

**The Primary Problem:
An Analysis of International Donations in Israeli Primary Elections
and Their Effect On Israeli Politics**

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ABSTRACT

Unlike Israeli general elections, which are publicly funded by the state, Israeli primary elections rely on private funding. Much of this funding comes from international donors. Prior to this paper, the entirety of these foreign donations had not been studied in any systematic manner. This paper analyzes the 4964 donations, including the 971 foreign donations, from the four major parties that had primary elections for the 2013 electoral cycle in order to examine the characteristics of Israeli politicians that made them likely to receive foreign donations. The analysis revealed that foreign donors were more likely to donate to candidates from conservative parties than liberal parties and that a greater percentage of conservative parties' funds and donors were foreign than were liberal parties' funds and donors. While this paper found that, for the most part, political experience had no bearing on a politician's ties to foreign donors, the results also showed that time spent as a party leader closely correlates to all three metrics considered when discussing foreign donations.

INTRODUCTION

In early 1948, the leaders of the not-yet-formed state of Israel were preparing for the ensuing declaration of independence. All hands were on deck in preparation for the birth of the Jewish state, yet Golda Meir, who would become the Prime Minister of Israel in 1969, was halfway across the world. Instead of helping with military, diplomatic, or political preparations at home, Meir found herself lobbying American Jews for the Jewish Agency. In January of 1948, the Agency's treasurer had warned that American Jews were 'tapped out,' and that Israel should not expect more than eight million dollars from the community in the oncoming months. Golda Meir was able to raise \$50 million (Kordova, 2008).

International donors, particularly North American donors, have always played an important role in Israeli society. The world-renowned Hadassah Medical Center, the parent organization for the two Hadassah Hospitals and the Hadassah Medical School, was founded and is funded by the international women's group Hadassah. The Jewish National Fund, which held approximately 13% of all state lands in 2007, is funded by the North American Jewish community (Pfeffer & Stern, 2007).

Yet international funding of Israeli initiatives often goes beyond international charity organizations and dives into the Israeli political realm itself. As citizens of a proportional parliamentary democracy, Israeli voters cast their ballot for one amongst several parties on Election Day. Votes are then tallied, and all parties that meet a predefined minimum threshold, which in the 2013 election was set at 2%, are given a portion of the 120 seats in the parliamentary assembly, called the 'Knesset' in Hebrew, equal to the percentage of the vote that they received. Parties then give these seats to members of their party in an order set by a predefined party 'list'. If the Labor Party, for instance, wins 20 seats, the first 20 people on their party's list would become members of the Knesset.

Parties have their choice of how to pick who will be on these lists, and in what order. Traditionally, all of the lists were simply determined by party elites. In some newer or more religious organizations, party elites still control the formation of the lists. Yet, starting in 1992 when Yitzhak Rabin defeated Shimon Peres to become the Labor Party's leader, Israel's more established and traditional political parties have employed a primary system to determine both their parties' leadership and the makeup and ordering of their lists. This is where international donors come into play; while foreign donations are banned from Israeli general elections, international donors are allowed to donate funds to primary campaigns within the Jewish state.

It has been well documented that international donors back candidates in Israeli primaries. In 2008, for instance, the *Washington Post* wrote a piece discussing the large roles that American donors had played in that year's elections. By their count, Labor Party leader Ehud Barack received approximately a third of his campaign money from American donors, while Likud Party head Binyamin Netanyahu received 75% of the donations for his 2007 primary from the United States (Witte, 2008). Meanwhile, a 2012 story from the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz* reported that "More than half of the contributions to politicians in the past two years - 53 percent of the NIS 13 million - came from people who live overseas, cannot vote in Israel and are not directly impacted by the elected officials' decisions"(Levinson, 2012). Even BuzzFeed has explored the topic by documenting how three American families – the Falic family, the Book family, and the Schottenstein family – were funding over half of Prime Minister Netanyahu's 2015 campaign contributions. BuzzFeed's piece also contained a choice quote from Likud activist Yonatan Benizri, who said "Thank you, rich Americans! The rest of the parties are still scrambling and Netanyahu has a party...It's nothing new, why get money from Israel when you can get it from the U.S.?" (Frenkel, 2015).

This international funding in turn leads to a number of concerns regarding the relationship between Israeli politicians and international donors. Are donors receiving quid pro quo exchanges in return for their donations? Some, such as American businessman Morris Talansky, who donated now-disgraced former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert \$150,000 over a nearly 15-year period (Witte, 2008), insisted that he received nothing in exchange for his financial support. Yet the donations do still lead to concerns regarding who Israeli candidates truly answer to. At the same time, the donations raise questions about who controls the options,

in the form of lists, that are presented to Israeli voters. Are foreigners dictating to Israelis who they can vote for by moving candidates that they prefer farther up their respective parties' lists?

While the aforementioned articles considered limited aspects of international donations and Israeli electoral funding, no survey to date has analyzed all donations made to Israeli members of Knesset during their respective primary seasons. To that end, this paper will conduct an in-depth analysis of the 4964 donations that were given to Israeli members of the four major parties that had primaries for their spots in the 2013 Knesset, the most recently held election at the time of this paper's writing. In doing so, this paper will attempt to determine why international funders donate to certain elite Israeli candidates over others by considering what characteristics of Israeli politicians make them more likely to receive contributions. This paper will also draw on existing literature on campaigns and electoral funding to link its empirical results to a larger discussion on the role that international donors play in Israeli primaries.

LITERATURE REVIEW

An Overview of Israeli Primaries And Financing

While the literature pertaining to Israeli electoral funding is rather sparse, it does help explain the evolution of Israeli electoral law and the development of private funding of Israeli primaries. This overview will help explain both why Israel has primaries and why these primaries rely on private financing.

As was mentioned in the introduction to this paper, from the state's beginnings until the late 1970s, party leaders unilaterally drew up and ordered their parties' lists. This process took a number of forms – some parties relied on secular leaders, while other groups turned to rabbinic or other religious councils to pick their list. This process started to shift in 1977 when the Likud party introduced a minor change to their political system. By transferring the control of its list to

the party's Central Committee of approximately 600 members (Hofnung, 2008), the party now required candidates to participate in a number of electoral cycles. In each round of the election, the top seven vote-getters were added to the party list (Hofnung, 2006). Likud went on to win the 1977 general election, which marked the first time in Israeli history that the conservative Likud party or its predecessors had defeated the liberal Labor party or its precursors.

