religiosity will coincide with higher levels of support for Israel.

**H3: As levels of religiosity increase, support for Israel will also increase.**

The third explanatory theory examines the relationship between political party affiliation and support for Israel. Haija argues that Christian Zionists constitute the largest voting block in the Republican Party. The power of Christian Zionists is increased, according to Mearsheimer and Walt, because of their alliance with the Neo-

---

43 Mayer, “Christian Fundamentalist and Public Opinion Toward the Middle East.”
Conservative movement within the Republican Party. The Neo-Conservative movement is committed to the goals of regional hegemony for Israel, and the development of democratic states in the Middle East, which is presently composed of regimes generally hostile to both the United States and Israel. The neo-Conservatives view the national interest as being furthered by a pro-Israel policy. If this theory is correct Republican Party membership will serve as a predictor of higher levels of support for Israel. H4: Republicans will have a higher level of support for Israel than non-Republicans.

Testing the Theories:

This chapter examines these explanatory theories through OLS multivariate regression of public opinion and demographic information. The data set used for this analysis is the ABC News/Washington Post Poll, April 2002 (ICPSR 3433).45 The cases of the data set are 1250 individual telephone surveys. The survey aims at producing a sample representative of the American population. Households for inquiry in the survey were selected using random-digit dialing. To maintain the random nature of the survey, individual respondents were selected using the “most recent birthday” sampling method. The universe of the study is persons aged 18 years of age or older, residing within the contiguous 48 United States.

Variable Definition and Measurement:

Dependent Variable:

Before conducting statistical analysis to determine the source of American support for Israel, it is necessary to properly identify the variables that correspond to the explanatory theories, and define key terms. The dependent variable, or object of analysis,

in this study is *Support for Israel*. Defining and measuring levels of support is extremely difficult to do. What qualifies as support? Since this study does not look at material support in the form of financial donations, or votes for specific candidates. *Support for Israel* in this study, as in the ABC Poll, is defined as the placing of responsibility for the outbreak of violence with the Palestinians. It is measured on a range of 1 to 5. The value 1 indicates the respondent believes Israel is most responsible for violence, 2 indicates Israel is somewhat responsible, 3 indicates both sides are equally responsible, 4 indicates the Palestinians are somewhat responsible, and 5 indicates Palestinians are most responsible for violence.

![Histogram of Support for Israel](image)

As noted earlier, Americans are overwhelmingly supportive of Israel with 58.7 percent of respondents placing the responsibility for violence on the Palestinians. The histogram in Figure 2, illustrates how the responses fit against a normal curve. In
analysis of Support for Israel, an arithmetic mean of 3.6384 is found, indicating average support for Israel is just above the median value of 3. The graph shows the data is unimodal, with a clear positive skew. The mode of the data is 5, and falls beyond one standard deviation of the mean. This might be problematic in using the mean for analysis. However, most of the data points fall within 1 standard deviation of the mean, indicating the mean is the appropriate measure of central tendency, and associated problems would therefore be minimal.

Figure 3

**Difference in Support for Israel Between Non-Jews and Jews**

*Independent Variables:*

This study seeks to determine the relationship between five independent variables and Support for Israel. The first independent variable of this inquiry is Jewish identity, and will test the first explanatory theory. For the purposes of this study, Jewish-ness is defined as respondents who identified themselves as Jewish when asked about their religious identity. Non-Jews are coded with the value 0, in order to serve as the dummy variable, and Jews are coded as 1. Jews composed only 1.7% of the sample, 21
respondents out of 1207. Figure 3 illustrates the mean difference in Support for Israel between non-Jews and Jews. Non-Jews had a mean level of Support for Israel at 3.6236, while Jews had a mean level of Support for Israel at 4.3810. Based on this graph, there seems to be a clear positive relationship between this independent variable and the dependent variable. In order to determine if this relationship is significant, it is necessary to conduct a Difference of Means Test, to determine significance.

For this independent variable, it is necessary to conduct an Independent Samples T-Test, because this analysis examines whether or not the mean levels of Support for Israel between non-Jews and Jews differ significantly. In conducting the Independent Samples T-Test, one must look first at the output for the Levene's Test for Equality of Variances, to determine whether or not the variances of Support for Israel between non-Jews and Jews are distributed equally. Levene's test produces an F score of 10.267 which is significant at the .001. Because Levene's test produced a significance score below the .05 value, one must assume that the variances for the two groups are not equal.

Given that equal variances between non-Jews and Jews are not assumed, the second line of the Independent Samples T-Test produces a t-score of -4.556, the absolute value of which is well above the 1.96 critical value necessary for significance on a two tailed test, and is significant at the .001 level. This indicates that mean difference (-.75738) between the two groups is significant, and would only be attributable to chance or error less than 1 time out of 1000. The hypothesis for this variable holds that: Jewish Americans will have higher levels of Support for Israel than non-Jews.

46 This value mirrors the American Jewish population as reported in the CIA World Fact Book, 2008 edition. The question is flawed however, as there may be a relationship between Jews who don't understand the Jewish identity to necessarily be a religious identity and those Jews who would be less supportive of Israel (or would reject the premise of such classification altogether) as defined by the scope of this analysis.
The second independent variable of this study is the respondent’s identity as a ‘Born Again’ Christian. This variable also operates to test the first explanatory hypothesis. For the purposes of this study, Born Again Christians is defined as those respondents who identified as being part of a Protestant Christian denomination that identifies as Born Again. Non-Born Again Christians are coded as 0, to serve as the dummy variable, and Born Again Christians are coded as 1.

![Percentage of Christian Respondents who identify as "Born Again"

Figure 4

Figure 4 shows that Born Again Christians constitute a large percentage of all Christians included in the analysis, 33.7%, 407 cases out of a total of 1207. Figure 5, on the following page, shows the differences of mean Support for Israel between non-Born Again Christian and Born-Again Christians. Non-Born Again Christians had a mean support level of 3.4554, while Born Again Christians had a mean support level of 3.9918. Based on the mean differences illustrated in the graph, a clear positive
relationship is suggested. In order to determine whether the difference of means between Non-Born Again Christians and Born Again Christians is significant, it is again necessary to conduct an Independent Samples Means Test.

