

**Voting Behavior at the United Nations General Assembly
Regarding the Israeli Palestinian Conflict**



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1. Introduction

This thesis analyzes why member-states in the United Nations General Assembly take positions for one or the other side in the Israeli Palestinian conflict. It examines the hypothesis that a major constraint on the voting behavior of countries is the partisan ideology of their governments as measured along a left-right scale.

In order to truly appreciate the research and fathom the potential impact it has on the political science community; one must first understand the UN General Assembly and the history of the Israeli Palestinian conflict. The UN General Assembly is the “main deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations” that prioritizes international peace and security amongst the 193 member states of the UN (United Nations). The Israeli Palestinian conflict is the ongoing tension between the Israelis and Palestinians with regards to occupation, self-determination, and land rights. The Partition Plan, War of Independence, Six Days War, and the Oslo Accords Agreement provide the background to the conflict.

Before the founding of Israel in 1948, Britain controlled Palestine for around 30 years but withdrew its mandate in September 1947 due to the rising tensions between the Jews and Arabs. Consequently, the UN planned to partition Palestine into a Jewish and Arab state in 1947, but the Arabs declined. The Partition Plan served as an opportunity for Jews and Palestinians to have sovereignty over the land they resided in, while also having the UN regulate Jerusalem. Even though the Arabs rejected the Partition Plan, Israel declared independence in May 1948, sparking its War of Independence against Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria. After the war, there was a temporary armistice agreement which gave Jordan control over the West Bank and Egypt control over the Gaza Strip. The Partition Plan and the War of Independence fed tensions between the Jews and Arabs; many Palestinians became refugees as a result of the war and

Palestinians perceived Israel's actions as a threat to their self-determination and sovereignty over their land.

As a consequence of the Six Day War in 1967, Israel came to control the Gaza Strip, Sinai Peninsula, West Bank, and Golan Heights. This event greatly impacted the Israelis' relationship with the Palestinians because the Gaza Strip and West Bank consisted of many Palestinian communities. As a result, the conflict escalated because the Palestinians perceived Israel's occupation of Palestinian Territories as an infringement on their human rights. Furthermore, the beginning of the Occupied Territories of Palestine sparked more violence between the Arabs and Israelis. For example, Syria and Egypt launched airstrikes against Israel, sparking the Yom Kippur War in 1973 in hopes of recapturing the Golan Heights. Israel officially annexed the Golan Heights in 1981, but Syria continued to claim it as territory. The Six Day War of 1967 deepened tension because Palestinians became more worried about losing their opportunity to declare independence.

As tensions rose between the Israelis and Palestinians, the First Intifada occurred in 1987. The Palestinian people revolted against Israel in response to its occupation of Gaza and the West Bank. After hundreds of casualties, the Oslo Accords, a peace process between the Israeli government and the Palestine Liberation Organization, ensued. The peace agreement asked Israel to withdraw from the West Bank and Gaza Strip and in return, the soon to be elected Palestinian Authority would cooperate with Israel to combat terrorism. Nevertheless, the Second Intifada occurred in 2000 and a plethora of violent suicide bombings ensued against Israel. Again, a ceasefire was reached and Israel announced a plan to remove all troops and Jewish settlements from the Gaza strip by the end of 2005. The Oslo Accords agreement defines the point of

contention between the Palestinians and Israelis: the occupation, land rights, and self-determination.

Evidently, the conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians is important and unique by itself, but its relevance is heightened due to the discussion it sparks internationally at the United Nations General Assembly. For example, in the current 74th UN General Assembly, 18 resolutions criticized Israel compared to the 7 resolutions criticizing 5 different countries (UN Watch). Consequently, more research should be done to help resolve the conflict and improve the situation for Palestinians and Israelis.

This research paper will study the voting behavior of countries regarding the Israeli Palestinian conflict at the UN General Assembly. The research question addresses why countries vote the way they do on resolutions pertaining to the Israeli Palestinian conflict. Many papers have addressed voting behavior at the UN General Assembly, but not through the lens of the Israeli Palestinian conflict. Many papers have addressed countries' relations with Israel, but not within the sphere of the UN General Assembly. The relevance and importance of the research question cannot be exaggerated because by solving the puzzle, Israel will better understand its abilities and limitations to increase its support amongst other countries. Furthermore, due to its uniqueness, this research will contribute to political science research and analysis of countries' voting behaviors regarding the Israeli Palestinian conflict.

2. Prevailing Hypotheses

The existing literature highlights five possible hypotheses explaining the positions member-states take on UN General Assembly resolutions regarding the Israeli Palestinian conflict. The explanations address demography, foreign aid, regime type, government ideology, and bloc membership. The theory that I present in section three corresponds to the fourth of these explanations.

2.1 Impact of Demography and Religion on Voting Behavior at the UN General Assembly

The first explanation emphasizes that the Israeli Palestinian conflict revolves around the land rights of religious groups. As a result, UN member-states with many members from similar religious groups base their vote on their religious affinity with one side or the other. Consequently, researchers believe it is important to study the effect of cultural demography on a country's perception of Israelis and Palestinians.

