

**Sacred Politics:  
Religious Leaders and Conflict in Israel**

by

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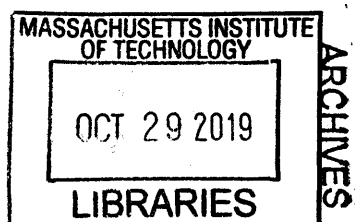
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Submitted to the Department of Political Science  
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**Abstract**

My dissertation examines why religious leaders adopt nationalist positions and how these positions contribute to the duration of an ongoing conflict. I propose a general framework of sacred politics that incorporates the state, religious leaders, and religious communities. Within this framework, I develop a theory of religious credibility that explains the variation in religious leader ideology through examining leaders' incentives to strategically adopt ideological positions and the network of religious institutions. I test these hypotheses in Israel using a combination of methods including statistical text methods that analyze religious communication of different religious leaders, spatial panel data showing the electoral impact of religious institutions, and a novel experimental design where I vary the credibility of religious leaders using religious sermons. This dissertation offers significant social science contributions as it offers an account of why religious leaders adopt moderate and extreme ideologies. They also give insight into the reasons why some religious leaders cooperate with the state, why this cooperation is crucial for the termination of conflict, and the influence that religious leaders have on the political behavior of their followers. Outside of scholarly literatures, the dissertation offers important findings for policy-makers seeking to understand and include religious leaders in development and peace-building processes.

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

Accepting that the Israel-Palestine conflict is also a bitter religious war runs counter to the international community's preferred solutions. But it would be better to recognize this awful fact, which is a central reason that none of these solutions have worked, despite the intense diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict (Pfeffer, 2014).

You can have a smartphone, a television at home, your kids can go to karate, but at the end of the day what are you? Haredi or not? he said. With all the advancement, in the end people still listened to the rabbis (Kershner, 2019).

### 1.1 Motivation

In the past decade, religious leaders have been deal-breakers in conflicts ranging from Afghanistan to Israel, powerful motivators in vote choice in the United States, and have influenced compliance with state law on issues ranging from paying taxes to reporting crimes. Yet, this continued impact is puzzling as the influence of religious leaders was predicted to wane in a globalized era where there is increased access to information and more material goods (Gorski and AltÄšnordu, 2008). Despite these predictions, religious movements increasingly influence government policy worldwide

(Gill, 2001; Philpott, 2009; Grzymala-Busse, 2012).<sup>1</sup>

Alongside the increase in religious influence, there has been an increase in religious conflicts during the last 10 years (Walter, 2017*b*). These conflicts tend to be longer and more violent with many militant groups increasingly espousing religious ideologies. Prominent examples of countries where religious leaders play an important role include Nigeria, Pakistan, Indonesia, Iraq, and Israel. In these contexts, religious leaders (and religious ideologies) play an important role in the exacerbation and conclusion of conflict.

However, the literature is deeply divided in its explanations for the political influence of religious leaders. In addition, other key questions remain under-explored such as why do religious groups have large political influence in some countries, while remaining marginal to politics in other countries. Finally, although religious leader engagement has important political consequences, the motivations and strategic interests of religious leaders are not well understood by scholars or policy makers.

A significant reason for the slow progress of scholarship on the study of religious leaders is the existence of measurement concerns, challenges in causal identification, and skepticism over the importance of religious actors in conflict settings. My dissertation addresses this lacuna by taking advantage of recent advances in text analysis and big data to examine two related questions surrounding the political behavior and influence of religious leaders. First, why do some religious leaders choose to cooperate with the state, while others choose to challenge it? Second, why do religious leaders become involved in some conflicts, while remaining more indifferent to others?

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<sup>1</sup> According to the Religion and State (RAS) dataset, which measures the extent of government involvement in religion for 175 states on a yearly basis, 39 countries worldwide had one established state religion in 2008 (22 percent of the sample). While most of these countries are concentrated in the Middle East and Asia, the list also includes a range of democratic countries such as Argentina, Denmark, and Norway. Indeed, virtually all countries have some type of religious legislation, where the average country in the data has 8 such policies.

## 1.2 Argument

Building on a larger religion and politics literature, I propose and develop in my dissertation a theory of sacred politics that helps answer these related questions by explaining the rationale for the political behavior and impact of religious leaders during different types of conflict. Specifically, I propose a general framework of political behavior that incorporates the state, religious leaders, and religious communities. This theory helps explain the variation in religious leader ideology by looking at leaders' incentives to strategically adopt ideological positions and the network of religious institutions.

I argue that religious leaders are faced with the following dilemma: to what extent should they cooperate with the state to gain resources? On one side, cooperation may allow one to gain resources, which can be used to maintain followers and even attract new adherents (Davis and Robinson, 2012; Cammett and Maclean, 2014). In addition, political ties allow for religious leaders to advocate for issues which they care about. On the other hand, one may need to make compromises on one's religious principles to be attractive and influential with the secular state. In turn, these compromises may threaten one's status and future ability to influence one's religious community due to the possible loss of perceived religious authenticity.

This argument assumes that in a competitive market between similar religious groups, religious leaders need material resources to succeed (Iannaccone, 1998). For religious individuals, the transition from a religious community to a non-religious community is difficult and rare due to the high costs of conversion (Grzymala-Busse, 2012). However, the transition between different religious communities is more commonplace. In this competitive market, material resources are important since they allow for a more beneficial religious experience through the funding of religious and educational services. Thus, religious leaders that need more material resources from the state will be more likely to cooperate with the state (Migdal, 1988; Barkey, 1994).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> In contrast, religious leaders that can draw on material resources from the larger community - including foreign donations - have less to gain from cooperation with the state. Under these circumstances, foreign donations act as a type of "insurance policy", protecting religious leaders from state pressure.

In addition, religious leaders need to weigh to what extent their local community will be receptive to political compromise on controversial political and religious issues. I argue that political compromise becomes less risky for religious leaders when these compromises are viewed as religiously credible (Djupe and Calfano, 2013a; Charnysh, Lucas and Singh, 2015; Grzymala-Busse, 2015; Masoud, Jamal and Nugent, 2016). When this happens, religious leaders can succeed as religious peacemakers, as opposed to acting as ‘spoilers’ to political compromise.

My theoretical framework suggests two implications. First, I propose that religious leaders strategically adopt popular ideological positions, especially during symbolic conflict, to protect their reputation within their local community. Second, that religious leaders are deeply influenced by their institutional setting, where religious leaders who belong to religious institutions without independent resources are significantly more likely to participate in politics and cooperate with the state.

### 1.3 Context

My dissertation examines religious leaders in Israel. One motivation for focusing on Israel is that the country is embroiled in a range of conflicts, where some conflicts involve sacred territory (Jerusalem), while others do not (Lebanon). Moreover, it contains local populations that are highly exposed to and influenced by religious teachings. As well, the Israeli context offers a rich menu of different religious groups who pursue political activity for different reasons. For example, some religious leaders are motivated to gain resources, which help subsidize the production of religious goods, which motivates the adoption of politically moderate views.

For instance, *Haredi* elites are arguably motivated by the need to preserve their cultural autonomy and to have resources directed to their community via *Yeshiva* benefits and child subsidies. Consequently, religious elites are careful to maintain political neutrality on important foreign issues, which allows them to join political coalitions led by the right wing or left wing (Berman, 2000). In contrast, other religious leaders are motivated to shape the policy of government according to religious

principles. For example, Religious Zionist elites are motivated to influence Israeli government policy, particularly to shape the Jewish nature of the state and adopt hawkish positions on the Israeli Palestinian conflict (Mendelsohn, 2016). Moreover, religious leaders may engage in politics in order to present themselves as a viable alternative to the ruling party.

In Israel, scholars have noted the impact that religious groups have on politics. However, these accounts typically focus on the impact that religious political parties have on national politics in Israel by making or breaking governing coalitions (Liebman, 1993). In addition, other scholarly accounts have noted the impact that radical religious groups (such as Gush Emunim) have on political violence in Israel (Pedahzur, 2012; Mendelsohn, 2016). While religious political parties and messianic groups do indeed play an important role in Israeli politics, scholars have yet to systematically examine the political behavior and impact of religious leaders in Israel.

In the Israeli context, religious leaders are typically employed in a variety of religious or educational institutions such as *Yeshivot*, *Kollels*, and Synagogues which differ in their funding structure. Significantly, most of these religious institutions receive state funding at the behest of the religious political parties, which in many instances comprises much of their funding (Liebman, 1993; Shetreet, 1999; Ben-Porat, 2013).<sup>3</sup>

## 1.4 Methodology

My dissertation uses diverse tools to answer these questions, from big-data approaches to interviews. Combining these approaches with fieldwork and experiments gives me inferential leverage to test hypotheses and mechanisms that one method alone could not provide. I also draw on several disciplines including comparative politics, international relations, conflict resolution, sociology, and economics.

For the dissertation, I have collected a variety of rich data. First, I have collected

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<sup>3</sup> While most of state funding comes from the Ministry of Education, some institutions also receive money from the Ministry of Welfare or the Ministry of Defense.

thousands of different Sabbath pamphlets (*Alonei Shabbat*), a popular form of religious media containing sermons by prominent religious elites on important political, national, and religious (*Halachic*) issues (Caplan, 2006). In addition, I have collected over 100,000 legal responses, where religious leaders provide legal rulings on a host of social and political issues. To provide empirical evidence on the actual political importance of religious institutions in Israel, I use a novel approach that exploits temporal and spatial variation in the entry of new religious institutions into neighborhoods. Specifically, I will spatially link data on voting for national elections held between 1977-2015 with over 2000 religious institutions. Finally, I have collected experimental evidence on religious leaders by running a survey experiment (2 studies) using Qualtrics through iPanel, an Israeli survey with a good reputation that uses an online panel.

## 1.5 Dissertation Roadmap

My dissertation comprises three papers exploring why religious leaders adopt nationalist positions and how these positions contribute to the duration of an ongoing conflict.

Chapter 2 develops an incentive-based theory to understand why leaders strategically adopt certain theological positions during different military and political conflicts. I theorize that religious leaders are more likely to become more nationalist during conflicts that involves territory with high symbolic value. Drawing on an original collection of Sabbath pamphlets distributed to Synagogues, I use statistical text analysis to measure what topics religious leaders focus on in their weekly written sermons. My findings show that religious leaders respond with more nationalist rhetoric for symbolic conflict with Palestinians which involves sacred territory, and that these effects are mediated by the political ideology of one's religious community towards the state. In contrast, religious rhetoric does not respond to strategic military conflict in Lebanon or other internal Israeli political conflicts. These findings highlight the different incentives that religious leaders face during conflict, leading some religious

leaders to infuse symbolic conflicts with a religious tone.

In Chapter 3, I analyze how Jewish religious institutions (Yeshivot) and Jewish faith organizations help generate support for religious political parties in Israel. I theorize that the exchange of goods and services for political support between religious political parties and religious institutions functions similarly to clientelism. I spatially link local voting data for national elections with data on the founding of over 3,000 religious institutions, and use a difference in differences design that exploits the plausibly exogenous timing of entry of Yeshivot into neighborhoods. I find that new religious institutions are associated with an increase in local voting support for religious parties, where the effect is larger for religious institutions who are connected to religious political parties. My results also suggest that the primary mechanism driving these results are benefits distributed to communities by religious institutions, where these goods influence the political views of existing residents. In contrast, changes to the composition of the neighborhood through in-migration has a more limited effect on voting patterns. My findings also highlight the impact of religious institutions on the social and political fabric of local communities.

Chapter 4 examines how religious rhetoric can help resolve or extend conflict and to what extent religious leaders are able to generate a greater willingness among local populations to make political compromises with out-groups in conflict situations. Together with Pazit Ben-Nun Bloom (Hebrew University), this chapter examines why some religious leaders can help resolve conflict while others have little impact. We argue that religious leaders with religious authority are uniquely situated to propose political compromises. Since people typically choose what religious leaders and messages they expose themselves to, it is hard to measure the causal impact due to the confounding effects of self-selection. We overcome this identification problem by conducting a novel survey experiment in Israel where we vary the political and religious credibility of a religious leader, and then present a sermon by that leader that encourages political compromise. Our results suggest that religious leader authority, together with political credibility, does contribute to a greater willingness to make political compromises. Overall, this research makes important contributions regarding



the potential for selective religious leaders to diminish religiously motivated political claims.

I conclude in Chapter 5 with contributions, limitations, and next steps for my research agenda. I argue that my dissertation significantly advances theory, data, and methodology in the study of religious politics as it offers an account of why religious leaders adopt moderate and extreme ideologies and the impact these choices have on the duration and intensity of conflict. Understanding the political behavior of religious leaders is important to large literatures on religion and politics, Middle Eastern politics, state legitimacy, and conflict resolution. Outside of scholarly literatures, my dissertation offers important findings for policy-makers seeking to understand and include religious leaders in community building and peace-building processes.

## Chapter 2

# Fighting from the Pulpit: Religious Leaders and Violent Conflict in Israel

### Abstract

Religious leaders greatly influence their constituents' political behavior. Yet, it is unclear what events trigger nationalist attitudes among religious leaders and why this effect occurs more among some religious leaders rather than others. In this paper, I examine the content of Israeli Rabbinic rhetoric during different military and political conflicts. Drawing on an original collection of Sabbath pamphlets distributed to Synagogues, I demonstrate that religious rhetoric is highly responsive to levels of violence for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. I find that religious rhetoric and tone are more nationalist during conflict with the Palestinians, and that this effect is mediated by religious ideologies towards the state. In contrast, religious rhetoric does not respond to military conflict in Lebanon or other internal Israeli political conflicts. These findings highlight under what conditions religious leaders infuse conflict with a religious tone, arguably making it harder to gain support for political compromise among the religious public.

Ample evidence exists that citizens take cues from religious leaders when forming opinions about salient political issues (Grzymala-Busse, 2012; Djupe and Calfano, 2013b; Masoud, Jamal and Nugent, 2016). The influence of religious leaders seems especially consequential during conflict, particularly when the conflict involves sacred places or territory (Atran, Axelrod and Davis, 2007; Svensson, 2007; Hassner, 2009; Manekin, Grossman and Mitts, 2018). Yet, measurement concerns and causal identification challenges have impeded the fine-grained study of religious leaders in conflict settings.

In this paper, I explore how religious leaders respond to heightened conflict where religious beliefs play an important role. In this context, do religious leaders serve as a moderating voice, or do they contribute to an escalation in violence? I examine this question by analyzing how religious leaders respond to different conflicts in Israel. In the past, religious support by Israel's leading Rabbis was critical for the peace process, the Oslo accords, and for resolving conflict on the Temple Mount (Usher, 1999; Gopin, 2002a; Hassner, 2009). However, recent years have seen a right-wing shift in Rabbinic opinion, and the religious community has adopted a hawkish and uncompromising stance on the peace process.<sup>1</sup> For example, the Israeli police have investigated and pressed charges against several hardline Rabbis for inciting violence.<sup>2</sup> In contrast, other religious leaders have been actively involved in peace dialogues.<sup>3</sup>

Despite the link between religious leaders and violence, the literature often does not consider temporality at all and treats the violent rhetoric of religious elites as if it was fixed over time (Nielsen, 2017). I argue that this is not the case, and that this oversimplification makes it difficult to understand when religious elites will stoke conflict. Since religious leaders see their primary task as upholding and enforcing sacred values, I argue they are more likely to use nationalist rhetoric during conflict

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<sup>1</sup> See the most recent Pew Report on Israel, which indicates that Israel's religious populations hold more hawkish views on the peace process. Available at: <http://www.pewforum.org/2016/03/08/israels-religiously-divided-society/>

<sup>2</sup> See <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-west-bank-rabbi-to-stand-trial-for-incitement-against-arabs-1.5483816>

<sup>3</sup> For one example of dialogue between religious leaders during conflict, see <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/press-room/view/muslim-jewish-religious-leaders-denounce-violence-promote-peace-in-unprecedented>

when religious values such as the indivisibility of sacred territory are at risk. In contrast, they will be less likely to respond to conflicts that involve territory which is valuable for strategic reasons but possess less symbolic value.

Other scholarship which focuses on the effects of conflict, such as the ‘rally round the flag effect’, typically distinguishes between political elites and the masses. However, it is theoretically unclear whether religious elites are more likely to view conflict as a strategic opportunity to become more popular (like elites), or to engage in patriotic impulses (like the masses). I argue that the incentives generated by conflict will be mediated by how one’s religious community views the state, implying that leaders cannot simply bend the power of congregations to their will.

To assess these hypotheses, I collect and analyze the writings of religious leaders from Sabbath pamphlets (*Alonei Shabbat*). These pamphlets are an important vehicle that Jewish Israeli religious leaders use to communicate with followers on a weekly basis.<sup>4</sup> Building an original panel dataset of over 10,000 articles written by over 200 religious leaders in these religious pamphlets, this paper examines weekly changes in religious leaders’ discourse using structural topic models. I estimate the effect of conflict on religious leader rhetoric by exploiting the variation of conflict intensity over time for different military and political conflicts. To vary the type of conflict, I compare episodes of violence during the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, one of the best-known and longest-enduring religiously linked conflicts in the world today, to other instances of conflict such as the Lebanon war in 2006 or the evacuation of Israeli settlements.

My results indicate that religious rhetoric becomes more nationalist in frequency and tone during times of military conflict with the Palestinians. I find that conflict increases the share of nationalist rhetoric topics in Sabbath pamphlets by approximately 40 percent. I also find that nationalist rhetoric during conflict with the Palestinians changes from a mostly civic discourse which emphasizes statehood to

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<sup>4</sup> Several online surveys among the religious public suggest that popular pamphlets have a percentage of readership that is comparable to Israel’s most popular written media outlets. For example, *Miskar*, a survey firm for the Religious Zionist community, shows that the readership for pamphlets and newspapers are comparable (about 30 percent). For the report (in Hebrew), see: <https://www.miskar.co.il/he/surveys/132>.

an ethnic discourse which emphasizes fighting and defeating one's enemies. Examining why conflict has this impact on religious leaders, I compare conflict with the Palestinians to conflict in Lebanon and other internal Israeli political conflicts. I find that these changes in rhetoric are reserved exclusively for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This result is consistent with a theoretical argument which posits that religious leaders are more likely to reserve their religious ire for conflicts that involves sacred territory. In addition, these results weigh against a salience explanation where religious leaders respond to every conflict as part of a tendency to respond to important political events.

I also consider how religious leaders face different incentives which may help shape their response to conflict. I propose that religious leaders who belong to religious communities with prior nationalist beliefs will be more likely to view conflict as an opportunity to gain new followers and promote hawkish religious-nationalist opinions among the Israeli public (Meyer and Staggenborg, 1996). My results suggest that political theology does mediate one's response to conflict, where religious leaders who belong to communities with favorable attitudes towards Zionism and the state adopt more nationalist language during conflict. In contrast, religious leaders in religious communities opposed to Zionism do *not* use more nationalist language during conflict.

This article makes four key contributions. First, despite the prominent link between religious leaders and conflict, it is unclear how religious leaders respond to conflict. I help fill this gap by providing a theoretical framework that distinguishes between distinct types of conflict and the political incentives which different religious leaders face. Second, scholarship has recognized that religious conflicts are harder to resolve, but our understanding of the social mechanisms through which this operates remains limited. My results arguably highlight a potential mechanism by which religious leaders help sustain conflict by providing moral authority to continuous state military actions and infusing the conflict with a religious tone.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> In the Israeli-Palestinian context, Ginges et al. (2007) notes that offering material incentives over Jerusalem or refugees created backlash for both Israeli and Palestinian respondents. They attribute this backlash to the psychological mechanism where individuals recoil from a cost-benefit analysis over sacred values.

Third, scholars have mostly looked at religious wars in the context of Christianity or Islam (Toft, 2007; Toft and Zhukov, 2015). I contribute to this literature by examining Jewish religious leader rhetoric in the context of conflict. The focus on religious leaders also complements existing studies that have mainly focused on other religious actors in Israel such as the religious political parties and radical groups like *Gush Emunim* (Pedahzur, 2012; Mendelsohn, 2016), and other studies which have focused on the effects of terror without considering the possible mediating role of religious rhetoric (Berrebi and Klor, 2008; Getmansky and Zeitzoff, 2014; Zeitzoff, 2014; Peffley, Hutchinson and Shamir, 2015; Grossman, Manekin and Miodownik, 2015; Canetti et al., 2017; Mitts, 2019b). Fourth, the paper provides a novel methodological approach to studying religious leaders and conflict by combining causal inference tools with big data. This contributes to several other recent works that have examined important determinants of religious leader behavior using text (Genovese, 2015; Nielsen, 2017). I add to these works by collecting a panel of time-stamped religious materials, which allows me to study changes in the weekly discourse of religious leaders during important political events.

## 2.1 Religious Leaders and Conflict

Despite the prominent link between religious leaders and conflict, there is little systematic work on the impact that conflict has on religious leaders, as expressed by their religious rhetoric. In this section, I outline my hypotheses and their application to the Israeli context.

### 2.1.1 Indivisible Territory and Different Types of Conflict

Many scholars note that conflicts which involve indivisible goods are harder to resolve. Typically, these indivisible goods relate to territory, the heart of many conflicts (Johnson and Toft, 2014; Toft, 2014). When the disputed territory is viewed as sacred, conflict can even take on a religious tone (Appleby, 2000). These religious conflicts tend to be longer, more violent, and deadlier than other conflicts (Toft, 2007).

However, scholars disagree why some territory is perceived as indivisible. According to Fearon (1995), a rational choice framework would argue that there are few issues which are inherently indivisible. Rather, this framework attributes the existence of indivisible goods to domestic factors or other mechanisms. In contrast, other work argues that there are sacred spaces which are inherently harder to resolve by division, such as the Temple Mount in Jerusalem (Hassner, 2003, 2009). In addition to sacred spaces, territory may be viewed as more precious if it was part of one's homeland. For example, Shelef (2016) finds that homeland territory which has been lost increases the likelihood of future conflict.

Representing a middle ground between rational choice and constructivist theories, Goddard (2006, 2009) argues that territory can become indivisible due to social constructs. Specifically, territory which is initially divisible can become indivisible due to uncompromising claims made by political elites. In turn, political elites become locked into these intractable positions due to the need to maintain legitimacy. According to this view, territory can become indivisible due to political processes. This implies that the process is also reversible where indivisible territory becomes suddenly divisible.

Building on this theory of legitimacy, I argue that in addition to political elites, there are other elites in society who actively enforce the indivisibility of territory: religious leaders. Due to their moral authority, religious leaders are uniquely situated to help enforce claims of indivisibility (or potential compromises) with appeals to religious scripture and authority. Indeed, research has shown that religious leaders have a large and substantive influence on a host of controversial moral political issues, even when these messages are cross-cutting (Djupe and Calfano, 2013*b*; Ben-Nun Bloom, Arikan and Courtemanche, 2015; Masoud, Jamal and Nugent, 2016; Margolis, 2018). Moreover, exposure to religious teachings leads to more charitable giving and pro-social behavior (Warner et al., 2015; McClendon and Riedl, 2015; Condra, Isaqzadeh and Linardi, 2017). Finally, religious leaders can also use prayer times to mobilize for street protests (Butt, 2016).

One way for religious leaders to enforce claims of indivisibility on territory is to

merge together nationalist and religious messages in their sermons. Yet, the desire for religious leaders to engage in religious-nationalist rhetoric should not be the same across all conflicts. Rather, this need should be stronger for conflicts that involve territory with high symbolic value that is perceived as indivisible (Manekin, Grossman and Mitts, 2018). In contrast, they should be less likely to attach religious value to territory which only contains strategic value (Zellman, 2015). This suggests the following hypothesis:

**H1:** Religious leaders are more likely to engage in nationalist rhetoric during conflict that involves territory with symbolic value.

### 2.1.2 Religious Ideology and the State

My second hypothesis builds on literature which discusses the ‘rally ’round the flag effect’. This effect refers to the boost in popularity for political leaders due to conflict. One important finding from this literature is that the effect of conflict on presidential popularity is mediated by political elites (Baker and Oneal, 2001; Baum, 2002). However, it is theoretically unclear to what extent religious leaders use conflict to gain followers (like other political elites) or respond reflexively with more nationalism (like the masses).

According to the former scenario, religious leaders may use nationalist rhetoric in an opportunistic manner. Specifically, during times of conflict, there is an opportunity for religious leaders to gain more supporters in a fragmented religious community (Berman, 2009). If the median individual becomes more extreme at times of conflict due to a ‘rally ’round the flag effect’, leaders vying for their support also must shift towards the more extreme. At the same time, we would expect that the potential for religious leaders to gain more followers using nationalist rhetoric will differ according to their religious communities’ relationship to the state. An important part of a religious group’s ideology is its political theology and political standing with the state (Philpott, 2007, 2009). Consequently, when a religious group enjoys a good relationship with the state, religious leaders will have more incentives to use nationalist rhetoric. In contrast, religious leaders that lead religious groups with more ambivalent



attitudes toward the state will have fewer incentives to change their rhetoric during conflict. Indeed, nationalist rhetoric could even backfire as some religious communities might penalize a religious leader who is seen as too close to the ‘secular state’ (Juergensmeyer, 2008).

In contrast, religious leaders may respond to conflict like other citizens and reflexively use nationalist rhetoric to signal their patriotism (Baker and Oneal, 2001; Baum, 2002). Under this scenario, religious leaders should respond in a similar fashion to conflict with more nationalist rhetoric, with less regard towards their community’s attitude towards the state. This is also consistent with the mechanism where religious leaders respond directly to the psychological effects of political violence associated with conflict with more nationalism (Bar-Tal, 2000; Petersen, 2002; Hirsch-Hoefler et al., 2016).<sup>6</sup>

I argue that religious leaders are more likely to act strategically like other political elites. According to several scholars, religious leaders make use of extreme rhetoric as a tool for ideologically outbidding opponents (Blaydes and Linzer, 2012; Breslawski and Ives, 2019). This extreme rhetoric signals one’s authenticity, as one eschews “political correctness” during times of conflict (Nielsen, 2017). This suggests an additional hypothesis:

**H2:** The effects of conflict on religious leaders will be mediated by the religious subgroup’s attitude towards the state.

In the next subsection, I describe how my hypotheses can be applied to religious leaders and conflict in the Israeli context.

### 2.1.3 Jewish Religious Leaders and Conflict in Israel

Jewish religious leaders have a great influence on religious and political affairs in Israel. Religious political parties will usually seek Rabbinical guidance and approval when deciding how to vote on key political issues of the day.<sup>7</sup> This influence also

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<sup>6</sup> It should be noted that some scholars argue that religious actors have *less* of a need to engage in nationalist language during conflict (Fischer et al., 2006; Norenzayan et al., 2009).

<sup>7</sup> The three-major religious political parties in Israel are the Jewish Home, *Shas*, and United Torah Judaism.

manifests itself regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which involves territory that is considered sacred by many individuals. Many religious leaders subscribe to the view that it is forbidden to give away parts of the land of Israel, even in exchange for peace. Some observers believe that prominent conflicts such as the Six-Day War in 1967 (which tripled Israel's territory) and the trauma of the 1973 Arab-Israeli War (*Yom Kippur* war) transformed Israeli society.<sup>8</sup> This was particularly true regarding the religious ideology of Religious Zionism, whose focus shifted from supporting the state to strong beliefs in building settlements and Greater Israel (Shelef, 2010). However, it is less clear whether smaller-scale military conflicts would have a similar impact on religious leaders, especially for conflicts that do not involve sacred territory (such as Lebanon).

In addition, the attitudes of religious leaders are not religiously or politically uniform in Israel. An important cleavage issue among religious leaders in Israel is a group's political theology (Philpott, 2007), as expressed by its attitudes towards Zionism and the state of Israel. On one end of the spectrum regarding attitudes towards Zionism are *Haredi* Rabbis who on religious and ideological grounds are opposed to Zionism. One reason for their opposition was a strong *Haredi* concern that secular Zionism violated traditional religious belief regarding the Messianic process (Ravitzky, 1996).<sup>9</sup> In contrast, leaders from the Religious Zionist community have a more favorable attitude towards Zionism and the state of Israel. This group primarily sees Zionism as the beginning of the Messianic process.<sup>10</sup>

These differences in religious theology have important political and social implications. For instance, the Religious Zionist community in Israel is more likely to support

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<sup>8</sup> For one discussion, see: <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/06/how-the-six-day-war-changed-religion/528981/>.

<sup>9</sup> A primary rabbinic source for *Haredi* opposition to Zionism was the "Three Oaths", which was understood as a vow taken by Jewry not to migrate in large numbers to Israel by 'force' (Ravitzky, 1996). This teaching states: "What are these Three Oaths? One, that Israel should not storm the wall. Two, the Holy One adjured Israel not to rebel against the nations of the world. Three, the Holy One adjured the nations that they would not oppress Israel too much" (*Ketubot* 110b).

<sup>10</sup> According to Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, an influential religious thinker, redemption would take place in two stages. First, a more physical stage such as establishing the state, a strong army, and returning Jewish exiles to Israel. Second, a more spiritual or religious stage which would involve the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple, and the state being run by religious law.

more hawkish political parties who have taken a leading role in the settlement enterprise, while *Haredi* political parties tend to not involve themselves in foreign affairs. In addition, members of the Religious Zionist community serve in the army with many becoming officers, while most *Haredim* learn in religious seminaries and abstain from army service (Cohen, 1993).

#### 2.1.4 Impact of Religious Leaders on Conflict

Finally, it is important to consider the following question: what impact does nationalist rhetoric by religious leaders have on conflict? In this context, it is important to distinguish between the logic of civil war onset and dynamics during civil wars (Cederman and Vogt, 2017). While religious leaders respond to conflict, it seems unlikely that religious leaders initiate the precise timing of conflict in most contexts. First, conflict is often times initiated by the other side, catching religious leaders unprepared. Second, most religious leaders have no direct access to state or military power. However, even if religious leaders do not initiate the onset of conflict, they may still play an important role during conflict and contribute to the likelihood of future conflicts.

For example, religious leaders can provide support for acts of political violence during conflict and help determine who is a legitimate target (De Juan, 2008; Hegghammer, 2013; Basedau, Pfeiffer and Vu, 2016; Hassner, 2016). Other scholars also note that militant groups involved in conflict are increasingly likely to use religious rhetoric to help overcome collective action problems that plague mobilization efforts during conflict (Toft, 2007; Berman, 2009; Isaacs, 2016; Breslawski and Ives, 2019). In some instances, religious leaders can even serve in an advisory or leadership role, like religious leaders who helped set up the Jewish Underground in Israel (Perliger and Pedahzur, 2011).

In the next subsection, I elaborate upon the Sabbath pamphlets, my data source of religious leader discourse.

## 2.2 Converting Religious Pamphlets into Data

To study the effects of conflict on religious leader discourse, I converted religious texts from over 100 weekly leaflets into a format that can be analyzed quantitatively using web-scraping and text analysis techniques (Grimmer and Stewart, 2013). The overall sample size is 10,968 articles written by 250 different religious leaders over a ten-year span (2006-2015). This section and the online appendix describe in more detail how I built this unique corpus.

### 2.2.1 Religious Pamphlets

Religious leaders in Israel systematically communicate their opinions in several ways. In contrast to other religious traditions (Djupe and Calfano, 2013*b*), the local sermon is a relatively insignificant channel in Israel. Indeed, many local Synagogues and prayer services do not have a weekly Sabbath sermon due to the long prayer service (over 2 hours), cost of hiring a Rabbi, and religious prohibitions on microphones. Moreover, when there are sermons on the Sabbath, religious prohibitions on electronic recording (and travel) prevent their diffusion to larger audiences. In response, religious leaders in Israel have created other forms of religious communication, such as audio tapes, radio shows, and religious pamphlets (Caplan, 1997). In this paper, I focus on religious pamphlets, which are viewed as a very prominent channel of religious communication. Qualitative evidence also suggests that the pamphlets have become an important institutional part of the Synagogue experience as other forms of electronic media are prohibited on the Sabbath (Caplan, 2006).