Again, the Independent Samples Means Test is used because this study is interested in determining the significance of the differences in means of Support between two groups, non-Born Again Christians and Born Again Christians. In analyzing the output for this significance test, researchers must look first to the output for the Levene's Test for Equality of Variances. The test produces an F score of 37.288, which is significant at the .001 level. Because the significance is less than .05, equal variances between the two groups are not assumed. Given that equal variances are not assumed, the second line of SPSS output for the Independent Samples Means Test produces a t-score of -7.004, which is well above the 1.96 critical value for a two-tailed test, and is
significant at the .001 alpha level. This indicates that the difference of means between the two groups, -.53636, is significant and that difference would be due to chance or error less than 1 time out of 1000. The hypothesis for this variable holds that: **Born Again Christians will have a higher level of Support for Israel than non-Born Again Christians.**

This is extremely important for the project of this study because it is from Born Again Christians that the Christian Zionist movement constructs its community of believers. Born Again Christians are by nature evangelical Protestants. The concept of ‘born again’ comes out of an Evangelical hermeneutic of scriptural interpretation. The Christian Right is composed of Born Again Evangelicals. It is the scriptural hermeneutic that offers the access point by which the Christian Zionist movement increases its membership.

![Religiosity's Affect on Support for Israel](image)

**Religiosity's Affect on Support for Israel**

Figure 6
The third independent variable for this study is Religiosity, and tests the second explanatory theory. For the purposes of this study, religiosity is defined as frequency of religious service attendance.\textsuperscript{47} As this data is interval, values for religiosity are coded on a range of 0-3. A value of 0 indicates the respondent never attends religious services, and therefore has no religiosity. The value 1 represents individuals who attend services less than twice per month, 2 represents individuals who attend services at least twice per month, and 3 represents individuals who attend services at least once a week, 3 classifies as highly religious. This variable has an N of 1193 valid cases. The mean for this variable is 1.8312, which indicates that Christian Americans, on average, are fairly religious.

Figure 6, on the proceeding page, is a scatter plot for religiosity with a line of best fit. The regression line produced suggests a positive relationship between religiosity and Support for Israel. With a causal relationship suggested in the graph, it is necessary to conduct a means test to determine the variable’s significance. Because this variable looks at the mean value of one variable, it is necessary to use a One-Sample Means Test to see if the mean value for religiosity differs significantly from a hypothetical/test value. The test value of this analysis is 0, this will allows for the determination of whether or not the mean of religiosity differs significantly from value indicating a respondent is non-religious. The SPSS output for the One-Sample Means Test on religiosity generates a t-score of 65.171, well above the 1.96 critical value of a two-tailed test, and is significant

\textsuperscript{47} Defining religiosity as simply religious service attendance is a gross over-simplification of what constitutes religiosity. A more complete picture of religiosity would include frequency of prayer, scripture reading, listening and/or watching religious programming, religious group affiliations, attendance at religious instruction, and amounts of financial contributions to religious causes. This variable illustrates the problems Fox alludes to, which emerge for social scientists when empirical modes of analysis are applied to behaviors, beliefs, and opinions that are not necessarily quantifiable.
at the .001 alpha level. This indicates that the mean of American religiosity is significantly different from 0 or non-religiosity, and that difference would be due to chance or error less than 1 time out of 1000. The hypothesis for this variable holds that: 

*As religiosity increases, Support for Israel will also increase.*

The fourth independent variable of this study is *political party affiliation*, specifically *Republican Party affiliation*, and tests the third explanatory theory. This analysis examines the impact of *Republican Party affiliation* on the respondent’s level of support for Israel. For this study, Republicans are defined as respondents who indicated their party identification as being Republican. Republicans constituted 32.6% of respondents, with an N of 368 out of 1128. Republicans are coded with the value 1, while Democrats and Independents are coded with the value 0. Figure 7, shows percentage of respondents grouped by party identification on the DV.

![Differences in Support for Israel by Party Affiliation](image-url)

**Figure 7**
Figure 8 illustrates the difference in mean level of support between non-Republicans and Republicans. A clear positive relationship is suggested between Republican Party membership and support for Israel. It is then necessary to conduct an Independent Means Test to determine whether the difference between the groups non-Republicans and Republican is significant.

![Difference in Support for Israel Among Non-Republicans and Republicans](image)

In analyzing the Independent Samples Means Test, the first step is to examine the output for the Levene’s Test of Equality of Variances. The test generates an F score of 5.571 with a significance score of .018. Because this significance score is below the .05 level, equal variances between Republicans and non-Republicans should not be assumed. Given that equal variances for the two groups are not assumed, the significance test’s second line of output generates a t-score of -3.831, which has an absolute value greater than the 1.96 critical value for a two-tailed test, and is significant at the .001 level. This indicates that the mean difference of -.31878 is significant, and the difference observed
between Republicans and non-Republicans would be the result of chance or error less than 1 time out of 1000. The hypothesis for this variable holds that: **Republicans will have a higher level of Support for Israel than non-Republicans.**

With a clear understanding of the significance of variables, it is now necessary to conduct an OLS Multivariate Regression, to determine whether knowledge of these four IVs taken together allows for predictions on the DV, and how much of the variance on the DV can be explained by these IVs taken together.

**OLS Regression:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>3.509</td>
<td>3.352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.170)</td>
<td>(.055)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>1.029***</td>
<td>.980***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.283)</td>
<td>(.281)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born Again</td>
<td>.560***</td>
<td>.572***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.088)</td>
<td>(.083)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religiosity</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.043)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>.276***</td>
<td>.272***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.084)</td>
<td>(.083)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1003</td>
<td>1011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R Squared</td>
<td>.063</td>
<td>.063</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An F test indicated that these models were significant at the .001 level. Coefficients are unstandardized, with standard errors in parentheses.

*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001
**Interpretation:**

**MODEL I:**

The OLS Regression indicates that the model is significant as a predictor of the dependent variable, Support for Israel. The model includes the IVs: Jewish, Born Again, Religiosity, and Republican. The ANOVA analysis generates an F score of 14.485, which is significant at the .001 alpha level. Therefore, the model is significant. This indicates that knowledge of the IVs taken together, will allow for accurate prediction of the DV, with error accounting for less than 5 occurrences out of 100. The Adjusted R Square for the model is .063, which indicates that the model can explain 6.3% of the variance on Support for Israel. Model 1 produces a positive regression line, calculated as: 

\[
\text{Support for Israel} = 3.509 + 1.029 \text{ (Jewish)} + .560 \text{ (Born Again)} + .019 \text{ (Religiosity)} + .276 \text{ (Republican)} + \text{error.}
\]

**MODEL II:**

The OLS Regression indicates that this model is a significant predictor of the dependent variable, support for Israel. The model includes the IVs: Jewish, Born Again, and Republican. The ANOVA analysis indicated that an F score of 23.464 was generated, which is significant at the .001 alpha level. Therefore, this model is significant. This means that knowledge of these three IVs taken together, allows for prediction of the DV support for Israel, and that those predictions would be attributable to chance or error less than 1 time out of 1000. The model generated an Adjusted R Square of .063, which indicates it explains 6.3% of the variance in the DV, support for Israel. The model produces a positive regression line, calculated as: 

\[
\text{Support for Israel} = 3.352 + .980 \text{ (Jewish)} + .572 \text{ (Born Again)} + .272 \text{ (Republican)} + \text{error.}
\]
Jews scored .980 greater than non-Jews, holding all other independent variables constant. The magnitude of this variable is somewhat high given Jewish Identity accounts for more than 1/4 of the range of Support for Israel. However, Jews accounted for only 1.87% of total respondents and were concentrated in the top 2% of cases. The ability of this religious identity group to skew the results is limited. The variable generated a t-score of 3.489, and is significant at the .001 alpha level.