Mirilovic and Siroky (2015, p. 282) mention a theory emphasizing the “role of religious affinities, and suggest that transnational religious ties among Muslim majority states shape recognition [of Palestine] decisions.” Specifically, Mirilovic and Siroky (2015, p. 282) state that countries with “greater proportion of Muslims, and with more religious regulation, were respectively 50% and 35% more likely to recognize Palestine — and were 60% and 20% less likely to recognize Israel.” Mirilovic and Siroky's study has clear implications for what one might expect to see in votes on the Israeli Palestinian conflict.

Hypothesis 1: Countries with a larger percentage of Muslims in their population are more likely to support resolutions more critical of Israel.

2.2 Impact of Foreign Aid on Voting Behavior at the UN General Assembly

Even though the demography of a country impacts a country's behavior towards Israel, the foreign aid relationship between countries might be relevant as well. For example, countries such as Israel, its allies, and its adversaries continuously attempt to develop relations with countries through foreign aid. Consequently, researchers believe it is significant to study the impact of foreign aid on voting behavior at the UN General Assembly.

Dreher, Nunnenkamp, and Thiele (2008, p. 157) address the types of aid countries give and receive in order to buy votes at the UN General Assembly. For example, "program aid, grants, and untied aid are most likely to shape UN voting behavior." Additionally, they state that the United States is more likely to give aid to countries that do not initially vote along with the United States in hopes of enticing them to switch their vote in the future. Consequently, this suggests that aid is not a reward for past voting, but an incentive to switch votes. Similarly, Woo and Chung (2017, p. 1021) mention that "the United States has little incentive to provide foreign aid to those who already support its position." As a result, they conclude that the United States puts its effort into buying votes at the UN General Assembly (Woo & Chung, 2017). Lastly, Dreher and Nunnekamp (2008, p. 157) mention that "accounting for the potential endogeneity of aid, our results provide strong evidence that US aid has indeed bought voting compliance."

Gitelson (1976) focuses on the compellent and deterrent impact of Israeli and Arab-country foreign aid on Black African states. The study finds a strong correlation between support for Israel from half of the states Israel had aided (Gitelson, 1976). Consequently, Israel "reinforced the rewards to those states which supported it in the UN and decreased its technical assistance to states which voted strongly against it" (Gitelson, 1976, p. 170). Alternatively,

Gitelson (1976) finds that Arabs are less likely to receive support from Black African states even after being generous. The implication of this research is that Black African states are more likely to support Israel if their actions are reinforced with Israeli aid. These three studies have clear implications for what one expects to see in vote.

Hypothesis 2: Countries that previously received significant foreign aid from Israel or its closest allies, such as the United States, are more likely to oppose resolutions more critical of Israel.

2.3 Impact of Regime Type on Voting Behavior at the UN General Assembly

Some analysts suggest that democratic and autocratic countries respectively vote together due to the resemblance of the regimes. Yet, studies have shown both similarities and differences in UN voting among countries that share the same regime type. Additionally, there is very limited information identifying regime type as a major influence on voting behavior at the UN General Assembly with regards to the Israeli Palestinian conflict.

Carter and Stone (2015) analyze why democratic countries vote more in line with the United States compared to autocratic countries at the UN General Assembly. They suggest two explanations: sharing inherently aligned preferences or the punishments and rewards different types of regimes receive from the United States (Carter & Stone, 2015). Interestingly, the study establishes that “democracies in the developing world are in fact more critical of the US positions in the United Nations than autocracies” (Carter & Stone, 2015, p. 29). As a result, this seems to suggest that the regime type of countries does not affect their voting behavior at the UN General Assembly. Still, the study also mentions that overall “democracies comply more with US voting preferences than autocracies do” (Carter & Stone, 2015, p. 29). Ultimately, the study

proved that the regime type, democracy or autocracy, cannot be the sole explanation behind a country's voting behavior at the UN General Assembly. For example, research suggests that while democracies comply with the United States, an explanation for why a country might act differently is the potential scrutiny from public opinion (Carter & Stone, 2015). The research implies that the regime type of a country may affect the voting behavior of a country.

Hypothesis 3: Democratic countries are more likely to vote in support with other democracies, such as Israel, and autocratic countries are more likely to vote in support with other autocratic countries, such as most Arab states.

2.4 Impact of Government Ideology on Voting Behavior at the UN General Assembly

Another variable, quite similar to regime type, is the country's government ideology. Some scholars suggest that a country's government ideology will not only help indicate the principles that the country values, but will also lead to support from other countries with a similar government ideology. Ultimately, studies have shown that government ideology can affect voting behavior at the UN General Assembly, however no research has determined its effect on voting behavior with regards to the Israeli Palestinian conflict.

Potrafke (2009) suggests "government ideology has had a strong influence on political alignment with the US" (Potrafke, 2009, p. 263). Specifically, the study states that countries with left-wing governments are less sympathetic with US positions and tend to oppose voting with the US (Potrafke, 2009). For example, the study finds that leftist parties, voters, and governments in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OCED) tend to be more anti-American than Right-wing governments (Potrafke, 2009). The research implies that country

government ideology may affect the voting behavior and position on the Israeli Palestinian conflict of a country:

Hypothesis 4: Countries with left-leaning governments are less likely to support the United States, and its closest allies such as Israel, at the UN General Assembly than right-leaning countries.