According to a prominent overview on Israeli religious pamphlets, the motivations for producing and reading the weekly pamphlets are threefold (Caplan, 2006). First, the pamphlets serve as a media alternative to the “secular” media in Israel. While the secular media is viewed by religious leaders, and large parts of the religious population as “biased” against religion, the pamphlets allow for a more positive religious perspective on the religious and political issues of the day (Cohen, 2000; Rashi, 2011). Second, the pamphlets serve as a gateway for connecting religious leaders to the mass

religious public. While most scholarly work is “inaccessible” to most of the religious population, the pamphlets are written in a way that allow “ordinary” people to access religious leader opinion on religious and political matters. In this regard, they are part of a greater trend towards folk religion in Israel which includes visiting graves of famous Rabbis and religiously-inspired music. Third, the great diversity of pamphlets reflect the fragmentation of the religious community in Israel. As noted by Caplan (2006), a widespread platitude in Israel is that “if your organization does not put out a pamphlet, it does not exist.”

While it is hard to quantify precisely the scope of the phenomenon, older estimates suggest there are over 1.5 million pamphlets published weekly (Israel’s total population is less than 9 million people).<sup>11</sup> Considering that the religious population who frequent a Synagogue on a weekly basis is estimated to be about 1 million people, this indicates that there are more pamphlets being published than those who go to Synagogue. Pamphlets are usually sent out in the mail and distributed by local organizations or volunteers to neighborhood Synagogues. Most Synagogues have a table where a multitude of pamphlets are put out prior to the Sabbath, and it is common for people to take several pamphlets when they attend Synagogue during Sabbath prayer. These pamphlets are also frequently read during the prayer service, a practice that has attracted Rabbinic criticism (Caplan, 2006).

Many pamphlets contain advertisements, which mostly fund the costs of publishing. The pamphlets are typically 8-10 pages, which contain articles from the same 5-6 scholars on different topics. The typical pamphlet - like a newspaper - contains several genres. There is usually a main article that ties in events from the weekly Bible reading with current events. While the purpose of the article is usually homiletic, it is not uncommon for the discussion to focus on current political events.

Finally, most pamphlets are affiliated with religious movements. While Ultra-Orthodox pamphlets are less involved with politics, most Religious Zionist pamphlets are loosely affiliated with political parties. In other words, while having no explicit

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<sup>11</sup> See <http://www.haaretz.com/weekend/week-s-end/who-says-print-journalism-is-dying-1.217254>

political affiliation, most make endorsements around elections for specific parties and will allow political entrepreneurs to advertise in the pamphlets.<sup>12</sup>

### 2.2.2 Sampling and Generalizability

My analysis focuses on religious leaders whose teachings are available in religious pamphlets. These pamphlets include articles by important senior religious leaders, and articles by religious educators who are not well-known outside of their local community. My analysis, however, does not include religious leaders whose teachings are only available in other formats such as audio or video, due to the logistical difficulty involved in converting Hebrew audio or video to quantitative data.

I developed a sampling frame of written pamphlets using a combination of methods: multiple visits to different Synagogues across Israel, expert interviews, Israel's National Library catalog, and internet searches. With these methods, I identified over 25 pamphlets that are circulated nationally, and over 400 pamphlets that are circulated locally among different *Haredi* communities.

As indicated by the sampling frame, the pamphlets differ in several important ways (see Table A1). First, they differ in which religious community they target: Religious Zionist, *Ashkenazi Haredi*, and *Sephardic Haredi*. Second, pamphlets differ in their circulation (ranging from 3,000-180,000), year they were first established (1984-2014), and their target audience (youth, the non-religious, local community, or the well-educated). While it would be ideal to randomly sample from this sampling frame, this method proved unfeasible as many pamphlets are not available in any archive or only available at Israel's National Library. Thus, I chose a stratified sample based on the following criteria: importance of the pamphlet, target audience, and ease of collection.

For the *Haredi* communities, I randomly sampled pamphlets from an independent online archive which contains over-time copies of 200 distinct pamphlets.<sup>13</sup> These

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<sup>12</sup> There are some exceptions, where some pamphlets were produced by specific political parties. However, most of these are now defunct. Examples include The Weekly Stream (Shas), Our Land of Israel (National Union Party), and *Oneg Shabbat* (Likud).

<sup>13</sup> Given the disdain for the internet in the *Haredi* community, very few organizations maintain

pamphlets are typically distributed to local *Haredi* Synagogues, where the pamphlet is a written lecture by one religious leader. From the online archive, I randomly selected 20 percent of pamphlets from a large collection of 15,000 pamphlets.<sup>14</sup>

For the Religious Zionist community, there are nine pamphlets that are delivered together nationally to virtually all Religious Zionist Synagogues.<sup>15</sup> I chose two important pamphlets that represent different segments of the community. The first pamphlet, *Be'ahava Uve'emuna*, is a well-known leaflet associated with *Yeshivat Machon Meir*, which represents the more hawkish wing of the Religious Zionist community.<sup>16</sup> The second, *Shabbat Beshabato*, the first pamphlet to be published on a weekly basis (since 1985), is associated with the more mainstream part of the Religious Zionist community.<sup>17</sup> Notably, each of these pamphlets contains about 5-10 articles by a diverse set of leaders in the Religious Zionist community.

To complete my sample, I grouped together 15 'independent' pamphlets that are distributed by other organizations. These pamphlets are typically distributed independently by activists, and either engage in outreach or represent a 'fringe' ideological community. From this group, I selected *Sichat Hashavua*, the pamphlet with the largest circulation. This pamphlet is associated with the *Chabad* movement, a well-known *Haredi* group known for its outreach to non-religious Jews in Jewish communities around the world.<sup>18</sup> Similar in style to the Religious Zionist pamphlets, this pamphlet also contains 5-10 articles by a diverse set of religious leaders in the *Chabad* community.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of the sample. The sample is diverse, but not strictly representative. It leaves out rarer and harder-to-access

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an online presence. However, several *Haredi* sites independently maintain an online archive of pamphlets. For this reason, there is little reason to think that the pamphlets available on this site differ in important ways from pamphlets that are not on the site. The Hebrew archive is available at <http://beinenu.com/alonim>.

<sup>14</sup> I take a sample due to the logistics involved in converting massive amounts of Hebrew text into data.

<sup>15</sup> These pamphlets are all currently published and distributed by *Mekor Rishon*. While originally independent, these pamphlets cut costs by sharing the same publisher and distributor.

<sup>16</sup> For the Hebrew archive see [http://www.meirtv.co.il/site/alon\\_list.asp](http://www.meirtv.co.il/site/alon_list.asp)

<sup>17</sup> For the Hebrew archive see <http://zomet.org.il/?CategoryID=160&ArticleID=1>

<sup>18</sup> For the Hebrew archive see <http://www.chabad.org.il/Magazines/Articles.asp?CategoryID=30>

pamphlets, so the results say more about popular mainstream writers than fringe figures. The availability of issues also varies by pamphlet, so although I do my best to collect all of them, there are gaps due to availability. As such, I am confident in these results for the religious leaders in the mainstream Religious Zionist and *Haredi* communities, who are religiously and politically influential in Israel. However, they may not hold if I were able to look at rarer or more niche pamphlets (such as the very nationalist *Eretz Yisrael Shelanu* or anti-Zionist *Neturei Karta* pamphlets) who play a more marginal role in Israeli society.

### 2.2.3 Measurement of Key Variables

To measure religious rhetoric, I used Structural Topic Models (STM). Specifically, these methods classified the large collections of religious texts into distinct themes/topics by looking for associations or clustering between words (Blei, 2012; Grimmer and Stewart, 2013; Lucas et al., 2015). In these models, a topic is defined as a collection of words where each word has a higher or lower probability of belonging to a topic. In addition, each document is composed of multiple topics. Using STM allows me to include covariates in the topic model, such as author or year (Roberts et al., 2014). This helps improve the precision of the topic model, since it can incorporate information about the texts in the analysis. Similar methods have been used by scholars to measure the political content of sermons, support for ISIS, and Jihadism (Woolfalk, 2013; Mitts, 2019a; Nielsen, 2017).

Using a Structural Topic Model (STM), I identified ten main topics in the corpus, including nationalist and religious topics.<sup>19</sup> Figure 2-1 plots the key words and topic labels for these 10 topics.<sup>20</sup> As noted in the figure, most topics are concerned with religious and ethical teachings. For instance, prominent topics include writings that emphasize religious and legal scholarship (Topics 2 and 4), mysticism (Topics 7 and

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<sup>19</sup> In the online appendix, I provide more details on the STM model including its model specification and validation.

<sup>20</sup> While there is no 'right' number of topics, Figure A-1 assesses the relative exclusivity and semantic coherence for different numbers of topics. The results imply that the ideal number of topics for the corpus is between 10-20 topics.



8), and texts that cater to parents and kids (Topic 5). In contrast, nationalist writings (Topic 1) stress modern political and national concepts such as the state, land, community, and army.<sup>21</sup>

A closer look at the nationalist texts indicates that the discourse reflects a religious nationalist discourse that places Zionism in a religious context, rather than a secular nationalist discourse (Figure A-3 shows snippets from the highest-ranked nationalist texts.) The texts also do not hesitate to give right-winged nationalist advice that is critical of current government policy, including hawkish opinions such as more Jewish legislation or annexing settlements. Overall, the rhetoric is very hawkish, where the government and the army are encouraged to take harsh measures against the Palestinians during conflict.

For data on weekly conflict, I use a (0/1) dichotomous variable. I define military conflict with the Palestinians as the start and end of hostilities for the three most recent military operations in Gaza (Operations Cast Lead, Pillar of Defense, and Protective Edge).<sup>22</sup> For a more fine-grained measure of conflict, I use data on the weekly number of Israeli and Palestinian casualties between 2006 and 2015.<sup>23</sup> This data also distinguishes between Palestinians killed by Israel's security forces or Israeli civilians, and between Israeli civilians or security forces killed by Palestinians. Finally, I examine five other political events where one would anticipate higher levels of nationalism: the 2006 Lebanon War, settlement evacuations, protests concerning the drafting of Yeshiva students to the Israeli army, Israel's large-scale social justice protests of 2011, and national elections.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Figure A-2 shows the correlations among the different topics. The results suggest that religious and legal scholarship are central to the corpus. This is not surprising as these pamphlets are primarily educational and religious tools.

<sup>22</sup> Operation Cast Lead began on December 26, 2008 and ended on January 18, 2009. Operation Pillar of Defense lasted from November 14, 2012 until November 21, 2012. Finally, Operation Protective Edge (the 2014 Israel-Gaza conflict) started with the kidnapping of the three teenagers in Israel (June 12, 2014) and lasted until the end of Israel's military operations in Gaza (August 26, 2014).

<sup>23</sup> This data is available on the *Btselem* website at <http://www.btselem.org/statistics>

<sup>24</sup> Settlement protests refers to protests against the settlement evacuations of Amona (January 25, 2006 - February 8, 2006) and Migron (August 25, 2012- September 9, 2012). Army protests refer to large-scale protests against the drafting of Yeshiva students to the army (February 17, 2014 - March 9, 2014). Social justice protests refer to the protest activities that happened in Israel between July 14, 2011 and October 29, 2011. Elections refer to the two weeks before and two weeks after the

## 2.3 Empirical Strategy

To estimate the effect that conflict has on religious leaders, I use a panel with two-way fixed effects. This model exploits the variation in conflict over time to assess its impact on the weekly proportion of religious leader discourse on nationalist topics. I propose the following model:

$$Y_{i,j,t} = \alpha_{i,t} + \beta \text{conflict}_t + \gamma_j + \delta_p + \varepsilon_{i,t} \quad (2.1)$$

where the outcome variable  $Y$  is the topic proportion for nationalism made by Rabbi  $i$  in pamphlet  $j$  in week  $t$ . The main explanatory variable  $\beta$  is the presence of conflict for week  $t$ . The model also includes  $\gamma_j$ , a fixed effect for each religious leader that controls for unobserved characteristics over time between different religious leaders, and  $\delta_p$  is a year fixed effect to control for common factors that change over the period. Standard errors are clustered by religious leader.

### 2.3.1 Validity of Design

One threat to the empirical strategy is that since religious figures play a large role in politics, they can influence Israeli political leaders to pursue conflict. Under this scenario, the relationship between conflict and religious rhetoric would be spurious if religious leaders are influencing the onset of conflict - either by causing terror attacks or influencing Israel military behavior. To overcome this problem, I exploit the variation of conflict intensity over time. For example, by focusing on conflicts with Gaza, I am exploiting the relative lack of violence in Israel before and after these conflicts. Moreover, the comparison of religious leader discourse during several different periods of conflict should allow for estimates of the impact of conflict on religious leader discourse.

Thus, the identification strategy relies on two key assumptions. First, that in the absence of conflict, the trends of religious leader discourse would remain the same.

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2006, 2009, and 2013 national elections in Israel.

Second, that the precise timing of conflict is exogenous to the weekly content of each document. This is quite plausible since it is unlikely that Palestinian violence or Israeli military strategy are driven by the exact contents of a weekly pamphlet.<sup>25</sup> While the overall long-term effects of these publications are to plausibly move the Israeli religious public or religious politicians to adopt more right-wing opinions on the conflict, it is unlikely that specific documents drive short-term events (see also Figure 2-3 below where I test for this possibility). However, one might also be concerned that religious leader rhetoric is correlated with other factors that do predict conflict, such as influence on settler activities or Israeli religious political leaders. Conditioning on the content of prior documents provides a way of controlling for these factors, helping mitigate (partially) the effects of omitted variable bias. This strategy is similar in spirit to a difference-in-differences approach that uses the variation of conflict over time to control for possible time-specific effects. However, it must be acknowledged that this design does not strictly allow for making causal inferences.

## 2.4 Impact of Conflict on Religious Rhetoric

I present the results for my main specifications using an OLS panel fixed effects regression in Table B.2 (see Equation 1). The estimated results from Column 2 indicate that religious leaders increase their nationalist rhetoric during conflict with the Palestinians by 0.04 percentage points on average.<sup>26</sup> The effect is both statistically significant and substantively large. The results imply that conflict increases nationalist rhetoric by approximately 40 percent (baseline mean of 0.1). These changes in nationalist topic frequency during conflict come at the expense of other topics, such as religious or legal scholarship (see Figure A-4).<sup>27</sup> These changes are also larger than the shifts

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<sup>25</sup> This assumption seems safer when one also considers the timing of events. Pamphlets are sent to the printers at the beginning of the week so that there is time for them to be published and distributed before Friday. Thus, there is about a one-week lag between events and religious leader responses, as seen from instances where specific political events are noted in the pamphlets.

<sup>26</sup> The results are also robust to using a lagged dependent variable (see Table A2).

<sup>27</sup> Figure A-4 also shows that other topics besides nationalism do not increase in frequency during conflict, with the exception of Bible rhetoric. However, this slight increase may be due to the fact that nationalist texts tend to use Biblical verses to religiously justify nationalist sentiments.

in topic frequency associated with the seasonal changes in the Biblical reading cycle (see Figure A-5), and higher than estimates reported in other recent papers using STM.<sup>28</sup>

One might be concerned that Rabbinic response to conflict would be dependent on the political climate, wherein stronger ties by religious leaders would increase their likelihood of pursuing nationalist rhetoric.<sup>29</sup> However, as shown in Column 3, there is no significant relationship between nationalist rhetoric and political ties. Column 4 indicates that the impact of conflict on nationalist rhetoric is not affected by the religious ties to the coalition or economic conditions (proxied by the quarterly unemployment rate).<sup>30</sup>

In addition to an increase in the prevalence of nationalist rhetoric, the results in Figure 2-2 suggest that the *content* of rhetoric shifts during periods of conflict with the Palestinians. For nationalist rhetoric, the figure suggests that during periods of non-conflict there is an emphasis on developing the state. In contrast, during periods of conflict there is an emphasis on Israel's fight with its enemies. Thus, one can detect two types of nationalist rhetoric, where the more hawkish version is emphasized during conflict with the Palestinians.

### 2.4.1 Robustness of Results

In this section, I present several robustness checks to increase the confidence in the results.

First, I assess whether the results are due to the possibility that religious leaders are relating to the salience of current events. In that case, one would anticipate

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<sup>28</sup> For example, Terman (2017) reports an effect of 3.4-3.6 percent for female rights when reporting on Muslim countries. In addition, Genovese (2015) reports a small and statistically insignificant effect for the effect of crisis on the political content of papal communications. Finally, Tingley (2017) reports coefficients in the 0.02 range for an experimental treatment looking at US power.

<sup>29</sup> Due to the fact that there are three main religious political parties who have been inside and outside of the ruling coalition, religious ties for different religious leaders to the government vary over time (including periods of conflict). For example, United Torah Judaism, a *Haredi* party, was part of the 2008 coalition during Operation Cast Lead, while the Jewish Home, a Religious Zionist party, was part of the 2014 coalition during Operation Protective Edge.

<sup>30</sup> I control for economic conditions, since it is possible religious leaders might be more likely to express nationalist opinions during conflict when economic conditions are poor.

that their religious rhetoric would change in response to other major political events in Israel. In Table 2.2, I run my main specification, but examine periods where there were important political conflicts in Israel. As indicated by Table 2.2, other important political events, including the 2006 Lebanon war, have no significant effect on nationalist rhetoric. This implies that religious leaders do not respond to all important political conflicts (like newspapers) but respond selectively to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict which involves a dispute over sacred territory.

Second, I assess to what extent nationalist rhetoric is conflated with words that simply describe events during periods of conflict. In order to perform this analysis, I acquired a list of 50 common words that are used by the media during conflict in Gaza (Fogel-Dror, Shenhav and Sheaffer, 2018).<sup>31</sup> I then reran the analysis without these terms. The results in Table A.2 imply that the results remain statistically significant, although the estimates are smaller in magnitude. In addition, Figure A-6 indicates that after removing conflict words, there is still a distinct form of hawkish nationalism that uses language such as 'terror', 'enemy', 'united', and 'enough'. Overall, these results indicate that part of the effects of conflict on nationalism are driven by the description of conflict.

Third, I assess whether religious rhetoric responds to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, or does it cause conflict. To examine the possibility of reverse causality, I plot for each military conflict religious rhetoric five weeks before and five weeks after each conflict. As indicated by Figure 2-3, religious rhetoric largely increases after conflict starts, suggesting that conflict drives rhetoric. This suggests that religious leaders respond to wartime dynamics but seem unlikely to be driving the actual conflict events. In addition, rhetoric tapers off after the termination of conflict, suggesting that conflict does not have long-term effects.

Fourth, I show that the main results are robust to different measurement choices. Thus, I rerun the main specification using a more fine-grained measure of conflict: Is-

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<sup>31</sup> These words are: Israel, Hamas, Israeli, rocket, Gaza, military, civilian, operation, killed, fire, tunnel, strike, attack, soldier, ceasefire, militant, IDF, ground, fighting, fired, truce, air, area, ceasefire, conflict, official, death, day, army, July, hit, people, city, southern, group, force, offensive, target, casualty, missile, border, time, home, launched, end, Tuesday, school, killing, edge, war.

raeli and Palestinian casualties. Consistent with the results above, Table A4 indicates that Israeli and Palestinian casualties are associated with higher levels of nationalist rhetoric. The results suggest that the effects of military conflict are similar in magnitude to the effects of about 15 Israeli casualties or 500 Palestinian casualties. This magnitude implies that casualties during military conflict are primarily driving the results. Interestingly, the results also suggest that this increase is primarily driven by Israeli military casualties and Palestinian casualties caused by the Israeli army. In contrast, Israeli civilian casualties have no statistically significant effect on nationalist rhetoric.

Finally, I show that the results are not strictly dependent on the choice of 10 topics in the corpus. I show this by rerunning the topic model, varying the number of topics. I then plot the model estimates separately for nationalism, using the main two-way fixed effects specification. As indicated by Figure A-7, the estimates remain significant and largely similar when increasing the number of topics beyond 10 (11-15 topics). However, the results are not robust for fewer than nine topics. This is due to the fact that the nationalist topic becomes less distinct, merging with other related topics (such as education, events, and Bible). This implies that the results are largely robust to the number of topics, with an important caveat that the number of topics is large enough to allow for a distinct nationalist topic.

## 2.5 Religious Heterogeneity

Why does rhetoric by religious leaders become more nationalist during times of conflict with the Palestinians? To examine what is unique about violent events involving the Palestinians, I explore to what extent there are heterogeneous effects of conflict for different types of religious leaders.

Figure 2-4 plots nationalist rhetoric by religious leaders over-time, distinguishing between religious leaders from different religious groups. The figure shows interesting differences between religious leaders, both in overall levels of nationalism and over-time trends. For instance, religious leaders from Ultra-Orthodox communities have

low levels of nationalism, which remains steady over time. In contrast, leaders from other religious communities have higher levels of nationalism that varies over time.

To assess to what extent these over-time fluctuations are driven by conflict, I rerun my main specification, distinguishing between religious leaders from different religious groups. The results in Figure 4-5 imply that not all religious leaders respond to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the same way. Specifically, Religious Zionist and *Chabad* leaders respond to conflict with more nationalism. In contrast, *Haredi* leaders do not use more nationalist rhetoric during conflict, even if this rhetoric could be used to attract more followers.<sup>32</sup> Interestingly, Figure A-9 implies that more nationalism during conflict largely comes at the expense of ‘worship’ topics (for the Religious Zionist and *Chabad* communities) or ‘scholarship’ (for the *Haredi* communities).

### 2.5.1 Potential Mechanisms

One potential explanation for these differences relates to religious leader ideology and support for nationalism, where religious leaders who oppose nationalism remain indifferent during conflict. This would support the argument that differences in political theology mediate nationalist tendencies, and that religious leaders are unlikely to stray in the short-term from important tenets of political theology (Philpott, 2007).

Related, one can attribute these differences to social factors such as the level of varying service in the IDF across religious groups (Cohen, 1993). Specifically, we would expect that nationalist rhetoric would increase for religious leaders that belong to communities whose constituents serve in the IDF (Religious Zionism and *Chabad*). According to this explanation, differences between religious leaders relates to the need to express empathy during conflict, where this need is higher for religious communities whose families are actively participating in conflict. If this is the case, these results are consistent with the broader ‘rally ’round the flag’ literature, where the pressure to signal allegiance is larger for religious leaders whose communities are more actively

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<sup>32</sup> According to Israel’s Peace Index, support for Israel’s army operations are very high. For example, in July 2014 during Operation Pillar of Defense, public support for the operation was at 95 percent. See <http://peaceindex.org/indexMainEng.aspx>

engaged in the conflict.

## 2.6 Conclusion

Recent work titled “God’s Century” argues that conflict in the 21st century will be highly influenced by religion - helping determine whether conflict descends into a drawn-out civil war or reconciliation and peace (Toft, Philpott and Shah, 2011). Prominent examples of conflicts where religious beliefs play an important role include conflict between Sunnis and Shias in Iraq and Syria, between Hindus and Muslims in India, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. These conflicts are marked by recurring rounds of violence and their intractability.

In that vein, this paper has examined how religious leaders in Israel respond to different types of military conflict. By showing how religious leaders are more likely to engage in nationalist rhetoric during conflict with the Palestinians, my findings provide evidence that even short bouts of violence have an effect in shaping and politicizing the messaging of religious leaders. My findings also show that religious leaders respond in a stronger nationalist manner to conflict which involves sacred territory (conflict with the Palestinians), and that these effects are mediated by the political ideology of one’s religious community towards the state.

This paper contributes to previous literature on religion and conflict by providing a fine-grained analysis on religious leaders and their rhetoric during conflict. They highlight one potential mechanism for why religious conflicts are harder to resolve, where religious leaders frame conflict in a religious light. From a policy perspective, the results suggest that political leaders should provide incentives for religious leaders to moderate their nationalist rhetoric during conflict. In addition, reconciliation events between prominent religious leaders during conflict may help prevent religiously inspired forms of violence.

Finally, several key limitations to the study should be noted and exploited as avenues for future research. First, future research should examine to what extent religious leaders respond to conflict like other secular leaders. According to the ‘rally



'round the flag' literature, both elites and masses may move in a more nationalist direction. While my results are consistent with this literature, it is beyond the scope of this paper to analyze the Israeli press generally. I choose to focus on religious leaders since they are exceptional actors due to their unique moral authority. Second, future research should also examine in more detail to what extent religious leader rhetoric has causal effects on conflict - such as in influencing military actions, government policy, or people's political behavior.

Table 2.1: Impact of Israeli-Palestinian Conflict on Nationalist Rhetoric

	Nationalist Rhetoric			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Military Conflict	0.049 (0.013)	0.043 (0.012)		0.043 (0.011)
Political Ties to Coalition			-0.001 (0.006)	0.003 (0.006)
Economic Conditions				0.003 (0.003)
Rabbi FEs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FEs	No	Yes	No	Yes
Observations	10,968	10,968	10,968	10,968
Adj. R-squared	0.437	0.437	0.434	0.437

*Notes:* Standard errors are clustered by Rabbi.

Table 2.2: Impact of Other Political Conflicts on Nationalist Rhetoric

	<b>Nationalist Rhetoric</b>				
	<b>Model 1</b>	<b>Model 2</b>	<b>Model 3</b>	<b>Model 4</b>	<b>Model 5</b>
Second Lebanon War	0.015 (0.015)				
Settlement Evacuations		-0.007 (0.010)			
IDF Draft Protests			-0.009 (0.013)		
Social Justice Protests				-0.007 (0.008)	
National Elections					-0.008 (0.010)
Political Ties to Coalition	-0.013 (0.006)	-0.013 (0.006)	-0.013 (0.006)	-0.013 (0.006)	-0.015 (0.006)
Economic Conditions	0.006 (0.004)	0.006 (0.004)	0.006 (0.004)	0.006 (0.004)	0.007 (0.004)
Rabbi FEs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FEs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	10,968	10,968	10,968	10,968	10,968
Adj. R-squared	0.435	0.435	0.435	0.435	0.435

*Notes:* See Table 1. Standard errors are clustered by Rabbi.

1. Nationalism	F: Jew, land, state, war, day, world, community FREX: state, government, Zionism, citizen, soldier, Tzahal, army F: יהודי, ארץ, מדינה, מלחמה, ים, עולם, ציבור FREX: מדינה, ממשלה, ציונות, אזרח, חייל, צה, צבא
2. Religious Scholarship	F: yes, name, wrote, spoke, the Rabbi, Torah, mountain FREX: authority, by, lesson plan, Torah lesson plan, view, Torah-view, Modi'in Illit F: כן, שם, כתב, דבר, רבי, תור, הר FREX: שליט, עי, מערכה_שיעור, מערכה_שיעור_תור, צפייה, תור_צפייה, מודיעין_עילית
3. Bible	F: land, Moses, name, Jacob, that, Father, Torah portion FREX: desert, Pharaoh, Rashi, Rashi, Jacob, Egypt F: ארץ, משה, שם, יעקב, אשר, אב, פרשה FREX: במדבר, פרעה, רש, רש_י, יעקב, מצרים
4. Legal Scholarship	F: law, spoke, forbidden, yes, therefore, name, obligation FREX: vow, exempt, Tzitzit, inherit, excommunicate, steal, obligated F: דין, דבר, אינה, כן, הרי, שם, חייב FREX: נדר, פטור, ציצית, יורש, חרם, גזל, חיוב
5. Holidays	F: blessing, day, prayer, day, blessed, happiness, late FREX: Purim, Kippur, Tabernacles, bless, fast, blessed, Yom Kippur F: ברכה, יום, תפילה, ים, ברך, שמחה, אחר FREX: פורים, כיפור, סוכות, ברך, צום, בירך, יום_כיפור
6. Education	F: child, life, person, man, permitted, world, path FREX: youth, parent, personality, couple, psychologist, education, teacher F: ילד, חיים, אדם, איש, הותר, עולם, דרך FREX: נוער, הורה, אישיות, זוג, פסיכולוג, חינוך, מורה
7. Hasidic Tales	F: Rebbe, person, Rabbi, face, hand, late, spoke FREX: story, suddenly, answered, doctor, Father, my side, requested F: רבי, איש, רב, פנים, יד, אחר, דבר FREX: סיפר, פתע, ענה, רופא, אבא, צדי, ביקש
8. Mysticism	F: man, world, Torah, God, spoke, hand, Torah FREX: Messiah, redemption, evil inclination, created, God, purpose, creation F: אדם, עולם, תורה, קב, דבר, יד, תור FREX: משיח, גאולה, יצר_רע, נברא, קב, תכלית, בריאה
9. Events	F: Rabbi, book, Yeshiva, Torah, year, land, Chabad FREX: Chabad, Chabad, Yeshiva, Chasidic head, Wide F: רב, ספר, ישיבה, תור, שנה, ארץ, ד FREX: חב_ד, חב, ישיבה, אדמו, אדמו_ר, רחב, ר
10. Halacha (law)	F: Sabbath, forbid, yes, prohibition, permitted, spoke, candle FREX: lit, candle, lighting, Chanuka, cook, food, permitted F: שבת, אסר, כן, איסור, מותר, דבר, נר FREX: הדליק, נר, הדלקה, חנוכה, בישול, מאכל, מותר

Figure 2-1: Topics in the Religious Corpus "F:" indicates words that are most frequent in each topic. "FREX:" indicates words that are both frequent in and exclusive to each topic.



Figure 2-2: **Impact of Israeli-Palestinian Conflict on Nationalist Rhetoric**  
 This plot shows the distribution of words in nationalist discourse during periods of conflict and non-conflict. Word color indicates the uniqueness of the word, with blacker nodes having a more positive association with conflict. Word size is proportional to the number of words in the corpus devoted to the topic.