Born Again Christians scored .572 greater than non-Born Again Christians, holding all other independent variables constant. This variable has a fairly high magnitude, considering the range of value range of 4 on the DV and the high number of individuals in the sample and the population who classify as Born Again. The IV generated a t-score of 6.890, well above the 1.96 critical value, and is significant at the .001 alpha level.

Republicans scored .272 more than non-Republicans, holding all other independent variables constant. The magnitude of this IV is moderate at best. It accounts for a minimal amount of change in the range of 4 on the dependent variable, despite the fact that 1/3 of respondents identify as Republicans. The IV generated a t-score of 3.294, well above the 1.96 critical value level for a two-tailed test, and is significant at the .001 alpha level.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this analysis some generalizations can be made. First, American public opinion is overwhelmingly pro-Israel. Second, based on the OLS regression, the most significant factors that allow researchers to predict an individual’s level of support for Israel are their identity as a Jewish American or a Born Again
Christian. Researchers who examine the relationship between American Jews and Israel, and so-called Christian Zionists and Israel, seem to have their research validated by such analysis. For researchers like Mearsheimer and Walt, who look at the power of interest groups in shaping U.S. policy in regards to Israel, this study raises a question of temporal antecedence. Are these interest groups powerful because they can influence public opinion, or are they powerful because their advocacy on the issue mirrors the sentiment of the population? The data seems to suggest a clear pro-Israel bias that was in operation prior to the advent of Christian Zionist lobbying, but not the foundation of its ideological premise. In this sense, what we may see from the Christian Zionist lobby in terms of attempts to shape public discourse is a situation where the Reverends are essentially “preaching to the choir.” The following chapter will examine the ideology of Christian Zionism and the manner in which this ideology is framed as a political project. In doing so, it will become clear how this process of “preaching to the choir” operates to increase movement efforts on behalf of Israel by mobilizing the community of believers into action.
CHAPTER III

THE IDEOLOGICAL PROJECT

Only in America

America has always been anomalous when considering the impact of religion on the political process and the elites elected to lead it. Alexis de Tocqueville in "Democracy in America", is clear in illustrating the defining role religion plays in solidifying American social structure. Moreover, religious sensibilities played major roles in American public policy throughout U.S. history. Both sides of the abolition debate were framed in religious ideology. Federal conflicts with American Indians, the Temperance Movement, and much American internationalism and U.S. foreign policy were also reflective of the religious nature of American society. However, the post-War period characterized by extreme shifts in the political landscape and in American society at large, was also characterized by what some perceived as a shift toward secularization. This shift characterized by the feminist movements, drug culture, anti-establishment liberalism, the legalization of abortion, and political efforts to secularize the public sphere created the political environment necessary for the emergence of a so-called Christian Fundamentalist movement and its political wing, the Christian Right. The emergence of this movement was a boon for U.S. anti-communist policies, because the communist threat was understood and articulated by this movement to be synonymous with the threat of atheistic-secularism.

---

This Christian fundamentalist movement is characterized by its broad coalition, containing various religious branches with differing interpretations of Christian scripture and history. Christian fundamentalism is not monolithic, and it is in the nuances of beliefs that we find Christian Zionists as a specific group characterized by those beliefs that drive their perceptions of and activism for Israel and that separates them from others within those coalitions. It is therefore inappropriate to classify Christian fundamentalists as Christian Zionists, while it is correct to classify Christian Zionists as a type of Christian fundamentalists. This specificity is important to note in examining the construction of the Christian Zionist community of believers. As was previously shown, an individual’s identity as a Born Again Christian is significant as a predictor of the respondent’s support for Israel. The Evangelicals who compose the Christian Right are classifiable as Born Again Christians in the previous chapter. It is from this group of Evangelical Christian fundamentalists that Christian Zionists compose their community of believers, because of the significance their ideological project would hold in the ideology of that type of fundamentalism.

**How can a Christian be a Zionist?**

The driving theory of Christian Zionism is dramatically different from classical Zionist theory. According to Gelvin, Zionism is, “broadly defined as Jewish nationalism... [which asserts] Jews have the same right to self-determination as other peoples.” This is most certainly true, but Zionism is more than simple nationalism. For Gelvin, nationalism is a political movement that emphasizes inclusion in an expanded political community, that is bound by shared experience and distinguishing traits.

---

50 Ibid.
However, Zionism is more than simple nationalism. For the purposes of this argument, classical Zionist theory is broken into two divergent schools, *secular Zionism* and *religious Zionism*. This classification is problematic as Zionist theory is extremely diverse with significant overlap clearly present in any attempt to classify the theory as purely religious or purely political. What this study typifies as *secular Zionism* is best exemplified the Zionist theory articulated by Shlomo Avineri in *The Makings of Modern Zionism*. In this work Avineri traces the intellectual genealogy of Zionist theory through the writings of European Jewish scholars struggling to define themselves in the post-Enlightenment worldview.

Avineri argues that Zionism is a product of intellectual liberalism that emerged in the wake of the French Revolution, along with the nationalist and socialist movements of the latter nineteenth century. The work shows how Jewish intellectuals sought to deal with the liberation classical liberalism offered to Jewish citizens with the emergence of the notion of equality among individuals and the fear and exclusion nationalist ideologies expressed towards Jewish people who refused to blend within the national identity, due in large part to the concept of *separateness* and *chosen-ness* central to rabbinical Jewish identity. Socialism was also problematic because of the anti-religious character that was perceived as central to Leninist ideology. Zionism in this view is essentially a political phenomenon seeking to provide the freedom guaranteed by liberal society and the communal identity guaranteed by nationalism, both of which had failed to truly extend to Jewish people, especially the Jewish underclass which was not afforded the opportunities available to their cosmopolitan counterparts. A Jewish homeland in Palestine is not the

---

central focus of this Zionism, but rather the principles of self-determination, self-identification, and political agency. This ideology is remarkably different from “religious Zionism”, which is much more closely tied to the land in Palestine.