After Labor was handed defeats in the 1981, 1984, and 1988 elections, the party decided to propose a radical change. Instead of turning to the party machine to create their list, Labor would allow the entirety of the list – from the party leader spot on downwards – to be picked through mass party primaries that would include all of the party's dues-paying, registered members (Hofnung, 2006). In the ensuing 1992 primary, 200,000 Labor Party members chose to elect Yitzhak Rabin as their party leader for the upcoming elections (Hofnung, 2008).

Much like Likud's policy shift, Labor's open primaries resulted in a roaring success for the party, as it was able to retake the prime ministership from Likud. Other parties quickly took note of the success of Labor's strategy and, as Menachem Hofnung puts it, "felt obliged to follow suit and democratize their internal procedures." Within a year of the 1992 general election, five of the six largest parties in Israel had announced plans to create some form of primaries to select candidates for both local and national office (Hofnung, 2008).

Just before the 1992 election, Israel faced a separate electoral seismic shift. A law passed that, starting in 1996, would allow for the direct election of the Prime Minister. The growing importance of primaries in conjunction with the direct election of Prime Ministers had two noticeable effects on the Israeli electoral landscape. First, campaigns were far longer. Second, and more importantly for the purposes of this paper, the expenses required to run a serious campaign increased exponentially (Hofnung, 1996). As more people were able to vote in

primaries, more money was required to reach out to the voting populace. According to Hofnung, the cost of securing a safe place on Likud's Knesset list increased tenfold in a single year (Hofnung, 1996). Hofnung writes that the new Prime Minister laws and the decision to hold open primaries meant that "Personal campaign and financial might became a *sine qua non* in Israeli politics" (Hofnung, 2006).

While the price of running a campaign varied from party to party (Hofnung, 2006), the increases in costs were invariably, and immediately, higher than before. Benjamin Netanyahu's 1992 winning, and expensive, campaign for party chairman stands out as one example of the immediate effects the new system had on election costs (Hofnung, 2008).

In Israeli general elections, parties were accustomed to receiving generous funding from the state. In fact, relative to the country's number of voters, Israeli political parties were receiving the most money in public grants of any nation in the world. In 1992, for instance, the parties received the equivalent of \$10.75 in direct subsidies from the state per vote given to any of the parties. The next highest sum given in a Western democracy at that time was in Germany, which gave only \$3 per voter to its parties (Hofnung, 1996).

At the same time, the opening of the 1992 primaries – and the prevalence of expensive campaigns that came with it – led to a number of campaigns going over the expenditure ceilings specified by law at the time. After both Labor and Likud accrued large deficits over the course of the campaign, the Knesset decided to raise the yearly sums given to political parties by 36 percent. This decision was subsequently reversed in the courts, which required Likud and Labor to return money they had already spent.

In Israel, this entire process did not play well with the voting populace. Exacerbating the problem were allegations of coalition-based bribes and other shady political dealings. Small

parties, namely Meretz and the now-defunct Tzomet party, took advantage of the situation by running public campaigns focusing on anti-corruption and ‘clean government’ with high levels of success, as they received 16% of the popular vote in 1992 (Hofnung, 1996). In light of the public outrage regarding excessive public funding of campaigns, the Knesset was wary of providing public funding for these new, and expensive, inter-party primary campaigns.

Instead, the Knesset passed a private-funding law. The new system established expenditure ceilings and donation limits that increase on a yearly basis (Hofnung, 1996). At the same time, corporations were not allowed to donate to politicians’ campaigns (Hofnung, 2006). Instead, private individuals, Israeli or foreign, would, and do, make up the brunt of the financing of Israeli primary campaigns.

How Donors Operate and Money Effects Politics

What the Israeli literature provides in descriptions of Israeli electoral financing history it lacks in analysis of what motivates donors to give money to specific candidates. While not of direct importance to this paper, understanding the motivations of individual donors will help inform the paper’s hypotheses and conclusions. At the same time, understanding the role money plays in political campaigns helps underscore the importance of this research. The central reason citizens care about money in politics is because money influences the political sphere in a number of ways. While not ultimately central to this this paper, this literature is still relevant because it explains the importance of the money being considered in the Israeli political arena. Most of the literature relevant to this topic comes from the United States’ political system. Therefore, in order to consider the motivations of donors and the effect of money, the American political system will be considered as a proxy for Israeli elections and donors.

The first, and most obvious, consideration for why donors give money to candidates, and why money is important in politics, is because these donations may be given in return for political favors.

Ansolabehere, Figueiredo, and Snyder famously argued that campaign donations were not given in return for political quid pro quo. They support this notion of donations as a consumptive utility by pointing to the fact that there is so little money in American politics and elections relative to the potential gains to be had from the results of government contracts and legislation. They determined that when party identification and a district's partisan tilt were accounted for money had little role in influencing a politician's votes (Ansolabehere, Figueiredo, & Snyder, 2003).

On the other hand, a number of studies suggest that donors view donations as investments. Gordon, Hafer, and Landa, for example, show that business executives whose compensation varies directly based on corporate earnings contribute more to campaigns than business executives whose compensation comes largely from salaries. Therefore, they conclude that these donations are given as a form of instrumental utility (Gordon, Hafer, & Landa, 2007).

In observing contributions from the 1980-1986 campaigns for open House of Representative seats, Snyder shows that politicians act as if donations are given in return for political favors. By combining donation data from PACs with formulas he creates, Snyder hypothesizes that all candidates maximize contributions to the greatest extent possible and therefore promise to deliver as many favors as possible. Snyder concludes, though, that politicians who are not in close races do not always maximize contributions by promising as many favors as possible, but that candidates in close races always do so. Snyder therefore shows that politicians themselves are viewing donations as a form of quid pro quo (Snyder, 1990).