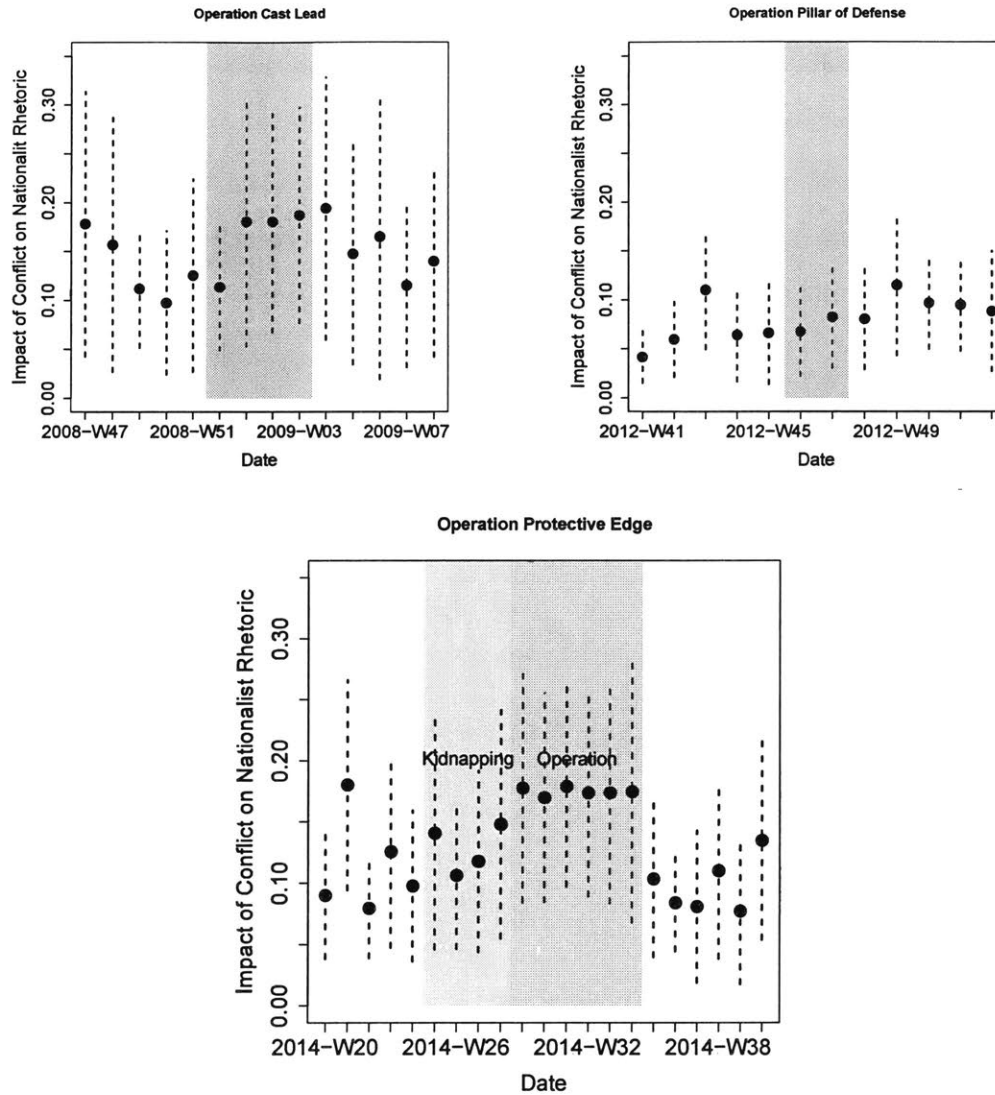


Figure 2-3: Nationalist Rhetoric and Israeli Military Operations in Gaza. The plot shows the mean measure of nationalist rhetoric made that week with 95 % confidence intervals. Conflict periods are highlighted.

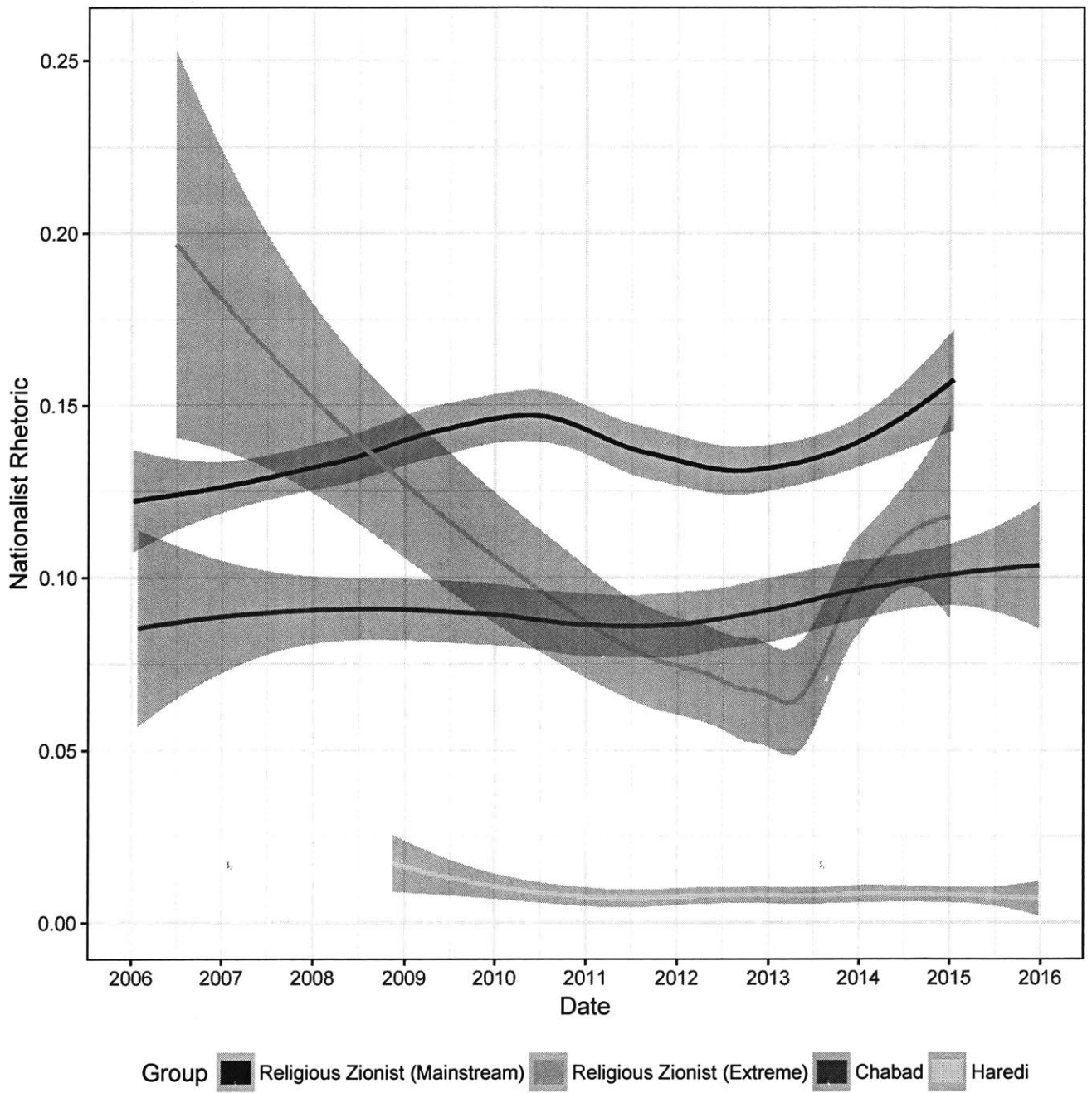


Figure 2-4: **Nationalist Rhetoric by Group Over Time** This plot shows the proportion of nationalist rhetoric over time for each religious group.

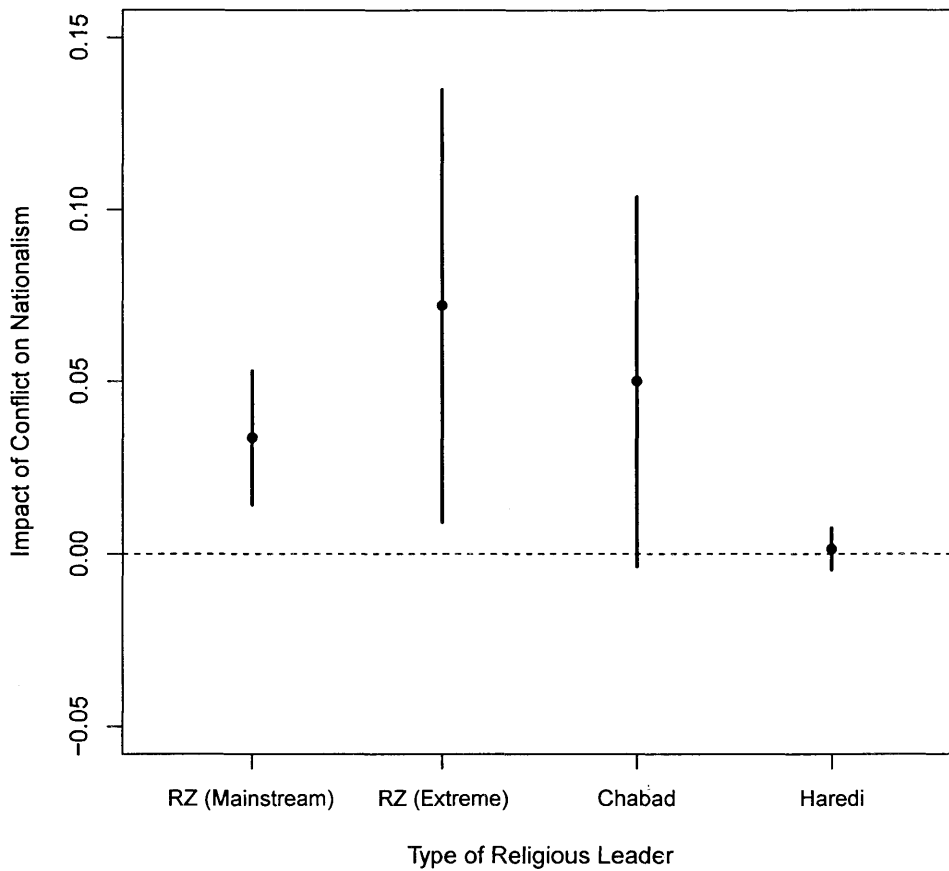


Figure 2-5: **Impact of Israeli-Palestinian Conflict on Nationalism, By Religious Group** See Table 1. The plot shows the coefficients and 95% confidence intervals for the main religious groups in Israel.





## Chapter 3

# Vote with Your Rabbi: The Electoral Effects of Religious Institutions in Israel

### Abstract

Scholars debate the source of religious party success. In this paper, I analyze how Jewish religious institutions help generate grassroots support for religious political parties in Israel. Using original data, I examine the association between the timing of entry of religious institutions into neighborhoods and local voting patterns for Israeli national elections. I find that religious institutions are associated with a 4-percentage point increase in the local vote share for religious parties, where this effect is larger for religious institutions with connections to political parties. My results suggest that the primary mechanism driving these results are benefits distributed to communities by religious institutions, where these goods influence the political views of existing residents. In contrast, changes to the composition of the neighborhood through immigration has a more limited effect on voting patterns. These findings highlight the impact of religious institutions on the social and political fabric of local communities.

Prominent examples of religious party success include the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, the AKP in Turkey, and the *Ennadhda* Party in Tunisia. Unlike other political parties who rely on natural allies such as labor unions or corporations for political support, many religious parties - who are unable or unwilling to exploit the traditional electoral cleavage between labor and capital - have no built-in political alliances. This raises the following two related questions. First, what accounts for the electoral success of religious political parties, especially in the Middle East? Second, what impact do different electoral strategies have on democratic politics? Moreover, many observers believe that electoral gains by religious groups have had tumultuous consequences, with citizens increasingly divided over the role of religion in politics and society.

In this paper, I examine the role of religious institutions in Israeli politics, organizations that have successfully linked religious parties in Israel with voters at the grassroots level. In Israel, religious political parties are 'king makers' who have made or brought down governments in Israel's multi-party parliamentary democracy (Liebman, 1993).<sup>1</sup> In Israel, arguably the most successful use of religion by political parties was the rise of Shas in the 1990s. Promising to "return the crown to the former glory", Shas drew voters by fusing greater religious observance with ethnic grievances. At its peak, Shas won 17 seats in the 1999 elections and continues to exert its influence on Israeli politics today. Many observers attribute their political success to their network of religious schools known as *El Hama'ayan* ("To the Wellsprings") which provides religious services, educational programs, and social welfare benefits to local citizens.<sup>2</sup> In addition to *Shas*, the other main religious parties in Israel (United Torah Judaism and the Jewish Home) have formed important links to religious institutions to serve their constituent communities.

My analysis focuses on the religious institutions that help link these parties with

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<sup>1</sup> These political parties - United Torah Judaism, *Shas*, and the Jewish Home - hold over one sixth of the seats in the current Israeli parliament. See the appendix for more details on each of Israel's three religious political parties.

<sup>2</sup> *El Hama'ayan* schools included a strong emphasis on Jewish identity and religious studies. They were able to attract significant support in low-income Sephardic neighborhoods by providing services such as subsidized day cares and free school meals.

their grassroots supporters by providing educational and vocational state-funded services: religious study groups known as *Yeshivot* and Jewish faith organizations. *Yeshivot* are religious schools that are led by charismatic and influential religious leaders. Their intense focus on Jewish studies makes them comparable to other religious schools such as *Madrasas* or seminaries (Heilman, 1996). While the model of the *Yeshiva* has ancient roots in Judaism and was primarily found in the *Ashkenazi Haredi* world, the institution has also become prominent among the *Sephardic Haredi* and Religious Zionist communities (Don-Yehiya, 1994).<sup>3</sup> According to Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics, there are currently over 140,000 Yeshiva students in Israel, divided among 1,600 government-funded institutions.<sup>4</sup> Virtually all students are males over the age of 18, with very few *Yeshivot* designated for women. In addition to *Yeshivot*, Jewish faith organizations have been set up across the country to provide religious services, whose purpose is to proselytize and bring Israelis closer to religious observance.

While these religious institutions primarily provide educational and religious services, I argue that these religious institutions also fulfill an important political role in Israel. Like the Christian religious right in the United States who formed an alliance with the Republican party (Schlozman, 2015), Jewish religious institutions have chosen to form powerful alliances with Israel's religious political parties. In this political arrangement, leaders of important religious institutions enjoy a very privileged status, controlling and highly influencing Israeli politics via their control over many party decisions. This includes influencing the choice of party leader, order of candidates on the party list, legislation, and vote choice in government sessions (Liebman, 1993; Willis, 1995; Bick, 2007; Davis and Robinson, 2012). Moreover, these religious institutions receive government resources and substantial foreign donations which they distribute in their local communities via stipends, charity, social programs, and free-loan funds known as *Gemachim* (Shetreet, 1999).

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<sup>3</sup> *Yeshivot* are generally organized by religious affiliation, gender, and marital status. See the appendix for more details.

<sup>4</sup> To put this number in perspective, about 300,000 students study in colleges and universities in Israel.

I theorize that the relationship between religious political parties and religious institutions resembles clientelism since there is an exchange of goods and services for political support.<sup>5</sup> Specifically, religious political parties ensure that religious institutions receive funding from the state. In turn, religious institutions provide legitimacy to these parties. At the local level, they also encourage residents to vote for religious political parties by providing club goods that are largely subsidized by state funding.

To test this hypothesis, I spatially link all available data on local voting for national elections (held between 1977-2015) with data on the founding of over 3,000 religious institutions. For my main results, I use a difference in differences design that exploits the plausibly exogenous timing of entry of such organizations into neighborhoods.

I find that religious institutions have a significant impact on people's political behavior, increasing support on average for religious political parties in local neighborhoods by approximately four percentage points in national elections. At the same time, I also find that areas with additional religious institutions experience less support for centrist parties. As elections are very close in Israel's parliamentary system involving many political parties, these votes potentially make the difference between a narrow right-wing government that relies exclusively on right-wing and religious parties (such as Netanyahu's 2015-2018 government coalition), versus a broader government that builds on the support of some center or left-wing parties (such as Netanyahu's 2013-2015 government coalition).

To understand what is driving these results, I distinguish between two channels. First, that existing residents change their political views due to mobilization efforts by religious institutions, with partisans adopting more pro-religious orientations while other residents adopt anti-religious orientations. Second, that the results are driven by selective migration, where the entry of religious institutions into neighborhoods is followed by the out-migration of non-religious residents and the in-migration of

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<sup>5</sup> While there is some disagreement among scholars what exactly constitutes clientelism, I use the definition given by Stokes (2007): "the term clientelism can be defined as giving material goods in return for electoral support, where the criterion of distribution that the patron uses is simply: did you/will you support me?".

religious migrants. I find more support for the first channel, where the political effects are largest for religious institutions that are connected to political parties. Using census data on immigration, I also find that religious institutions do not appear to be associated with short term changes to the composition of the neighborhood population.

This paper makes three key contributions. First, it adds to the literature on the political role of religious institutions. Many scholars note that religious institutions will contribute to social capital, community building, and political participation (Smidt, 2003; Harrigan and El-Said, 2009; Grzymala-Busse, 2012; Gerber, Gruber and Hungerman, 2016). In contrast, my results suggest that by allying with partisan political parties, religious institutions contribute to the local strengthening of sectarian religious parties. Second, the paper offers a better understanding of the politicization of religion in Israeli politics. The findings highlight why religious leaders have substantial influence on Israeli politics, and why religion is perceived as a growing and polarizing force in Israeli society (Peled and Peled, 2018). Third and last, it provides a novel methodological approach to estimating the political impact of religious organizations on local politics by exploiting differences in the timing of entry of new religious institutions into neighborhoods.

### 3.1 Theory of Religious Influence on Politics

Scholars have investigated the political influence of religious institutions (Wald, Silverman and Fridy, 2005; Freston, 2008; Grzymala-Busse, 2012). However, there is little consensus regarding the optimal way for religious movements to gain political influence. For example, recent work notes that the political influence of churches is largely dependent on having high levels of moral authority (Grzymala-Busse, 2015). This implies that churches succeed politically when they are perceived by the public as representing the national interest, and do not engage in party politics. In contrast, other scholars note that it is common for religious institutions to gain power by openly allying with political parties (Kalyvas, 1996; Warner, 2000; Schlozman,

2015). Similarly, other research debates how Islamic groups gain and maintain power (Schwedler, 2011). The main explanation given by scholars for the “Islamist political advantage”, where Islamist parties perform better than their secular counterparts at the ballot box, is a reputation for being less corrupt and organizational advantages (Cammatt and Luong, 2014).

These contrasting views imply that there are multiple pathways for religious institutions to gain political influence (Davis and Robinson, 2012; Cammett, 2014). At the same time, one point of agreement in the literature is that people’s religious values and social identity are highly shaped by their local religious community (Djupe and Calfano, 2013a; Woolfalk, 2013; McClendon and Riedl, 2015; Margolis, 2018). This suggests an important role for *local* religious institutions.

Drawing on research on clientelism and ethnic politics, I propose a general framework of local political influence that incorporates political parties, religious institutions, and local communities. In this framework, religious institutions enter partisan relationships with other political parties, and through this exchange, religious institutions help deliver votes and political support from their local religious communities. In turn, political parties grant political access and material resources to religious institutions.

This framework implies that religious institutions can generate political support in a way that resembles clientelistic practices in developing democracies (Scott, 1972; Chandra, 2007; Blaydes, 2010; Hicken, 2011).<sup>6</sup> Thus, by providing religious, educational, and material goods to the population, religious institutions fulfill a role that is analogous to brokers in a clientelistic system where voters who receive benefits are encouraged to vote for a religious political party (Stokes et al., 2013).

Adopting this theoretical framework, it is apparent that religious institutions are well positioned to act as brokers and coordinate between political parties and voters. First, they enjoy high levels of legitimacy in their local community. This gives

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<sup>6</sup> This comparison may seem surprising since many scholars assume that the benefits of religious affiliation are usually non-material in nature (Iannaccone, 1998). Yet, churches also provide tangible material benefits such as charity, education, welfare services, and social networks which can aid in finding employment (Berman, 2000; Iyer, 2016).

them access to information that allows them to identify core supporters and potential swing voters in their community (Kitschelt and Wilkinson, 2007). Second, religious institutions are well positioned to distribute party resources within local communities, as club goods can be morally justified by norms which dictate that community members come first (Iannaccone, 1998; Berman, 2000). Third, religious institutions help mitigate the monitoring problems associated with vote choice in any clientelistic arrangement. Daily contact with members and norms of reciprocity within the community help ensure that voters do not renege and vote for other political parties during elections (Finan and Schechter, 2012).

However, it is important to note that this framework only resembles clientelism since there is no direct vote buying on a large-scale. Moreover, the reward or punishment that individuals receive from parties or brokers is less contingent on actual vote choice, which is usually unknown due to the secrecy of the vote ballot. At the same time there are conceptual similarities, as voters are persuaded by religious institutions to vote for certain parties, with the expectation that greater political representation will translate into future material gain through larger budgets and subsidies to religious communities.

At the same time, there is actual potential for backlash to religious institutions. First, if the benefits of religious institutions are directed only to members of the religious group, this may be perceived by non-religious residents as discriminatory, or even as a form of political corruption. Second, it is likely that new religious institutions make religion more of a salient issue in the community (Wald, Silverman and Fridy, 2005). This may make religion more of a cleavage issue, leading to political polarization and higher support for political parties with a non-religious ideology.

In the next section, I describe how this theoretical framework can be applied to religious institutions in the Israeli context.



## 3.2 Religious Institutions in Israel

In Israel, the three major religious political parties (The Jewish Home, Shas, and United Torah Judaism) receive on average about 20 percent of the combined current vote in Israel. In Israel's Proportional Representation (PR) electoral system, this electoral strength has historically given the religious political parties a large impact on national politics (Liebman, 1993). However, there has been little work on religious institutions, the intermediaries who are critical for connecting these religious parties with voters.

Religious institutions can influence who voters support via different channels. In this context, it is important to distinguish between services that religious institutions provide to their students, versus services that are provided to the local community (Cammett and Issar, 2010). Students typically receive a rich religious education, a monthly stipend, access to material goods and free loans from affiliated institutions such as *Gemachim*, and a partial or full exemption from military service. Potential services that religious institutions provide to the community include free religious lectures, volunteer services, charity handouts, and social welfare services.

Naturally, religious institutions vary in important ways that may impact their political impact. Specifically, they differ in their religious ideology, engagement with the state, and political affiliation. Moreover, while the vast majority of religious institutions are Ultra-Orthodox institutions, an influential minority identify with the Religious Zionist community (*such as Hesder Yeshivot*). In addition, religious institutions vary in the extent that they focus exclusively on their students versus a broader engagement that includes providing services to the community. Typically, religious institutions affiliated with *Shas* or the Religious Zionist community provide more services to the greater community. In contrast, Ultra-Orthodox institutions are more insular with services more targeted to their members. Another important factor is whether religious institutions receive government funding and form political connections with specific religious parties.

Accounts on religious institutions in Israel are divided over their impact on politics

and society. For instance, several scholars have described how religious institutions successfully use material resources to influence people's political behavior. Davis and Robinson (2012) describe how *Shas* was able to attract new voters in Israel via a combination of providing social welfare and setting up religious institutions. This was accomplished primarily through their *El Hama'ayan* educational network. These institutions accomplished two goals: "strengthening" local Jewish religious identity and increasing support for religious parties from voters who had voted for non-religious political parties in the past. Similarly, Shetreet (1999) argues that all the religious parties funnel resources through the religious institutions to get religious individuals to vote for religious parties and attract new voters through proselytizing activities. These accounts suggest that providing educational, religious, and welfare services to the greater community can help religious institutions attract voters to religious political parties.

In contrast, other accounts note a strong backlash to religious institutions. As noted by Enos and Gidron (2016), there are major tensions between secular and Ultra-Orthodox Jews in Israel. Due to the high birthrate of Ultra-Orthodox Jews, there is a fear among secular Jews that they will become a minority (Efron, 2003). These tensions are especially present at the neighborhood level, particularly in mixed neighborhoods where the character of the neighborhood is contested. Local tensions tend to focus on two related issues. First, public resources such as schools are allocated along religious observance lines. Under these circumstances, decisions regarding which group will receive a public resource can be highly contentious. Second, 'culture wars' over religious issues such as the public observance of the Sabbath or gender segregation can become local flash-points.

Under these circumstances, new religious institutions or changes in neighborhood residential patterns may provoke local backlash since these events can change the balance of power in neighborhoods. Thus, in many secular or traditional neighborhoods in Israel, religious institutions are viewed by secular residents as an unwelcome presence. Several organizations have even been set up to counter local Ultra-Orthodox influence, including groups such as The Secular Forum or Be Free Israel. These or-

ganizations use campaigns that are similar in spirit to NIMBY campaigns against immigrants (Hopkins, 2010), where residents are encouraged to organize to prevent the entry and influence of religious groups. Local media also contains many anecdotes of these religious clashes. Recent flash-points include fights in Arad over controversial religious posters (Ben Zikri, 2017), religious boycotts over ‘immodest’ malls in Jerusalem (Hasson, 2013), and protests over allocating buildings for religious kindergartens (Sharon, 2013). In the media, *hadata* (opposition to religious indoctrination, primarily in the school curriculum) has become a widely used term (Peled and Peled, 2018).<sup>7</sup> Overall, this implies that religious institutions may activate and mobilize political identities across both religious and counter-religious lines.

### 3.3 Data

To study the effects of these religious institutions on voting, I created an original panel dataset of geolocated religious institutions and fine-grained election returns. I used data on the percentage of the vote that went to each political party at the census tract for elections held between 1977-2015. With this data, I measured the proportion of the vote that went to religious parties, center parties, and left-wing parties in national elections for each census tract over time. I spatially merged the electoral data with data on over 3,000 geo-located religious institutions.

My electoral data came from two different sources. Data for elections held between 2006-2015 was acquired from Israel’s elections office. For elections held between 1977-2003, I acquired data from the Israel Social Sciences Data Center. Since I was interested in the local impact of religious institutions, I used the lowest unit of analysis: census tracts.<sup>8</sup>

According to the CBS methodology report, small localities less than 10,000 residents are treated as one census tract. When a locality is more than 10,000 residents,

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<sup>7</sup> The Secular Forum even has a testimonials page where citizens are encouraged to report instances of *hadata* in schools. See: <http://www.hiloni.org.il/testimonials>

<sup>8</sup> During the time period I am interested in, Israel carried out 3 national censuses (1983, 1995, 2008). When Israel administers a census, it divides localities into geographic units of different sizes (quarter, sub-quarter, census tracts).

it is divided into census tracts where each area is on average 3,000- 4,000 residents, roughly corresponding to neighborhoods in large cities. These tracts are divided in a way that tries to preserve the homogeneity of the unit, where land use, historical factors, and demographic factors are considered.

It is also important to note that the boundaries of some of the census tracts change between censuses for administrative reasons and due to population growth. This means that there was a need to merge data between elections released under different census tract mappings. For instance, for elections held between 1996 and 2009, election data was released at the 1995 census tract level. However, the elections data prior to 1996 was released at the 1983 census tract level. To overcome this challenge, I merged the data using the 1995 units, using a conversion key of the census tracts of 1983 and 1995, available in the Geographical-Statistical Division of Urban Localities in Israel (hard copy). Similarly, I merged the 2013 and 2015 election data based on the 2008 census tracts, using a conversion key of the census tracts of 2008 and 1995 that was acquired from Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics.

My data on religious institutions was webscraped from the NGO database maintained by Guidestar in Israel.<sup>9</sup> Their database maintains a list of all nonprofit organizations in Israel (over 41,000). Critically, this data also includes information on the date an institution was established, a precise address, type of institution, and a brief description of its objectives and activities. Each nonprofit in Israel is categorized by their area of activity and there are over 80 unique categories, including categories for *Yeshivot* and Jewish faith organizations. Thus, I was able to identify *all* registered institutions in Israel. According to Figure B-2, religious institutions represent approximately 16 percent of all institutions in Israel.

I merged religious institutions to census tracts using QGIS, where census tracts were polygons and religious institutions were points. The 1995 shape file of census tracts was acquired from Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics. Latitude and longitude points for religious institutions were calculated by inputting the address of the religious institutions into Google Maps API (using a Python script).

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<sup>9</sup> For the English website, see [http://www.guidestar.org.il/GS\\_Index?lang=en\\_US](http://www.guidestar.org.il/GS_Index?lang=en_US)

To identify religious institutions with political connections, I acquired data on government funding from the Public Knowledge Workshop (*Hasadna*), including all support given to NGOs between 2006-2015.<sup>10</sup> Institutions that received any support over the period were defined as politically connected religious institutions. Finally, I identified Religious Zionist and Sephardic organizations using a keyword search of their name or organization objectives.<sup>11</sup>

Finally, it is important to note several limitations to the data. First, Israel's laws relating to NGOs were passed in 1981. Thus, according to Guidestar, in the early 1980s many institutions that were recognized as NGOs were not 'new', but older organizations which were registered under Ottoman Law. However, this should not affect the main results which rely on NGOs founded in the 1990s and 2000s. Second, my data records the founding date and original address of the organization. This implies that additional branches or offices that may have been added are not included in the data and neither is information on religious institutions that move, although this seems unlikely in an organization's early years. Furthermore, some institutions registered with addresses whose location Google Maps was unable to identify with certainty. This was mostly a problem for older organizations, as street names may have changed in the interim in some communities. Overall, these types of measurement error are expected to attenuate the results and bias the results downwards.

### 3.4 Descriptive Statistics

In Figure 3-1, I plot the yearly number of new religious institutions over time in Israel. The figure suggests that there has been a steady growth in the number of

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<sup>10</sup> This Israeli organization promotes government transparency and citizen involvement in politics by collecting data on government spending and proposed legislation.

<sup>11</sup> I identified Religious Zionist institutions using the following 6 keywords: Rav Kook (spiritual founder of Religious Zionism), *Yeshivot Hesder* (*Yeshivot* associated with the Religious Zionist movement who combine learning with army service), Torah-Based group (*Garin Torani*, groups of Religious Zionists who engage in community projects), Religious Zionism (*Tzionut Hadatit*), *Bnei Akiva* (Religious Zionist youth group), and National Religious (*Dati Leumi*, alternative Hebrew term for Religious Zionism). I identified Sephardic institutions using the following 5 keywords: *Sephard*, Groups from the East (*Edot Hamizrach*, common term for *Mizrachi* or Sephardi Jews), *Porat Yosef* (a leading Sephardic *Yeshiva* in Jerusalem), Yemen (*Teiman*, a term for Yemenite Jews), and *Yosef Chaim* (a famous Sephardi rabbi from Iraq).

religious institutions in Israel, with 100-200 new institutions created each year.<sup>12</sup> The growth in religious institutions, including those that target the ‘born again’ (*Ba’alei Teshuva*), is also likely connected to the resurgence of religion in Israel (Ben-Porat, 2013). For example, the 2009 Social Survey indicates that 21 percent of the Jewish population report becoming more religious during their lifetime, compared to 14 percent who report becoming less religious.<sup>13</sup> In addition, five percent of the Jewish population define themselves as ‘newly religious’, with nearly half of these respondents attributing the change in their level of religious observance to the influence of family or environment.

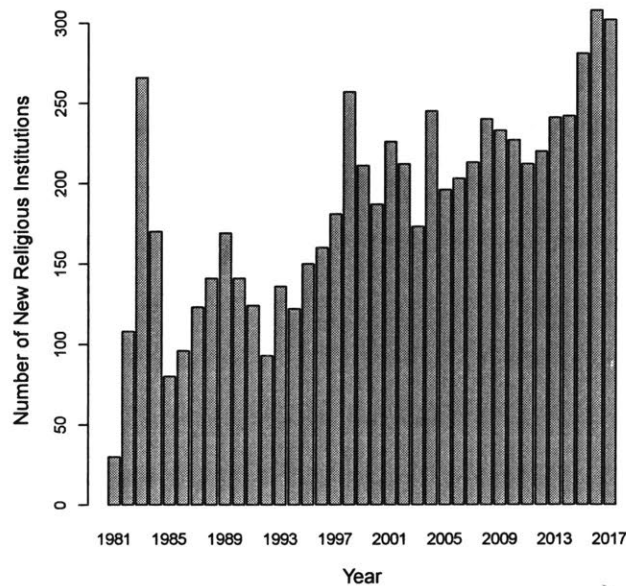


Figure 3-1: New Religious Institutions in Israel

In Figure 3-2, I plot the total budget that religious institutions in Israel received from the Ministry of Education.<sup>14</sup> The figure indicates that the overall budget for

<sup>12</sup> Israel’s registration laws passed in 1981 help explain why there was a small number of ‘new’ institutions in 1981 as organizations were slow to register, and the very large number in 1983 as older and newer organizations registered.

<sup>13</sup> This representative survey was published by Israel’s Central Bureau of Statistics. In 2009, the survey focus was on family life and religiosity. For a summary of the results, see <http://www.cbs.gov.il/statistical/seker-chevrati-e124.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> In Figure B-1, I plot the total amount of government funding for individual religious institutions. While the majority of state funding comes from the Ministry of Education, some institutions also receive money from the Ministry of Welfare or the Ministry of Defense.