2.5 Impact of Bloc Membership on Voting Behavior at the UN General Assembly

Lastly, country coalitions may vote as blocs in the UN General Assembly. Studies on many policy issues before the General Assembly have shown that countries in voting blocs vote similarly to one another. And this cooperation may extend to issues that are not immediately important to an individual bloc member, but the member votes to maintain bloc solidarity. The effects on voting behavior at the UN General Assembly with regards to the Israeli Palestinian conflict has been minimally addressed.

Graham (2011) highlights that “repeatedly voting in a certain way builds up a reputation of consistency” (Graham, 2011, p. 426). As a result, some countries vote a certain way in order to develop a bond that can grow the relationship between countries. For example, the study analyzes the voting behaviors of South Africa, Brazil, and India and concludes that “for the most part South Africa agrees with Brazil and India on matters brought before the UN” (Graham, 2011, p. 426). Yet, the study demonstrates divergence in voting patterns between the countries on matters relating to nuclear issues and human rights (Graham, 2011). Furthermore, the paper suggests that the divergence arose because of how closely related the topics were to the countries’ domestic and foreign policy goals, which may take precedence over coalition cooperation (Graham, 2011). Similarly, Luif’s (2003) study of EU countries highlights the

correlation between an increase in identical votes by the EU states in the UN General Assembly and the further development of Foreign and Security Policy (Luif, 2003). Yet, Luif also points out that while they might agree on matters, one issue on which EU members do not agree is the Israeli Palestinian conflict (Luif, 2003). The implication of this research is that bloc membership may affect the voting behavior of a country. Yet, Eric Voeten and his team find that bloc membership has little or no impact on the voting outcome at the UN General Assembly regarding the Israeli Palestinian conflict (Reinalda, 2019, p. 64). Voeten's finding suggests that there is not sufficient evidence to support a hypothesis on bloc voting.

3. Theory

The research question is why do countries vote the way they do at the UN General Assembly regarding the Israeli Palestinian conflict. The hypothesis that I propose is a variant to Hypothesis 4. When the government ideology of a country's government leans right, the country is more likely to vote against the UN resolutions that oppose or criticize Israel at the UN General Assembly. The purpose of this research is to test the ability of this hypothesis to explain the voting behavior of UN member states and to compare its explanatory power with that of the alternative hypotheses offered by other analysts. The theoretical foundation of this hypothesis is supported by four conjectures about right-wing governments and their alternatives.

Support 1: Right-wing governments are more likely to vote against the resolutions and support Israel because their conservative principles limit intervention. Left-wing governments are more likely to vote in support of the resolution and against Israel because their liberal principles encourage intervention.

Firstly, in the present context, the term right-leaning or right-wing government is a conservative and/or Christian democratic government that draws a substantial part of its support from business interests. Right-leaning governments are much less likely to use extensive government intervention to produce rapid change in domestic affairs particularly if it disrupts traditional social patterns (such as Church and family), property rights, or economic expansion. The business interests particularly favor law-and-order stability and incremental over rapid change that risks disrupting economic activity. In the Israel-Palestine conflict, these interests are likely to favor a negotiated settlement over greater assertion of Palestinian rights that could lead to renewed struggle and rapid disruptive change in the Middle East. The business interest in a

stable international economic environment is likely to be wary of resolutions that could encourage Palestinian actions that reignite conflict and disrupt commerce.

Secondly, the hypothesis implicitly mentions that the countries with left-wing governments at the UN General Assembly are more likely to vote for the Palestinian demands in the resolutions. Left-wing governments may be communist, socialist, and/or social democratic. They share a willingness to use the government more actively to promote more rapid social change to remedy what they see as social injustices. In confronting the perceived injustices towards Palestinians, left-wing governments are more likely to support bolder, swifter moves. Left-wing governments vote not to be anti-Israel, but to be pro-Palestinian. The irony is that the old distinction that identified anti-Semitism with the Right and opposition to this with the Left in no way predicts the votes of these governments on the contemporary issues in the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Thirdly, the hypothesis implicitly mentions that the centrist governments at the UN General Assembly are more likely to exhibit balanced voting behavior on resolutions relating to the Israeli Palestinian conflict. Centrist governments seek to balance policies promoting moderate-paced movement towards greater social justice while refraining from assertive, disruptive government action. These governments find themselves between the Left and Right extremes on the Israel-Palestine conflict as well.

Support 2: Right-wing governments are more likely to vote against the resolutions and support Israel because of their historical alliance and ideological similarities with the United States, a close ally of Israel.

The global climate, stressing a market-oriented economic system and a foreign policy relying on the dominant military capabilities of the United States, sparked political polarization between the U.S. and other countries (Potrafke 2009). Literature on Anti-Americanism explains that Anti-Americanism sentiment significantly influences the divide between political Left and Right both in Europe and in the U.S. For example, Isernia (2007) utilized a micro-survey on participants from France, Italy, Germany and Great Britain during the Cold War and found that Right-wing voters were less likely to be Anti-American than Left-wing voters. This seems to suggest that the Cold War contributed to making Anti-Americanism a point of issue among the political Left and Right.

The anti-Americanism can also stem from ideological differences; for example, Anti-Americanism is strongly correlated with anti-capitalism (Potrafke 2009). Grunberg (2005) highlights that respondents for whom “words such as “profit” and “globalization” evoke “something negative” are much more likely to hold a negative image of the U.S. than respondents who associate “something positive” with those words” (2005, p. 67). Consequently, based on the research, one can evidently suggest that because free market ideology is a strong value that conservative parties in Europe embrace, but criticized from the political Left, right-wing parties are more likely to be in agreement with the US than left-wing parties.