In considering only the farm sector – where, unlike in much of the literature, the votes are not relating to public goods, are not subject to many competing groups, and are not too well publicized for money’s effect on politicians’ votes to be lost – Stratmann also concludes that money influences votes. In eight of the ten roll call votes considered, Stratmann concluded that contributions given by PACs with relevant interests played an important determinant in explaining the legislator’s votes. While, like Ansolabehere et al., Stratmann concludes that rather small donations were able to determine the results of Congressional votes, his results still indicate that the donations were given as a form of investment that swayed votes (Stratmann, 1991).

At the same time, as Grober, Reuben, and Tymula point out in their own literature review, Ansolabehere et al. fail to account for the fact that donations from special interest groups can affect earlier stages of the legislative process, including during the committee phase when legislation is proposed and amended (Grober, Reuben, & Tymula, 2013). Like the United States, Israel has a committee-based legislative model. Hall and Wayman, for instance, argue that “constraints on member behavior and the rational calculations of group strategists limit the extent to which votes become the basis for exchange” at the full-legislature level. Instead, their data suggests that money mobilizes specific action at the committee stage of the House of Representatives (Hall & Wayman, 1990).

Others argue for a more indirect connection between money and votes that still points to donations being given as a form of investment. Langbein uses Tobit analysis of the 95th Congress to show that campaign contributions are used to get access to politicians so that lobbyists can then convince them to vote a certain way (Langbein, 1986). Langbein is far from alone in drawing a conclusion that money buys access as opposed to votes. She points out in her own

paper that a number of authors, including Lester Milbrath and Larry Sabato, argue that access is a precondition to having influence over the development of legislation and policy, and that this access is another, if not the main, reason for campaign donations.

Wright, meanwhile, looked at both lobbying and campaign contributions separately in considering what led members of Congress to vote certain ways. While he concluded that campaign contributions sometimes explained lobbying patterns, it was the lobbying efforts themselves that affected legislation (Wright, 1990). This notion that lobbying affects the policy sphere has been well supported in a number of other studies. For instance, Figueiredo and Silverman show that, for universities that are represented by a House Appropriations Committee or Senate Appropriations Committee member, a 10 percent increase in lobbying yields an additional 2.8 percent or 3.5 percent increase, respectively, in earmarks given to the university (Figueiredo & Silverman, 2006). Kelleher Richter, Samphantharak, and Timmons come to a similar conclusion regarding the power of lobbying on the legislative process. By looking at a dataset of all US firms with publicly available financial statements, they were able to conclude that increasing registered lobbying expenditures by 1% leads to a reduction of effective tax rates by 0.5 to 1.6 percent (Keller Richter, Saphantharak, & Timmons, 2009). While these papers may point to a more indirect power of donations in politics, when read together they still point to a view of political donations as a form of investment. Donations lead to access to politicians, and that access allows lobbyists to accrue benefits for their interest group.

Regardless of whether donations are consumptive or instrumental, those donations could have an effect on the election process if foreign donors are able to control the outcomes of primaries. If they are able to significantly influence the results of the major parties' primaries, foreign donors can limit the options presented to Israeli voters come the general election. The

question, then, is whether money leads to success in Israeli primaries. In a 2012 report, Israeli newspaper *Haaretz* found that in Likud and Labor's primaries, "direct correlation exists between the sums candidates spend on their primary campaigns and their chances of reaching the Knesset" (Levinson, 2012). This does not necessarily mean, however, that having more campaign donations leads to success in Israeli primaries. As Ben-Zion and Eytan argue, donors may give more money to politicians who are more likely to win their election (Ben-Zion & Eytan, 1974). In other words, there is a chance that *Haaretz* is putting the cart before the horse, and that because a politician is successful donors will give her money, rather than the theory that because a donor gives a politician money she will be successful.

Ben-Zion and Eytan's concept makes sense regardless of whether donations are thought to be made to accrue consumptive or instrumental utility. From an instrumental perspective, benefits in terms of policy changes are only accrued if the candidate the donation is given to wins their election. Therefore, donors will give money to candidates they deem likely to win their election. Even if donors are giving donations as a form of consumptive good it makes sense for them to give their donations to candidates who are more likely to become members of the Knesset. While donors want to give funds to candidates who they agree with for personal benefit, logic dictates that they would be more likely to give money to the candidates who agree with them the most from amongst the set of candidates who are likely to win a seat in the Knesset, as these candidates would therefore be able to propagate their shared views in the Knesset. Donors giving funds for the consumptive benefit will therefore give money to candidates likely to win a seat. Either way, there is a chance that the correlation observed by *Haaretz* is because electoral success leads to campaign donations rather than because campaign donations lead to electoral success.

Here again the United States is the best proxy in considering the effects of campaign donations on winning elections. Jacobson examines Congressional districts and argues that while campaign spending is not necessarily required for incumbents who already enjoy name recognition to be electorally successful, campaign expenditures do “buy nonincumbents the necessary voter recognition already enjoyed by incumbents prior to the campaign” (Jacobson, 1972). Some may be apprehensive about applying Jacobson’s theory to Israeli politics because of the difference in size between congressional districts and Israeli parties. The average Congressional district from the 1970s, though, was only approximately 400,000 voters, and while these districts are slightly larger than Israeli primaries, where large parties’ membership registers just north of 200,000 voters, they are not of different degrees of magnitude. Jacobson’s theory can therefore be applied in this case. Applying Jacobson’s theory to the Israeli experience, campaign spending may not make well-known incumbents less or more likely to win their primary campaigns. It does, however, mean that non-Israelis can ‘buy’ for nonincumbents the means necessary to increase voter recognition and become politically relevant. If foreign donors represent a significant percentage of the funds going into a certain party’s primaries, these donors can control which new candidates are able to succeed and come to power in a particular party.

THEORY

Party Identification

Insofar as this paper is interested in understanding which politicians will benefit from foreign donations as a result of their unique characteristics, this paper’s theory must be grounded in an understanding of what motivates foreign donors to give money in the first place.

The literature presented in this paper disputes whether or not donations are given as an investment or consumptive good. Yet the end result of these donations would be markedly similar in terms of which characteristics foreign donors would be looking for in Israeli politicians regardless of whether they are given to provide instrumental or consumptive utility. If the donation is given as an instrumental good, it is more logical to give money to individuals who agree to some extent with the donor's views. Doing so will make sure that politicians who agree with the donor are more likely to win their elections and vote in a way that pleases the donors after they are elected. McCarty and Poole used donation and voting records to show that, with some notable exceptions in which groups choose to pragmatically back an incumbent who is destined to win despite ideological differences, donors tend to support ideologically similar candidates (McCarty & Poole, 1998). Kau, Keenan, and Rubin came to a similar conclusion in their analysis (Kau, Keenan, & Rubin, 1982).