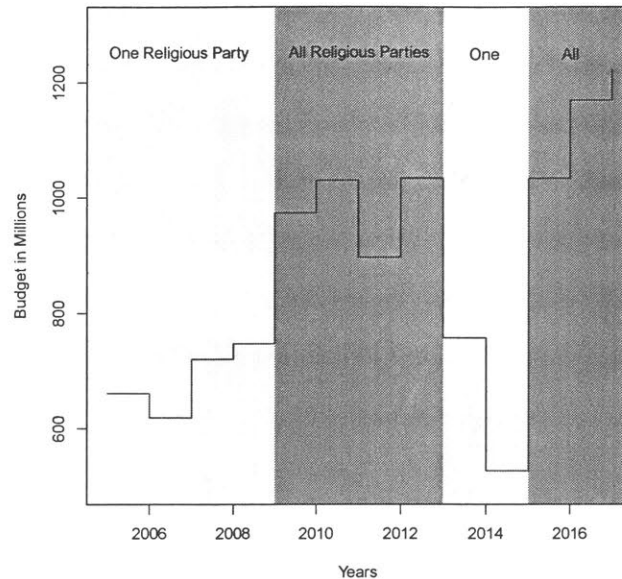


Figure 3-2: **Religious Parties and the Educational Budget for Religious Institutions** The figure shows the overall yearly budget in Israeli Shekels (millions) allocated by the Ministry of Education to religious institutions. The 2006-2009 government included *Shas*, while the 2013-2015 government included the Jewish Home.

religious institutions has ranged in the past ten years between half a billion to slightly more than one billion Israeli Shekels. Notably, the budget is significantly lower in years where some religious parties were excluded from the governing coalition (such as the 2013 government with the anti-clerical party *Yesh Atid*), and much higher when all the religious parties were part of the governing coalition (the 2015 government which includes all three religious parties).<sup>15</sup> This underscores the importance which many religious institutions place on having religious political parties join the government coalition, as the majority of *Yeshivot* have historically received state funding, which in many instances comprises more than half of their overall funding.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> The overall budget for religious institutions is set by the government. Detailed guidelines (in Hebrew) describe eligibility and how each institution receives money according to a set formula determined by the type of religious institution, number of students, and citizenship of the students (see <http://cms.education.gov.il/EducationCMS/Units/MT/MivchanimLetmicha/MibhaneyTmiha.htm>)

<sup>16</sup> Based on a perusal of financial documents which I collected and analyzed, which religious institutions are obligated to file annually. Other important sources of funding are donations, made primarily by foreign donors.

### 3.5 Empirical Strategy

My empirical strategy is motivated by the observation that where to geographically establish a new religious institution is not made randomly by its founders. Many religious institutions are typically set up in neighborhoods that are becoming more religious or where the share of the religious population is growing. Alternatively, religious institutions are set up in places where the founders believe there is potential to succeed. Thus, regular OLS estimates that do not consider these factors would be biased.<sup>17</sup>

To help overcome this identification problem, I adopt a difference in differences strategy. This strategy compares places which received religious institutions in the 1990s with places which received religious institutions between 2000 and 2015. This identification strategy assumes that places that received religious institutions are similar in kind and that the *timing* when a religious institution enters a neighborhood is largely exogenous. This assumption seems plausible as setting up new institutions depends on the availability of land, public buildings, and access to resources. How long these steps take varies greatly with the slow regulatory process in Israel.

I propose the following model to estimate the effect that religious institutions have on local voting choice:

$$\text{Vot}_{j,t} = \mu_{j,t} + \gamma \cdot D + \delta \cdot T + \alpha \cdot (D \cdot T) + X'\beta + \varepsilon \quad (3.1)$$

where the outcome variable  $\text{Vot}_{j,t}$  is the proportion of people who voted for a religious party in census tract  $j$  and elections  $t$ .  $D$  takes on a value of 1 for treated units which received religious institutions in the 90s, while  $D$  takes on a value of 0 for control units which received religious institutions between 2000 and 2015.  $T$  takes on a value of 1 for the post-treatment period (after 1990) and a value of 0 in the pre-treatment period (before 1990). The model includes important census-level covariates such as number of synagogues and number of eligible voters. Note that the quantity of interest is

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<sup>17</sup> If religious institutions are built in neighborhoods with highly homogeneous religious populations, this could bias the results downwards since new institutions would likely have little effect on the already high proportion of individuals who support religious parties.



$\alpha$ , which identifies the effect of having religious institutions on voting rates among treated units after 1990. Standard errors are clustered by census tract.

To check the parallel trends assumption for the difference in differences design, Figure 3-3 plots the over-time trends in vote share for religious parties, disaggregated by when neighborhoods initially received a religious institution. As indicated by the figure, one can identify four distinct groups: neighborhoods that received religious institutions for the first time in the 1980s or earlier (mostly homogeneous religious areas making it a biased treatment group), neighborhoods that received religious institutions for the first time in the 1990s (treated), neighborhoods that received religious institutions for the first time in the 2000s (control), and neighborhoods that never received a religious institution (biased control). The figure shows that the vote share for religious parties in neighborhoods that received religious institutions in the 1990s (treated) or 2000s (control) were very similar for elections held between 1977-1988, which provides support for the parallel trends assumption for these two groups. Therefore, my analysis focuses on these two groups, while excluding the very religious neighborhoods (biased treatment group) and areas that are not receptive to having religious institutions (never received).

In Table 3.1, I assess to what extent the treatment and control groups are comparable based on demographic characteristics associated with the religious population in Israel. The results indicate that these groups are similar on average in their pre-1990's voting behavior, and for demographic covariates (from the 1983 census) that are associated with religious populations such as household size, share of youth in the population, and ethnic background.

Finally, to get a better sense of the neighborhoods used for the analysis, I plot in Figure 3-4 maps of the treatment and control neighborhoods for select cities: Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Haifa, and Beer Sheva. Figure 3-4a indicates that Jerusalem, a city with a large Ultra-Orthodox population, has the largest number of relevant neighborhoods, with religious institutions moving to Ramot (North Jerusalem) and the southern parts of the city during the 1990s and 2000s. In addition, Figure 3-4 shows that religious institutions were founded during this period in secular cities such

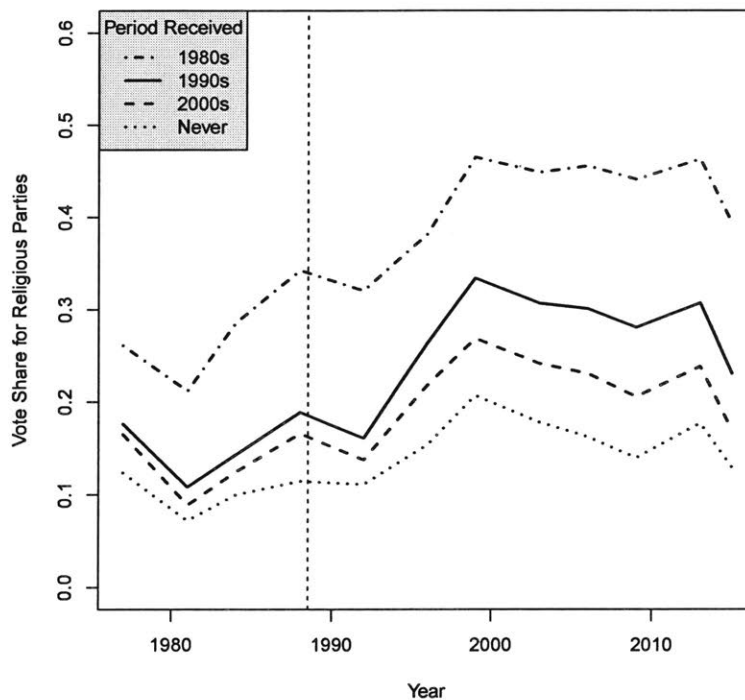


Figure 3-3: **Group Voting Trends Over Time, by Initial Exposure to Religious Institutions** Treated units were first exposed to religious institutions during elections held between the 1988 and 1999 elections (1990s). Control units were first exposed to religious institutions during elections held between the 1999 and 2015 elections (2000s).

Table 3.1: Comparison of Groups for Difference in Differences Analysis

Covariate	Control	Treated	P-values
<b>Vote Share for Religious Parties (1977-1998)</b>	0.14	0.15	0.01
<b>Vote Share for Likud (1977-1998)</b>	0.39	0.38	0.24
<b>Vote Participation (1977-1998)</b>	0.78	0.78	0.22
<b>Persons in Household (1983)</b>	3.30	3.36	0.38
<b>Proportion Ages 0-19 (1983)</b>	0.11	0.11	0.69
<b>Proportion born in Asia-Africa (1983)</b>	0.69	0.67	0.58

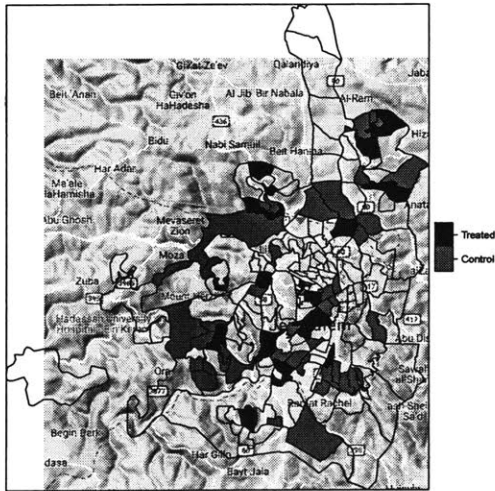
*Notes:* Average measures for demographic covariates are taken from Israel's 1983 census.

as Tel Aviv and Haifa, unexpected places for religious institutions. The maps also indicate that the control and treated neighborhoods are in close geographic proximity within cities, indicating that the neighborhoods are comparable.<sup>18</sup>

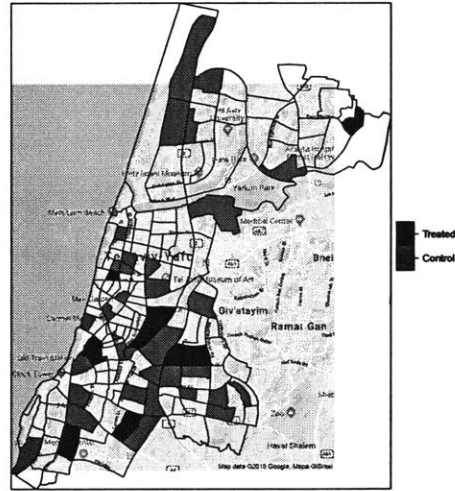
### 3.6 Main Results

I present the results for my main specifications using a difference in differences design in Table 3.2 (see Equation 1). Note that the analysis only considers census tracts which received their first religious institution in the 1990s (between the 1988 and 1999 elections) or the 2000s (between the 1999 and 2015 elections). The results from Table 3.2 indicate that places with new religious institutions in the 90s increased their vote proportion for religious parties by four percentage points on average for future elections (these results are also seen graphically in Figure 3-3). The effect is both statistically significant and substantively large. The results imply that religious institutions increase the vote share for religious parties by approximately 20 percent

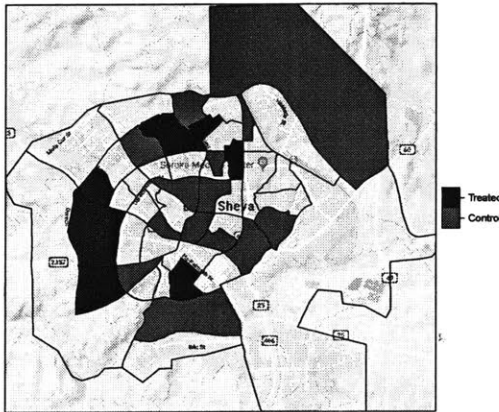
<sup>18</sup> This is consistent with research which finds that new immigrants tend to move to neighborhoods that are adjacent to existing immigrant enclaves (Saiz and Wachter, 2011).



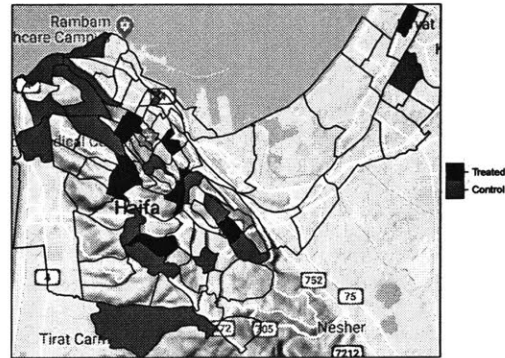
(a) Jerusalem



(b) Tel Aviv-Jaffa



(c) Beer Sheva



(d) Haifa

Figure 3-4: Location of Religious Institutions, Treated and Control Units in Select Cities The plot shows 1995 census tracts, shaded blue for treated units and red for control units.

(baseline mean of 0.20). This effect is comparable to the effect of terror attacks in Israel, where studies indicate that support for right-wing parties increases between one to six percentage points after terror attacks (Berrebi and Klor, 2008).

Table 3.2: Impact of Religious Institutions on Voting for Religious Parties, DID

	<b>Dependent Variable: Vote for Religious Parties</b>	
	<b>Model 1</b>	<b>Model 2</b>
Religious Institutions in the 90s	0.018 (0.013)	0.020 (0.012)
Post 1990s	0.078 (0.005)	0.074 (0.005)
Synagogues		0.057 (0.004)
Eligible Voters (1000s)		-0.016 (0.002)
Treatment X Post	0.042 (0.014)	0.039 (0.012)
Constant	0.136 (0.007)	0.166 (0.009)
Dependent Variable Mean	0.20	0.20
Observations	7,051	7,051
Adj. R-squared	0.067	0.132

*Notes:* Standard errors are clustered by census tract.

In Figure 3-5, I assess the impact of religious institutions on support for all types of parties for elections held between 1984-2015. In each specification, the dependent variable is a specific political party and the explanatory variable is voting patterns in treated areas. The results suggest that the increase in support for religious parties is mainly due to an increase in support for the Ultra-Orthodox parties (United Torah Judaism and Shas). Interestingly, the results also suggest a large decrease in support for centrist (Kadima/Shinui) and right-wing parties (Likud), and little change in support for left-wing parties (Labor and Meretz). In combination, these results suggest that religious institutions have weakened support for the mainstream right/center political parties, with increased support for sectarian religious parties.

To increase the confidence in the results, I present several robustness checks in

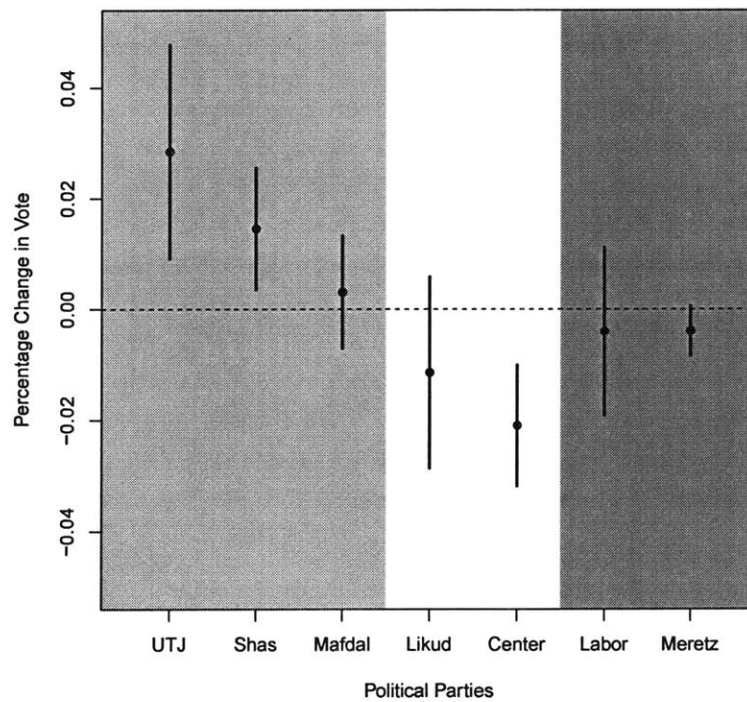


Figure 3-5: **Impact of Religious Institutions on Voting, Disaggregated by Party** See Table 3.2 notes. This plot shows the coefficients and 95 percent confidence intervals of the change in party vote share for treated units post the 1990s. Due to data limitations, each regression only analyzes data from the 1984 elections and onwards.

the appendix. First, I show that the results are not driven by highly religious cities. In these cities, some of the expansion of religious institutions into other areas may be driven by the natural growth of the religious population. Thus, I rerun the difference in differences design from Equation 1 after excluding Jerusalem and Bnei Brak from the sample. Table B.1 indicates that religious institutions had a significant impact (3.4 percentage points) on local voting patterns, even in cities with smaller religious populations. Second, I show the results are robust to other specifications. The results in Table B.2 (Model 2) from a two-way fixed-effects specification indicate that an increase between elections in the number of new religious institutions increases the vote proportion for religious parties by 1-2 percentage points on average. In columns 3 and 4, I use linear and quadratic time trends. These specifications help account for time-varying unobserved confounders, such as the percentage of the religious population in a given area. The estimates are significant. However, the smaller effect size (2.5 percentage points) suggests that the individual effects of religious institutions are smaller than their cumulative impact. Third, I show that the results are robust to other measurement choices. Table B.3 indicates that the results are robust to using a dummy measure for new religious institutions.

### 3.7 Types of Religious Institutions and Potential Mechanisms

Why is the entry of religious institutions associated with effects on local vote choice? In this section, I examine different channels that could help explain the findings.

Specifically, I explore to what extent there is heterogeneity across different types of religious institutions. I consider two types of institutions: religious institutions who are connected to political parties that receive state funding, and religious institutions who rely on donors and receive no state support. In Table 3.3, I compare the effects of these different types of religious institutions using a two-way fixed-effects specification for each type of religious institution separately. The results suggest that the effect of

politically-connected religious institutions on voting is nearly double (0.019) than the effects for religious institutions without political connections (0.011). Overall, these results suggest that religious institutions with political connections can have a larger influence on local voting patterns by having more resources to distribute to the local community.

Table 3.3: Impact of Politically Connected Religious Institutions on Voting for Religious Parties

	<b>Dependent Variable: Vote for Religious Parties</b>	
	<b>Model 1</b>	<b>Model 2</b>
Funded Religious Institutions	0.019 (0.012)	
Non-Funded Religious Institutions		0.011 (0.003)
Synagogues	0.008 (0.004)	0.010 (0.004)
Eligible Voters (1000s)	-0.001 (0.001)	-0.002 (0.001)
Dependent Variable Mean	0.20	0.20
Statistical Area FEs	Yes	Yes
Election FEs	Yes	Yes
Observations	7,051	7,051
Adj. R-squared	0.846	0.847

*Notes:* Standard errors are clustered by census tract.

### 3.8 Alternative Explanations

In this section I consider several alternative explanations for the results.

I have argued that religious institutions are able to influence local voting patterns by distributing resources. However, an alternative explanation would be that when a religious institution enters a neighborhood, it could initiate changes to the composition of the neighborhood. Specifically, residential preferences towards religion could lead to a geographic chain effect where people who are attracted to the new religious institute move into the neighborhood, whereas people who don't want to live in the



proximity of religious institutions move out of the neighborhood (Schelling, 1971; Emerson, Chai and Yancey, 2001).

To assess this explanation, I first examined general migration patterns using Israeli census data from 2008 which asks people whether they have moved from their census tract in the last five years. Table B.4 suggests that on average, 80 percent of people have not moved from their census tract, 10 percent of people have moved within the city, and 10 percent of people have moved from a different city. This indicates that the population composition of most neighborhoods is relatively steady over time. The data also suggests that migration is not more common for cities with large religious populations such as Jerusalem or Bnei Brak, compared to other cities with smaller religious populations such as Tel Aviv or Haifa.

To examine this issue further, I acquired data from Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics on internal migration and other types of population growth. The Bureau has only produced these statistics for the years 2011, and 2013-2016, allowing me to assess the short-term impact of religious institutions on immigration and other population trends for a small period of my sample. The data distinguishes between migration within cities (switching neighborhoods) and migration between cities. The results in Table 3.4 suggest that new religious institutions are not associated with yearly changes to immigration patterns (in-migration and out-migration) for neighborhoods. While not conclusive, these results provide some indication that migration is not the primary mechanism driving the results.<sup>19</sup>

Another explanation for the different electoral effects for religious institutions is that they are driven by heterogeneity in political affiliation among religious institutions. This seems plausible since the decision to accept government funding is related to religious ideology, where religious institutions associated with Religious Zionism or *Shas* being more likely to pursue government funding. The results in Figure 3-6 suggest that religious ideology does not seem to be the main driver. For instance, religious institutions affiliated with the Religious Zionist movement have largely in-

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<sup>19</sup> At the same time, these results cannot rule out the possibility that some religious institutions, especially large *Yeshivot* led by important leaders, may cause occasional long-term changes to the composition of the population within neighborhoods (Cahaner, 2012).

Table 3.4: Impact of Religious Institutions on Immigration Patterns

	Migration Within Cities		External Migration	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Religious Institutions	2.660 (2.658)	1.102 (1.689)	-3.765 (2.691)	-0.525 (1.846)
Statistical Area FEs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	8,777	8,777	9,079	9,110
Adj. R-squared	0.812	0.853	0.740	0.828

*Notes:* Standard errors are clustered by census tract.

significant effects on vote choice. Similarly, *Sephardic* institutions affiliated with *Shas* seem to have little electoral effects, as well.

However, there are two important caveats to these results. First, many important Religious Zionist institutions are in the West Bank and are excluded from the analysis due to data limitations (voting data in unavailable for the West Bank). Second, many Sephardic *Yeshivot* have a weak affiliation with *Shas*, with many religious leaders maintaining broader ties with *Ashkenazi Haredi* institutions.

### 3.9 Conclusion

Religious political parties continue to flourish in many political systems. However, there is little agreement among scholars regarding how religious parties attract voters, and what impact different tactics by religious political parties have on society. In this paper, I examine the critical role that religious institutions play in Israeli politics, linking voters with religious parties. Employing a design that exploited the timing in the entry of new religious institutions into neighborhoods, I showed that religious institutions have an important influence on local politics in Israel, pushing the electorate towards religious and non-centrist parties. In the long term, clientelistic strategies have increased religious political power in Israel, but have also contributed to making the role of religion in society a core cleavage issue.

This paper makes several important contributions. First, it contributes to pre-

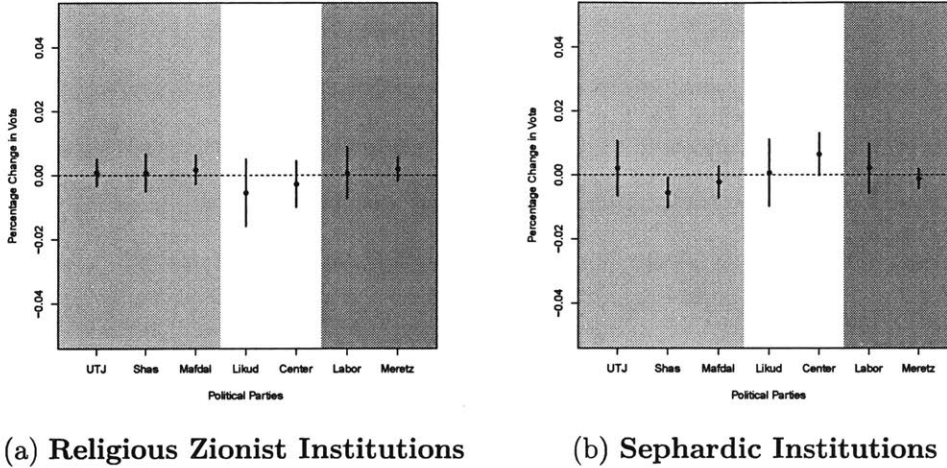


Figure 3-6: **Impact of Different Types of Religious Institutions on Voting, Disaggregated by Party** See Table 3.3 notes. The plots show the coefficients and 95 percent confidence intervals of the change in party vote share using a two-way fixed effects specification. Each sub-figure shows the results for a different type of religious institution. Due to data limitations, each regression only analyzes data from the 1984 elections and onwards.

vious literature on religion and politics by showing conceptual similarities between clientelism and religious patronage strategies. This suggests that tactics which work effectively for secular parties can be adapted for religious ends as well. Second, this paper provides a detailed analysis on the political role of religious institutions. It suggests that in a context where religious institutions have a strong political affiliation, it is unlikely that they will have community strengthening effects.

Finally, key limitations to the study should be noted and exploited as avenues for future research. While my paper focuses on one channel of political influence for religious institutions (local impact via new institutions), this should not imply that *Yeshivot* do not have additional political or social impacts on Israeli society. There are many ways in which religious institutions influence society, and my paper focuses on one understudied aspect which lends itself to causal identification. Thus, future studies can examine the social impact of *Yeshivot* by examining other outcomes such as local cooperation or social capital. As well, one can study the broader political impacts of religious leaders at *Yeshivot* by examining how they engage with and

influence other political and social elites.



## Chapter 4

# Religious Authority and Political Compromise: Evidence from Religious Leaders in Israel (with Pazit Ben-Nun Bloom)

### Abstract

Why are some religious leaders able to help resolve conflict while others have little impact? In this paper, we examine to what extent different types of religious leaders are able to generate a greater willingness among local populations to make political compromises with out-groups in symbolic conflicts. We propose a theory which distinguishes between political credibility and religious authority, arguing that religious authority plays an often overlooked role for religious leaders. We use an experimental survey design with different populations from across the religious spectrum in Israel. Our findings from Study 1 suggest that religious leader authority, combined with political credibility, contributes to greater public willingness to make political compromises in symbolic conflicts. In contrast, Study 2 finds that political credibility or religious leader authority on its own has little impact on political compromise. Overall, our mixed results provide a possible explanation for why cases of religious peacemaking are rare.

## 4.1 Introduction

Religious leadership and communities are vital parts of political life in many conflict and post-conflict countries. The influence of religious leaders is especially consequential where religious beliefs are central to the conflict or when conflict involves sacred territory (Hassner, 2003; Atran, Axelrod and Davis, 2007; Manekin, Grossman and Mitts, 2018). Under these circumstances, there is a genuine fear that the conflict will be viewed by the actors as intractable, making support for political compromise unlikely (Bar-Tal, 2013). In contrast, religious actors have also played a valuable role in promoting political alternatives to conflict worldwide through religious compromise and interfaith dialogue. Scholarship has also highlighted the potential role for religion to contribute to conflict resolution through its moral authority to harness and (re)interpret religious teachings (Johnston and Sampson, 1995; Appleby, 2000; Gopin, 2002*b*; Toft, Philpott and Shah, 2011; Haynes, 2016).

These opposing views of religion - the “double-edged” sword that contributes both to conflict and to peacemaking (Appleby, 2000) - point to the differing roles filled by different religious leaders, where some leaders encourage conflict and others promote reconciliation. This leads to the following related questions. First, under what circumstances can religious leaders promote political compromise to conflict involving symbolic or sacred values? Second, are some religious leaders more effective than others in promoting political compromise?

To examine these questions, we develop a theory of religious authority, which builds on previous literature in moral psychology, conflict resolution, and the political influence of religion. We argue that in a competitive religious marketplace where religious elites compete for followers, elites attempt to outbid each other to signal their religious credentials (Toft, 2007). In this framework, compromises surrounding conflicts involving sacred values are likely to be viewed as taboo and not-religiously credible by other religious leaders and the religious public. Previous literature on source credibility, however, suggests that certain types of religious leaders can avoid this reputation loss.

When deciding between competing religious messages in this marketplace, it is likely that religious individuals will side with more authoritative religious leaders. For religious leaders, we hypothesize that there are two types of credibility: religious authority (unique to religious leaders) and political competence (common to all elites/leaders). We argue that this combination of religious authority and political competence allows certain religious leaders to propose political compromises to sensitive issues involving sacred values.

While there are several ways to establish religious authority, we focus on two cases where religious leaders can maintain their authority, even when proposing unpopular political compromise. First, religious leaders can signal their religious expertise when political compromise is accompanied by a detailed religious discussion in a different issue domain. For example, one can support giving away sacred territory in a religious conflict, but maintain religious authority by adopting a clear legal position on esoteric religious issues. Second, religious leaders can signal their allegiance to religious authority/tradition, when one attributes their unpopular political opinions to a recognized religious authority.

For political credibility, we rely on source credibility literature which suggests that unpopular compromises will appear more credible when proposed by an unlikely source (Berinsky, 2017). In the context of conflict, this suggests that conciliatory statements made by a religious leader with a reputation as a political hardliner - based on previous actions or statements - will be viewed as more credible. For instance, *past* participation in protests against the government can give a religious leader a reputation of trustworthiness and political legitimacy.

Since people typically choose what religious leaders and messages they expose themselves to, it is hard to measure the causal impact due to the confounding effects of self-selection.<sup>1</sup> We overcome this identification problem by testing our hypotheses using a novel experimental design which targets different populations along the

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that studies which examine the causal impact of news or social media face a similar identification problem of self-selection (Arceneaux and Johnson, 2013). While experimental evidence helps overcome this identification problem, other studies have exploited random variation in exposure to media (DellaVigna and Kaplan, 2007).



religious spectrum in Israel. In the experiment, we present respondents with a conciliatory peace message and vary the religious authority and political credibility of the religious leader.

The Israeli case presents a unique opportunity to examine these hypotheses. Conflict involving religious issues is prevalent, including conflict between groups in Israel (religion and state), and foreign policy issues (such as giving up land for peace with the Palestinians). Furthermore, individuals see religion as a source of shared identity and nationhood while also being strongly divided over religious involvement in politics.

Our results from Study 1 indicate that conciliatory messages made by a religious leader with religious authority, together with political credibility, leads respondents to increase their support for political compromise on issues relevant to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Mediation analysis indicates that increased support for reconciliation is linked to the respondents perceived credibility of the religious leader. We also find that the effects are the largest among religious and traditional respondents, while the effects are weakest among secular respondents (who are unlikely to value religious authority). This suggests that the treatment is most effective among respondents who are likely to value religious leader input on the symbolic elements of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but who may be unaware of conciliatory opinions which are religiously sanctioned.

Our results from Study 2 suggest that the independent effects of religious authority or political credibility are marginal and not statistically significant. We also find that religious leaders are not more effective than army generals in promoting compromise. In combination, our results suggest why cases of religious peacemaking are rare, as there are few religious leaders who possess both religious and political credibility.

This research makes important contributions to two bodies of research. First, it contributes to the growing literature on the political influence of religious leaders. While work has focused on the effect of religious messages (McCauley, 2014; McClen- don and Riedl, 2015; Warner et al., 2015), it remains unclear how important different types of religious leader credibility are for promoting political compromise. Second,

most of the literature argues that negotiations over sacred values leads to political hardening and backlash. In contrast, this paper proposes that credible religious leaders, with religious authority and political credibility, possess unique capabilities to propose compromises in conflict situations that involve sacred values.

In the next section, we outline our theory and hypotheses. Section 3 provides an outline of our research design and describes our data. Section 4 presents our results from Study 1 and Section 5 presents our Study 2 results. Section 6 concludes.

## 4.2 Religious Leaders and Political Compromise

There are two strands of extant literature that are relevant for our theory and hypotheses. The first is the moral psychology and conflict resolution literature on sacred values, and the second is the literature on the political effect of religious leaders. By combining findings from these literatures, we gain important insights on the political influence of religious leaders.