Support 3: Right-wing governments are more likely to vote against the resolutions and support Israel because of their political affinity with recent conservative Israeli governments.

In recent years Israel has been run by the right-wing political party called Likud. Likud was founded by Menachem Begin and Ariel Sharon in 1973. The political party like many other right-wing political parties share very similar perspectives on the economy and international

affairs. For example, Likud supports a free-market capitalist system and a very strong military presence. Consequently, one can evidently suggest that if a country shares similar principles with one another on matters such as international affairs and economy then both countries will be more likely to support one another.

Support 4: Left-wing governments are more likely to vote in support of the resolutions and as a result oppose Israel because they subscribe to principles that support minority rights, which are the Palestinians in the case of the Israeli Palestinian Conflict.

Left-wing parties subscribe to a philosophy on various issues that implicitly relates to helping minorities. In no way should this support seem to suggest that Left-wing parties are inclusive and Right-wing parties are racist. Rather, Left-wing principles tend to support the Palestinians as a minority group in Israel; this can also explain why Left-wing governments are more likely to oppose Israel.

4. Research Design

This analysis of voting behavior in the United Nations General Assembly examines votes on four recurring resolutions by member-states from 1996 to 2017. The time frame begins in 1996 because that is when the recurring resolutions begin and the time frame ends in 2017 because the data on government ideology ends in that year. There are 4,285 country-year observations in the dataset.

4.1 Dependent Variable: UN Votes

Data on UN votes is drawn from Erik Voeten's "United Nations General Assembly Voting Data." (Voeten et al., 2020). The four dependent variables are the votes cast by each country each year on the following four resolutions:

(1) "Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat" (hereafter, *Division for Palestinians*). This resolution asks countries to support the UN Secretariat's division as well as provide it "the necessary resources and to ensure it continues to effectively carry out its programme of work..." (United Nations). The division itself "serves as the Secretariat of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People." The division has several responsibilities such as organizing meetings and programs for the committee. For example, the division "organizes the annual observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People" (United Nations).

(2) "Work of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and other Arabs of the Occupied Territories" (hereafter, *Special Committee*). This resolution criticizes Israel's occupation as a "grave violation of human rights" (United Nations). Additionally, the resolution asks countries to hold Israel accountable for its

actions against the Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Moreover, it calls for the end of the occupation because of human rights violations. Lastly, the resolution encourages investigations of Israel's actions against the "thousands of Palestinian and Arab prisoners and detainees" (United Nations).

(3) "Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources" (hereafter, *Permanent Sovereignty*). This resolution highlights Israel's lack of respect for the human rights of Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Specifically, the resolution addresses Israel's treatment of Palestinian's natural resources. For example, the resolution criticizes Israel for its "exploitation" and "destruction" of the natural resources in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The list of resources that the resolutions asserts have been negatively impacted by Israel include water, agriculture, roads, and electricity.

(4) "The right of the Palestinian people to self-determination" (hereafter, *Self-Determination*). This resolution criticizes Israel's occupation of the Occupied Territories of Palestine because it "severely impedes the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination" (United Nations). The resolution encourages other countries to end Israel's occupation of the Occupied Territories of Palestine in hopes of granting the Palestinians the right to self-determination.

The voting code that Voeten utilized to represent each UN member-state's voting record identifies yes, no, abstain, and absent. I use these data in two operationalizations: First is a scale of pro-Israel voting that codes no votes (against each resolution) as 1, abstain as 0.5, and yes votes (for each resolution) as 0. The absent countries were coded as if they had abstained because being absent is a way to avoid having to take a public stand on this very contentious

issue. It is instructive that resolutions that are not closely contested rarely have countries that are absent, suggesting that absence is a strategic choice to avoid taking a public stand. The second operationalization is a dichotomous indicator of a pro-Israel vote that treats both no and abstain as votes to avoid criticism of Israel and codes these as 1, while a yes vote (to endorse the Palestinian position) is coded as 0.

4.2 Independent variable: Demographics and Religion

The country's Muslim demographics are selected from the Pew Research Center's "Interactive Data Table: World Muslim Population by Country" (Pew Research Center). The original dataset includes the percentage of Muslims within their respective countries, but includes approximations in many countries. I have treated each approximation as a best estimate of the true value and assigned a mean value for ranges, such as coding "less than 1" as 0.5.

I use two operationalizations of Muslim population: First is the percentage of a country's total population that is Muslim. The second is a dichotomous indicator of a Muslim-majority population, coded 1 when the proportion of Muslims in the country was above .50 (range 0.0 to 1.0).

4.3 Independent variable: Regime Type

The regime type values were selected from the "Polity5 Annual Time-Series, 1946-2018 from the Integrated Network for Societal Conflict Research Data Page" (INCR Data Page). All the values use the Polity2 score variable which "is computed by subtracting the [Autocracy] AUTOC score from the [Democracy] DEMOC score." The Polity2 scores that range from +10 (strongly democratic) to -10 (strongly autocratic) were transformed to range between 0 and 1 by

adding 10 and dividing by 20. A second operationalization is a dichotomous indicator, More Democratic, that is 1 when the DEMOC score is greater than the AUTOOC score (or in other words, the original Polity2 score is positive).