Religious Zionism is best exemplified in the work of the late Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg in his work, *The Zionist Idea*\(^5\). While Hertzberg’s work acknowledges the influence of the Emancipation of Jews following the French Revolution, the advent of classical liberalism, along with the nationalist and socialist movements of the nineteenth century in the construction of Zionist ideology, Hertzberg pays specific attention to the role messianism played in the formation of Zionist ideology both as a response to traditional messianism, and an expression of a new messianism. With its emphasis on the historical homeland, and the religious concepts of the return, the end of exile, and the coming End of Days, Hertzberg highlights how Zionism emerged as a type of secular messianism, as opposed to the nationalism Gelvin presents.

While Zionism, like other forms of nationalism, would incorporate a historical identity located in a specific geography, with a shared cultural history, it was the importance of religious identity and the cultural value of Judaism which sets Zionism apart from secular nationalisms.\(^5\) Hertzberg notes that this secular nationalism (read secular Zionism) moved the expectation of redemption away from the traditional understanding of messianism as a “confrontation with G-d...to a confrontation with the nations.” Hertzberg shows that in framing Zionist ideology as a new secular messianism, there was significant contention with traditional messianism and religious notions of

---


53 While secular forms of Zionism have always been significant, the importance of Jewish religious ideology in the construction of Zionist ideology, makes the Zionist nationalism similar to other religious nationalisms.
Jewish self-understanding. That is to say concepts like *chosenness* and *separateness* had to be reconciled with the nationalistic impulse to be one nationalized people in a collection of liberal nations. It is from the conflict between the two types of messianism, and the conflict between traditional self-definitions as Jews, and the Zionist self-definition as one nation among many, that Hertzberg presents the theoretical foundations of religious Zionist ideology.

It is important to note that Zionist ideology, both political and religious, exist on spectrums ranging from far left to far right. By the founding of the state of Israel, Zionism as an ideology is less concerned with concepts like agency and self-determination, and much more concerned with the security the State of Israel can offer to its Jewish citizens. Both secular and religious Zionists recognize a need for a Jewish state given the history of anti-Semitism and political violence that has characterized Jewish encounters with gentile society as early as the Babylonian exile. This ideology morphs into political action, which is characterized by expansionist Israeli policies, including militaristic hegemony over the Occupied Palestinian Territories, settlement founding within the OPTs, the construction of the Separation Wall beyond the 1967 borders creating a de facto land annexation within the OPTs, and Israeli control of greater Jerusalem in its entirety, not because of the religious significance of the space but because of the need to ensure the protection of Israeli citizens.

Religious Zionism also exists in a spectrum, containing broad diversity of interpretations of the modern state of Israel. This diversity is shown in Aviezer Ravitsky’s work, *Messianism, Zionism, and Jewish Religious Radicalism*. He highlights

---

leftist religious radicalism that ranges from radical anti-Zionism of Ultra-Orthodox Jews who reject the modern state because of its secular origins, to the 'redemption' oriented messianic movement articulated by Rabbi Abraham Kook and the Gush Emunim movement, who emphasized that the creation of a modern political state would be a divinely ordained event, bring about the advent of Messiah to redeem the land and the Jewish people, and lead to the forgiveness of sins that had caused the period of exile. Religious Zionism also has a far right, a radical religious element that sees it as a spiritual right and obligation of Jews to occupy all of the territory held in the biblical period. They recognize their right, and spiritual obligation to use violence to forcibly occupy the territory and redeem it from gentile possession through removal or eradication.

Regardless of the theoretical construction of Zionism, the ideology is consistent in that it emphasizes the global Jewish community as part of the nation of Israel. Its socialist elements impart a sense of duty within the community to provide money to the Zionist effort and promote a state that allows for Jewish agency and self-determination. It is important to remember that neither Avineri’s political Zionism, nor Hertzberg’s secular messianism inherent in Zionism emphasized the construction of a Zionist state in the territory of Palestine. That particular course of action was emphasized the Zionism of Theodore Herzl, which combined the political and messianic concepts of Zionism and merged them with an ideological attachment to the geography of Palestine and called upon the Jewish community to increase settlement of the land, through the 'redemption' of the Jewish homeland. For Herzl, a Jewish state is necessary because of the plight of Jews in the Diaspora, who were subject to institutional anti-Semitism. Herzl understood Jewish identity to be a national identity, requiring a nationalist enterprise to meet the
needs of the Jewish people. He acknowledges religious and social identities to matter, but only in terms of broader nationality. Zionism in this form is most importantly about agency, but a close second is the historical homeland in Palestine. In Herzl’s view, it was the Zionist obligation of all Jews to emigrate to Israel as, “a Jew is better, richer, fuller, and ultimately more secure in Israel than anywhere else.”

Christian Zionism has little to do with classical Jewish Zionism; however, it is politically aligned with the far-Right of both streams of Zionist thought. Christian Zionism is a uniquely Christian invention, that is based in a specific understanding of sacred time called dispensationalism, a unique biblical hermeneutic that emphasizes the importance of Bible prophecy, and that places the State of Israel in a teleology that arguably has as much more to do with Christianity than it does with Judaism.

What makes a Christian Zionist?

Unlike many other observers, I blame much of the Middle East conflict, not on misunderstandings, not on a failure to communicate, not on an inability to compromise, but on evil – pure and simple. And evil, I believe, can only be overcome with G-d’s love and blessing, and it can only be resisted by man through prayer and force.

Joseph Farah, Pray for the Peace of Israel

Christian Zionism exists as a form of Protestant Christian fundamentalism, which grew out of the Evangelical Great Awakening of the 19th Century. While both forms of fundamentalism are a byproduct of the Evangelical movement, Christian Zionist theology is its own unique strand, with theological roots extending much further. Marc Schoeni provides a clear definition of the philosophy of Christian Zionism and its historical and theological roots. He suggests that the specific type of theology, which characterizes Christian Zionism, emerged prior to the development of modern Jewish Zionism. He

---

55 Eizenstat, “Loving Israel, Warts and All,” 90.
57 Ibid, 3.
traces the theological roots of Christian Zionism through the evangelical minister John Nelson Darby, and highlights the development of this theological position in the latter 19th century.