Even if donors are giving funds as a consumptive good, ideological similarities would still be a leading concept that would influence their choices. Logic dictates that donors would receive personal fulfillment and utility from giving to candidates who care about similar issues to them or who help advance issues that the donors care about. Therefore, regardless of whether donations are a consumptive or instrumental good, one would assume that issue confluence between donors and politicians will have a strong influence on whether or not politicians receive a donation.

The question then, is who are these donors and what policy preferences do they care about? Both logic and past observational studies have shown that the American Jewish population is the most likely group to be giving money to Israeli politicians. According to a 2012 survey from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem's Berman Institute, over 69% of Jews living in

the diaspora reside in the United States (DellaPergola, 2012). This makes the United States home to the largest diasporic Jewish population and, as members of the Jewish faith, the American Jewish community has close religious and ethnic ties to the Jewish state. There is also evidence to suggest that the American Jewish community is not only the world's largest, but perhaps the most influential as well. The aforementioned three families that are funding over half of Benjamin Netanyahu's 2015 campaign, for instance, are all American. Uber-wealthy American donors who are influential at home, such as arch-conservative casino magnate Sheldon Adelson, have gotten involved in Israeli politics as well. Adelson, who the *Washington Post* writes "is an avid supporter and long-time friend of Prime Minister Netanyahu," has purchased and created a number of Israeli newspapers that espouse his political views. In fact, many call *Israel Hayom*, the free newspaper created by Adelson that is now Israel's most widely read paper, the *Bibi-ton*, a combination of Netanyahu's nickname, Bibi, and the Hebrew word for newspaper, *iton* (*The Economist*, 2015). All of these facts make it likely that American Jews would make up a considerable share of international donations to Israel. Thus, considering American Jews' views and political stances can lead to insights into how international donations at large will be given.

Public polling of the American Jewish community shows an interesting trend in terms of issue salience – they tend to focus more on Israeli security concerns than the country's domestic issues. When asked in a 2013 Pew Research report to identify the most important problem facing Israel, 25 percent of American Jewish respondents stated a specific national group, country, or group of countries such as Palestinians, Arab states, or Iran. 20 percent said that peace and coexistence was the largest problem, while 14 percent identified general violence, 11 percent identified general threats, such as anti-Semitism and survival, and 11 percent identified relationships and conflict with Palestinians, Arab states, Muslims, and others. Only 9 percent of

American Jewish respondents said that domestic problems were the largest issue facing Israel. The three examples Pew gave of the domestic problems respondents cited in their answers were demographic issues, internal divisions, and religious conflict, as opposed to more concrete issues like economic, housing, and education concerns (Lugo, 2013).

When, also in 2013, Israelis were asked by Tel Aviv University to identify the most important issue facing their own government, their responses were markedly different. Over 17 percent of respondents identified the economy as the most important issue, making it the largest single answer given in the survey. Respondents also tended to offer other economic- and domestic-related answers – over 8 percent said that housing problems were the largest issue facing the government, and over 5 percent offered education as their answer. An additional 2.91 percent discussed the increased standard of living, 1.5 percent discussed helping the middle class, and 5.65 percent said general domestic issues were their chief concern. Security, foreign, and Arab relations were much less important to Israeli citizens when compared to the answers offered by North Americans. Only 12.57 percent said that security in general was their chief concern, and only 3.49, 2.44, and 2.04 percent named the peace process, foreign policy, and the Arab-Israeli conflict, respectively. (Shamir, 2013)

There is good reason for why Israelis would care more about domestic concerns like education and the economy than would their American peers. To be blunt, it is because Israelis actually have to live in the country and American Jews do not. Unlike international Jews who would not have to face the brunt of a poor housing market, weak job prospects, or a failing education system, Israeli Jews naturally care deeply about domestic affairs. Instead of focusing on these domestic issues, international Jews are free to care more about less tangible, more ‘existential’ issues, like Israel’s foreign policy and relationship with Arabs.

The importance placed on the economy domestically could not have been stronger than it was in the election cycle in question. Less than two years before the election, during July of 2011, over 320,000 Israelis – in a country of approximately 8,000,000 people – took to the streets of Tel Aviv. The size of the protests took experts by surprise and, as the Hebrew University’s Tamir Sheafer said at the time, the protests were “not something that deals with the peace process or with war, it’s an economic protest” (Lidman, 2011). The protesters also had a broad base of support across the country – 98 percent of polled members of the centrist Kadima party and 85 percent of polled members of the conservative Likud party approved of the protesters (Peri, 2011).

The recent trend in Israeli politics has been for liberal Israeli parties, like the Labor party, to prioritize speaking about domestic issues like the economy and education policy, while conservative parties, like Likud, tend to downplay economic issues to focus more on national security policy. This is in large part because Israelis are rather liberal on the economy. As Brookings’ Natan Sachs put it, “the instincts of the Israeli public on economic issues, the popular (and at times populist) position leans decidedly to the left. Whereas American voters are often referred to, by default, as *taxpayers*, and vows to refrain from tax hikes are a staple of contemporary American politics, In [sic] Israel, much of the voting public prefers a more robust welfare state and has much higher tolerance for deficits and taxes on the wealthy” (Sachs, 2015).

This liberal economic viewpoint tends to help liberal groups like the Labor party. In 2013, for instance, then-Labor party leader Shelly Yachimovich’s “worldview was economically-leftist and she ha[d] promoted social welfare issues since before the demonstrations erupted in 2011. As such, she is well suited to capture the social justice agenda, even while her lack of experience – especially on security and diplomacy – make her appear ill-

equipped to assume leadership of the country” (Sachs, 2012). Politically, then, the best chance of success for the conservative Likud party and their leader, Benjamin Netanyahu, was to focus the campaign on those areas, like national security and foreign policy, where their conservative politics stood a better chance than on domestic issues. As Sachs wrote in October of 2012, “the degree to which Netanyahu can steer the election toward security matters, or to which the opposition can highlight social and economic issues, will likely determine their relative gains. The more security stands as the main issue, the stronger Netanyahu will be; the more his economic policy can be highlighted, the weaker his electoral base” (Sachs, 2012).