4.4 Independent Variable: U.S. Foreign Aid

United States foreign aid data comes from the US foreign aid explorer website (USAID Data Services). Data on Israeli foreign aid is not available. The operationalization of U.S. foreign aid uses the constant dollar amount of foreign aid obligations rather than disbursements.

The research made several modifications to the variables because the constant dollar amount provided did not factor in the GDP and the varying population of the country over the years. As a result, the research utilized other datasets from the World Bank Development Indicators (World Development Indicators). The dataset provided the population of each country from the years 1996-2017 and the GDP of each country in constant US dollars for each specific year. Consequently, the constant dollar amount was divided by the GDP to accurately provide the variable which depicts what the United States owed each country in foreign aid from 1996 to 2017.

4.5 Independent variable: Government Ideology

Government ideology values come from “The Database of Political Institutions 2017” (Scartanscini et al., 2018). The DPI’s EXECLRLC variable represents the “party orientation with respect to economic policy.” The original dataset codes governments based on their party composition. Right-wing governments are composed of “parties defined as conservative, Christian democratic, or right wing”; centrist governments by “parties that are defined as centrist

or when party position can best be described as centrist”; and left-wing governments by “parties that are defined as communist, socialist, social democratic, or left wing.” The operationalizations are three dichotomous indicators of each type of government. The residual or baseline category is governments without an identifiable ideological position. The baseline category includes a significant percentage of the non-democratic regimes, but also some democracies. The tests will take this into account.

Table 4.1 Descriptive Statistics: Variables in Dataset

Variables	Observations	Mean	Standard Deviation	Min	Max
Resolution 1	4,191	.2403961	.281299	0	1
Resolution 2	4,191	.2862085	.2821004	0	1
Resolution 3	3,806	.1014188	.2320295	0	1
Resolution 4	4,191	.0617991	.1999368	0	1
Left Ideology	4,285	.1738623	.3790353	0	1
Center Ideology	4,285	.644107	.2455118	0	1
Right Ideology	4,285	.2387398	.426361	0	1
Muslim Percentage	4,125	.2512514	.3691097	.0005	.997
Muslim Majority	4,125	.2453333	.4303368	0	1
Polity Score	3,418	.6819485	.3247187	0	1
Democratic Regime	3,418	.6960211	.4600409	0	1
U.S Foreign Aid	3,618	.014138	.0636791	.0019383	.9655876

5. Results

The research follows five steps to test the government-ideology hypothesis and its robustness. In the first four steps, the regression results report the two different operationalizations of the dependent variable on each resolution—that is, pro-Israel voting score and dichotomous pro-Israel vote. In the first step, the research runs regressions on government ideology alone. The comparisons in these regressions are with a baseline group of countries with governments that do not have an identifiable Left-Center-Right ideology. Since the base category is associated with regime type, the second step runs regressions of the two vote variables on regime type and polity score. This raises the suspicion that the government-ideology coefficients are proxying for regime-type. In the third step, the regressions of the two vote variables on government ideology only include democracies. And in the fourth step, to check the robustness of the government-ideology variable, the regressions include variables for the variables identified in the alternative hypotheses. This also permits a comparison of the relative effect of each variable on the vote. In this fourth step, the purpose is not to dismiss the alternative variables but to estimate the relative impact of each. In the fifth step, the research takes a closer look at the total percentages of yes, no, and abstains to confirm the general pattern found in the regression analysis.

Table 5.1 Regression of Voting Score on Government Ideology

Names of Resolutions	Division for Palestinians	Special Committee	Permanent Sovereignty	Self-Determination
Right Ideology	0.0978*** (0.0119)	0.143*** (0.0118)	0.00663 (0.0103)	-0.00562 (0.00849)
Center Ideology	0.0518*** (0.0178)	0.127*** (0.0176)	-0.0780*** (0.0154)	-0.0644*** (0.0127)
Left Ideology	-0.0227** (0.0106)	-0.00262 (0.0105)	-0.0568*** (0.00918)	-0.0412*** (0.00756)
Constant	0.225*** (0.00599)	0.253*** (0.00593)	0.119*** (0.00521)	0.0770*** (0.00428)
Observations	4,191	4,191	3,806	4,191
R-squared	0.022	0.045	0.016	0.011

Table 5.2 Regression of Pro-Israel Vote on Government Ideology

Names of Resolutions	Division for Palestinians	Special Committee	Permanent Sovereignty	Self-Determination
Right Ideology	0.151*** (0.0210)	0.244*** (0.0208)	-0.0204 (0.0169)	-0.0325*** (0.0126)
Center Ideology	0.132*** (0.0315)	0.287*** (0.0311)	-0.132*** (0.0252)	-0.102*** (0.0189)
Left Ideology	-0.0403** (0.0187)	0.00256 (0.0185)	-0.107*** (0.0151)	-0.0718*** (0.0112)
Constant	0.422*** (0.0106)	0.473*** (0.0105)	0.214*** (0.00856)	0.128*** (0.00635)
Observations	4,191	4,191	3,806	4,191
R-squared	0.020	0.048	0.017	0.014

Step One: Analysis of the Impact of Country Ideology Alone

The regression results in Table 5.1 corroborate the hypothesis that Right-wing governments are consistently more likely than Left-wing governments to cast pro-Israel votes. On the Division for Palestinians and Special Committee resolutions, Right-wing governments were statistically different from the baseline-group (Constant), but on Permanent Sovereignty and Self-

determination resolutions, Right-wing governments were indistinguishable from the baseline. On the Division for Palestinians, Permanent Sovereignty, and Self Determination resolutions, Left-wing governments were statistically different from the baseline-group (Constant) but on Special Committee resolution, Left-wing governments were indistinguishable from the baseline. Nonetheless, the important test is whether Right-wing governments are statistically different from Left-wing governments and whether the difference is in the predicted direction.