Schoeni holds that what is classified as Christian Zionism is best understood as a product of a specific type of Protestantism, and that it rests on specific beliefs about the nature of the Bible and the validity of biblical interpretation. He classifies Protestantism into three categories: classical, spiritual/enthusiastic, and accommodated. Classical Protestantism is best understood as the theology of the ‘magisterial’ Reformers, and is theologically understood as composed of the two reform schools, Lutheran and Calvinist. Classical Protestant theology is characterized by its evangelical drive, confirmation of the validity of divine revelation, and what he terms the Scripture principal. According to the Scripture principle,

"Scripture is not valued in and of itself, but inasmuch as it is the G-d-chosen vehicle of the Gospel. The constant return to Scripture is the means by which we receive this message ever anew from without, rather than reading it off our own experiences or insights. But the Bible exists for the sake of Christ, not Christ for the sake of the Bible. The authority of the Scripture is secondary to that of G-d in Christ."

In the Spiritualist branch of Protestantism the role of the scripture is more prominent. He argues that this branch has a strongly developed Biblicism, the scriptural encounter is the one by which the individual encounters the divine and facilitates the spiritual conversion. This Biblicism is coupled with a complete rejection of external authority on spiritual matters, the personal encounter the reader experiences with the divine while engaging the text allows him to interpret the text as the divine intends. The interpretation is primary, and it occurs without any definitive theological oversight.

58 Ibid, 7.
In discussing accommodated Protestantism, Schoeni notes that this brand of religiosity emerged in response to the advent of modernity and that much of its character is shaped by democratic principles. He shows that Christian Zionism is not necessarily a product of accommodated Protestantism, as its theological support for Jewish Zionism is not necessarily a “Zionist” ideology as framed by various branches of classical Jewish Zionist theory.

Instead, he argues that Christian Zionism grew out of the Spiritualist type of Protestantism, and is a product of eschatological enthusiasm and Biblicism. He shows how the eschatological enthusiasm that characterizes Christian Zionism places its roots in the foundation of Christianity, citing the presence of the apocalyptic texts in the canon, and its presence throughout the life of the faith. He traces the resurgence of chialistic (millenarian) worldviews with the coming of the Crusades. These beliefs were articulated by Joachim of Fiore, and focused on three spiritual ages: that of the Father, the age of Christ, and the coming age of the Spirit, which would usher in the kingdom of G-d and Christ’s millennial reign.

In the 17th century, millenarianism split into two branches: postmillennialism and premillennialism. He states that postmillennialism was present among more moderate millennialists and is characterized by its view of continuity between the present age and the coming one. The coming age would come ‘without any dramatic end to history’ and would be characterized by spiritual revival and evangelism. He states that premillennialism is “pessimistic with regard to history and sees the institutional church...as beyond redemption.” This concern with millennialism is termed

\[59\] Ibid, 24.

\[60\] Ibid, 25.
dispensationalism. Dispensationalists believe that time is divinely ordained towards a specific teleology. In this worldview, the different periods are characterized by different relations between G-d and human beings. Christian Zionists accept dispensationalism, and regard the formation of the modern State of Israel as one of the key events in the final dispensation in which Christ will return to earth.

The Ideological Framing

Christian Zionism is foundationally a theopolitical ideology, whose adherents understand their theological origins to affect political purposes. It is characterized by the belief in the teleological need for a political Israel, composed of Jews, in the biblical geography of Ancient Israel, along with a religious community practicing traditional pre-rabbinic temple worship, in a restored temple, on the Temple Mount, in order for Jesus Christ to return and establish his kingdom on Earth. Christian Zionist political action is aimed at providing material, financial, and political support for the state of Israel, and for rightist Israeli policies aimed at expanding territorial hegemony for the state of Israel and complete sovereignty over Jerusalem. This political action is accomplished through lobbying activities by organized political action committees, cues from religious elites, the promotion of candidates who espouse a pro-Israel stance and direct financial assistance to rightist Zionist groups in the U.S. and in Israel and for increased settlement efforts in the OPTs.

Gary Burge examines the evolution of Christian Zionist attitudes and the relationship that has developed between the movement and the State of Israel. 61 Burge highlights that the movement is a dynamic philosophy that grew out of the Dispensationalist theology of the late nineteenth century. He defines Christian Zionism

61 Burge, “Christian Zionism, Evangelicals and Israel.”
as a movement which blends religion and politics, and interprets biblical faithfulness in
terms of fidelity to Israel’s future.

Burge identifies five beliefs that characterize Christian Zionist ideology that rest
on interpretations of G-d’s covenant with men, the role of the Church in G-d’s
teleological design, the principle of blessing Israel, the role of Bible prophecy, and the
role of the State of Israel in divine eschatology. Christian Zionist interpretations of the
divine covenants rest on the belief that the Abrahamic Covenant is eternal and
unconditional. Their belief places a primacy on the Covenant between Abraham and G-d
over the ‘New Covenant’ framed in the Christian interpretations of Jesus’ ministry,
crucifixion, and resurrection. The Christian Zionist interpretation conflicts with
traditional Christian theology by asserting that the Church does not replace Israel as
G-d’s primary instrument on Earth, nor have periods of so-called unfaithfulness of the
Jews terminated the land grant given to the Jews in the Abrahamic Covenant.62 The
second tenant of Christian Zionist belief emphasizes this point. To Christian Zionists the
Church and the New Covenant are essentially a supplemental addendum resulting from
Jewish unfaithfulness, but after the rapture of the faithful Israel and the Jews will again
be G-d’s primary agent in the world.

The third theological tenet of Christian Zionism rests on the promise in Gen
12.363, that G-d would bless those who bless Israel and curse those that curse Israel. In
the perspective of Christian Zionists this is a binding divine norm for Christians. They

63 The belief emerges from G-d’s call of Abram to leave Haran to a location to G-d would lead him to.
Genesis 12.1-3 NIV, "The Lord had said to Abram, ‘Leave your country, your people and your father’s
household and go to a land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will
make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses
you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”
interpret this verse as both a promise and as an obligation to engage in pro-Israel policy advocacy to ensure that they as a community of believers, and by proxy the U.S., benefit from G-d’s special relationship with the Jews. This ideology is the source of the Christian Zionist construction of the national interest. It is from this theological perspective that efforts to influence the direction of U.S. foreign policy on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict need to be understood. Efforts to raise capital investments, to influence congress through lobbying efforts, voter mobilization, and direct influence on the President all, in the view of Christian Zionists, are ways in which the Christian Zionist movement seek to ‘bless’ Israel.

The fourth tenant of Christian Zionist belief rests on the value of Bible Prophecy. This belief holds that certain Biblical texts are intended to be read as a roadmap to coming events. Christian Zionists reject mainstream Liberal Christian theology that argues that these prophetic texts refer to contemporary or immediately pending events at the time of their writing, or are theological beliefs meant to be accepted by second century Jewish and Christian communities. In this rejection, they also accept that there is a limited group of biblical scholars who possess the appropriate interpretive hermeneutic, therefore affirming a sense of authority and authenticity that is characteristic of fundamentalist ideology. This monopoly on orthodoxy provides serious influence and authority to those religious elites who provide proper prophetic interpretation, and critiques on political efforts and policy regarding Israel.