### 4.2.1 Symbolic Dimensions of Conflict

Many times, conflict over territory involves non-material dimensions. This includes conflict surrounding sacred territory or where religious beliefs are central to the conflict (Hassner, 2003; Walter, 2017a).<sup>2</sup> Scholars note that these conflict are more resistant to traditional compromise. For instance, (Atran and Ginges, 2012) note that in intractable conflicts involving sacred values, offering material incentives creates greater opposition to political compromise. Applying this theory to the Israeli-Palestinian context, (Ginges et al., 2007) note that offering material incentives over Jerusalem or refugees created backlash from both Israeli and Palestinian respondents.

The moral psychology literature attributes this backlash to the psychological

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<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that a religious conflict does not necessarily imply that religious values are the source of the conflict. Rather, religious conflict may be the result of a process where religious values are attached to long-standing conflicts, even when their origins were initially non-religious at the onset of conflict (Omer, 2010). In addition, while religion may be used in an instrumental way by elites to help maintain support and mobilize for conflict, it does not follow from this that religious is the causal reason for the onset of conflict (Christia, 2012).

mechanism where individuals recoil from a cost-benefit analysis over sacred values (Haidt, 2001). In contrast to values rooted in self-interest, beliefs rooted in sacred values are seen as absolute and defy traditional cost-benefit calculations (Tetlock et al., 2000; Tetlock, 2003).<sup>3</sup> In addition, sacred values are not held exclusively by religious individuals.<sup>4</sup>

The fact that people base their political choices on their religious beliefs suggests an important role for elites who can speak to these symbolic values, such as religious leaders. Indeed, a wide consensus has emerged that posits that while religion contributes to conflict, it also has the potential to contribute to peacemaking, making religion a “double-edged” sword (Appleby, 2000). Prominent examples include Northern Ireland and South Africa (Sandal, 2017). Moreover, the unique nature of symbolic or religious conflict opens up possibilities for different types of conflict resolution. For instance, (Ginges et al., 2007) uses a series of experiments to show that *symbolic* concessions to the long-standing Israeli-Palestinian conflict were viewed more favorably by religious actors on both sides, relative to material concessions.

This implies that religious leaders have great power to help shape people’s views on conflict and other important political issues. This seems especially pertinent for contested political issues where it is *prime facie* unclear whether sacred values are at stake and how to apply them. While some religious leaders moralize certain political issues (such as gay marriage or abortion) (Grzymala-Busse, 2012), this process can also be reversed. One historical example is religious attitudes towards slavery, where public attitudes became demoralized after religious leaders argued that there was no

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<sup>3</sup> One prominent framework for understanding the role of values is the sacred-value-protection model (SVPM) set out by Tetlock and colleagues which argues that sacred values entail a high level of commitment and are resistant to compromise. Like other taboos, a violation of these sacred values or bargaining over them generates moral disgust and a need for moral cleansing. Similarly, (Ryan, 2017) uses experimental survey evidence to show that individuals with political attitudes rooted in moral considerations are more likely to oppose political compromise and punish compromising politicians.

<sup>4</sup> Findings in moral psychology imply that moral beliefs and convictions are universal, although the specific beliefs vary across cultures and individuals (Haidt, 2007). Thus, liberals may attach moral significance to issues involving fairness while conservatives are more likely to attribute moral significance to ingroup loyalty (Haidt, 2007). Similarly, some individuals attribute moral convictions to issues considered more economic in nature (such as social-security reform), while others do not attribute moral convictions to classical religious issues (such as same-sex marriage) (Ryan, 2014).

religious justification for slavery (McKivigan and Snay, 1998). More recent contested examples include debates between religious leaders over whether it is permissible to hurt innocents during religiously motivated conflict (Hegghammer, 2013) and religious obligations towards refugees/immigrants.<sup>5</sup>

This has important implications for conflict, particularly when the conflict centers around moral, symbolic, or religious issues. For example, (Johnston and Sampson, 1995) note that religious leaders are better equipped to engage in conflict resolution, as religious leaders can provide justification for dividing territory which is considered indivisible (Goddard, 2009). These efforts have been labeled by scholars as “the missing dimension of statecraft” and a potentially fruitful alternative to conflict resolution measures based on realpolitik principles (Johnston and Sampson, 1995; Johnston, 2003; Toft, Philpott and Shah, 2011). Indeed, religious leaders have been at the forefront of several important peace-making initiatives, such as in Nigeria and Northern Macedonia (Smock, 2008). However, it remains unclear why some instances of religious peacemaking have enjoyed success, while other efforts have largely failed.

In the next section, we show how recent work on the political influence of religious leaders indicates that certain authoritative religious leaders may be uniquely situated to propose compromises to conflicts involving sacred values.

#### 4.2.2 Religious Leaders and Political Compromise

The political economy of religion literature theorizes the existence of a competitive religious marketplace, where religious leaders compete for followers. In this marketplace, religious leaders and communities organize along similar interests. This leads to religious traditions that are multivocal, as communities attribute varying levels of sacredness to different political values and issues (Stepan, 2000; Grzymala-Busse, 2012).<sup>6</sup> This stems from the fact that religious texts will be interpreted in

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<sup>5</sup> See <http://www.catholicnews.com/services/englishnews/2016/christians-who-reject-all-refugees-are-hypocrites-pope-says.cfm>

<sup>6</sup> More generally, the multifaceted nature of religion also helps explain its political ambivalence in many settings, where religious communities adopt different attitudes towards the state, democracy, and support for political violence (Philpott, 2007).

a more liberal or conservative manner by different leaders (Iyer, 2016). For instance, they may highlight certain religious passages in Scripture (Masoud, Jamal and Nugent, 2016), emphasize certain religious values (Ben-Nun Bloom, Arikan and Courtemanche, 2015), or appeal to secular values such as self-efficacy (McClendon and Riedl, 2015).<sup>7</sup> Prominent issues at dispute include climate change (Djupe and Calfano, 2013*b*), immigration, (Ben-Nun Bloom, Arikan and Courtemanche, 2015; Margolis, 2018), and female political leadership in the Middle East (Masoud, Jamal and Nugent, 2016).

When deciding between competing religious messages in this marketplace, individuals will inevitably side with some religious leaders, while ignoring others. When deciding who to side with, it is likely that religious individuals will side with religious leaders who possess religious authority (unique to religious leaders) and political competence (common to all elites/leaders). In the next two subsections, we discuss each of these attributes.

### 4.2.3 Religious Authority

How does a religious leader gain and maintain religious authority in a religious system? Notably, the structure of religious authority differs among religious traditions. For instance, in a centralized religious system (such as Catholicism) authority is institutional and can be formally acquired by moving up the religious leadership hierarchy. In a less centralized religious system, such as Sunni Islam or Judaism, authority can be gained through a combination of personal charisma and reputation for piety. This suggests that especially in a less hierarchical religious system, religious leaders, who vary in persuasive abilities, capacity, and authority will not be able to (successfully) promote political compromise to the same degree.

Social psychology work on persuasion has long noted the importance of source credibility, where the two key components are expertise and trustworthiness (Pornpitakpan, 2004). In the religious context, scholars have varied source credibility by

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<sup>7</sup> Recent work notes that even exposure to clergy can lead to more honest behavior due to monitoring effects and the effects of religious authority (Condra, Isaqzadeh and Linardi, 2017).

whether the religious message came from one's religious in-group or out-group (Robinson, 2010), whether religious titles were used (Margolis, 2018), or whether the messenger is dressed as a civilian or cleric (Condra, Isaqzadeh and Linardi, 2017).

Arguably, another way to signal religious authority is how one religiously frames political compromise. For instance, moderate messages on LGBT rights may be viewed as more credible when accompanied by authoritative positions on other religious issues. Similarly, political opinions by religious leaders are seen as more credible when they reveal their religious thought process (Djupe and Calfano, 2013*a*). This suggests that religious individuals may be more receptive to peace messages made by religious leaders, when they are made within a broader discussion of religious issues (which maintains religious leader authority). This suggests our first hypothesis:

**H1:** Religious leaders with religious authority are more likely to successfully promote political compromise.

#### 4.2.4 Political Credibility

Another type of credibility for religious leaders, common for other leaders, relates to political credibility. Recent work notes that political credibility is mainly based on political partisanship (Swire et al., 2017), or whether the political message came from an unlikely source (Berinsky, 2017). In the context of conflict, an unlikely source for re-conciliatory peace messages would be a former hardliner who has opposed political compromise in the past. This is consistent with other work which notes that hawks are better at making peace (Schultz, 2005; Mattes and Weeks, 2019) and why Islamists or extremists enjoy political advantages (Cammatt and Luong, 2014; Walter, 2017*a*). This suggests the following hypothesis:

**H2:** Religious leaders with political credibility are more likely to successfully promote political compromise.

## 4.3 Research Design

We explored these hypotheses in Israel. This case provides a valuable contribution as Jewish identity in Israel is complex, infused with religious, ethnic, and nationalist meaning. In addition, Israel's different social groups vary in their support for religion and nationalism, which has a large impact on a host of political issues such as support for the settlements in the West Bank. This variation may also impact their readiness to make political compromises when exposed to conciliatory religious messages by religious leaders.

Another advantage of examining Israel is that it provides a setting where there is sharp disagreement among different social groups regarding the influence that religion should have on politics. According to a recent Pew Research Center report (2016),<sup>8</sup> while the majority of Jewish Israelis believe religion should be kept separate from government policies, there is a sharp divide among the four main social groups in Israel.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, this debate is not merely ideological. There are strong disagreements over actual religious policies such as whether to allow public transportation on the Sabbath, whether Ultra-Orthodox Jews should serve in the army, and whether non-Orthodox Rabbis should be allowed to conduct marriages in Israel. Furthermore, attitudes towards peace are highly shaped by religious values such as whether sacred land can be divided (Manekin, Grossman and Mitts, 2018). While most religious leaders (and the religious public) hold hawkish views on the peace process, several prominent religious leaders have taken liberal stances (such as Rabbis Ovadiah Yosef, Menachem Froman, and Yehuda Amital). However, it is unclear what impact these conciliatory messages have on the public.

In addition, large parts of the population are exposed to religious teachings. The competition between religious elites has led to the creation of alternative forms of religious media which contain many political messages by prominent religious elites, such as the popular weekly Sabbath pamphlet (*Alonei Shabbat*).

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<sup>8</sup> See <http://www.pewforum.org/2016/03/08/israels-religiously-divided-society/>

<sup>9</sup> These groups are the secular (*Hilonim*), traditional (*Mesorati*), national-religious (*Dati*) and Ultra-Orthodox (*Haredi*).

For the project, we designed the treatment to resemble an article in a religious pamphlet. As part of a larger project that surveys the content of religious sermons in Israel, we examined different Sabbath pamphlets (*Alonei Shabbat*) and online responsa (*Shutim*) (Freedman, 2019). In these materials, political issues that involve sacred values are frequently debated. While many texts do admittedly discourage political compromise,<sup>10</sup> others use rhetorical devices to justify political compromise.<sup>11</sup> For internal validity, we crafted religious messages that were based on past conciliatory opinions given by actual religious figures in Israel.

### 4.3.1 Outcome Variables:

The main outcome variable measured readiness to make political compromises in other conflict areas such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict using questions on political compromise used by other scholars (Atran and Ginges, 2012). One example included the following:

“In exchange for a permanent peace agreement, would you be prepared for the Arab neighborhoods in East Jerusalem to serve as the capital of the Palestinian state?”

Responses to these prompts were recorded on a 7-point scale that ranged from “completely favor” to “completely oppose.”

Notably, since this is a political issue where attitudes were likely to be resistant to compromise due to past violence, we also included questions that asked about Palestinian victimization (Čehajić-Clancy et al., 2011). When possible, we also used question wordings from previously run surveys such as the 2016 Pew Report and the Guttman religion surveys.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> For example, Rabbis Zalman Melamed, Dov Lior, and Eliezer Melamed note in several legal responses that it is categorically forbidden to return territories to the Palestinians (see <http://www.yeshiva.org.il/ask/?cat=332>).

<sup>11</sup> For example, the famous ruling given by Rabbi Ovadia Yosef that it is permitted to give away parts of the land of Israel if it were to save lives.

<sup>12</sup> The Guttman Center runs many public surveys in Israel and has surveyed religious beliefs and practices in Israel in 1991, 1999, and 2009.



In addition, we measured the willingness to make political compromises on a set of controversial political issues. Building on a framework of political compromise used by (Ryan, 2017), respondents were presented with several political scenarios which involved political compromise. For instance, the Sabbath prompt, also recorded on a 7-point scale (as described above) read:

“To what extent would you support or oppose public transportation running on Shabbat throughout the country?”

It should be noted that respondents may be reluctant to state a willingness to make compromises on politically sensitive topics in response to direct questions. In order to account for this potential form of social desirability bias, we also included alternative measures that were less sensitive. One such measure included feeling thermometers, a standard tool used in many surveys (such as the ANES) for measuring feelings towards different social groups (Nelson, 2008).

### 4.3.2 Treatments

In line with the hypotheses, in Study 1 we varied the political credibility and religious authority of the religious leader. We had two possible experimental protocols whereby individuals were randomly assigned to one experimental condition. In the first condition, the religious leader possesses political credibility and religious authority versus the second condition where the religious leader only has political credibility. This allows us to assess to what extent religious authority plays a role for religious leaders, holding constant political credibility.

To signal religious authority in Study 1, we framed the political discussion around a religion and state issue that is relatively esoteric, as we wanted the issue to be chiefly about religious practice and contain no political implications. For this purpose, we chose the topic of *eruv*, a Jewish law governing the ability to carry items outside of the

household on the Sabbath.<sup>13</sup> While it is common for religious leaders to state political opinions, typically only religious legal experts take stances on purely legal issues in Jewish law. As well, this mimics the common practice in more conservative circles to juxtapose rulings on both political and legal issues, whereas discussing political issues exclusively is rarer.

We signaled political credibility by noting the religious leader's past participation in protests against the peace process. Since most of the religious public holds right-wing views on the conflict, liberal positions taken by former hardline leaders are seen as more politically credible by the public than consistent dovish positions.

Both conditions contained a conciliatory message about peace with the Palestinians. The conciliatory message stated that it was permissible to give away land for peace when doing so would save Israeli lives. Notably, this religious message frames Palestinians as a threat, and compromise for peace as being in Israel's self-interest. We chose this message, as it is based on actual legal religious opinions made by prominent religious leaders in Israel, giving the design more internal validity.

In Study 2, we made several modifications to the treatment conditions. To examine the independent effects of political credibility and religious authority, we had three survey conditions: religious leader with no stated credibility (control), religious leader with political credibility, and religious leader with religious authority. We also operationalized religious authority differently by attributing one's views to a religious authority (Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef). To see how unique religious leaders are, we also included a condition with a pro-peace statement made by an army General - arguably the secular version of a peace-maker in Israel.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>In one variation, the Rabbi takes a strict view on the topic, forbidding the carrying of items on the Sabbath, and in the other variation, the view is more lenient, permitting this action.

<sup>14</sup>For an example of the involvement of army Generals in politics, see: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/22/world/middleeast/israel-generals-politics-netanyahu.html>

### 4.3.3 Sampling

We have conducted two survey experiments in Israel, where IRB approval was obtained from MIT and Hebrew University.<sup>15</sup> The first was an online sample collected in two waves (August 2018 and January 2019) by IPanel, an Israeli firm who specializes in administering online samples (n=265). The second study was collected by IPanel in May 2019 (n=289), during a time of renewed tensions in Gaza. Using quota sampling, we oversampled the religious population in Israel since this is the most relevant population for the survey. Respondents were randomly assigned to the different treatment conditions. The appendix (C) contains the transcript of the survey questionnaires and the treatment conditions.

## 4.4 Results for Study 1

As a manipulation check for the effect of our treatment on religious leader credibility, Figure 4-1 plots the means and 95% confidence intervals for the different treatment groups. We measured religious leader credibility as the average respondent ranking of the leader's expertise, honesty, and righteousness (on a scale of 1-6). The figure indicates that when the discussion of political issues are accompanied by a legal discussion of other religious issues, respondents ranked the religious leader as more credible, relative to control (4.26 versus 3.97).<sup>16</sup> Interestingly, these results were the largest for perceptions of religious leader expertise (4.17 versus 3.60).

To assess the impact of our treatment on political compromise, we plot the difference of means between the control and treatment group in Figure 4-2. The figure

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<sup>15</sup> For an initial pretest, we also collected a short convenience sample of undergraduate students at Hebrew University in June 2018 (n=107). The results from the Hebrew University pretest sample are presented in the appendix.

<sup>16</sup> There was little difference for religious authority between the different variants for our treatment group (strict versus lenient), implying that taking a religious position is sufficient for establishing credibility (but that whether the position is strict or lenient is not consequential). In the analysis below, we present results where we combine these two treatment groups together (and separately in the appendix).

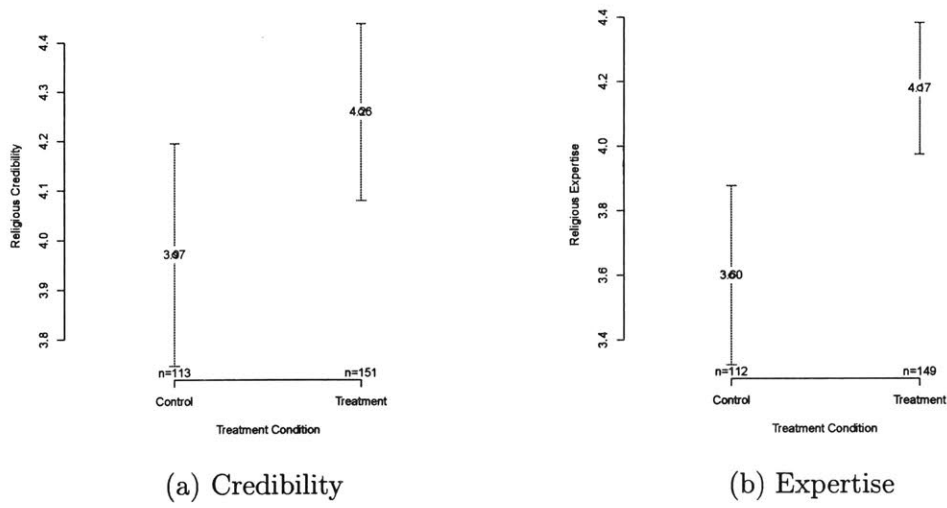
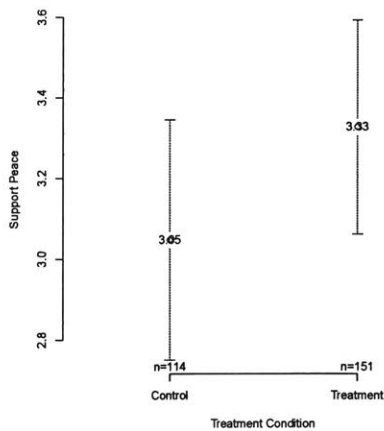


Figure 4-1: **Religious Leader Credibility by Treatment Group** Religious leader credibility is the average value of responses regarding the leader’s expertise, honesty, and righteousness.

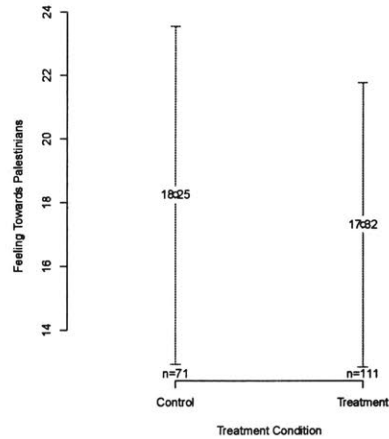
indicates that there was more support for peace in the treatment condition relative to the control group (3.33 versus 3.05). This is consistent with our theoretical expectation that conciliatory messages by a religious leader with religious authority (together with political credibility) will increase support for political compromise, relative to a religious leader with just political credibility.

Interestingly, another important result was that treatment had no effect on positive feelings towards Palestinians. This is consistent with previous research which distinguishes between respondent’s policy positions and emotions towards out-groups (Čehajić-Clancy et al., 2011). It is also possible that the wording of our conciliatory message in the treatment - which emphasized political compromise due to the threat of further conflict - would not lead to having more positive emotions towards the Palestinians.

To assess whether these differences are statistically significant, we used an OLS regression in Table 4.1. Column 1, with no controls, suggests that treatment has a moderate positive effect, although the effect is not statistically significant. In Column



(a) Support for Peace



(b) Feelings towards Palestinians

Figure 4-2: **Effect of Religious Leader Credibility on Political Outcomes.** Support for peace is the average value of responses regarding support for negotiations, support for dividing Jerusalem, and support for exchanging land for peace. Feelings towards Palestinians are based on a thermometer scale.

2, we introduce demographic controls which account for some covariate imbalance between the treatment and control groups. Column 2 suggests that treatment increased support for peace by 0.43, which represents about a quarter of a standard deviation, and this result is statistically significant. Interestingly, Column 4 suggests that the effect of treatment was slightly stronger among the group that received a lenient religious message.

#### 4.4.1 Mechanisms

We tested for mechanisms using the causal mediation analysis framework outlined by (Imai et al., 2011). Note that this framework allows one to estimate the average causal mediation effect (ACME), given sequential ignorability.

In Figure 4-3, we assess to what extent the effect of treatment is mediated by perceptions of greater religious leader credibility. The Figure implies that part of the effect is mediated by perceptions of the religious leader's credibility (ACME=0.02). The results also imply that the treatment had an independent and direct effect on

Table 4.1: Impact of Religious Leader Credibility on Support for Peace

	Support for Peace			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Treatment (all)	0.282 (0.203)	0.433 (0.172)		
Age		0.004 (0.006)		0.004 (0.006)
Right-Wing Ideology		0.644 (0.075)		0.645 (0.075)
Female		0.014 (0.167)		0.011 (0.167)
Traditional		-0.057 (0.281)		-0.057 (0.282)
Religious		-0.968 (0.265)		-0.972 (0.265)
Ultra-Orthodox		-1.042 (0.275)		-1.040 (0.275)
Treatment (lenient)			0.367 (0.233)	0.506 (0.195)
Treatment (strict)			0.167 (0.256)	0.331 (0.213)
Constant	3.047 (0.153)	1.803 (0.453)	3.047 (0.153)	1.810 (0.454)
Observations	265	239	265	239
Adj. R-squared	0.004	0.390	0.002	0.389

our outcome, with perceptions of religious authority accounting for part of the total effect.

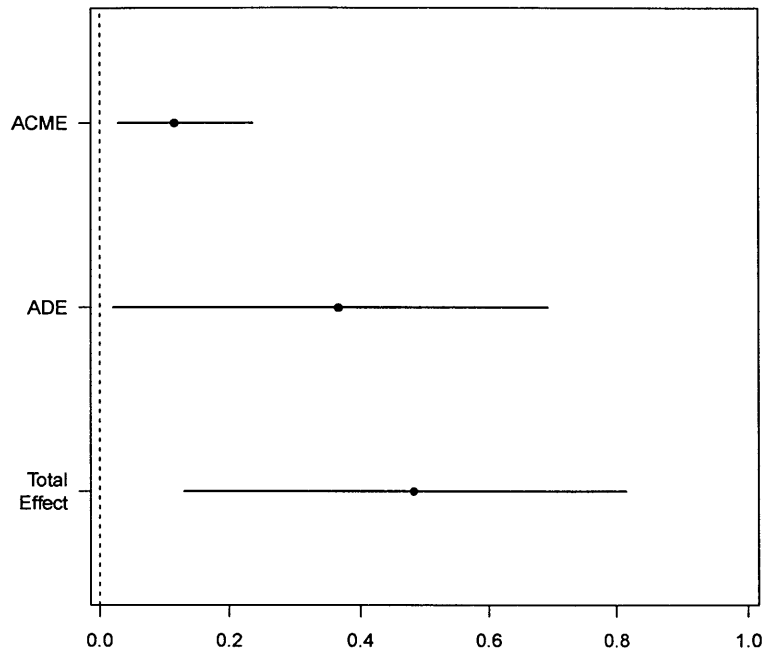


Figure 4-3: Mediation Analysis of Religious Leader Credibility on Support for Peace

#### 4.4.2 Impact on Religious Tolerance

We also examined to what extent the treatment had negative spillover effects. Specifically, we examined whether treatment made respondents less likely to support religious compromise on religious and state issues such as civil marriage. Figure 4-4 implies that treatment had an insignificant effect on religious compromise. This suggests that when respondents make political compromise on more “political” issues (such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict), they do not compensate by being less tolerant on more “religious” issues (such as civil marriage).

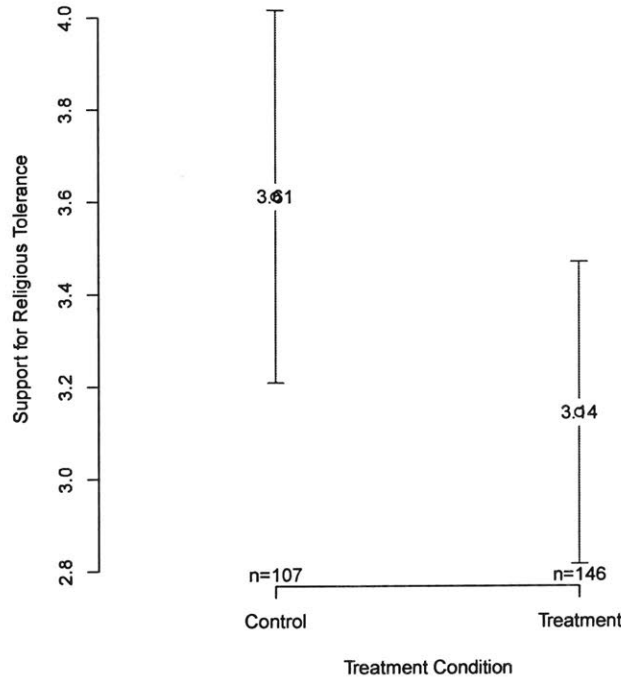


Figure 4-4: **Support for Religious-State Compromise by Treatment Group, IPanel Sample** Support for religious-state compromise is the average value of responses regarding support for civil marriage, public transportation on the Sabbath, and support for women praying loudly at the Western Wall.

### 4.4.3 Heterogeneity of Results

Finally, we examined to what extent treatment had heterogeneous effects based on feelings of moral disgust or religious knowledge.<sup>17</sup> As shown in Figure 4-5a, the results imply that treatment did not vary according to one’s feelings of moral disgust. This implies that respondents may have become habituated to thinking about political compromise, including religious respondents. However, Figure 4-5b implies that treatment was stronger for respondents with *low* religious knowledge. This is consistent with other work which finds that individuals who are less knowledgeable about their religion are the most susceptible to religious arguments (Wiktorowicz, 2005;

<sup>17</sup>In the appendix, we also show that the effects of treatment varied by exposure to violence and religious ideology (see Figures C-4 and C-5).



Fair, Goldstein and Hamza, 2017).

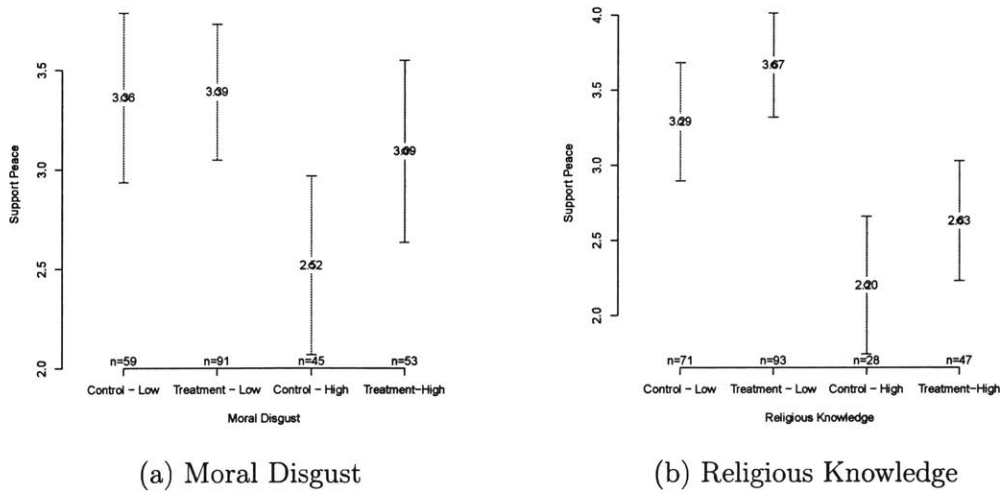


Figure 4-5: Heterogeneous Effects of Treatment on Support for Peace

## 4.5 Results for Study 2

The results from Study 1 suggested that religious leaders with religious and political credibility were more effective at promoting political compromise, relative to religious leaders with just political credibility. However, the study did not allow us to disentangle the independent effects of religious and political credibility. In addition, the instrument for religious authority seemed to have independent effects on attitudes towards political compromise, suggesting a need for a modified instrument. Finally, it was unclear from Study 1 how unique religious leaders are to other types of leaders.

We collected the survey in May 2019, during a period of renewed violence with Hamas in Gaza.<sup>18</sup> Our sample size was 289 respondents, distributed equally among the religious spectrum of Israel's Jewish population.

As an initial manipulation check, Figure 4-6 indicates that religious leaders in the political or religious authority conditions were viewed as more religiously credible,

<sup>18</sup> See <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/04/world/middleeast/gaza-rockets-israel.html>

relative to our control conditions. This implies that political or religious authority has independent effects on perceptions of religious authority.

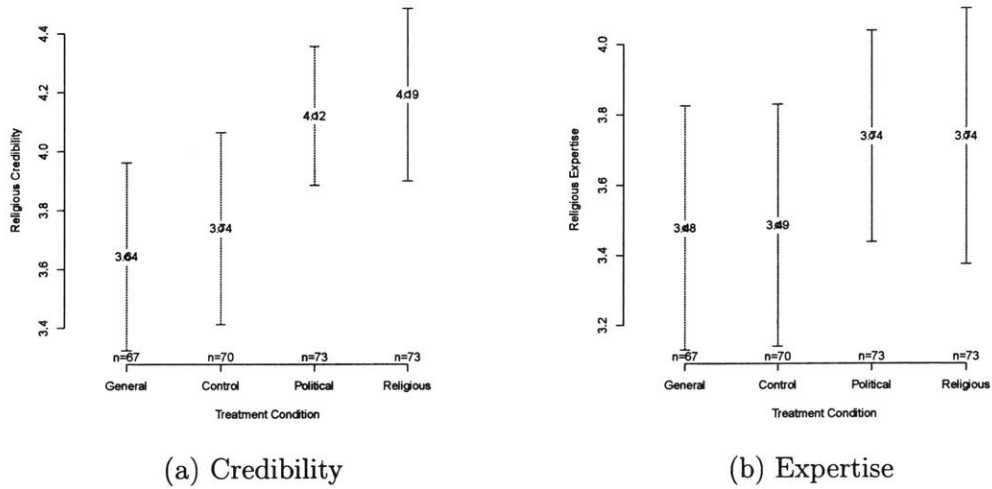


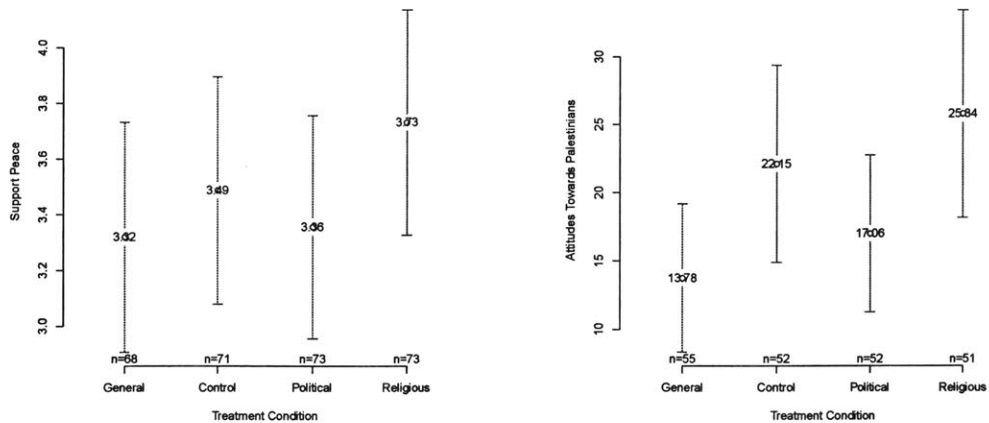
Figure 4-6: Religious Leader Credibility by Treatment Group, Study 2

In Figure C-2, we assess to what extent greater religious or political credibility led to a greater willingness to make political compromises. As indicated by the figure, greater credibility only led to a slight increase in support for political compromise.