In Table 5.2, with pro-Israel vote as the dependent variable, a similar pattern emerges. On the Division for Palestinians, Special Committee, and Self-Determination resolutions, Right-wing governments were statistically different from the baseline-group (Constant), but on Permanent Sovereignty resolution, Right-wing governments were indistinguishable from the baseline. On the Self Determination resolution, the results suggested that Right-wing governments are more likely to cast anti-Israel votes. On the Division for Palestinians, Permanent Sovereignty, and Self Determination resolutions, Left-wing governments were statistically different from the baseline-group (Constant) but on Special Committee resolution, Left-wing governments were indistinguishable from the baseline. But once again the important question concerns the comparison between Right-wing and Left-wing governments.

F-tests of the null hypothesis that the difference between Left-wing and Right-wing governments in Tables 5.1 and 5.2 is zero show that in cases we can reject the null hypothesis on all four resolutions. Hypothesis 4 seems to withstand this first test.

The coefficient estimates in Table 5.2 suggest that the probability a country would cast a pro-Israel vote on the Division for Palestine resolution was 57 percent under a Right-wing government but only 38 percent under a Left-wing government. The probability a country would

cast a pro-Israel vote on the Self-determination resolution was 10 percent under a Right-wing government but only 6 percent under a Left-wing government.

Table 5.3 Regression of Voting Score on Country Polity Score

Names of Resolutions	Division for Palestinians	Special Committee	Permanent Sovereignty	Self-Determination
Polity Score	0.327*** (0.0131)	0.352*** (0.0132)	-0.0129 (0.0111)	-0.00199 (0.00838)
Constant	-0.00378 (0.00991)	0.0260*** (0.00996)	0.0823*** (0.00833)	0.0395*** (0.00632)
Observations	3,398	3,398	3,088	3,398
R-squared	0.154	0.173	0.000	0.000

Table 5.4 Regression of Pro-Israel Vote on Country Polity Score

Names of Resolutions	Division for Palestinians	Special Committee	Permanent Sovereignty	Self-Determination
Polity Score	0.599*** (0.0239)	0.641*** (0.0240)	-0.0661*** (0.0185)	-0.0365*** (0.0127)
Constant	0.00721 (0.0181)	0.0688*** (0.0181)	0.174*** (0.0139)	0.0861*** (0.00955)
Observations	3,398	3,398	3,088	3,398
R-squared	0.156	0.173	0.004	0.002

Table 5.5 Regression of Voting Score on Regime-type

Names of Resolutions	Division for Palestinians	Special Committee	Permanent Sovereignty	Self-Determination
Democratic Regime	0.182*** (0.00958)	0.198*** (0.00965)	-0.00914 (0.00780)	-0.00147 (0.00591)
Constant	0.0928*** (0.00799)	0.128*** (0.00805)	0.0798*** (0.00649)	0.0391*** (0.00493)
Observations	3,398	3,398	3,088	3,398
R-squared	0.096	0.111	0.000	0.000

Table 5.6 Regression of Pro-Israel Vote on Regime-type

Names of Resolutions	Division for Palestinians	Special Committee	Permanent Sovereignty	Self-Determination
Democratic Regime	0.330*** (0.0175)	0.359*** (0.0176)	-0.0436*** (0.0131)	-0.0245*** (0.00893)
Constant	0.186*** (0.0146)	0.256*** (0.0147)	0.160*** (0.0109)	0.0783*** (0.00745)
Observations	3,398	3,398	3,088	3,398
R-squared	0.095	0.109	0.004	0.002

Step Two: Analysis of Impact of Regime-type Alone

The regression results in Tables 5.3 through 5.6 point to a possible complication in the initial regressions of vote on Government Ideology: The three indicators of government ideology may together constitute a proxy indicator of regime-type. Indeed, among countries that were less democratic—that is, their Polity2 score was below 0—fully (788/1039) 75.8 percent of their governments did not have an identifiable left-right ideology. By contrast, only (831/2379) 34.9 percent of the more democratic governments had governments without an identifiable left-right ideology.

An interesting finding is that more democratic governments (when compared to the less democratic governments in the baseline) were more likely to support a pro-Israel position on the Secretariat Division and Special Committee resolutions, but less likely to support a pro-Israel position on the Permanent Sovereignty and Self-determination resolutions.