Likud’s focus on security as opposed to the economy can be seen in other election cycles as well. Prior to the 2015 elections, for instance, Likud politician Moshe Kahlon actually broke away from the organization in order to form his own political party, called Kulanu. The main difference between his new organization and his former party was that Kahlon, unlike Netanyahu, chose to focus on economic issues (Mitnick, 2015).

Since American Jews, and one would assume international Jews worldwide, are more likely to care about security and diplomatic issues than domestic issues like the economy, I would predict that international donors would give more to conservative candidates and parties than their liberal counterparts.

The connection between international Jews and conservative Israeli politicians extends beyond issue salience, though, and into conservative candidates’ particular stances on issues like foreign policy and national security. Here, too, American Jews will be examined when predicting how international donors will behave. In an article on American donations to Israeli politicians, the *Washington Post* noted that “the fundraising trend is especially pronounced on Israel’s political right; politicians who advocate aggressive military action against Iran and Hamas and

who maintain an uncompromising stance against ceding land to the Palestinians have typically found generous support for their views in the States” (Witte, 2008).

Two theories exist for why American Jewish donors tend to agree with conservative foreign policy views. First, conservative American Jews could simply be the only Americans who choose to donate to Israeli political campaigns. As Jeremy Ben-Ami, executive director of the relatively dovish, liberal US-based Israeli lobbying firm J Street, told the *Post*, “The American Jews who hold the more conservative views toward Israel are also the ones who tend to be more actively engaged with Israel. Liberal American Jews tend not to single out Israel as the focus of their philanthropy” (Witte, 2008).

At the same time, though, American Jewry could simply support more conservative Israeli foreign policy stances, and therefore would be more likely to donate to conservative Israeli candidates. The American Israeli Public Affairs Committee, a lobbying group that is better known as AIPAC and is backed mainly by American Jews, has adopted rather conservative stances on the region. For instance, the *New Yorker*’s Connie Bruck notes that “Time and again – over issues ranging from Iran to the Palestinians – AIPAC has sided strongly with Netanyahu against Obama,” while the two leaders “have clashed frequently over the expansion of Israeli settlements and the contours of a potential peace agreement between the Israelis and the Palestinians” (Bruck, 2014).

Therefore, both because of the issues stressed and the views stated by candidates from conservative parties, I expect them to receive more funding and a greater percentage of their funding from foreign donors than candidates from more liberal parties. For the same reasons, I also expect that a greater percentage of the donors who give to politicians from conservative parties will be foreign than the corresponding percentage of politicians from liberal parties.

Political Experience

This study will examine three measures of political experience – number of Knesset sessions served, years served as a minister in the Israeli cabinet, and years as a party leader.

Several theories exist for why less experienced politicians would raise more money than more experienced politicians. First, non-incumbents oftentimes come to prominence because they offer something new and different than what has been previously exhibited in the political arena. The 19th Knesset was full of these sorts of candidates. Likud's Tzipi Hotovely, for instance, had only served since 2011 but was notable for both her relative youth – at the age of 34 she was the 18th Knesset's youngest member – and her status as an Orthodox woman. Likud's Moshe Feiglin, who had never been in the Knesset before he ran in 2013, is another good example. Feiglin supported Meir Kahane, the head of a political party that was later labeled as a terrorist organization by Israel, Canada, the EU, and the US (Resnick, 2013), penned an article entitled "I Am A Proud Homophobe" (Elis, 2013), and stated that Arabs "are a gang of bandits that never produced anything and never wanted to produce anything – a gang of bandits that for over one thousand years (since Islam was born) has lived on robbery and terror" (Feiglin, 2002). Feiglin was also banned from entering Britain in 2008 after the British Home Secretary concluded that his "exclusion is conducive to the public good" (Shragai, 2008), and was sentenced to six months in prison for sedition as a result of his role in a protest against the Oslo Accords, although the sentence was later commuted to community service (*Agence France-Presse*, 2008). Politicians like Hotovely and Feiglin who are so different than other Israeli politicians could catch the eye of international donors looking for a difference in Israeli politics and who gain greater utility, be it categorized as consumptive utility or instrumental utility, by funding candidates who could radically alter the Israeli political landscape in a way the

international donor enjoys. Because these candidates could attract attention from international donors who are looking for political change and may not otherwise closely follow Israeli politics, one could argue that new candidates of the Hotovely or Feiglin vein could receive a higher share of their money from abroad.

Less experienced candidates could also need campaign funds much more than their more seasoned counterparts just to get their name out amongst the voting populace. Therefore, these candidates may fundraise more intensely than more experienced candidates and may be more likely to turn to international markets to aid in those fundraising efforts.

At the same time, though, there are strong reasons to believe that more experienced candidates would receive more money and a larger share of their money from abroad. More experienced candidates may be better known than political neophytes as a result of their long political history, which oftentimes correlates with a rise in the party and legislature's ranks. International donors, who may be less in tune with the nuances of Israeli elections simply because they do not live in Israel, could logically be less likely to have heard of minor, new Israeli politicians than Israeli donors. More established Israeli politicians would therefore, in turn, receive both more money, and a larger percentage of their money, from foreign donors than would newer politicians.

One can also assume that more experienced candidates are more likely to be mulling a run for party leader and starting to build their war chests accordingly. The cost of a campaign for the leadership of a major party runs much higher than that of a normal primary campaign. The Hebrew University's Menachem Hofnung, for instance, estimated in 2006 that a normal primary campaign costs around NIS 2,000,000, or \$450,000. Competing in a primary for a major party's leadership and the right to be the party's nominee for prime minister requires around \$2,000,000

(Hofnung, 2006). If a politician is looking for that much money, she may be more willing to approach wealthy international donors, and may even be willing to spend the time and resources to travel abroad in search of international money. A smaller-name politician, meanwhile, would not need those kinds of resources and may thus choose to simply raise money in the Israeli market.