To assess whether these differences are statistically significant, we used an OLS regression in Table 4.2. In columns 1 and 2, we assess the cumulative impact of a religious leader versus an army general. Column 1 indicates that religious leaders had a slightly positive impact on political compromise, but this effect was not statistically significant. In columns 3 and 4, we show the results for each treatment condition separately. The results imply that conciliatory messages by a religious leader were not more persuasive than the message delivered by an army general, and that support for political compromise did not differ significantly across the different treatment conditions. This implies that the independent effects of political or religious leader credibility (relative to control) were marginal and not statistically significant.

Table 4.2: Impact of Religious Leader Credibility on Support for Peace, Study 2

	<b>Support for Peace</b>			
	<b>Model 1</b>	<b>Model 2</b>	<b>Model 3</b>	<b>Model 4</b>
Treatment (Religious Leader)	0.207 (0.239)	-0.010 (0.183)		
Age		0.008 (0.005)		0.008 (0.005)
Right-Wing Ideology		0.600 (0.059)		0.604 (0.059)
Female		-0.006 (0.159)		-0.021 (0.159)
Traditional		-0.339 (0.221)		-0.336 (0.221)
Religious		-1.109 (0.229)		-1.101 (0.229)
Ultra-Orthodox		-1.018 (0.242)		-1.037 (0.243)
Religious Leader (Control)			0.170 (0.292)	-0.183 (0.224)
Religious Leader (Political Credibility)			0.038 (0.290)	0.028 (0.220)
Religious Leader (Religious Credibility)			0.412 (0.290)	0.122 (0.223)
Constant	3.319 (0.209)	2.272 (0.394)	3.319 (0.209)	2.296 (0.395)
Observations	285	285	285	285
Adj. R-squared	-0.001	0.428	-0.002	0.428



(a) Support for Peace

(b) Feelings towards Palestinians

Figure 4-7: **Effect of Religious Leader Credibility on Political Outcomes, Study 2.** Support for peace is the average value of responses regarding support for negotiations, support for dividing Jerusalem, and support for exchanging land for peace. Feelings towards Palestinians are based on a thermometer scale.

## 4.6 Conclusions

Religious figures continue to play a valuable role in promoting political alternatives as high ranking leaders of moral authority. The research presented above suggests that religious authority can be an effective tool for fostering political compromise. However, our studies also suggest an important caveat where only certain religious leaders are able to promote peace (those with political credibility *and* religious authority), while others cannot (those with only one type of credibility). As there are few religious leaders with both political and religious authority, this may help explain why instances of effective religious peacemaking are relatively rare.

In exploring the issue further, we identify a number of limitations and areas that could benefit from additional analysis. First, we consider in this paper certain types of religious authority and political credibility. However, it is unclear to what extent religious leader traits such as authority can be successfully manipulated in a lab or survey setting. Second, the Israeli-Palestinian case-study is a prime example of a

conflict involving sacred territory where the rhetoric of religious figureheads can influence individuals in considering religious compromise and interfaith dialogue. At the same time, religious authority may be important precisely since religious issues are at stake. In contrast, religious leaders, even without religious authority, may have more political clout in situations where territorial compromise does not involve symbolic territory, such as Northern Ireland (Sandal, 2017). For these conflicts, political compromise may be more effective and tenable for all types of religious leaders as sacred principles are not at stake.

# Chapter 5

## Conclusions

My dissertation examined why religious leaders adopt certain nationalist positions and how these positions contribute to the intensity of conflict. I developed a theory of religious credibility that explains the variation in religious leader ideology by looking at leaders' incentives to strategically adopt ideological positions. I examined my theory in three papers in Israel, using a combination of methods including statistical text methods, spatial panel data, and experiments.

### 5.1 Contributions

In this section, I discuss the main contributions of my research.

#### **Religious Leaders and Conflict**

Previous literature on religion and conflict is deeply divided regarding to what extent religious leaders play a role during conflict. Some argue that religious leaders contribute to conflict, by using religious rhetoric to help overcome collective action problems that plague mobilization efforts during conflict (Toft, 2007; Berman, 2009; Isaacs, 2016; Walter, 2017*a*). In contrast, other scholars argue that they help resolve conflict by appealing to sacred values. Still, other studies suggest that religious

leaders are marginal to conflict and have little impact.

However, there are three main shortcomings in the literature. First, the literature does not fully consider how religious leaders distinguish between different types of conflict, giving more priority to symbolic conflict. Second, they do not discuss that the role of religious leaders varies for different stages of conflict (onset of conflict versus conflict dynamics). Third, the literature does not sufficiently weigh how religious leader incentives may vary depending on one's religious community.

My dissertation addresses these issues by showing how certain religious leaders become more nationalist during *symbolic* conflict (where there is symbolic or religious significance attached to the territory in dispute), but not during *strategic* conflict (where the territory is valued for material reasons) (Atran, Axelrod and Davis, 2007; Svensson, 2007; Hassner, 2009; Manekin, Grossman and Mitts, 2018). This is in contrast to other political elites who become more nationalist during conflict that is more violent (typically measured by casualties).

Moreover, I show that the incentives for different religious leaders to become more nationalist depends on the relationship of one's religious community to the state. Specifically, religious leaders are more likely to support the state during conflict when they lead communities who rally 'round the flag during conflict. In contrast, religious leaders who lead communities that have an ambivalent relationship with the state are less likely to become more nationalist during conflict.

One reason why certain religious leaders are more nationalistic during symbolic conflict is that they view themselves as gatekeepers for the preservation of territorial indivisibility. In contrast, political elites are more likely to value the material benefits of territory.

Religious leader attitudes have implications for why certain conflicts become viewed as religious or symbolic in nature. This has consequences for the duration of conflict, its intensity, and chances for helping resolve the conflict. In addition to the Israeli-

Palestinian conflict, some of the longest and most intractable conflicts revolve around sacred territory (such as the conflict between India and Pakistan over Kashmir).

## **Political Influence of Religious Leaders**

My findings from the dissertation both reinforce and challenge the existing political economy literature on religious leaders. It reinforces this literature by showing how religious leaders engage in politics in order to gain resources for their religious institutions (Gill, 1994; Iannaccone, 1998; Berman, 2000; Warner, 2000; Bellin, 2008; Grzymala-Busse, 2012, 2015; Iyer, 2016). At the same time, I find little evidence that state resources help make religious leaders more politically moderate. This challenges the existing literature which suggests that religious leaders are more likely to engage in politically moderate beliefs when there are material incentives such as state jobs and salaries (Nielsen2017).

One reason why this relationship fails in Israel is that funds earmarked for religious institutions are granted unconditionally, with little oversight. Thus, there is little incentive to moderate one's beliefs. As well, the power of religious political parties grants religious leaders a certain amount of political power, and subsequent independence from the state.

This has had important implications for the political system in Israel. First, it has contributed to the politicization of religion in Israeli politics. Many are resentful of the substantial influence that religious leaders have on Israeli politics, and religion is perceived as a growing and polarizing force in Israeli society (Peled and Peled, 2018). Second, it has provided incentives for religious political parties to primarily represent the interests of religious institutions, while failing to properly represent the median religious voter.



## 5.2 Limitations

In this section, I briefly discuss the limitations of my research.

### **How unique are religious leaders compared to other political elites?**

An important theoretical question which this dissertation raises - and does not fully answer - is to what extent religious leaders are unique political actors, compared to other political elites. One possibility is that religious leaders behave like other political elites. Another possibility is that religious leaders are unique, primarily motivated by religious concerns such as bringing more people to salvation.

In my dissertation, I attempt to sketch out how religious leaders are unique along several dimensions. For example, I argue that religious leaders are more engaged in symbolic conflicts, while political elites are more engaged in strategic conflicts. I also show that the source of political support varies for religious and other political elites. While political elites can make alliances with groups that stratify the labor/capital divide (like labor unions or big business), religious leaders turn to religious institutions. Finally, I propose variation in political influence. Specifically, political elites rely on their political credibility, while religious leaders influence is primarily a function of their religious authority.

While incomplete, I believe my dissertation does offer some evidence that religious leaders are unique actors on several important dimensions. At the same time, more work needs to be done to establish a full political theory of religious leaders.

### **Application outside of Israel**

My dissertation focused on religious leaders in Israel, so it is unclear how much can be generalized from the Israeli case due to its unique history and culture. With that, I have argued in the dissertation that it is possible to generalize on some aspects of the Israeli experience and not on others (Barnett, 1996; Fox, 2008).

For instance, there are strong conceptual similarities between the political influence of religious leaders in Israel and the broader Middle East. As noted in Chapter 3, religious parties in Israel and the Middle East have religious political parties which use clientelistic strategies - with the cooperation and endorsement of religious leaders - to attract voters (Cammett and Luong, 2014). In addition, there are many countries where religious leaders play an important role in encouraging or dissuading actors from cooperating with the state or participating in conflict, such as Nigeria, Pakistan, and Indonesia.

At the same time, more work is needed in order to better understand how the results apply outside of Israel. Thus, I plan to continue examining religion and conflict processes in Afghanistan, Yemen, and Turkey.

### 5.3 Next Steps

The next steps for my research will focus on which were only carried out partially in the dissertation. For instance, I only partially explored why some religious leaders choose to cooperate with the state, while others choose to challenge it. I will address this question in more detail in further work by examining to what extent religious leaders who lack an independent financial source are more likely to accept democratic politics and cooperate with the state when the state grants them political access and resources. This research will provide more evidence on the motivations for religious leaders to cooperate with the state.

Overall, my research findings suggest that the positions which religious leaders adopt can help lead to the extension or termination of conflicts. With religious leader influence on the rise, it becomes increasingly important to understand why religious clerics adopt moderate and extreme ideologies in different conflicts. One reason violence persists in the Israeli-Palestinian context is arguably due to the failure

of policy makers to acknowledge the de-facto veto power that Israeli (and Palestinian) religious leaders have over the peace process, who are opposed to seceding territories on religious grounds. This implies that without the tacit cooperation of religious leaders, many policy initiatives are doomed to fail.

While there have been many failed attempts, including religious leaders in the peace process has not been seriously considered. One notable lesson the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has taught us is that we ignore the influence of religious leaders at our own peril. Another approach is needed where policymakers are able to successfully partner with religious leaders to build peace.

# Appendix A

## Supplemental Information for Chapter 2

### A.1 Religious Leaders in the Sabbath Pamphlets

My sample includes important religious leaders, and other leaders with less political clout. There are articles by 250 different religious leaders, where 50 leaders have 50 or more articles. Important writers include Rabbi Shlomo Aviner (*Rosh Yeshiva* of *Ateret Cohanim* and one of the spiritual leaders of Religious Zionism), Rav Yisrael Rosen (director of *Zomet* institute and adviser to the Jewish Home party), Rabbi Menachem Brod (prominent *Chabad* spokesman), Rav Elimelech Biderman (a very popular *Chasidic* sermon giver), and Rav Shalom Arush (*Rosh Yeshiva* of *Chut shel Chesed*). Less important figures include educators, pulpit Rabbis, and other religious elites in the community.

#### A.1.1 How Influential are the Sabbath Pamphlets?

It is important to consider to what extent religious pamphlets are influential. Unlike changes in rhetoric which can be assessed in a more causal manner, there are two

main challenges involved in making a precise or causal inference regarding the impact of leader rhetoric on religious readers' opinion or behavior. First, simple correlations between reader's political opinions and exposure to pamphlets would be misleading due to self-selection of partisan media sources. Second, even when the pamphlets are read, it is not clear to what extent people accept the content in them. Most religious people read other forms of religious media - such as religious newspapers - and regular forms of secular media.

One ideal design that would alleviate some of these concerns would be to run a survey experiment in Israel that samples religious individuals. Treatment would be defined as exposure to a hawkish religious text from a pamphlet, whereas the control group would receive a more moderate religious text. Respondents in the control and treatment groups could then be compared across a host of political attitudes outcomes. This design would be similar in spirit to Woolfalk (2013), who estimates the impact of political cues by religious leaders using experimental evidence. An alternative design would implement an RCT in Israel that would allow users to select from different types of partisan media. This would be like Jo (2017), who uses a RCT in South Korea to measure the causal impact of partisan media on political behavior.

In the interim, I present two pieces of preliminary qualitative evidence which suggests that religious leader rhetoric in the pamphlets has an impact. First, I interviewed several experts in Israel who are knowledgeable about the religious community in Israel. All of them noted that the Sabbath pamphlets are very popular and well read, particularly among young people. Pamphlets are typically read in Synagogue, and conversation during Sabbath meals frequently discuss the pamphlets.

Second, Israeli media sources will report on statements - especially controversial ones - made in these Sabbath pamphlets. For example, controversy regarding Binyamin Netanyahu's beliefs about the two-state solution was arguably triggered by an article that appeared in a religious pamphlet *Olam Katan* which had asked

different political parties, including the Likud “What is the opinion of the head of your party regarding the creation of a Palestinian State?” In the pamphlet, Likud Knesset member Tzipi Hotovely - young and religious - was noted as saying that “The Prime Minister announced that the Bar-Ilan speech is null and void. Netanyahu’s entire political biography is a fight against the creation of a Palestinian state” (see <http://www.vox.com/2015/3/8/8171001/netanyahu-two-state>).

## A.2 Textual Analysis Details

I elaborate in this section on how I converted the pamphlets to data using topic models.

### A.2.1 Data Pre-Processing

To enable the use of statistical text methods, I made several standard modifications to the data. Texts were stemmed using a Hebrew stemmer developed by the Technion, and methods described in Mitts (2019b). After stemming, texts were transliterated from Hebrew into Latin characters, and numbers and common stop words were removed. In addition, texts with less than 100 words were removed from the corpus. Bigrams and trigrams were added to each text. Tokens that appeared less than 50 times in the corpus were removed.

### A.2.2 Structured Topic Model

Topic models identify topics in texts by observing clusters of similar words.<sup>1</sup> These are latent categories typically identified using Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) models Blei, Ng and Jordan (2003). The discovery of categories is unsupervised, where the

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<sup>1</sup> Topic models offer several advantages over other techniques. First, they allow for the analysis of thousands of unorganized texts. Second, they allow for more fine-grained coding by overcoming limitations associated with assigning documents to a dichotomous 0/1 class. Third, by identifying themes, topic models improve upon traditional keyword methods.

user input is the number of topics. Structured topic models are topic models that allow for the inclusion of covariates, which improves the precision of the topics. My structured topic model includes the following covariates:

$$Y_{ijt} = \alpha + \beta \text{pamphlet} + S(\text{week}_t) + \epsilon_{ijt} \quad (\text{A.1})$$

where the outcome variable  $Y$  is the topic proportion made by Rabbi  $i$  in pamphlet  $j$  in week  $t$ . The model controls for pamphlet type and includes a spline for time, factors which explain variation in religious leader discourse.

### A.2.3 Validation of the Topic Model

I assigned names to the different topics based on close reading of texts with high proportions of specific topics and using the top-ranked keywords (frequency and FREX). I validated the topic model using two different tests. First, I show how the topic frequency of religious sermons is sensitive to different parts of the Bible. Exploiting the cyclical nature of the weekly Bible reading, sermons during the book of Deuteronomy - a legal book that reviews laws for the land of Israel - are more likely to discuss legal issues and scholarship, while sermons during Genesis are low on scholarship (see Figure A-5). In contrast, sermons during the book of Numbers - detailing the people's journey to the land of Israel - are more likely to discuss nationalist topics. Second, I show that the topic content varies by pamphlet type. Specifically, Religious Zionist pamphlets are more nationalistic, while sermons in *Haredi* pamphlets are more likely to discuss religious and legal scholarship (see Figure A-8).

Table A1: Sampling Frame of Religious Pamphlets

	Hebrew Title	English Title	Ideological Bent	Organization	Number Published Weekly	Year First Published	Total Pamphlets	Major Writers
<b>Religious Zionist Pamphlets</b>								
1	שבת בשבתו	An Appointed Time	Religious Zionism -- mainstream	Zomet and Hapoel Hamizrahi	70,000	1984	1,674	Rav Rozen
2	מצב הרוח	Mood of the time	Religious Zionism -- mainstream	Private Individuals	60,000	2008	438	
3	שביעי	Seventh Year	Religious Zionism -- mainstream	Private Individuals	50,000	2010	260	
4	נופים	Views	Religious Zionism -- mainstream	Private Individuals		2014	157	
5	באהבה ובאמונה	Love and Faith	Religious Zionism -- Chardal	Machon Meir	50,000	1995	1,122	Rabbi Shlomo Aviner
6	עולם קטן	Small World	Religious Zionism -- Chardal	Olam Katan	80,000	2004	598	Mix of Rabbis and writers.
7	יש"ע שלנו	Our West Bank	Religious Zionism -- Chardal	Yesha Council	50,000	2005	535	
8	גילוי דעת	Gilui daat	Religious Zionism -- Chardal	Aviya Foundation	70,000	2010	356	
9	קול צופייד	Voice of your Gazers	Religious Zionist -- Sephardi	Voice of Eliyahu		1997	873	Rav Mordechai Eliyahu; Rav Shmuel Eliyahu
<b>Independent Pamphlets</b>								



Table A1: Sampling Frame of Religious Pamphlets

1	שיחת השבוע	Weekly Talk	Haredi -- Chabad -- Outreach	Habad	180,000	1986	1,586	Rav Menchem Brod
2	שיחת הגאולה	Redemption Talk	Haredi -- Chabad (Messianic)	Center for Redemption		1994	1,150	Rav Zimroni Zik
3	שלום לעם	Peace to the Nation	Haredi -- Sephardi -- Outreach	Judaism, Tradition, and Peace		2004	780	
4	הידברות עונג שבת	Speak about the Delights of Shabbat	Haredi -- Sephardi -- Outreach	Hidabroot		2011	308	Rabbi Zamir Cohen
5	מעין השבוע	The Weekly Stream	Haredi -- Sephardi	To the Stream		1990	891	
6	מאורות הדף היומי	Meorot Hadaf Yomi	Haredi -- Scholarly	Bnei Brak		1999	940	
7	עלים לתרופה	Leaves for Healing	Haredi -- Belz	Antwerp: Belz Hasidim		1995	1,064	
8	לידע ולהודיע	To Know and Announce	Haredi - Neturei Karta	Neturei Karta		2008	403	
9	Torah Tidbits	Torah Tidbits	Orthodox (English)	Israel Center	30,000	1992	1,224	Phil Chernofsky
10	גל עיני	Open my Eyes	Religious Zionsim -- Chardal/Chabad	Gal Einai	40,000	2014	116	Rav Yitzchak Ginsburgh
11	ארץ ישראל שלנו	Our Land of Israel	Religious Zionism -- Chardal/Chabad	The Saving Land of Israel Group		2007	165	Rabbi Shalom Dov Wolfe; Rabbi Dov Lior
12	תאיר נרי	The Light of Neri	Religious Zionism -- Chardal	The light of Neri		2009	361	Harav Nir Ben Artzi

Table A1: Sampling Frame of Religious Pamphlets

13	שבת שלום	Peaceful Sabbath	Religious Zionism -- liberal	Ways of Peace	3,000	1998	1,011		
14	שבתון	Sabbath	Religious Zionism -- liberal	Shabaton (Petah Tikva)	60,000	2000	825	Rav Sherlo	
15	קרוב אליך	Close to You	Religious Zionism -- Chasidic	Karov Elecha (Petah Tikva)	70,000	2013	178	Rav Steinsaltz; Rabbi Jonathan Sacks	
<b>Select Haredi Pamphlets (from list of 400)</b>									
1	באר הפרשה	The Weekly Well	Haredi - Lelov	Wellsprings of Faith Foundation			1,681	Rav Elimelech Biderman	
2	שבילי פנחס	Paths of Pinchas	Haredi- Belz			2012		Rabbi Pinches Friedman	
3	סיפורי צדיקים	Stories of the Righteous	Haredi- Kretchnif	Rechovot			296		
4	אז נדברו	Then we will talk	Haredi	Haifa			368	Rabbi Shmuel Pollack	
5	מסביב לשולחן	Around the Table	Haredi	Jerusalem		1998	730		
6	איש לרעהו	A person to his friend	Haredi	Love of Truth Center		2008	980		
7	חוט של חסד	A string of Kindness	Haredi -- Breslov	Breslov		2007	530	Rav Shalom Arush	
8	פניני עין חמד	Pearls from Ein Hemed	Haredi -- Sephardi	Mevaseret Ziyon	5,500	2006	606		

Table A.1: Impact of Israeli-Palestinian Conflict on Nationalist Rhetoric, Lagged Model

	<b>Nationalist Rhetoric</b>		
	<b>Model 1</b>	<b>Model 2</b>	<b>Model 3</b>
Military Conflict	0.054 (0.015)	0.049 (0.014)	0.047 (0.013)
Economic Conditions			0.003 (0.003)
Religious Parties in Coalition			-0.005 (0.005)
Rabbi FEs	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FEs	No	Yes	Yes
Observations	10,968	10,968	10,968
Adj. R-squared	0.437	0.438	0.438

Table A.2: Impact of Conflict on Nationalist Rhetoric, Conflict Words Removed

	Nationalist Rhetoric		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Military Conflict	0.035 (0.012)	0.029 (0.010)	0.028 (0.010)
Economic Conditions			0.003 (0.003)
Religious Parties in Coalition			-0.005 (0.005)
Rabbi FEs	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FEs	No	Yes	Yes
Observations	10,968	10,968	10,968
Adj. R-squared	0.467	0.467	0.467

Table A.3: Impact of Israeli-Palestinian Violence on Nationalist Rhetoric

	Nationalist Rhetoric			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Israeli Casualties	0.003 (0.001)			
Civilian Casualties		0.001 (0.001)		
Military Casualties		0.003 (0.001)		
Palestinian Casualties			0.0001 (0.00003)	
Killed by Israeli Civilians				-0.003 (0.006)
Killed by Israeli Military				0.0001 (0.00003)
Economic Conditions	0.005 (0.004)	0.005 (0.004)	0.005 (0.004)	0.005 (0.003)
Religious Parties in Coalition	-0.011 (0.006)	-0.012 (0.006)	-0.008 (0.005)	-0.008 (0.005)
Rabbi FEs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FEs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	10,968	10,968	10,968	10,968
Adj. R-squared	0.436	0.436	0.437	0.437

*Notes:* Standard errors are clustered by Rabbi.

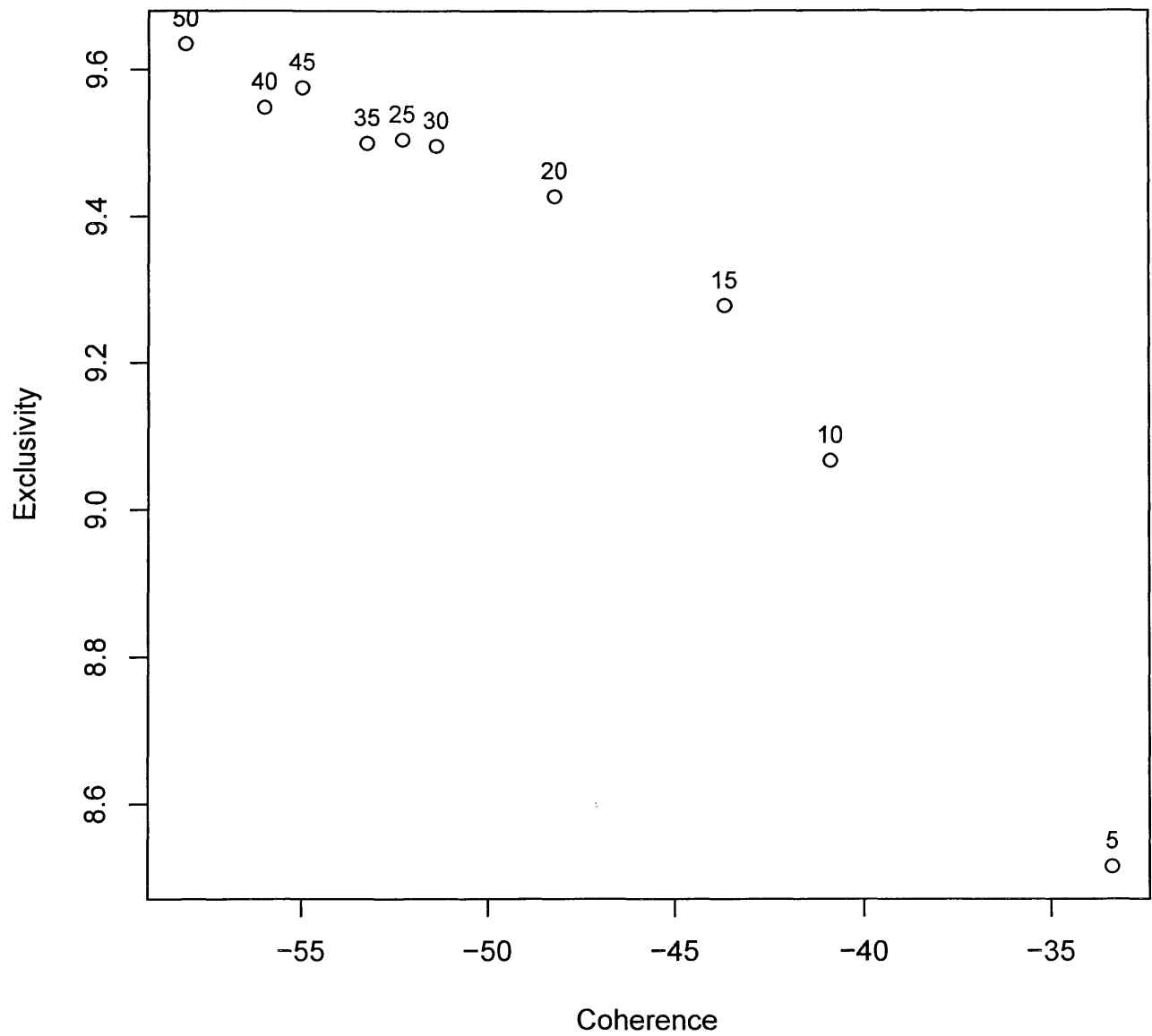


Figure A-1: **Ideal Number of Topics** The plot shows the exclusivity and semantic coherence for different numbers of topics.

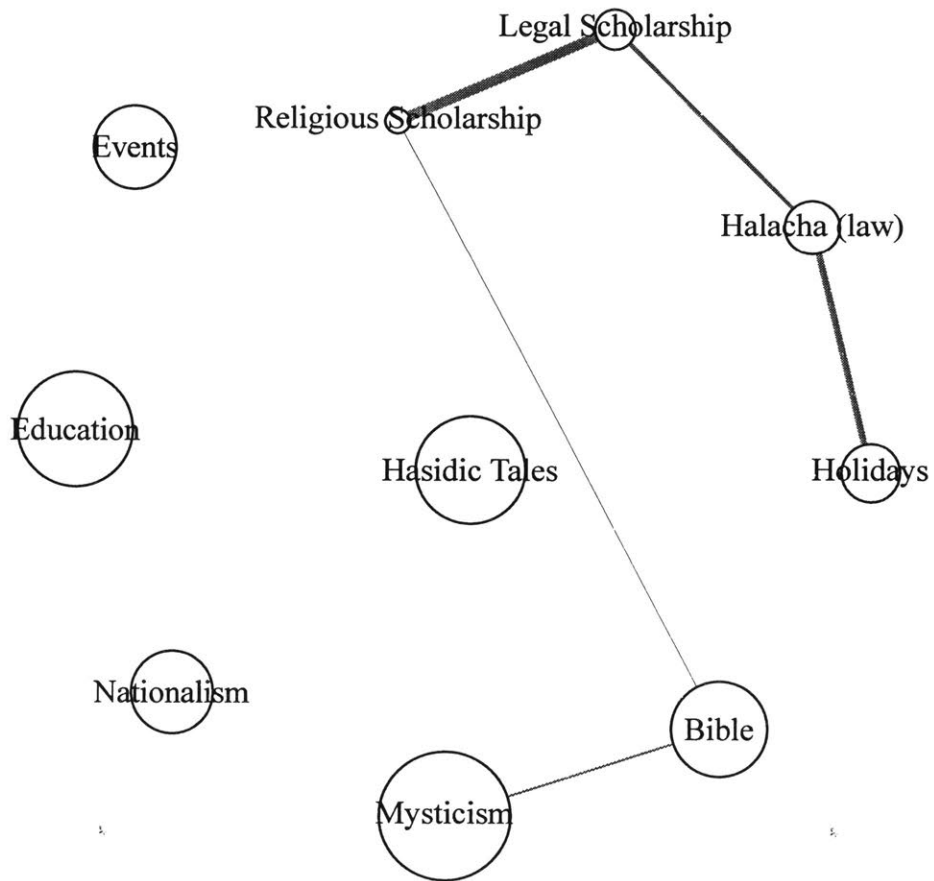


Figure A-2: **Network Correlation among Topics** The plot shows the correlation between topics. Thicker lines indicate a stronger correlation between topics. Topic circle size is proportional to the mean proportion of the topic in the corpus.

## Nationalist Rhetoric

**The Israeli Government Against Zionist Laws:** Behind the scenes of parliamentary activity are bills designed to promote national and Zionist issues, but the government opposes them and prevents their advancement and approval in the Knesset ... According to the existing law, every member of the Knesset declares allegiance to the State of Israel at the beginning of his term. I proposed that the Declaration of Trusts be expanded and stated: "I declare allegiance to the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state," in order to make it clear to all members of the Knesset that all members of the Knesset are committed to the Jewish character of the State of Israel, including Arab MKs. [*Zevulun Orlev, June 26, 2010 (no conflict)*]

**A Slippery Migron Slope:** Until recently, I did not delve into the Migron issue on a specific level. Like most of the country's citizens, even supporters of the political right, I was impressed that, aside from the question of justifying settlement-settlement in general, this is a local legal battle; Land costs, civil rights, priority in the destruction of illegal structures, etc. After reading a little bit of neutral background material, it turns out that this is a slippery, precedent-setting, disastrous disaster for the entire settlement in Judea and Samaria. [*Rav Yisrael Rosen; September 24, 2011 (no conflict)*]

**The War is in Full Swing:** The goal of world diplomacy is to break the public's stamina so that it will have to accept the miserable agreement that they are trying to dictate. Ostensibly, the days seem routine. People go to work, spend time in malls, go on vacation. But that's an illusion. We are in the midst of a war and are subject to a well planned, integrated attack. The US Secretary of State's warning of a boycott of Israel, if it does not give in to the agreement dictated to it, is not a slip of the tongue ... We must understand that we are at war for our very existence. While this is not a war of tanks and planes, it is a political battle, but it is no less critical. And when the Jews feel that they are being pushed against the wall, they know how to unite and demonstrate their steadfastness, the one that has overcome mighty and powerful nations with the help of the Lord of Israel. [*Rabbi Menachem Brod; February 7, 2014 (no conflict)*]

Figure A-3: **Examples of Nationalist Texts** This plot shows brief snippets of the three texts ranked highest in the Nationalist topic. The texts are translated from the original Hebrew, by Google Translate.