Table 5.7 Regression of Voting Score on Democratic Government Ideology

Names of Resolutions	Division for Palestinians	Special Committee	Permanent Sovereignty	Self-Determination
Right Ideology	0.0300** (0.0132)	0.0732*** (0.0129)	-0.0110 (0.0118)	-0.0253** (0.00993)
Center Ideology	-0.0133 (0.0194)	0.0513*** (0.0189)	-0.0986*** (0.0172)	-0.0844*** (0.0146)
Left Ideology	-0.0654*** (0.0127)	-0.0356*** (0.0123)	-0.0746*** (0.0113)	-0.0624*** (0.00949)
Constant	0.300*** (0.00773)	0.327*** (0.00752)	0.139*** (0.00694)	0.0980*** (0.00579)
Observations	3,156	3,156	2,854	3,156
R-squared	0.014	0.020	0.023	0.019

Table 5.8 Regression of Pro-Israel Vote on Democratic Government Ideology

Names of Resolutions	Division for Palestinians	Special Committee	Permanent Sovereignty	Self-Determination
Right Ideology	0.0289 (0.0229)	0.120*** (0.0221)	-0.0436** (0.0185)	-0.0585*** (0.0140)
Center Ideology	0.0187 (0.0337)	0.155*** (0.0325)	-0.159*** (0.0270)	-0.127*** (0.0205)
Left Ideology	-0.115*** (0.0219)	-0.0506** (0.0211)	-0.132*** (0.0177)	-0.103*** (0.0133)
Constant	0.555*** (0.0134)	0.601*** (0.0129)	0.239*** (0.0109)	0.154*** (0.00815)
Observations	3,156	3,156	2,854	3,156
R-squared	0.013	0.022	0.025	0.025

Step Three: Analysis of Government Ideology in Democratic Regimes

The regression results in Tables 5.7 and 5.8 control for the confounding distinction between more and less democratic regimes that may have biased the results in Tables 5.1 and 5.2. The results in Table 5.7 and 5.8 include only more democratic regimes. The results show that Right-wing governments are more likely than Left-wing governments to cast pro-Israel votes on resolutions. F-tests whether the coefficients for Right-wing and Left-wing governments are significantly different from one another permit rejection of the null hypothesis for all resolutions.

Contrary to expectations, however, the Centrist and Left-wing governments are in the expected rank-order only on the Division for Palestinians and Special Committee resolutions. Their rank-order contradicts predictions on the Permanent Sovereignty and Self Determination resolutions.

The results in Tables 5.7 and 5.8 support Hypothesis 4 and the logic supporting it. When the government parties subscribe to a right-wing ideology, democratic countries are more likely to oppose the resolutions and support Israel. When the government parties subscribe to a centrist ideology, democratic countries are more likely to have a balanced voting behavior. For example, centrist democratic governments are more likely to oppose the “Special Committee” resolution, but are more likely to support the “Permanent Sovereignty” and “Self Determination” resolutions. When the government parties subscribe to a left-wing ideology, countries are more likely to support all resolutions and oppose Israel. This suggests that countries are following a principle that applies generally, regardless of resolution type. Centrist governments obtain a balanced voting behavior because for two resolutions they supported Israel and for another two they did not.

Table 5.9 Regression of Voting Score on Government Ideology and Scalar Control Variables

Names of Resolutions	Division for Palestinians	Special Committee	Permanent Sovereignty	Self-Determination
Right Ideology	0.0534*** (0.0136)	0.0954*** (0.0136)	0.0954*** (0.0112)	0.0647*** (0.00806)
Center Ideology	-0.0407** (0.0193)	0.0540*** (0.0194)	0.00291 (0.0158)	-8.01e-05 (0.0115)
Left Ideology	-0.0576*** (0.0112)	-0.0395*** (0.0112)	-0.00945 (0.00926)	0.000983 (0.00666)
Polity Score	0.160*** (0.0175)	0.159*** (0.0175)	-0.0987*** (0.0144)	-0.0615*** (0.0104)
Muslim Percentage	-0.162*** (0.0137)	-0.187*** (0.0138)	-0.0529*** (0.0113)	-0.0199** (0.00816)
U.S. Foreign Aid	0.00470 (0.0229)	0.0241 (0.0230)	0.0626*** (0.0198)	0.0411*** (0.0136)
Constant	0.146*** (0.0144)	0.186*** (0.0144)	0.137*** (0.0118)	0.0686*** (0.00854)
Observations	2,955	2,955	2,672	2,955
R-squared	0.152	0.196	0.049	0.033

Table 5.10 Regression of Pro-Israel Vote on Government Ideology and Scalar Control Variables

Names of Resolutions	Division for Palestinians	Special Committee	Permanent Sovereignty	Self-Determination
Right Ideology	0.0306 (0.0252)	0.128*** (0.0252)	0.130*** (0.0197)	0.0771*** (0.0133)
Center Ideology	-0.0778** (0.0358)	0.122*** (0.0358)	0.00545 (0.0279)	-0.00226 (0.0189)
Left Ideology	-0.125*** (0.0208)	-0.0836*** (0.0208)	-0.0259 (0.0163)	-0.00330 (0.0109)
Polity Score	0.309*** (0.0323)	0.295*** (0.0324)	-0.199*** (0.0254)	-0.119*** (0.0170)
Muslim Percentage	-0.317*** (0.0254)	-0.362*** (0.0255)	-0.103*** (0.0200)	-0.0377*** (0.0134)
U.S. Foreign Aid	-0.0101 (0.0425)	0.0347 (0.0425)	0.0974*** (0.0349)	0.0548** (0.0224)
Constant	0.296*** (0.0266)	0.376*** (0.0267)	0.277*** (0.0209)	0.137*** (0.0140)
Observations	2,955	2,955	2,672	2,955
R-squared	0.149	0.192	0.043	0.027