The final tenant rests in how Christian Zionists view Israel itself. For Christian Zionists, Israel is the key to the final dispensation and the return of Jesus Christ to usher in his millennial reign. They view the formation of the modern State of Israel as the
catalyst which sparks the teleological countdown expressed in Bible prophecy. They interpret the various political phenomena and conflicts that have followed the formation of the State of Israel in 1948, as signs by which believers can know they are in the final dispensation and the Last Days are pending. When the underpinning ideology and the ultimate aims of the movement are observed, it is clear that the efforts of the Christian Zionist lobby are classifiable as an ideological project.

It is important to note that the Christian Zionist movement also articulates an image of itself as a political movement and an interpretation of the national interest that is entirely political. The Rev. John Hagee, founder and executive director of Christians United for Israel (CUFI), one of the most prominent Christian Zionist lobby groups, has said that Christian Zionist activities in support of Israel has nothing to do with dispensationalist theology, but rather with the political and strategic interest that are shared between Israel and the U.S., specifically combating the threat of militant Islam, eliminating hostile Arab regimes, and the promotion of democratic value. However, the ‘proof’ is in the pudding. Analyses of Hagee’s sermons on both Israel and Bible prophecy interpret the present situation, the need for (American) Christian Activism in support of Israel, and strategic threats in terms of Bible prophecy and eschatology. Hagee does not preach on bible prophecy without discussing dispensationalist ideology in terms of Israel’s future and America’s responsibility.

This is the ideology at the heart of their project and the premise for their construction of the national interest. This is clearly expressed in Rev. Hagee’s speech to
the AIPAC Policy Conference in March, 2007. In this speech, Pastor Hagee articulates a firm, continuing commitment to the state of Israel by the Christian Zionist movement in America. He frames a picture of the contemporary political situation in the region as one in which the ‘whole world is against Israel,’ citing criticism from the U.N. European states, and American academes. Moreover, Hagee firmly critiques attempts by mainline churches to divest from Israel, and the writings of former President Jimmy Carter. He states that CUFI and other like-minded evangelicals have, ‘a deep-seated faith-based’ belief to love Israel, to speak up for Israel, to stand up for Israel, to pray for Israel, and to financially support Israel until Israel achieves a just and lasting peace. He enumerates some 50 million religious Americans who stand with Christian Zionists in support of Israel. In his speech, he argues there is a legitimate threat to Israel’s survival in the Islamic Republic of Iran and its President Ahmadinejad and states that the U.S. must take preventative measures to ensure that Iran does not attain nuclear weapons status. Of the peace process, Hagee states that, ‘the problem is the Arab rejection of Israel’s right to exist… [that] Israel has no partner for peace…[evidenced by] the blood thirsty embrace of a theocratic dictatorship that believes they have a mandate from G-d to kill Christians and Jews…[and] the failure of the moderates in the Arab and Muslim world stand up and rein in these Islamic extremists.’

---

65 Ibid.
66 Ibid.
Conclusion

The primary objective of this chapter is to illustrate the need for greater analysis of the role religious ideology plays in international relations. This is accomplished through examining the Christian Zionist movement as a case study. In this section the ideological roots of this movement are explored to illustrate its location in broader Christian fundamentalist ideology, and clearly distinguish the movement from the various schools of Jewish Zionist ideology. The previous chapter identified the pro-Israel of born again evangelicals. This chapter identifies such evangelicals as the pool of individuals from which the Christian Zionist community of believers is constructed. Moreover, analysis of Christian Zionist ideology and its origins supports the causal relationship theorized in the previous chapter. The following chapter examines how this pro-Israel bias is transformed into agency on Israel’s behalf, which is observable in the movement’s political efforts.
CHAPTER IV

THE ECONOMIC VALUE OF IDEOLOGY

_Ideological Rent_

Mearsheimer and Walt show that a major goal of the Lobby is the continuation of a special relationship between the U.S. and Israel, which is characterized in large part by economic subsidization of Israel. This subsidization comes from grants, loans, and defense contracts. This chapter builds on their analysis of this relationship, but analyses the motivations for the continuation of this relationship in terms of ideology. The first part looks at the main sources of Israel’s ideologically based funding in the U.S. government, Diaspora Jews. The second section looks exclusively as Christian Zionist fundraising and activities in support of Israel. It will show that Christian Zionist steadfast love and support for Israel is extremely valuable, and is a relationship the Israeli government continues to foster as Diaspora support wanes.

In the study of the Middle East, scholarship on the economic structures of the states in the region has emphasized the importance of rent in the development process. Rent can be defined as state revenues not acquired from taxation, usually from external sources in the form of trade revenues from natural resource commodities or from foreign aid. A rentier state is any state that relies on such external sources for a significant amount of its total revenues. Gelvin notes that the Middle East is unique in that all of the
states in the region "are reliant on income derived from rent to a greater or lesser extent." As a result, all of these states can be analyzed in terms of rentier theory.

As much discussion of rentierism focuses on resource commodities, like oil, how do states without large amounts of resource wealth accrue rent? This question certainly applies to the state of Israel, which lacks valuable natural resources. Moreover, Israel operates with high levels of deficits. Israel, despite a relatively high GDP, remains reliant on foreign aid to cover its costs and fund programs. Israel is a rentier state in that it relies heavily on foreign economic and military aid and private donations to operate. Much of this revenue is available to Israel because of its ideological value for those who provide the rent. This chapter will examine Israel as a rentier state, focusing on the ideological sources of funding from the U.S. government, the Jewish Diaspora, and the Christian Zionist movement.

The primary source of Israel's rent, at present, is the U.S. government. The flow of aid to Israel from the U.S. comes in military aid, loans, and grants. U.S. aid to Israel stands at approximately 3.6 billion dollars annually. According to the Council on Foreign Relations, the FY08 requested funding amount for military aid to Israel is $2.4 billion. The U.S. provides an additional $1.2 billion for civil economic aid. The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs, totals U.S. aid to Israel since its 1949 founding at $107.9 billion. Their totaling includes 'conservative' accountings of aid for military grants, economic grants, refugee assistance, and the support of the American

---

67 Gelvin, The Modern Middle East, 247.
70 This refugee assistance is for Palestinians in the OPTs, but is administered by Israel. This money can be withheld by the government of Israel, as it was in 2006 from the Hamas leadership of Gaza.
Schools and Hospitals Abroad program. Their total also includes special Department of Defense grants for specific programs not included in normal earmarking, interest accrued on cash grants paid to Israel prior to the start of a new fiscal year, and other grants and endowments.