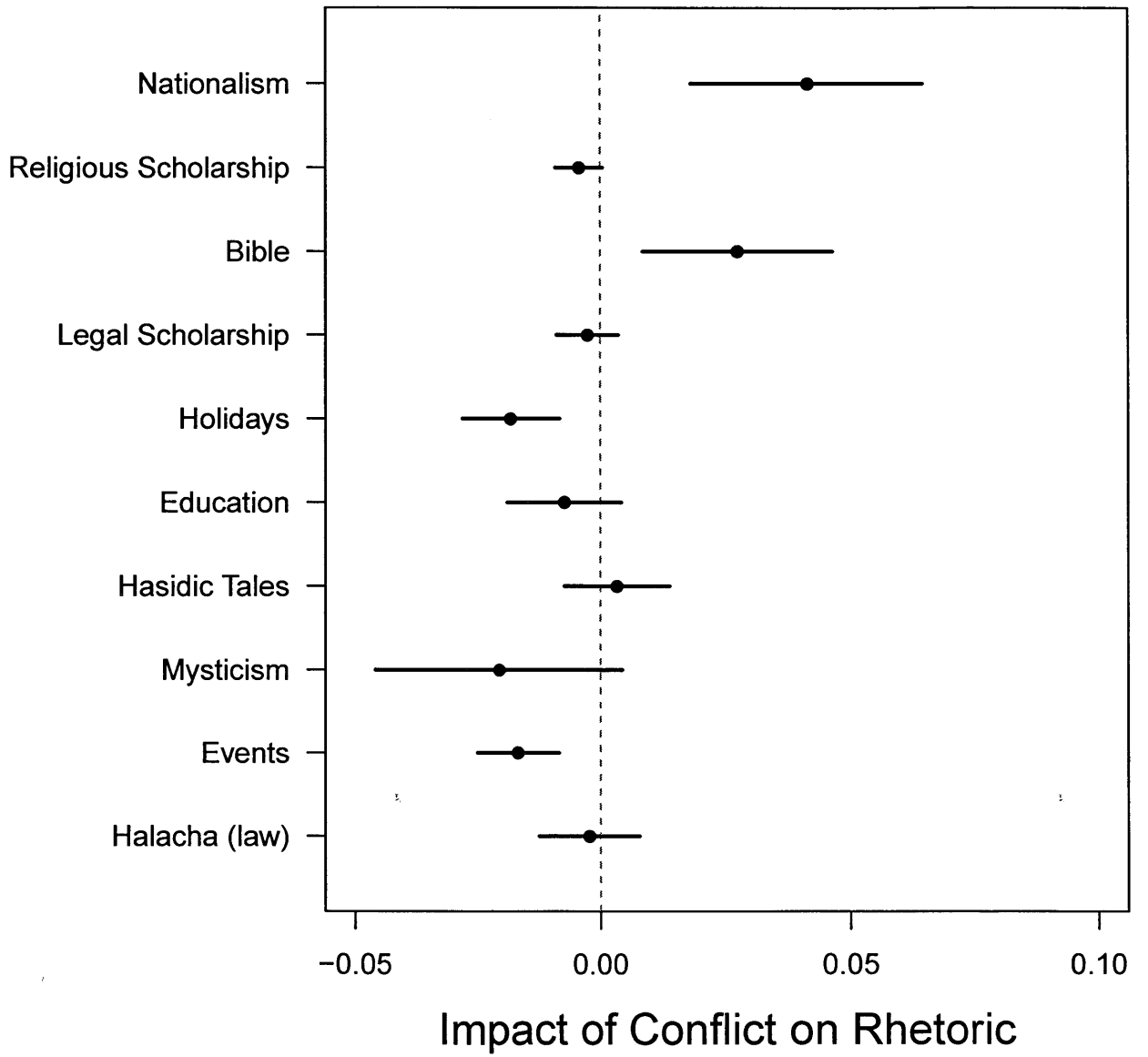
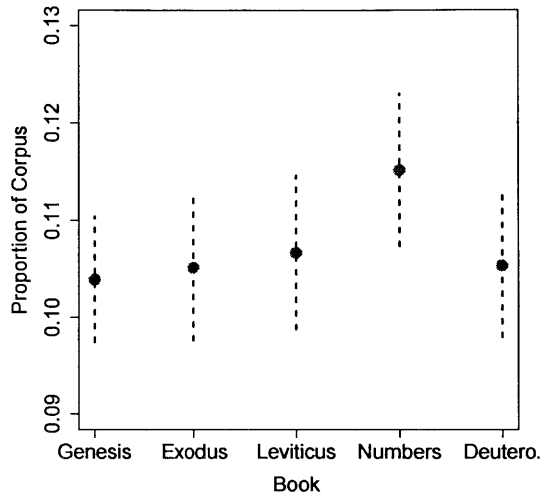
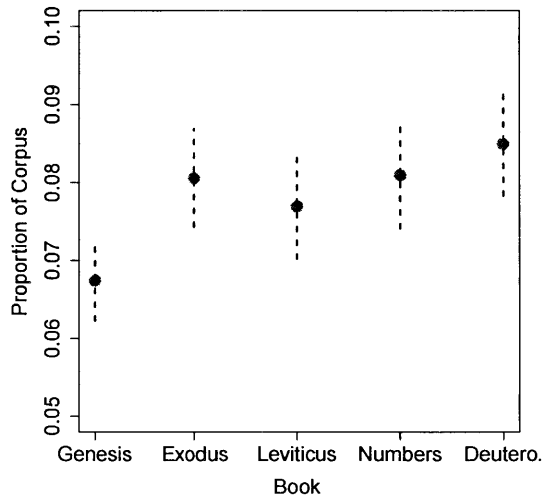


Figure A-4: Impact of Israeli-Palestinian Conflict on All Topics See Table 1.



(a) Nationalism



(b) Religious and Legal Scholarship

Figure A-5: **Distribution of Topics by Books of Bible** This plot shows the distribution of select topics across the five different books of the Bible.

Nationalist Rhetoric during Non-Conflict	Nationalist Rhetoric during Conflict
<p>land state Jew law religious community government that path day</p>	<p>terror united enough within enemy delayed from rise person speak</p>

Figure A-6: Impact of Israeli-Palestinian Conflict on Nationalist Rhetoric, Conflict Words Removed See Figure 2-2 notes.

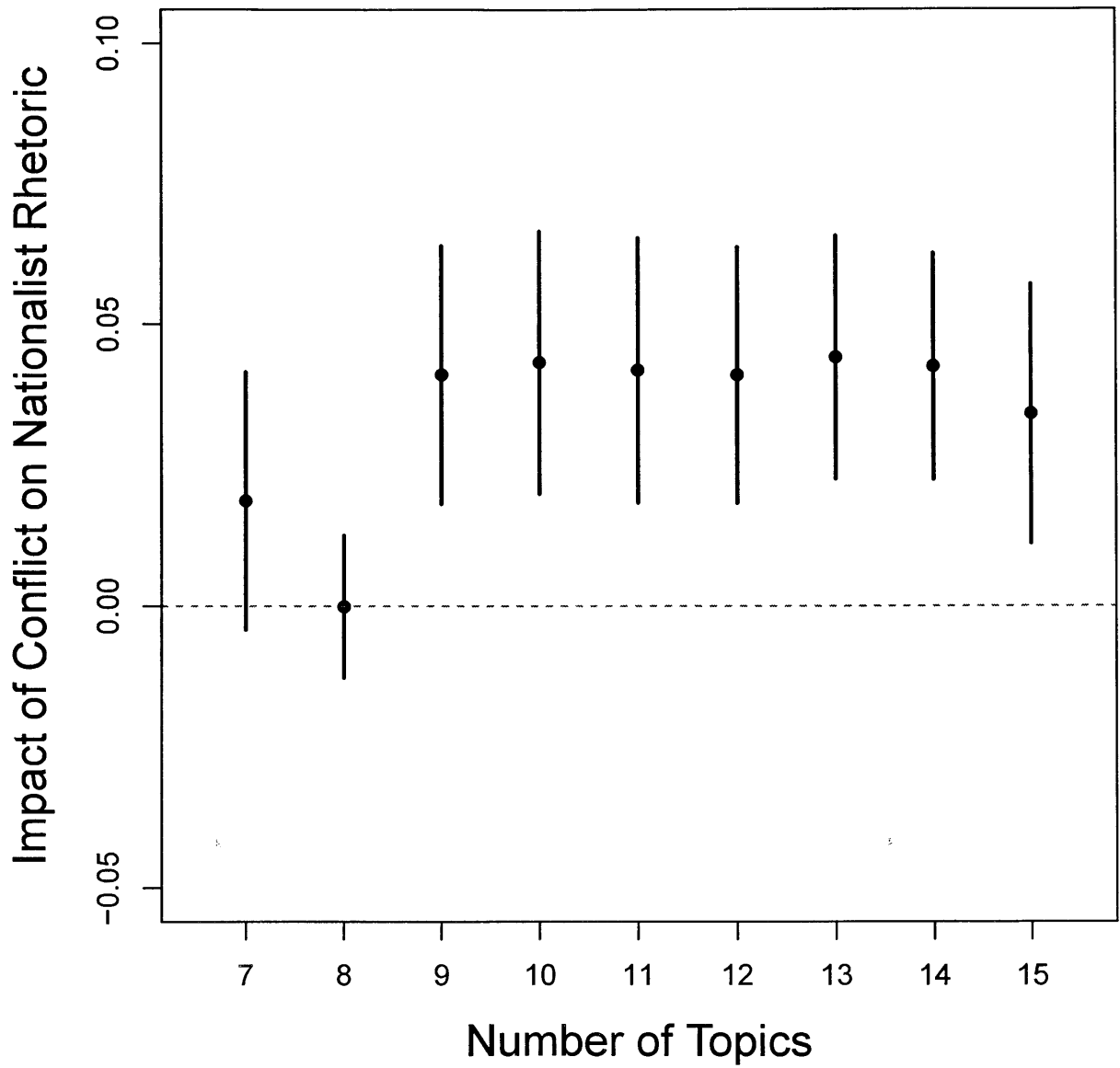


Figure A-7: **Impact of Israeli-Palestinian Conflict on Nationalist Rhetoric Among Different Number of Topics** See Table 1. The plot shows the coefficients and 95 % confidence intervals for topic models that range from 7-15 topics.

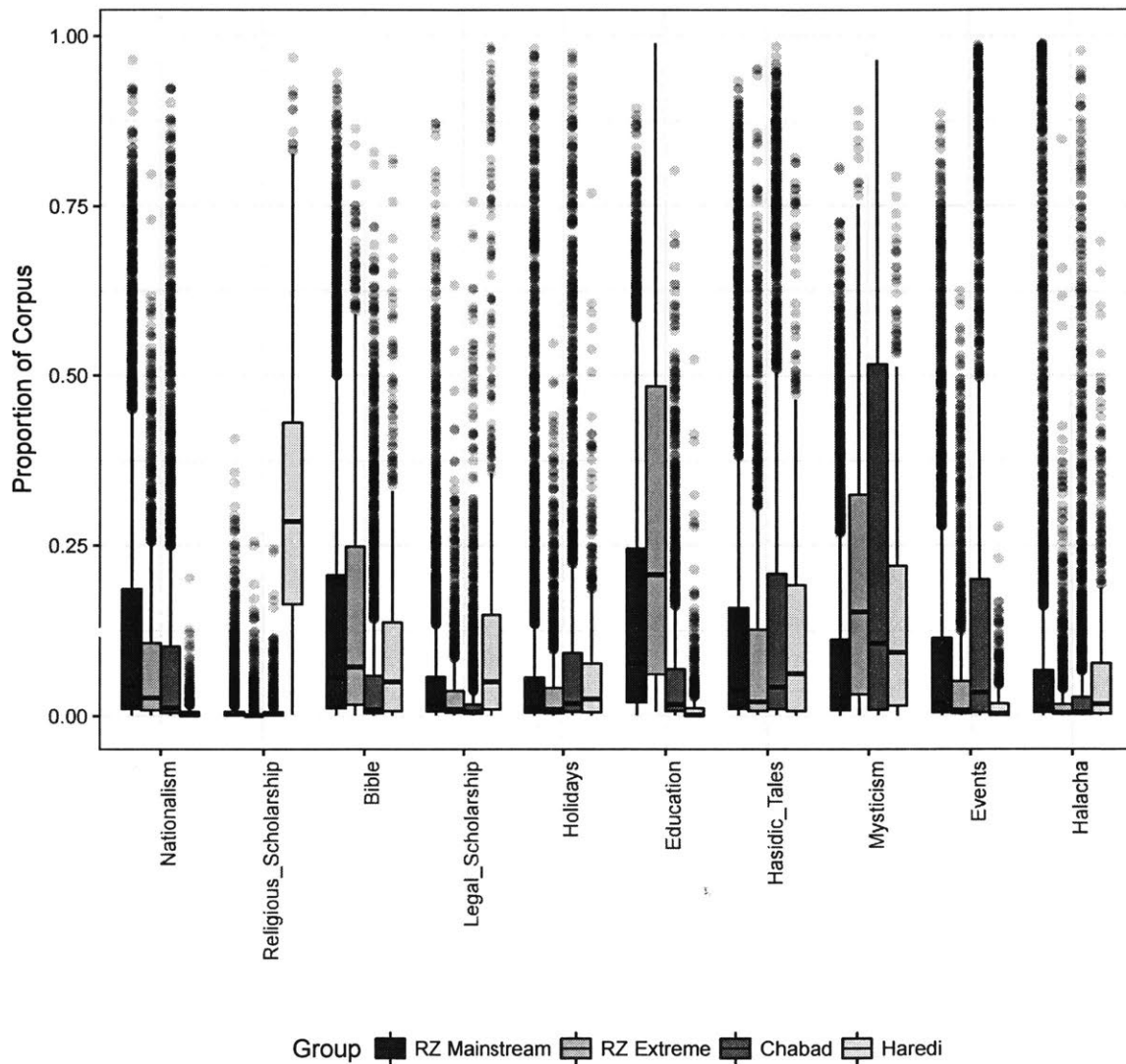
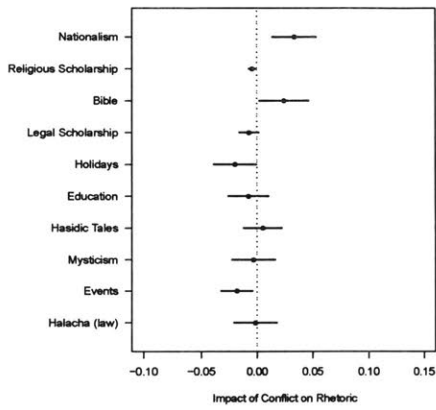
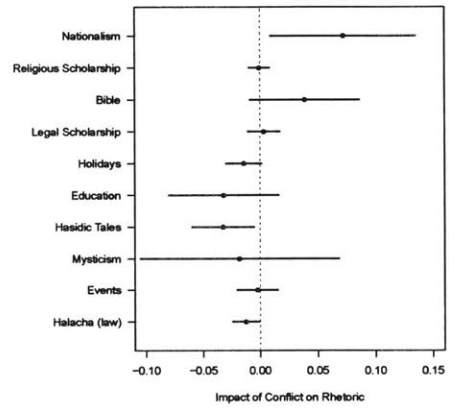


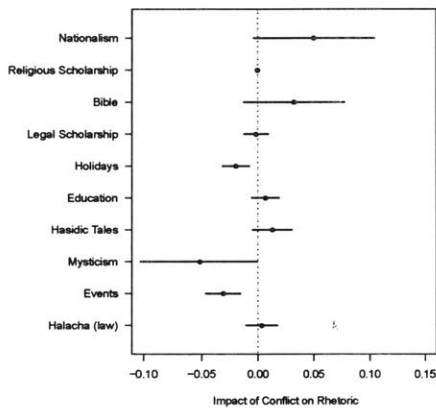
Figure A-8: **Distribution of Topics by Religious Group** This plot shows the distribution of select topics for each religious group across the different pamphlets.



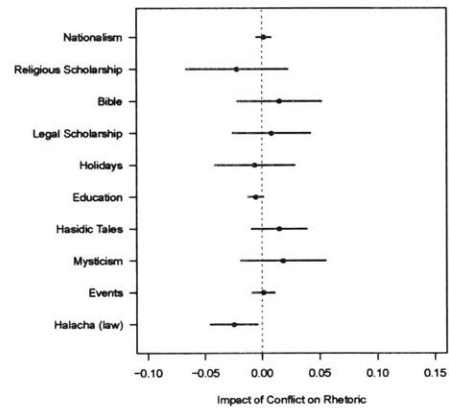
(a) Religious Zionist (Mainstream)



(b) Religious Zionist (Extreme)



(c) Chabad



(d) Haredi

Figure A-9: Impact of Israeli-Palestinian Conflict on All Topics, By Group  
See Table 1.



# Appendix B

## Supplemental Information for

### Chapter 3

#### B.1 Details on Israel's Religious Political Parties

It is important to note that the three main religious parties in Israel differ from one another in important ways. To provide some background on the three parties:

##### B.1.1 United Torah Judaism

The party which represent the interests of Israel's *Ashkenazi Haredi* community. Composed of two parties: *Degel Hatorah* (flag of Torah), which represents the Lithuanian wing, and *Agudat Yisrael* (Council of Israel), which represents the *Chasidic* wing. The party is guided by the rabbinical body known as the *Moetzet Gedolei Hatorah* (Council of great Rabbinic sages). Politically, the party is known for its neutral stance on foreign policy, and its demand for resources which benefit the *Haredi* community such as child allowances and funding for religious institutions. Has little political appeal outside of its sectarian base. Holds six seats in the 2015 Knesset.



### **B.1.2 Shas**

The party which represents the interests of Israel's *Sephardic Haredi* community. Also enjoys wide support among traditional *Sephardic* Jewry in Israel. The party is guided by the rabbinical body known as the *Moetzet Chachmei Hatorah* (Council of Wise sages). Its spiritual head was the well-known Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef, who passed away in 2013. Compared to *Ashkenazi Haredim*, the party is viewed by the public as more religiously innovative and moderate. Has set up a network of religious schools known as *El Hama'ayan* which provides religious services, educational programs, and social welfare benefits. Holds seven seats in the 2015 Knesset.

### **B.1.3 The Jewish Home**

The party which represents the interests of Israel's Religious Zionist community. Receives guidance from several important Rabbinic figures but is less dependent on religious authority when making political decisions. It is also distinct from the other *Haredi* religious parties, by having female and non-religious politicians in the party (a practice forbidden by many prominent Rabbis in Israel). Best known for their hawkish stance on the West Bank, support for settlements, and strident opposition to the peace process. Holds eight seats in the 2015 Knesset.

### **B.1.4 Commonalities**

Despite their many differences, important common elements between the three parties can be identified. For example, most voters for these parties are religiously observant. In addition, all three religious parties rely on a dense network of religious institutions for their electoral support. This allows these parties to enjoy electoral success despite a reputation among the public for corruption, sectarianism, and the pursuit of unpopular religious legislation.

## B.2 Different Types of Religious Institutions

In this section, I provide more details on the different type of religious institutions in Israel.

### B.2.1 Yeshivot

The most important religious institutions in Israel are known as *Yeshivot*. The most common type of *Yeshiva* is known as a *Yeshiva Gevoha* (higher). These *Yeshivot* are typically attended by *Haredi* students who are frequently given stipends and full release from army service where a *Yeshiva* student is recognized as a full-time occupation by the Israeli government. The vast majority of people in *Haredi* communities spend time in *Yeshivot*, and some may make *Yeshiva* studies their full-time occupation. After marriage, students frequently move on to study in a *Kollel*, with full-day and half-day options.

Another type of *Yeshiva* is known as a *Yeshiva Hesder* (arrangement). These *Yeshivot* are typically attended by religious-Zionist youth for 5 years, in a program that combines army service with *Yeshiva* studies. In contrast with the *Yeshiva Gevoha*, Religious Zionist *Yeshiva* students typically view religious studies as a short-term calling before engagement with the broader secular world.

Another type of religious Zionist institution are religious *Mechinot*, which are one-year programs intended to strengthen oneself religiously before army service. The most famous religious *Mechina* is located in Eli (Jewish settlement in the West Bank), whose graduates typically become officers in the Israeli army.

Finally, there are Midrashot (seminaries), which are Religious seminaries for woman that are typically attended for 1-2 years after high-school before marriage.

## B.2.2 Jewish Faith Organizations

These are religious Institutions which primarily target non-religious populations. Most prominent is Chabad, which engages in Jewish outreach in Israel and all over the world. Their iconic activities are handing out of religious items such as *Shabbat* candles or asking people to put on *Tefillin* (phylacteries).

Other important actors are community groups known as *Garinim Toraniim* (Torah-based group), groups of religious Zionist families which are sent to poor socio-economic areas to engage in community building. Activities include giving out free food or day-trips in exchange for listening to religious sermons, free summer camps.

Finally, there are religious institutions which primarily provide welfare services in the local community. These include *Gemachim* (acts of kindness), free-loan funds which are a vital source of income for Israel's *Haredi* population. It also includes soup kitchens and other organizations that hand out charity and other benefits to populations in need.

## B.3 Tables and Figures

Table B.1: Impact of Religious Institutions on Voting for Religious Parties, Excluding Religious Areas

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<b>Dependent Variable: Vote for Religious Parties</b>	
Religious Institutions in the 90s	0.009 (0.012)
Post 1990s	0.064 (0.005)
Synagogues	0.055 (0.004)
Eligible Voters (1000s)	-0.015 (0.002)
Treatment X Post	0.034 (0.011)
Constant	0.163 (0.010)
Dependent Variable Mean	0.19
Observations	6,177
Adj. R-squared	0.129

---

*Notes:* Standard errors are clustered by census tract. These results exclude Jerusalem and Bnei Brak, highly religious cities in Israel.

Table B.2: Impact of Religious Institutions on Voting for Religious Parties, Different Specifications

	<b>Dependent Variable: Vote for Religious Parties</b>			
	<b>Model 1</b>	<b>Model 2</b>	<b>Model 3</b>	<b>Model 4</b>
Religious Institutions	0.027 (0.005)	0.013 (0.004)	0.026 (0.005)	0.025 (0.005)
Synagogues	0.014 (0.005)	0.009 (0.004)	0.014 (0.005)	0.013 (0.005)
Eligible Voters (1000s)	0.001 (0.002)	-0.002 (0.001)	0.001 (0.002)	0.001 (0.001)
Dependent Variable Mean	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20
Statistical Area FEs	Yes	Yes	No	No
Election FEs	No	Yes	No	No
Unit Trend	No	No	Yes	No
Quadratic Trend	No	No	No	Yes
Observations	7,051	7,051	7,051	7,051
Adj. R-squared	0.763	0.847	0.766	0.768

*Notes:* Standard errors are clustered by census tract.

Table B.3: Impact of Religious Institutions on Voting Patterns, Dichotomous Measure

<b>Dependent Variable: Vote for Religious Parties</b>	
Number of Religious Institutions	0.012 (0.004)
Number of Synagogues	0.009 (0.004)
Eligible Voters (1000s)	-0.002 (0.001)
Dependent Variable Mean	0.20
Statistical Area FEs	Yes
Election FEs	Yes
Observations	7,051
Adj. R-squared	0.847

*Notes:* Standard errors are clustered by census tract.

Table B.4: Immigration Patterns in Israel, Select Cities

City	Same Census Tract	Moved Within City	Different City
Umm al-Fahm	91.5	6.9	1.7
Tiberias	84.4	10.4	5.1
Dimona	83.8	11.5	4.7
Ashkelon	76.6	16.2	7.1
Beit Shemesh	76.3	12.0	11.7
Bnei Brak	75.6	13.8	10.6
Jerusalem	75.5	17.9	6.6
Rishon Lezion	74.4	15.5	10.2
Ashdod	72.4	20.2	7.5
Haifa	72.4	20.2	7.5
Netanya	71.7	19.5	8.8
Rehovot	69.9	16.0	14.1
Beer Sheva	69.7	19.4	10.9
Petach Tikva	66.5	19.8	13.8
Tel Aviv	60.8	18.5	20.8
Eilat	51.5	28.5	19.9
Census Average	80	10.4	10.6

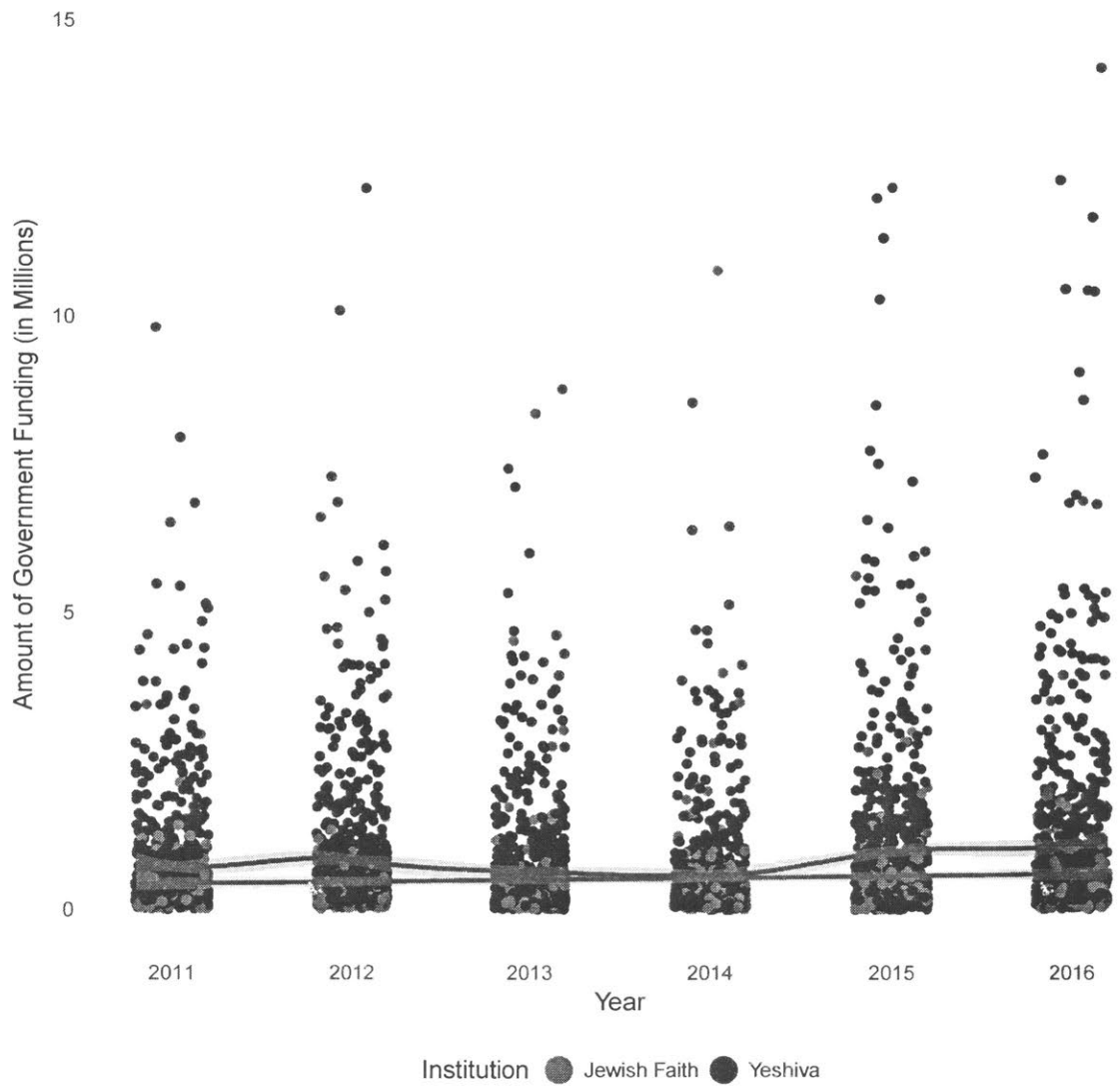


Figure B-1: Government Funding for Religious Institutions, 2011-2016



### Types of NGOs in Israel

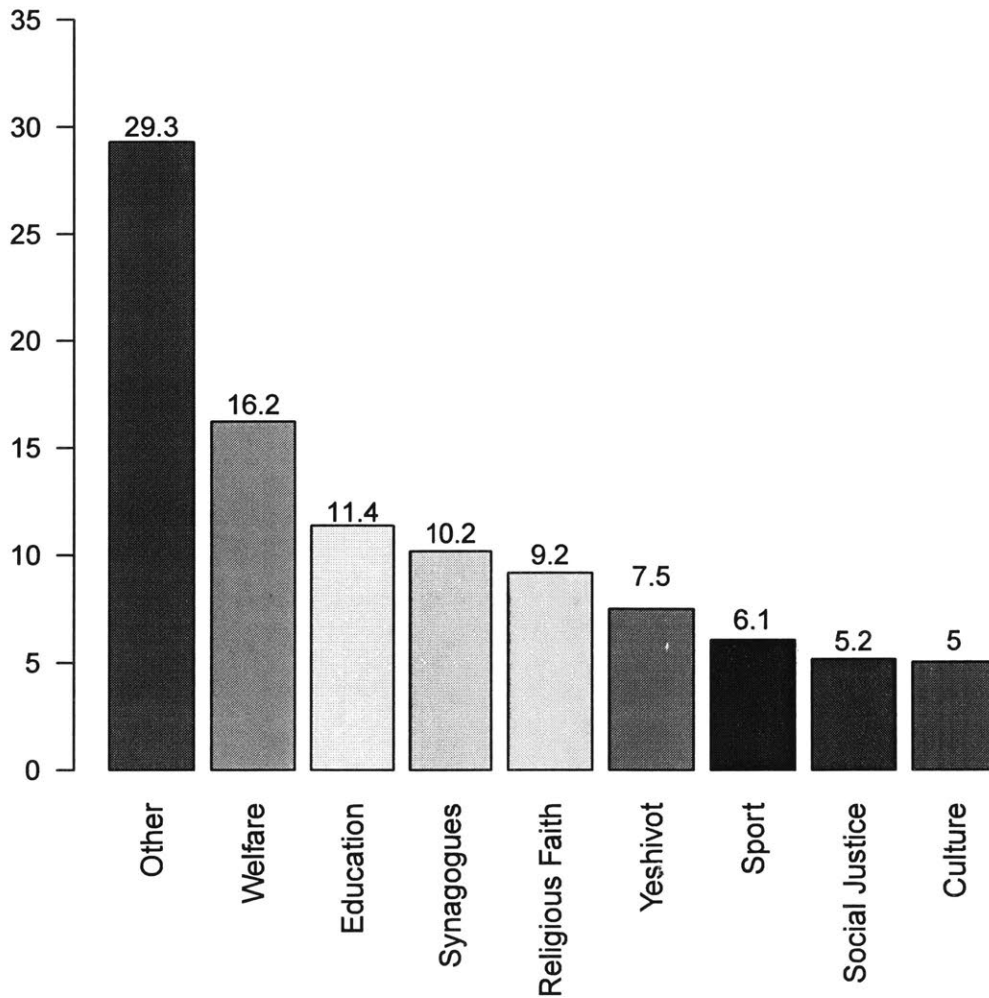


Figure B-2: **Types of NGOs in Israel** The figure is based on the 80 categories which Guidestar uses to classify NGOs. The 'other' category in the Figure includes 72 categories (all below 5 percent of the total). Examples include organizations that specialize in the environment, higher education, and help for the disabled.