With such arguments as to why both newer and more experienced politicians would be more likely to receive campaign funds, I predict that the result will be a wash, and that neither sessions in the Knesset nor years as a cabinet minister will have a significant effect on the amount nor percentage of funds that come from international donors. Similarly, I do not expect that there will be a correlation between these variables and the percentage of a politician's donors that are foreign.

I do, however, expect that there will be a strong correlation between being a party leader and the three measures of foreign funding. As was previously mentioned, party leadership campaigns require far greater resources than other campaigns do. Politicians who have been party leaders, then, are likely to have far larger fundraising efforts and are more likely to turn to wealthy foreign donors than are other politicians. If these politicians maintain their status as party leader over an extended period of time, I would likewise expect them to develop extensive connections abroad that will help them raise foreign money better than newer party leaders will be able to. I also expect these politicians to have far greater exposure abroad than their peers do, and that foreigners who do not know more minor politicians will therefore donate in higher numbers to these well-established candidates. Therefore, while more easily attainable measures of political experience, like the number of Knessets served or years as a party minister, are not

expected to correlate with foreign donations, I expect there to be a strong tie between party leaders and foreign donors.

Summary of Hypotheses
Hypothesis 1: There will be a correlation between foreign donations and being from a more conservative party Hypothesis 2: There will be no correlation between foreign donations and number of Knessets served in or time as a minister in the Knesset Hypothesis 3: There will be a correlation between foreign donations and number of years spent as a party leader

DATA

A number of decisions went into the data collection for this paper that ought to be explained and justified.

The dependent variable in this thesis is how much money an “elite” politician is able to attract. Some definition of ‘eliteness’ had to be included in the analysis to remove ‘non-serious candidates’ that were included in the primary and could skew the analysis. If a candidate enters a primary and appears on a ballot, but does not seriously contest the seat, she would likewise be less likely to seek or need donations. These null values could complicate an analysis on the relationship between donors and candidates. A boundary had to be drawn somewhere to remove these candidates, and considering all members of the 2013 Knesset seemed to be an appropriate choice for drawing this boundary. Only considering candidates who received funding as ‘elite’ seemed to be too restrictive of a sample, as eight politicians who were members of the parties being considered and who eventually joined the Knesset were ‘elite’ enough to be given a seat in the Knesset yet did not receive any campaign funds.

Five parties – Likud, Labor, Meretz, Habayit Hayehudi (The Jewish Home), and Kadima – conducted primaries and were included in the comptrollers’ records of parties with campaign

contributions. Kadima, however, only had two seats in the Knesset, and only one of its members, Shaul Mofaz, received campaign contributions. Kadima, which was founded in 2005 by then-Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, had fallen into dysfunction by the time of the 2013 election. Sharon went into a coma in 2006. His replacement, Ehud Olmert, was indicted for corruption less than six months after he ended his term, and was eventually convicted of corruption in both 2012 and 2014. Lastly, Tzipi Livni, whom Mofaz defeated in a primary to become Kadima's party leader, left the already-hamstrung party prior to the 2013 election to create her own party, Hatnuah. In fact, Kadima has become so politically weak that the party decided to stop running for elections after 2013. Between having an extremely small sample and being a party on the decline to the point of extinction, Kadima was not included in the analysis. Therefore, 52 politicians representing four parties – Likud, Labor, Meretz, and Habayit Hayehudi, were included in the final study.

All politicians from these four parties were included in the analysis, even if they left the Knesset before the end of their term. Likud's Reuven Rivlin, for instance, left the Knesset in June of 2014 after being elected Israel's President. Rivlin was still included in the study, while his replacement, Carmel Shama-Hacohen, was not. Simply put, this paper is trying to see what characteristics lead politicians to receive certain amounts of funds, and considering only the members who were elected and received funds is therefore the best way to create a data sample for the relationship being studied.

A number of considerations were made in regards to the dependent variable, the donations to candidates themselves. All donations were taken from the Israeli Comptroller's database.¹ Donations up until the day of the general election itself, on January 22, 2013, were included in the analysis. This was done for two reasons. First, accurate records regarding the

¹ The Israeli Comptroller's website can be found at: <http://primaries.publish.mevaker.gov.il/>

dates of primaries could not be found for all four of the parties in question. Second, this allows all parties to be on equal footing in terms of receiving donations and having them considered. Ending the analysis at different dates for different parties could lead to skewed results because different parties would have different numbers of days prior to the election to collect donations, and one would imagine that as an election ‘heats up’ and gets closer to its conclusion donors become more interested in contributing to a campaign.

All donations were considered in New Israeli Shekels (NIS), the official currency of Israel. Some donations in the dataset were only listed in the Israeli Comptroller’s database in US dollars without a conversion to NIS. These donations were converted to NIS using the American Internal Revenue Services’ yearly average currency exchange rate between dollars and shekels for the year in question.²

All donations were included in the analysis. Donations from the candidates themselves were included as domestic donations. Furthermore, donations from different members of the same family were included as separate donations. The number of both domestic and international donors, along with the amount in NIS that each politician received from each group, was tabulated. Percentages of money that came from foreign sources, along with the percentage of donors that were from Israel and abroad, were also calculated.

As for independent variables, background information was acquired for each of the politicians. In addition to their party membership, all of the politicians’ genders and ages at the time of the 2013 election were included in the analysis. Candidates were also screened for experience as a politician, as this could be a reason as to why some politicians receive more donations than others. All variables regarding experience were only considered up until 2013.

² This exchange can be found at: <http://www.irs.gov/Individuals/International-Taxpayers/Yearly-Average-Currency-Exchange-Rates>

First, the number of Knesset assemblies of which a politician had been a member prior to 2013 was collected. Second, the number of years the politician had served as a minister in the Israeli cabinet was considered. As is the case in many parliamentary democracies, the Israeli cabinet is made up of members of the parliament, in this case the Knesset. Lastly, the number of years each of the candidates had served as leader of their party prior to the election was included in the data set.