The rent relationship between the U.S. and Israel is designed at all levels to maximize rent incomes for Israel. As scholar Stephen Zunes notes, the U.S.-Israel relationship is uniquely structured to increase revenues for Israel. He cites as proof of a special relationship in aid the facts that since 1992, the U.S. offers of annual loan guarantees of $2 billion, that all loans to Israel have eventually been forgiven by congress, and that since 1984 U.S. policy has been to set U.S. aid to Israel at or above the annual debt repayments expected from Israel. Zunes goes on to discuss the manner in which funds are distributed to Israel:

Unlike other countries, which receive aid in quarterly installments, aid to Israel since 1982 has been given in a lump sum at the beginning of the fiscal year, leaving the U.S. government to borrow from future revenues. Israel even lends some of this money back through U.S. treasury bills and collects the additional interest.

With such a clear record of financial commitment to Israel by the U.S. government, the question becomes, why? What is it about Israel that requires such strong and consistent financial ties from the U.S.? The question essentially comes down to how policy actors in the U.S. view the state of Israel and their commitment to balancing the soviets during the Cold War period, and curtailing the expansion of Islamist political movements and expanding U.S. hegemony and securing access to Middle East oil resources. While these

---

72 Ibid.
motivations are obviously politically motivated, there is an inherent ideological position being advocated and supported materially by such support.

The most pronounced source of ideological rent for Israel comes from the Jewish Diaspora stemming heavily from the school of Zionism articulated by Herzl. The agency emphasized by Herzl, centered on a return of Diaspora Jews to their ancestral homeland to contribute to the settlement effort. Many Jews, especially in the U.S., were uncomfortable with and unwilling to permanently settle in Israel. The result was an accommodation from the government of Israel. Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion emphasized the need for American Jews to provide economic, political, and moral support for the Jewish state. The result was a source of rent that would be sustainable as long as there was an Israel composed of Jews and a community of Jews living outside of it.

The rent Israel received from the Diaspora was the most important aid it received during its formative years leading up to the 1967 war. Samuel Halperin argues that the Zionist movement was primarily a fundraising effort. He notes that by the 1940’s Zionist fundraising efforts accumulated $100 million annually. At present, donations from U.S. Jews to Israel are on the decline. The trend emerged in the 1990s when donations fell from $275 million in 1985 to $217 in 1997. As Eizenstat notes, this is largely do the rise in opposition to Israeli land policies and treatment of the Palestinians from American Jews. While the flow of funds from the American Diaspora to the government of Israel and its program efforts have decreased, overall donations to non-

---

governmental agencies and programs have continued to steadily increase continuing at a rate of approximately $2 billion.

**Blessing Israel**

Another major source of ideological rent for Israel is the Christian Zionist movement, which has become closely aligned with Israeli government elites and pro-Israel efforts by elements of the Jewish Diaspora. This is an important element of this interest group's capacity for influence. The tools of influence Mearsheimer and Walt identify for interest groups are lobbying, campaign contributions, voter mobilization, and influencing public discourse. The tools of the interest group are then applied in the process of influencing through pressure on policy actors, the presence of ideological sympathizers throughout the bureaucracy of government, and social outreach activities in the public sector. The Christian Zionist interest group, like the rest of the *Lobby*, is particularly effective in how they use these tools and impact policy formation. In terms of lobbying, the Christian Zionists are effective because of their influence within Republican Party politics and because of their willingness to cooperate with other non-Christian pro-Israel lobbying groups, especially AIPAC. Several prominent policy actors have identified as Christian Zionists, and there is speculation that presidents Ronald Reagan and G.W. Bush have expressed Christian Zionist attitudes in their policy formation. Movement leaders have also been particularly effective in mobilizing grass roots activism in support of pro-Israel politicians and policies.

Christian Zionist support for Israel is two fold. As we have seen, it has become a prominent participant in the *Lobby* and has provided greater access to Republican policy actors for lobbying efforts. In "The Influence of the Christian Right on U.S. Middle East
Policy,” Stephen Zunes argues that influence rests in mobilization of individuals to vote for Republican candidates. These candidates in this view are elected with the expectation they will continue and increase U.S. material support for Israel. He uses the fact that since the emergence of the Evangelical Right, 5 of 7 presidential elections have gone to Republican candidates, and had control of the U.S. Senate 8/13 sessions, and at time of writing had control of the U.S. House for the previous six years (that control ended in the mid-term elections of 2006). This was accomplished by the ability to make Evangelicals the most active politically, and most likely to vote. Zunes argues that the movement has a de facto leader in President George W. Bush, and that Christian Zionists “are, at this point, more significant in the formulation of U.S. policy toward Israel than are Jewish Zionists.”

One primary example comes in discussing the Bush administration’s support of the Road Map. On May 19, 2003 numerous Christian Zionist leaders sent an open letter to the President advising him to tend his pursuit of the Road Map. On CBS’ 60 Minutes in June of 2003, Rev. Jerry Falwell stated that, “There is nothing that would bring the wrath of the Christian public in this country down on this government like abandoning or opposing Israel in a critical matter. And when the chips are down Ariel Sharon can trust George [W.] Bush to do the right thing every time.” Another example comes from the previous year when the President spoke harshly of Israel military activities in Jenin. The response from the Christian Zionists was immediate, organizing a letter writing campaign that sent 100,000 letters, calls, and personal visits to government officials in D.C.

---

75 Ibid, 76.
The movement is extremely effective in shaping public discourse. This is accomplished through political rallies and conferences along with ministry outreach, television programs, and publications. Hagee’s television ratings are reported at 90 million viewers, he organizes four large religious tours to Israel, and has hundreds of millions of dollars in sales of pro-Israel religious books, videos, and other publications. The popular Christian Zionist writer Hal Lindsey’s pre-eminent work *The Late Great Planet Earth*, has gone through numerous editions and has sold over 25 million copies. His fantasy series, *The Left Behind Series*, which focuses on life after the rapture, spans eleven volumes and has sold over 100 million copies. Perhaps the most important source of their capacity to shape public discourse comes from the hundreds of thousands of individual churches that align themselves with broader Christian Zionist organizations like CUFI. These individual parishes participate in major pro-Israel events organized by the larger organizations, but they also keep the pro-Israel message before their congregants in weekly sermons, Sunday school lessons, bible studies, etc. These ministry outreach efforts are central to the Christian Zionist project in that they provide the means for consistent rearticulation of its ideological frame within the community of believers, it provides the possibility for membership expansion, and it provides opportunities for members to actively support Israel, in essence mobilizing the members from apathy to agency.