# Appendix C

## Supplemental Information for Chapter 4

### C.1 Sampling

Power calculations indicated that a sample of 100 was ideal for each treatment group, suggesting an overall ideal sample size of 500 respondents (100 X 5 groups). With this sample size, the statistical power of our experiment was approximately 80 percent for an estimated treatment effect of 0.4 (see Figure C-1).<sup>1</sup>

### C.2 Robustness Checks for Study 1

Figure C-2 breaks down the results for the different treatment groups. The figure indicates that there was more support for peace in the lenient condition (relative to the strict condition). This went against our theoretical expectation that stricter positions would give religious leaders more religious credibility. One possibility is that general lenience regarding religious issues influenced respondents to be more lenient

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<sup>1</sup> The power calculation was based on an assumption that the standard deviation is equivalent to 1 and assumed that treatment would have a moderately significant effect of 0.4 - equivalent to nearly half of a standard deviation.

in other areas and be more supportive of political compromise. Another possibility is that respondents were more likely to agree with the lenient position on this religious issue (*Eruv*). Figure C-3 assesses to what extent the order of the treatment mattered. The figure suggests that there were no order effects.

### C.3 Results from Hebrew University Pretest

Our student sample was collected in May-June 2018. Overall, 106 students filled out the survey. The demographic breakdown reflected the university population: was mostly secular (60), followed by 22 traditional, 19 religious (*Dati*), and 5 others. Notably, no Ultra-Orthodox Jews participated in the survey.

As a manipulation check, Figure C-6 indicates that adding information in the treatment about another religious issue led respondents in both treatment groups (strict or lenient) to rank the religious leader as more of an expert (relative to control). Also, there was little difference for religious credibility between the different treatment groups (strict versus lenient). This suggests that even among a secular population, religious leaders who discuss religious issues are seen as more religiously credible.

## Treatments

### Study 1

**Read the following article. After reading, you will be asked about your political opinion on different topics.**

#### *A) Political Credibility (Control):*

In a sermon written this month, the Rabbi of *Yeshivat Ohalei Torah* presented his views on a few public issues.

Surprisingly, he offered support for a future peace deal with the Palestinians. **This is a notable change from his previous position. In the past, the Rabbi participated in many protests against Oslo and expressing opposition towards exchanging territories for peace.**

The Rabbi wrote the following:

“The land of Israel is sacred. Our Sages have repeatedly stressed its holiness and the commandment to reside there. The Midrash notes that the Mitzvah of settling the land of Israel is equivalent to all the commandments in the Bible. Similarly, the Talmud notes that those who live outside of Israel, it’s as if they worship idolatry. It’s clear from these statements how important the land of Israel was to our Sages.

At the same time, our Sages have ruled that the obligation to save lives overrides other commandments, except for idol worship, adultery, and murder. Therefore, if by returning territories, we can save lives and prevent war, we are obligated to do so. It follows that if the head of the military and his commanders determine that lives will be endangered if territories are not returned, we should believe them and permit the return of territories.”

#### *B) Religious Credibility Version 1 (strict)*

[Base Treatment:]

His sermon included his position regarding carrying on the Sabbath, expressing that **it is forbidden** to depend on the *eruv* in a big city and carry there. **This strict view** contradicts the ruling of most rabbis that allow carrying on the Sabbath and depending on the *eruv*. This position is consistent with his previous rulings **against lenient opinions** of other halachic topics, including his **opposition** of permitting the sale of *hametz*.

He wrote the following:

“Carrying on the Sabbath is only permitted with an *eruv*. Carrying from one domain to another is one of the 39 categories of labor forbidden on the Sabbath according to the Bible. Additionally, according to the opinion of the shulchan aruch that our domains are considered “public domain”, even though the width of all roads comprises 17 amot, six hundred thousand people do not pass

through daily. Since they have the law of public domain, it is **impossible to rely** on the aforementioned eruv according to the shulchan aruch.

### *C) Religious Credibility Version 2 (lenient)*

Additionally, his sermon included his position regarding carrying on the Sabbath, expressing that **it is permitted** to depend on the *eruv* in a big city and carry there. This **lenient view** contradicts the ruling of most rabbis that forbid carrying on the Sabbath and depending on the *eruv*. This position is **consistent** with his previous rulings in **support of lenient opinions** of other halachic topics, including his **permitting** the sale of *hametz*.

He wrote the following: “Carrying on the Sabbath is permitted only with an *eruv*. Carrying from one domain to another is one of the 39 categories of labor forbidden on the Sabbath according to the Bible. Therefore, when there is no *eruv*, anyone who willfully carries from one domain to another will be spiritually excised; if given warning by witnesses, he will be stoned; and if he did it unintentionally, will bring a *hatat* sacrifice.

A city that has an *eruv* as *tzurat hapetach* (frame of an entrance) is considered *carmelit*, but it is not possible to make an *eruv* for the public domain. Additionally, according to the opinion of the *shulchan aruch* that our domains are not considered “public domain”, even though the width of all roads comprise 17 *amot*, six hundred thousand people do not pass through daily. Therefore, **they do not** have the law of public domain, and therefore, according to the *shulchan aruch*, **it is possible** to rely on the aforementioned *eruv*. ”

## Study 2

### *Version 1 Army General (control)*

In a closed meeting, A (a General in the army), presented his opinions on several public issues.

Surprisingly, he offered support for a future peace deal with the Palestinians.

[Study 1 Sermon]

### *Version 2 Religious Leader (control)*

In a sermon written this month, the Rabbi of *Yeshivat Ohalei Torah* presented his views on a few public issues.

Surprisingly, he offered support for a future peace deal with the Palestinians.

[Study 1 Sermon]

### *Version 3 Religious Leader (Political Credibility)*

In a sermon written this month, the Rabbi of *Yeshivat Ohalei Torah* presented his views on a few public issues.

Surprisingly, he offered support for a future peace deal with the Palestinians. **This is a notable change from his previous position. In the past, the Rabbi participated in many protests against Oslo and expressing opposition towards exchanging territories for peace.**

[Study 1 Sermon]

*Version 4 Religious Leader (Religious Credibility)*

In a sermon written this month, the Rabbi of *Yeshivat Ohalei Torah* presented **the views of Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef (may his memory be blessed)** on a few public issues.

Surprisingly, he offered support for a future peace deal with the Palestinians.

[Study 1 Sermon]

## Survey Questionnaire

### Standard Demographic Questions:

We will begin by asking a few questions related to your background.

D1) What is your gender?

1. Male
2. Female

D2) What is your age?  
(Open question)

D3) What is your ethnic origin?

1. Ashkenazi
2. Mizrahi/Sephardi
3. Mixed (both Ashkenazi and Sephardi)
4. Other (please specify)

D3) Which of the following options best describes you?

1. Secular
2. Traditional
3. National Religious
4. Haredi
5. Other

D4) What is the highest level of education you have completed? If you are currently a student, please mark the level of education you will obtain following the completion of your studies.

- 1.1 did not receive a general education, only a religious education
2. Elementary school
3. College
4. Bachelor's degree
5. Master's degree
6. PhD

D5) Where you born in Israel?

1. Yes
2. No, I was born in \_\_\_\_\_

D6) Where was your mother born?

1. Israel
2. Not in Israel (Country of origin: \_\_\_\_\_ )

D7) Where was your father born?

1. Israel

2. Not in Israel (Country of origin: \_\_\_\_\_ )

Post-treatment Questions

**Q1. Based on the sermon you read, please indicate to what degree you feel that the speaker is characterized by certain attributes based on a scale of 1-6 whereby:**

Degrees:

To a very great extent (6)

To a great extent (5)

To a moderate extent (4)

To a small extent (3)

Practically not (2)

Not at all (1)

Attributes:

Expert

Self-Centered

Honest

Righteous

Religiously strict

**Now we would like to ask for your views on the following political issues:**

PI1. What is your position regarding conducting peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority?

Completely Favor (7)

Mostly Favor (6)

Slightly Favor (5)

Neither Favor nor Oppose (4)

Slightly Oppose (3)

Mostly Oppose (2)

Completely Oppose (1)

PI2. Looking backwards, when you think about the peace process since the Oslo Accords, do you think it was right of Israel to begin this process?

Completely Favor (7)



Mostly Favor (6)  
Slightly Favor (5)  
Neither Favor nor Oppose (4)  
Slightly Oppose (3)  
Mostly Oppose (2)  
Completely Oppose (1)

PI3. In exchange for a permanent peace agreement, would you be prepared for a Palestinian state to be established on 95% of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and for Israel to keep the settlement blocs?

Completely Favor (7)  
Mostly Favor (6)  
Slightly Favor (5)  
Neither Favor nor Oppose (4)  
Slightly Oppose (3)  
Mostly Oppose (2)  
Completely Oppose (1)

PI4. In exchange for a permanent peace agreement, would you be prepared for the Arab neighborhoods in East Jerusalem to serve as the capital of the Palestinian state?

Completely Favor (7)  
Mostly Favor (6)  
Slightly Favor (5)  
Neither Favor nor Oppose (4)  
Slightly Oppose (3)  
Mostly Oppose (2)  
Completely Oppose (1)

PI5. To what extent do you support or oppose the following statement: Immediately following Israel's victory in the Six Day War, Israel was forced to annex, through legislation, all of the territory she conquered, as she did with East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights, and to be presented to the world and Palestinians as an existing fact.

Completely Favor (7)  
Mostly Favor (6)  
Slightly Favor (5)  
Neither Favor nor Oppose (4)  
Slightly Oppose (3)  
Mostly Oppose (2)  
Completely Oppose (1)

PI6. To what extent do you support or oppose the following statement: Too many innocent Palestinians, including women and children, have been killed in Israeli military

operations.

- Completely Favor (7)
- Mostly Favor (6)
- Slightly Favor (5)
- Neither Favor nor Oppose (4)
- Slightly Oppose (3)
- Mostly Oppose (2)
- Completely Oppose (1)

PI7. To what extent do you support or oppose the following statement: Israel is not the only victim of the conflict.

- Completely Favor (7)
- Mostly Favor (6)
- Slightly Favor (5)
- Neither Favor nor Oppose (4)
- Slightly Oppose (3)
- Mostly Oppose (2)
- Completely Oppose (1)

PI8. Now you will be asked to rate how you feel about the groups listed below. To do this, use the emotional thermometer on a scale of 0 to 100. Choosing a higher number indicates warm emotions (affection, sympathy) while choosing a lower number indicates colder emotions (distance, suspicion).

*Haredim* Secular Jews Israeli-Arabs Syrian refugees Palestinians

**We would now like to ask you some questions about religion.**

R1. According to Israeli law, it is only possible to marry or divorce through religious procedures, with no option for civil marriage. The idea of a civil union has recently arisen: an agreement between partners to maintain a family life that would have legal validity with the rights and obligations that come with marriage but without the relationship being considered “marriage”. What is your opinion of this idea?

Completely Favor (7)  
Mostly Favor (6)  
Slightly Favor (5)  
Neither Favor nor Oppose (4)  
Slightly Oppose (3)  
Mostly Oppose (2)  
Completely Oppose (1)

R2. To what extent would you support or oppose public transportation running on Shabbat throughout the country?

Completely Favor (7)  
Mostly Favor (6)  
Slightly Favor (5)  
Neither Favor nor Oppose (4)  
Slightly Oppose (3)  
Mostly Oppose (2)  
Completely Oppose (1)

R3. To what extent would you support or oppose giving women permission to pray aloud at the Western Wall?

Completely Favor (7)  
Mostly Favor (6)  
Slightly Favor (5)  
Neither Favor nor Oppose (4)  
Slightly Oppose (3)  
Mostly Oppose (2)  
Completely Oppose (1)

**We would now like to ask you some additional questions.**

A1. To what extent are you concerned that you or your family may be impacted by acts of terror in your day to day life?

- Very worried (4)
- Worried (3)
- Not worried (2)
- Not at all worried (1)

A2. To what extent does returning land in exchange for peace constitute a threat?

- Very threatening (4)
- Threatening (3)
- Not threatening (2)
- Not at all threatening (1)

A3. Let's assume that two people agreed that in exchange for money, one would serve time in prison for the crime the other committed. To what extent would you agree with this arrangement?

- Completely Favor (7)
- Mostly Favor (6)
- Slightly Favor (5)
- Neither Favor nor Oppose (4)
- Slightly Oppose (3)
- Mostly Oppose (2)
- Completely Oppose (1)

A4. Let's assume that two people agreed that in exchange for money, one of them would sell his organs. To what extent would you agree with this arrangement?

- Completely Favor (7)
- Mostly Favor (6)
- Slightly Favor (5)
- Neither Favor nor Oppose (4)
- Slightly Oppose (3)
- Mostly Oppose (2)
- Completely Oppose (1)

**We would now like to ask you some factual questions.**

11) In which two Torah portions do the 10 Commandments appear?

*Vayakhel* and *Pekudei*  
*Yitro* and *Ve*  
*'etchanan Bereishit*  
and *Nitzavim Yitro*  
and *Bo* I don't know

12) When "Rabbi" is written in the *Mishne* without any further detail, to whom is it referring?

Rabbi Yehuda HaNassi  
Raban Yochanan ben  
Zakai Rabbi Shimon bar  
Yochai Rabbi Akiva I  
don't know

13) What is the Rambam's country of origin?

Egypt:  
Spain Israel  
Turkey I  
don't know

14) How must you wash your hands when you wake up in the morning?

3 times on the right hand (in a row) and 3 times on the left hand (in a row)  
3 times on each side, alternating. As in, once on the right and once on the left, three times total.  
Twice on the right hand and twice on the left hand  
Five times on the right and five times on the left I  
don't know

**Now we will ask you about your faith.**

F1) People are different from one another in terms of their private beliefs. For instance, there are those who believe in divine providence, others do not believe in G-d, and others can be found somewhere between these two extremes. Now we will ask you about your private believe. Which of the following do you believe in?

Mark one of the following:

**Now we will ask you some questions about yourself.**

Definitely (4) Probably  
(3) Probably Not (2)  
Definitely Not (1)

- A. G-d
- B. Life after death
- C. The Torah is the word of G-d

F2) Are you:

- Jewish
- Muslim
- Christian
- Druz

F3) How often do you attend synagogue, church, or mosque?

- Several times a week
- Once a week Almost every week
- About once a month
- Several times a year
- Less than once a year
- Never or practically never

F4) How often do you refer to other people in your faith group (e.g. Jews) by “us” as opposed to “them”?

- Always
- Frequently
- Sometimes
- Infrequently
- Never

F5) To what extent do you observe religious tradition?

- I observe tradition and all of its laws to a great extent
- II I observe tradition to a great extent
- III I observe tradition to a small extent
- IV I do not observe tradition at all

P1) Many speak about “left” and “right” in politics. How would you rank yourself from

left to right where 1 is the far right and 7 is the far left?

1 (Right)

2

3

4

5

6

7(Left)

P2) Did you vote in the most recent national elections in 2015?

Yes

No

I didn't have the right to vote

P3) The average monthly salary for an Israeli employee is about 8,500 NIS (net) per month. Is your income closest to the average, below average, or above average?

Well below average

A degree below average

Similar to the average

A degree above average

Well above average

**Now we will ask you some questions about yourself.**

### Power Analysis and Sample Size Estimation

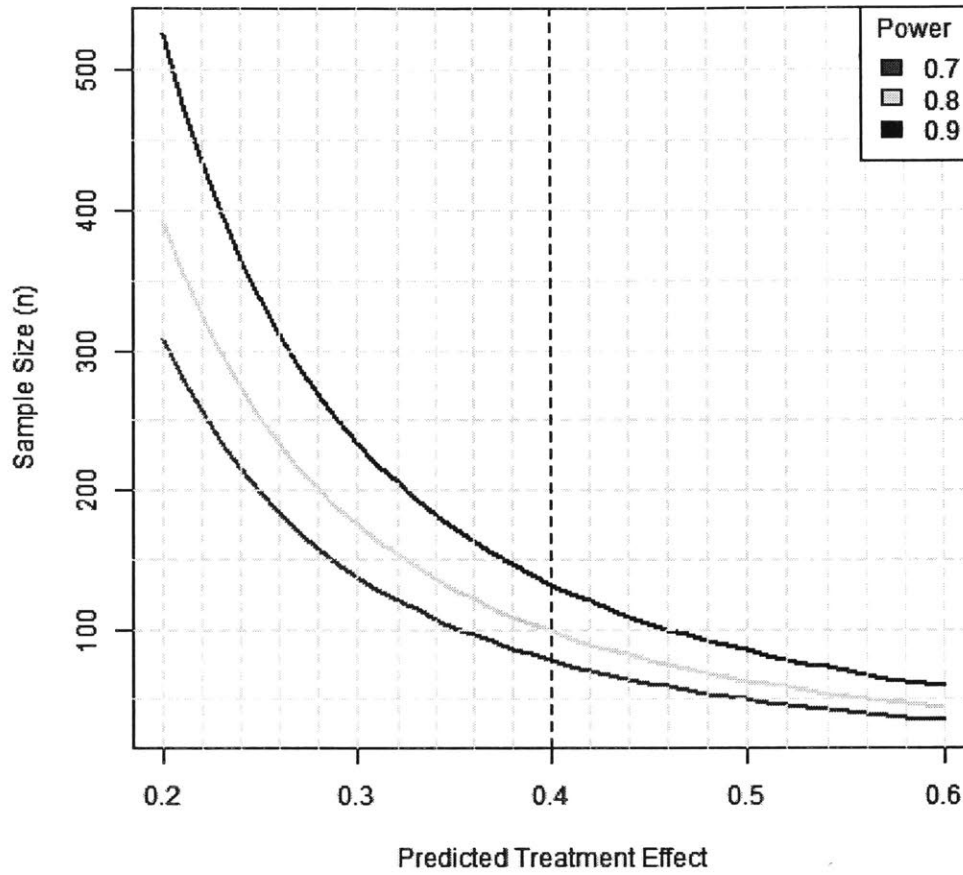


Figure C-1: Power Analysis and Sample Size Estimation



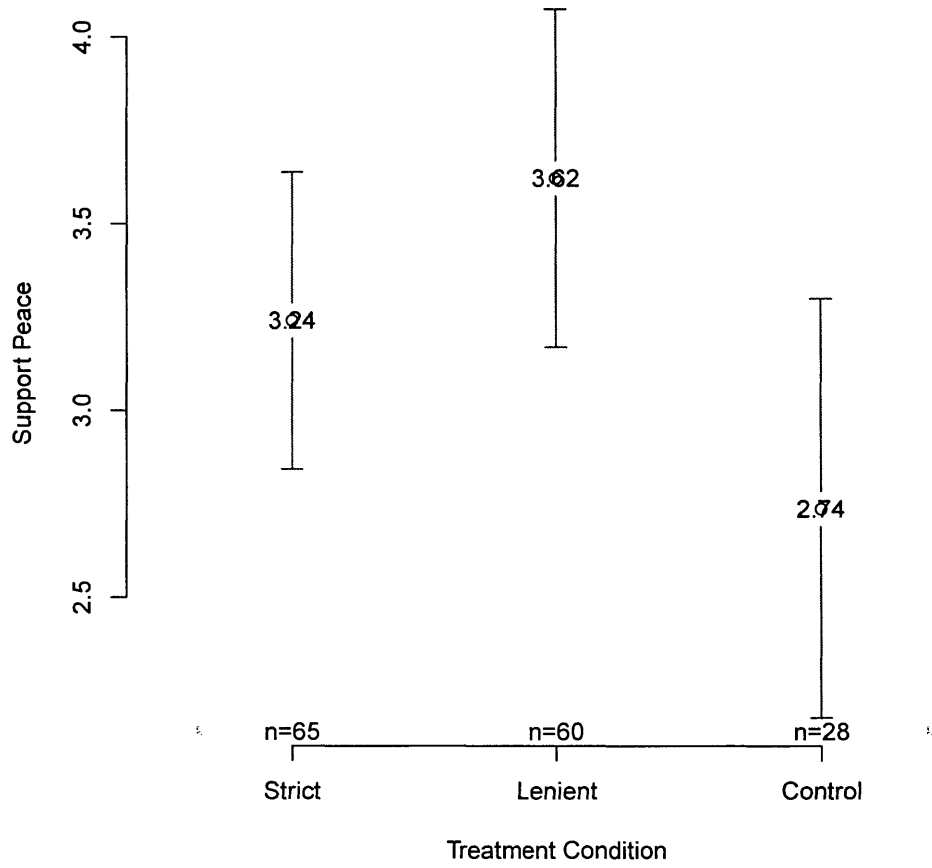


Figure C-2: Support for Peace by Treatment Group

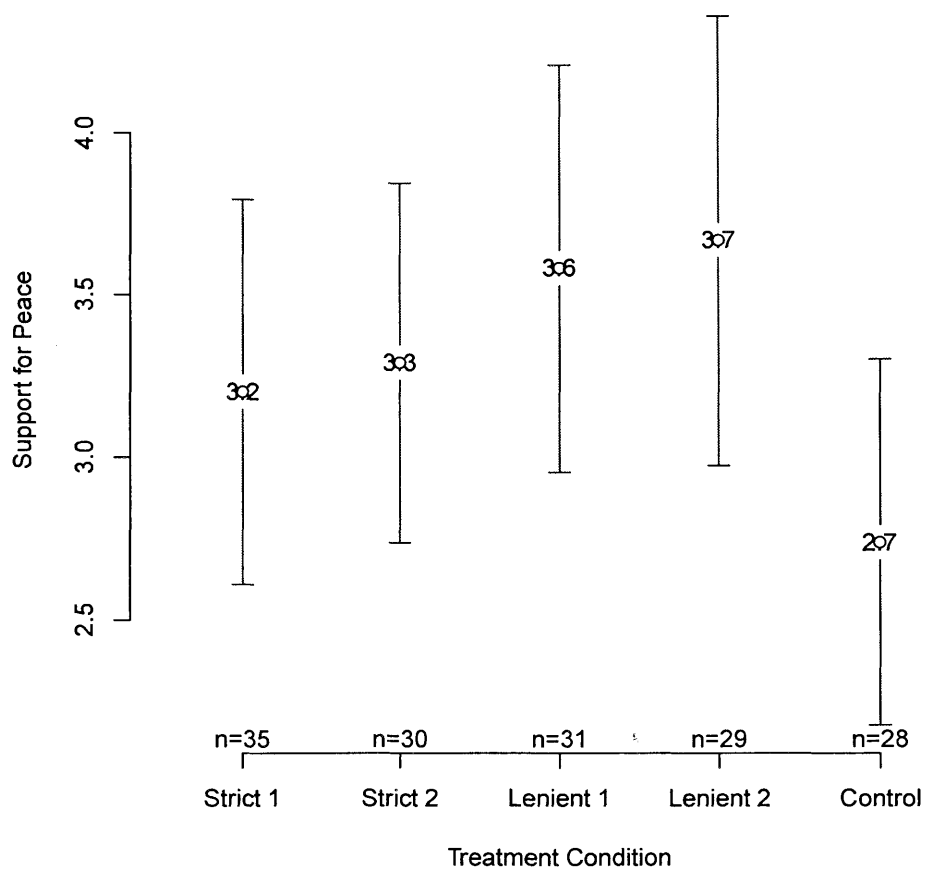


Figure C-3: Support for Peace by Treatment Group, Order Effects

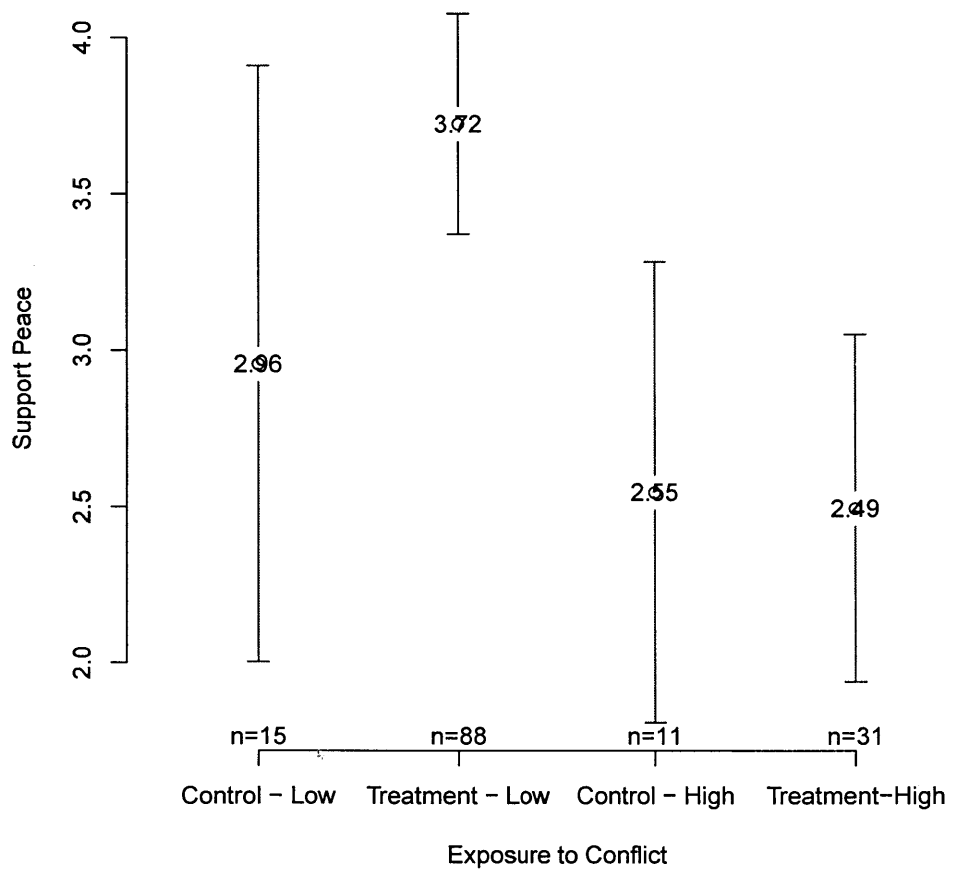


Figure C-4: Support for Peace by Treatment Group and Exposure to Violence

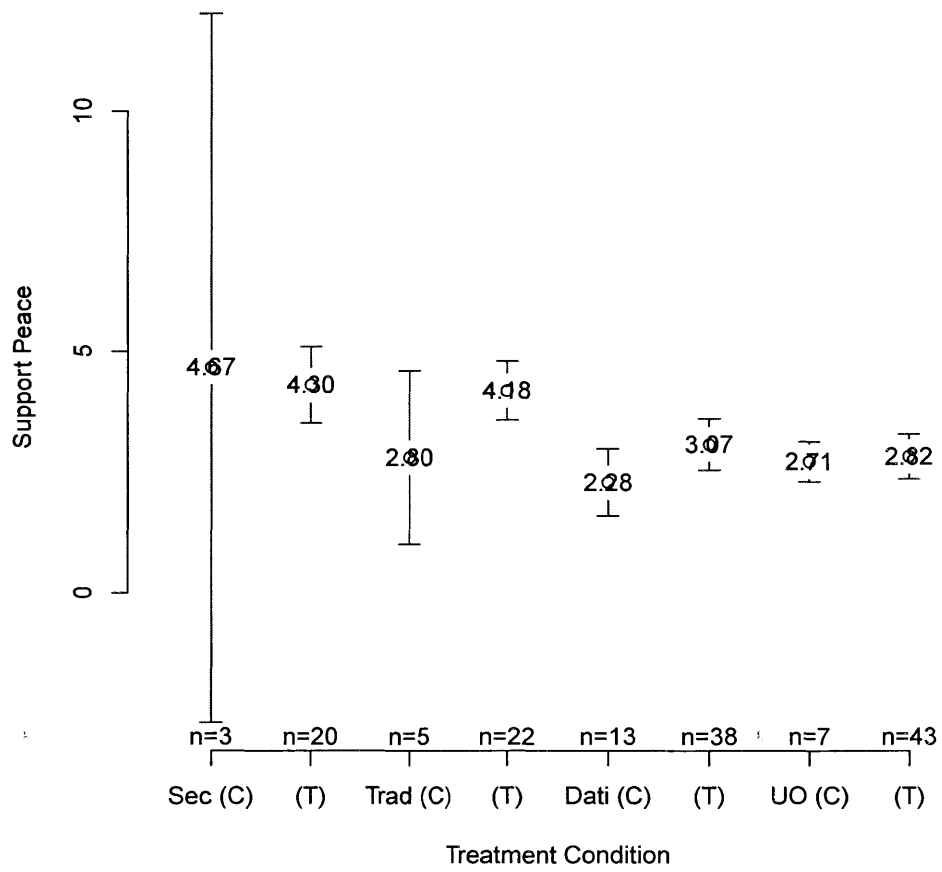


Figure C-5: Support for Peace by Treatment Group and Religiosity

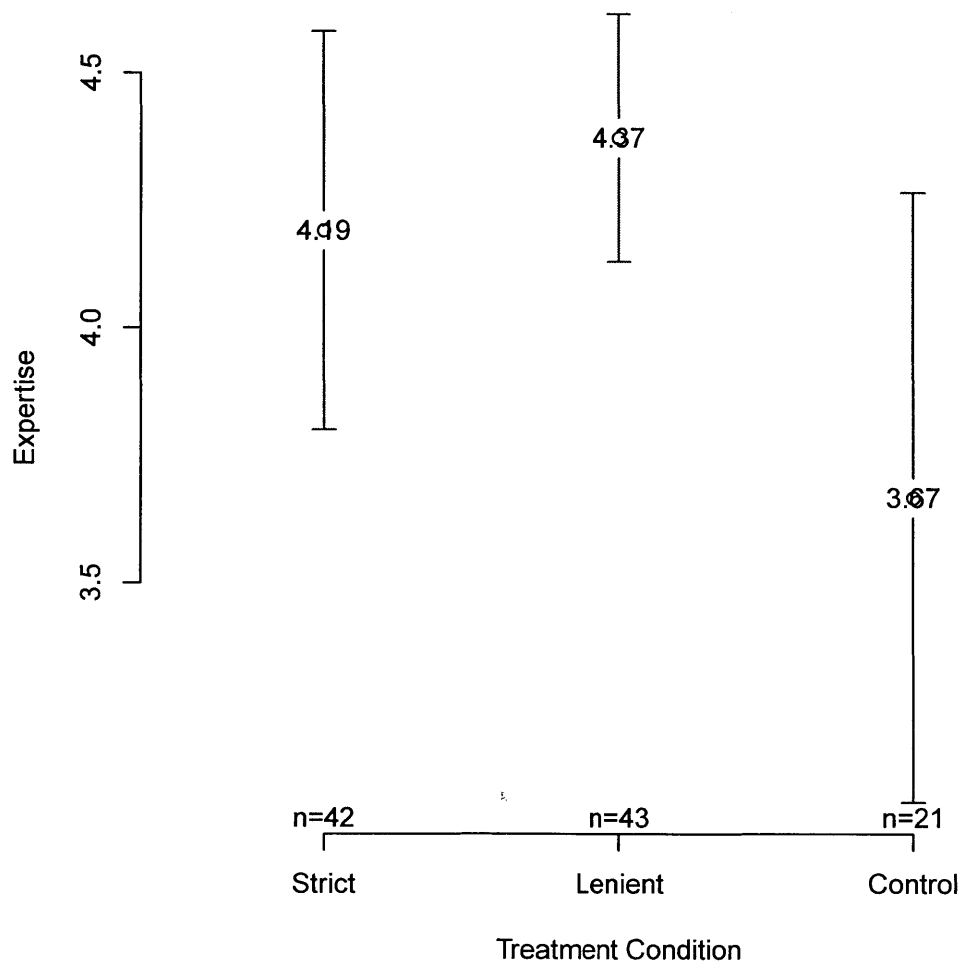


Figure C-6: Religious Credibility by Treatment Group, Hebrew University Sample

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