SUMMARY STATISTICS OF VARIABLES

Variable	Mean	Range	St. Deviation	% of Zeroes
Total Donations Sum	327,005.82	0-1,568,561	373,811.77	13.46%
International Donations Sum	121191.67	0-1,208,212.84	220,490.05	42.31%
% Of Donations That Are International	22.65	0-96.73	29.11	42.31%
# Of Donations	95.46	0-2033	293.01	13.46%
# Of International Donations	18.92	0-252	39.65	42.31%
% Of Donations That Are International	22.91	0-97.87	29.45	42.31%
Number of Knessets Served	1.92	0-8	2.37	42.31%
Years In Cabinet Position	2.13	0-16	4.28	73.08%
Years as Party Leader	.33	0-13	1.823	92.31%
Year of Birth	1961.6	1936-1985	11.11	N/A

Party Breakdown

Likud	18
Labor	15
The Jewish Home	12
Meretz	6

Gender Breakdown

Male	38
Female	14

Donations Statistics

N of Total Donations	4696
NIS of Total Donations	16,592,270.74
N of International Donations	984 (20.95% of total donations)
NIS of International Donations	6,185,964.86 (37.28% of total donations)
NIS of International Donations to Likud	4,691,843.32 (53.13% of donations to party)
NIS of International Donations to Labor	1,354,244.19 (22.21% of donations to party)
NIS of International Donations to Meretz	300 (.26% of donations to party)
NIS of International Donations to The Jewish Home	255,579.38 (13.03% of donations to party)

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

As was mentioned in the theory section, three variables will be included in the analysis when considering the role of foreign donors – the total international donations that each politician received (Total Int. Donations), the percentage of money each politician received that came from foreign sources (% of Donations Int.), and the percentage of each politician’s donors that were foreign (% of Donors Int.). Each of these three statistics help explain a different part of the picture in regards to the role that foreign donors and donations play in Israeli primary elections.

To account for the hypotheses related to political experience, a linear regression was run with the three measures of political experience – number of Knessets served, years in a cabinet position, and years as a party leader. Birth year and gender were also included in the analysis. At the same time, the theory section of this paper makes a case for why institutional levels of politicians should be considered within a larger framework of political ideology. Therefore, party was also taken into consideration in the regression, with Likud being considered as the base party and all other parties being considered from the set point of Likud. From here, results can be more easily and properly drawn:

	Total Int. Donations	% of Donations Int.	% of Donors Int.
Number of Knessets	-22291.79 (17372.24)	-.0122 (.026621)	-.0169 (.033561)
Years in Cabinet Position	18460.697** (8351.373)	.0074 (.012798)	.0065 (.015148)
Years as Party Leader	71005.466*** (11536.39)	.037** (.017678)	.0407** (.019687)
Birth Year	1444.433 (2422.68)	.38145 (.003713)	.0008 (.004449)
Gender (Male)	82824.779* (48609.63)	.0816 (.07449)	.1119 (.088405)
Labor	-110677.8** (54566.3)	-.3032*** (.083618)	-.2896*** (.094841)
Meretz	-159556.2** (71761.96)	-.4277*** (.109969)	-.4123*** (.131534)
The Jewish Home	-162076.2** (60287.75)	-.418177*** (.092385)	-.391088*** (.117507)
R- Squared	.665	.534	.478
Adjusted R-Squared	.590	.448	.362

N of politicians: 52

N of donations: 4964

N of international donations: 984

Note: *** significant at $p < 0.01$, ** significant at $p < 0.05$, * significant at $p < 0.10$

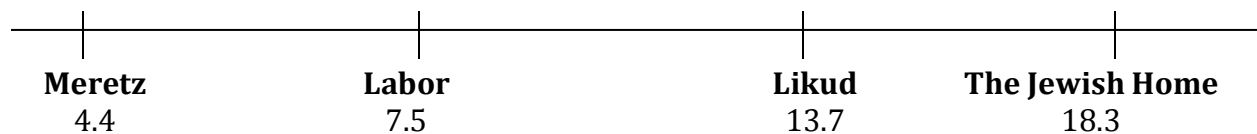
Before continuing to discuss the three hypotheses, it should be noted how successful these models were at accounting for the variance in the three metrics of foreign donations. For total international donations, the r-squared value was .655. For percent of donations that were international, the r-squared value was .534. For the percent of donors that were international, the r-squared value was .478. It is telling that such a simple model that does not take into

consideration a number of complex explanations that could alter how international donors give to politicians can serve as a fairly respectable explainer of the variance in the three measures of international donations.

Having completed the regression of the data, the results can be applied to each of the three hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1

The first hypothesis stated that there will be a correlation between foreign donations and being from a more conservative party. Before analyzing the results, the characteristics of the parties themselves must be accounted for. The four major parties can be viewed on a simple left-right axis. As Benoit and Laver observed in 2006, and as is still true today, Meretz is the most liberal of the four parties being considered, followed by Labor, Likud, and, most conservatively, The Jewish Home (Benoit & Laver, 2006). Benoit and Laver gave the parties different scores based on how liberal or conservative they were:³



The four parties are, however, of radically different sizes. Labor and Likud, which have been the only two of the four parties in the analysis to ever hold the prime ministership, have led the Knesset for all but two of the country's 20 parliamentary sessions and are Israel's two largest parties. With increased size and power comes an increase in the number of people who are

³ Benoit and Laver actually observed two of the Jewish Home's precursor, the National Religious Party and the National Unity, in their study. The NRP and National Unity merged with smaller parties in 2008 to form the modern-day Jewish Home Party. Both parties were right of the three other parties mentioned in this analysis. In the figure above, the two party's 'left-right' scores were averaged. Please also note that this figure is only meant to be a visual representation of the data, and is not drawn to scale.

members of the party and an increase in the amount of money needed to win a primary. Meretz and the Jewish Home, on the other hand, are relatively small parties that do not truly contend for the prime ministership, and can only hope to be side-players and kingmakers in larger Knesset coalitions. Therefore, one cannot simply observe all of these four parties and expect the three values of international donations to increase as one moves from Meretz to Labor to Likud to the Jewish Home.

Instead, the four parties should be considered as two pairwise comparisons – the two large parties, Likud and Labor, should be considered against each other, and the two smaller parties, Meretz and the Jewish Home should be considered vis-à-vis one another. Unfortunately, as small parties, the sample sizes of Meretz and the Jewish Home are far too small to be able to draw any statistically significant solutions in relation to one another. Therefore, the analysis of this hypothesis must rely on the differences between Labor and Likud. Since these are the two most powerful parties in Israeli politics, this analysis is not only statistically convenient; it will allow this study to consider international donations in the partisan context as it relates to the most important of Israeli political institutions.