The Christian Zionist movement is not simply an enabler for Israeli rent in the form of foreign and military aid from the U.S. Rather, it is a new, but significant source of revenue for Israel itself. This revenue comes from fundraising efforts by broad

---

78 The importance of these activities in the lives of these communities, are the access points which allows for the movement to shape public discourse, through the process of rearticulation.
Christian Zionist umbrella organizations, donations from individual ministries, and craft merchandise. No official government totals enumerate the exact contributions, however conservative estimates place donations from Christian Zionists at around $500 million.

In his article for the *Israeli Insider*, Jonathan Tobin examines the International Christian Jewish Fellowship, which is a coalition of Christian Zionist and Jewish Organizations. According to Tobin, this one organization contributes $47 million dollars annually to Israel, 98% of which comes from Evangelical Christians in small individual donation amounts.\(^7^9\) In 2006, the Rev. John Hagee’s ministry was able to donate $1 million dollars after 1 day of fundraising for Israel. Numerous Christian Zionist televangelist ministries sell cheap crafts exported from Israel, offering viewers the chance to support Israel while purchasing a small token that will symbolize their connection to the holy land.\(^8^0\) With hundreds of ministries in the U.S. alone that identify as Christian Zionists, the flow of rent to Israel promises to remain large and to replace some of the revenues lost from declining support from the Diaspora. Likewise, it promises to be a long lived source of rent given the theological premise on which it is grounded. In their own understanding, Christian Zionists are required by G-d to provide aid to Israel, support the settlement of Jews on the “frontier”\(^8^1\), and lobby their government to maintain a pro-Israel posture; they will continue to do this until the return of Jesus Christ.

It is also important to note an additional source of rent for Israel that is heavily tied to ideology, that is rent acquired from the tourism industry. Tourism accounts for

---


\(^8^0\) These objects are prized for their connection to the holy land. The sale of these products is not new, they mirror the trade in relics that characterized the crusade period. They are marketed as means of supporting and showing a spiritual commitment to Israel.

\(^8^1\) The “frontier” in this case refers to settlements established in areas beyond the Green Line, in the Golan Heights, and the OPTs.
approximately 1% GDP, or about $3 billion. The tourism industry relies heavily on religious pilgrimages and holiday celebrations, which bring Jews and Christians from around the world.\textsuperscript{82} Tourism is not a new source of rent for Israel, the wealth promised by controlling the holy cites of Jerusalem sparked centuries of conflict between Christian Europe and the Islamic empires. Tourism occupies a precarious position, with revenues highly subject to the political environment. The threat of violence is omnipresent, and outbreaks of violence and terrorist attacks cause significant declines in tourism to Israel.

\textbf{Conclusion}

While Israel is blessed with significant amounts of rent resources, stemming in large part from its ideological value for American foreign policy actors, the Jewish Diaspora, and the Christian Zionists, Israel experiences serious difficulties in terms of economic and social factors. In the case of the Christian Zionist lobby, we find an interest group that possesses significant amounts of access to policy actors, large amounts of political capital in voter networks and finances, and rather far reaching influence over the culture of ideas surrounding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In this light, it is fair to say that the Christian Zionist lobby does posses the capacity for influence over policy formation and the access points to exercise that capacity. As Mayer shows, the power of religious identity is significantly related to public opinions on the conflict.

\textsuperscript{82} Mearsheimer and Walt, \textit{The Israel Lobby}, Christian Tourism to Israel is reported at $1 Billion annually, 138.
CONCLUSIONS

Mearsheimer and Walt make the argument that the pro-Israel policy advocated by the Lobby undermines the national interest. Their critique has sparked significant debate. Ultimately, the question of whether or not this policy runs contrary to the national interest depends upon how the national interest is defined. For realist scholars, neo-conservative policy actors, and the administration, the national interest is not only to advance the relative power of the state, but to advance that power level in light of the expressed policy goals of the governing administration. At present, the national interest seems to be focused on eliminating the threat of hostile regimes in the region, preventing the rise of new Islamist regimes, and eliminating the capacity of terrorist organizations and their influence in regional politics.

The Christian Zionists and the Lobby see their goals as mirroring these identified policy goals. However, the national interest for Christian Zionists moves beyond simple realpolitik issues into eschatology, teleology, and other concepts that compose their ideological project. They include values and beliefs in the national interest that are not explainable by realist theories. As discussed earlier Christian Zionists do not define the national interest in terms of realpolitick, but in terms of obedience to a divine mandate. In their view, the benefits that come from advancing a realist national interest are second to the benefits that come from G-d’s promise to bless those who bless Israel. While many of the policy positions they support have a solid realist self-interested logic, the efforts by officials to contain terrorist threats and rogue regimes will not guarantee security. Unlike Mearsheimer and Walt, Christian Zionists understand threats from rogue
states and terrorist networks to increase without a pro-Israel policy because of divine punishment for failing to comply with the divine admonition to bless Israel. They do not see the decline in soft power and prestige as a negative result of the pro-Israel policy because their ideology frames their obligation of support as a spot of contention with the secular world that is to be welcomed, not averted. The ultimate critique of Mearsheimer and Walt that the capacity of the Lobby has a cooling effect on criticism against the pro-Israel policy, primarily because the Christian Zionist movement’s ideology rejects the premise. Movement elites emphasize that many prominent voices speak against the pro-Israel policy project, and frame their movement as part of a broader tradition of religion to speak unpopular truth to power.

What is unique about the interest group’s lobbying efforts is their status as a purely ideological project. The community of believers that subscribe to the project are the points of access by which the Christian Zionist lobby is able to accomplish the political goals of the project and influence the policy formation process. The power of the Christian Zionist lobby rests in its ability to frame its ideological project as a political project, to construct a community of believers, to rearticulate the movement’s ideological frame to those believers, and to mobilize them from a place of apathetic support of Israel, into active agency to accomplish the movement’s policy goals. These policy goals exist outside of the realist articulation of the national interests. The Christian Zionist lobby seeks relative increases in power for the U.S., but only as a means to an end. The decline in soft power that proves Mearsheimer and Walt’s critique is not a concern of Christian Zionists. Opposition to the U.S. is anticipated in their ideology,
because the ideology frames support for Israel as a source of conflict with international opinion.

In conclusion, this project leaves significant space for further research. Much more detailed analysis is needed to adequately measure Christian Zionist financial contributions. Analysis of the movements influence will be greatly advanced once the George W. Bush administration leaves office, and scholars have access to internal information. At this point, it will be plausible to test whether Christian Zionist lobbying efforts impact policy change.


BIBLIOGRAPHY