Looking at Labor and Likud shows the systematic difference between how liberals and conservatives are funded by international donors. The estimates show that the concept that conservatives would be funded more than liberals was correct in all three of the observed metrics of foreign donation. Meanwhile, looking at one-tailed p-values show that the differences between the two groups in all three of the metrics are statistically significant at the 5% level. The conclusiveness of the results between Likud and Labor means that the first hypothesis is confirmed.

Hypothesis 2

The second hypothesis stated that there would be no correlation between foreign donations and number of Knessets served in or time as a minister in the Knesset. For the most part, the results of this hypothesis were confirmed. Number of Knessets did not produce a statistically significant correlation with any of the three metrics of foreign donations. Of the three metrics, only total international donations had a statistically significant correlation with the years a politician had served as a minister. The correlations between years as a cabinet member and both percentage of donations that were foreign and percentage of donors that were foreign were both rather statistically insignificant.

These results mean that as a politician serves for more years as a cabinet minister they receive more money on the whole. There is no change between the relative amount of money coming from domestic and foreign sources, nor is there a change in the relative number of donors coming from Israel and abroad, but more funds and donors are coming in general from both sources. This result logically makes sense – as was explained in the theory section, cabinet members are usually more famous and influential, so they can ask for, and expect, more money at fundraising events. The increase in influence that comes from being a cabinet member could also mean that donors looking for some form of quid pro quo would need to spend more money to ‘buy over’ the politician. Lastly, these politicians may be considering a future party leadership bid. As was previously stated, these campaigns cost far more than simple party primaries, and these politicians may be preparing their war chests accordingly.

On the whole, though, there was not a strong correlation between foreign donations and the two measures of political experience. While being a cabinet minister does seem to mean that a politician is receiving more money in general during a primary season, they are not receiving a

greater proportion of that funding from foreign sources, nor do they have a greater percentage of foreign donors than those candidates that do not have cabinet-level experience. Therefore, the second hypothesis is also confirmed.

Hypothesis 3

The third hypothesis stated that there would be a correlation between foreign donations and the number of years a candidate served as party leader. The results from the analysis proved this hypothesis true in regards to all three metrics of foreign donations. The point estimates of the correlation between years as a party leader and all three of the metrics were positive, and all three of the correlations were statistically significant at the 3% level or better when looking at a one-tailed p-value test. Therefore, the third hypothesis that was outlined in the theory section is confirmed as well.

CONCLUSION

After analyzing the data, all three of the proposed hypotheses were confirmed by the study. The results indicate that while, for the most part, political experience does not play a role in how much money, what percentage of a politician's funds, or what percentage of a politicians' donors are foreign or come from foreign sources, the politician's political affiliations and how long they have served as a party leader does affect their ties to international donors when looking at all three metrics.

There are some limitations to the analysis that should be stated at this point. Simply put, this analysis only considered correlation, and correlative results do not necessarily imply causation. A number of confounding variables that could have influenced the results were not considered in this analysis. Among these variables are a party's perceived likelihood to win the prime ministership or become part of the governing coalition, a politician's committee

assignments and policy preferences, whether or not a politician belongs to the more conservative or liberal flank of their own party, and a politician's popularity abroad and in the foreign press in comparison to the Israeli press.

While I do not expect that these limiting variables particularly biased the results in any way, nor do they invalidate the study's results, they all serve as interesting possible expansions of the analysis performed in this study. Another possible extension of this work would be to consider other election cycles and see if the results found above are replicated in other Israeli elections. Considering the donors themselves instead of the politicians could make for another possible future study. The Israeli Comptroller's website lists the names and addresses of the domestic and foreign donors. Surveying these donors and determining their political and policy preferences and what drives them to fund certain politicians could shed further light on the private financing of Israeli political primaries.

While all of these options would further the study of Israeli primary financing, this study advances the conversation by considering *all* of the nearly 5000 donations and 1000 foreign donations that went to the 52 Israeli politicians from the four major Israeli parties that held primaries in 2013. The results of this study also leads to the consideration of some of the larger questions surrounding Israeli electoral financing and elections.

First, the results call into question who certain Israeli politicians really serve. If, as much of the literature surveyed in this study suggests, donors give to politicians as an investment that will yield political favors, the confluence of foreign money both to conservative political parties like Likud and amongst high-ranking politicians in the form of party leaders leads one to question if these individuals and institutions are only serving the Israeli public's interests or also have to work towards the interests of wealthy foreign donors. As this paper also made clear, even

if donations are given as a consumptive, as opposed to an instrumental, good, politicians may still feel the need to match their policy preferences and political actions to those of foreign donors in the hopes of convincing them to donate to their campaign. The fact that this process occurs also suggests that foreign donors may be limiting the options presented to Israeli voters. As the literature indicated, newer candidates need money to get their name out and contend in elections, and, particularly in parties like Likud where foreign donors play a larger role, politicians may need the resources of foreign donors to advance past the primary stages of the campaign. This is particularly important in situations where foreign donations make up a considerable percentage of the party's total primary funds. As the summary statistics in the data section showed, this is the sort of situation faced by Likud, where foreign donations accounted for over one half of total donations. In these cases, candidates may feel the need to change their policy preferences to match those of foreign donors, or candidates who already are aligned with foreign donors' interests may be the only ones in their party to receive the funds that will help them secure a high spot on the party's list.

Lastly, the results help explain the political preferences of foreign donors. The theory section of this paper offered evidence as to why foreign donors, particularly American Jews, would be more likely than Israelis to donate to conservative rather than liberal politicians, and the results of the study confirm this theory. The fact that foreign patrons are more conservative than Israelis, however, should also lead observers of Israeli politics to question the role that foreign patrons play in Israeli society at large. As was mentioned in this paper's introduction, foreign donors and organizations have long played a role in shaping Israeli society, and observers both within Israel and around the world should be cognizant in thinking of how the

systematic biases and preferences of these patrons differ from those of actual Israeli citizens who must live in the society these foreign donors affect.

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