Table 5.11 Regression of Voting Score on Government Ideology and Dichotomous Control Variables

Names of Resolutions	Division for Palestinians	Special Committee	Permanent Sovereignty	Self-Determination
Right Ideology	0.0809*** (0.0134)	0.125*** (0.0135)	0.0883*** (0.0110)	0.0581*** (0.00791)
Center Ideology	-0.0160 (0.0195)	0.0808*** (0.0195)	0.000749 (0.0158)	-0.00353 (0.0115)
Left Ideology	-0.0439*** (0.0112)	-0.0247** (0.0113)	-0.0139 (0.00920)	-0.00318 (0.00661)
Democratic Regime	0.0672*** (0.0113)	0.0661*** (0.0114)	-0.0538*** (0.00926)	-0.0317*** (0.00666)
Muslim Majority	-0.153*** (0.0113)	-0.172*** (0.0113)	-0.0429*** (0.00924)	-0.0189*** (0.00664)
U.S. Foreign Aid	-0.00277 (0.0231)	0.0153 (0.0232)	0.0599*** (0.0198)	0.0399*** (0.0136)
Constant	0.194*** (0.0108)	0.232*** (0.0108)	0.107*** (0.00883)	0.0509*** (0.00637)
Observations	2,955	2,955	2,672	2,955
R-squared	0.136	0.178	0.046	0.030

Table 5.12 Regression of Pro-Israel Vote on Government Ideology and Dichotomous Control Variables

Names of Resolutions	Division for Palestinians	Special Committee	Permanent Sovereignty	Self-Determination
Right Ideology	0.0856*** (0.0249)	0.185*** (0.0250)	0.117*** (0.0194)	0.0668*** (0.0130)
Center Ideology	-0.0287 (0.0361)	0.174*** (0.0362)	0.00217 (0.0279)	-0.00712 (0.0189)
Left Ideology	-0.0976*** (0.0208)	-0.0545*** (0.0209)	-0.0334** (0.0162)	-0.00957 (0.0109)
Democratic Regime	0.130*** (0.0210)	0.121*** (0.0210)	-0.110*** (0.0163)	-0.0644*** (0.0110)
Muslim Majority	-0.294*** (0.0209)	-0.327*** (0.0210)	-0.0776*** (0.0163)	-0.0311*** (0.0109)
U.S. Foreign Aid	-0.0248 (0.0430)	0.0176 (0.0431)	0.0923*** (0.0350)	0.0524** (0.0224)
Constant	0.388*** (0.0201)	0.460*** (0.0201)	0.215*** (0.0156)	0.102*** (0.0105)
Observations	2,955	2,955	2,672	2,955
R-squared	0.128	0.171	0.038	0.023

Step Four: Analysis with Control Variables

In order to test the alternative hypotheses and to test the robustness of the Government Ideology variables against the possibility that Ideology may be proxies for other causes, the regressions in Tables 5.9 to 5.12 include control variables for regime type and the causes mentioned in Hypothesis 1 through 3.

The regression results in Tables 5.9 to 5.12 corroborate the hypothesis that Right-wing governments are consistently more likely than Left-wing governments to cast pro-Israel votes. On all resolutions, F-tests show that Right-wing governments were statistically different from Left-wing governments. And in all cases, the coefficients for the Right-wing governments were more positive (pro-Israel) than those for the Left-wing governments.

The impact of Government ideology is robust between the different operationalizations of the dependent variable (compare Tables 5.9 and 5.10 with Tables 5.11 and 5.12).

The impact of Government ideology is also robust with the inclusion of the control variables identified by the Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3. Once again, greater democracy is associated with a more pro-Israel position on the Division for Palestinians and Special Committee resolutions, but a less pro-Israel position on the Permanent Sovereignty and Self-determination resolutions. A larger Muslim population is consistently associated with a less pro-Israel position on all resolutions. And more U.S. foreign aid seemed to buy a more pro-Israel vote on the Permanent Sovereignty and Self-determination resolutions, but not the Division for Palestinians or Special Committee resolutions.

Comparing the magnitude of the coefficients in Tables 5.11 and 5.12 where all independent variables except for US Foreign Aid are dichotomous variables, the magnitude of the Government ideology effect is comparable to that of the control variables. For example, in Table

5.12, a switch from Left-wing to Right-wing government brings an 18-percentage point change ($0.0856 + 0.0976$) in the likelihood of a pro-Israel vote on the Division for Palestinians resolution. This is comparable to the effect of democracy (0.13), but substantially less than the effect of a Muslim Majority (0.29). Another example, in Table 5.12, a switch from Left-wing to Right-wing government brings a 15-percentage point change ($0.117 + 0.0334$) in the likelihood of a pro-Israel vote on the Permanent Sovereignty resolution. This is comparable to the effect of democracy (0.11), but substantially greater than the effect of a Muslim Majority (0.07).

Figure 5.1: The Percentage of "Yes" for the UN General Assembly Resolutions for Each Type of Government Ideology

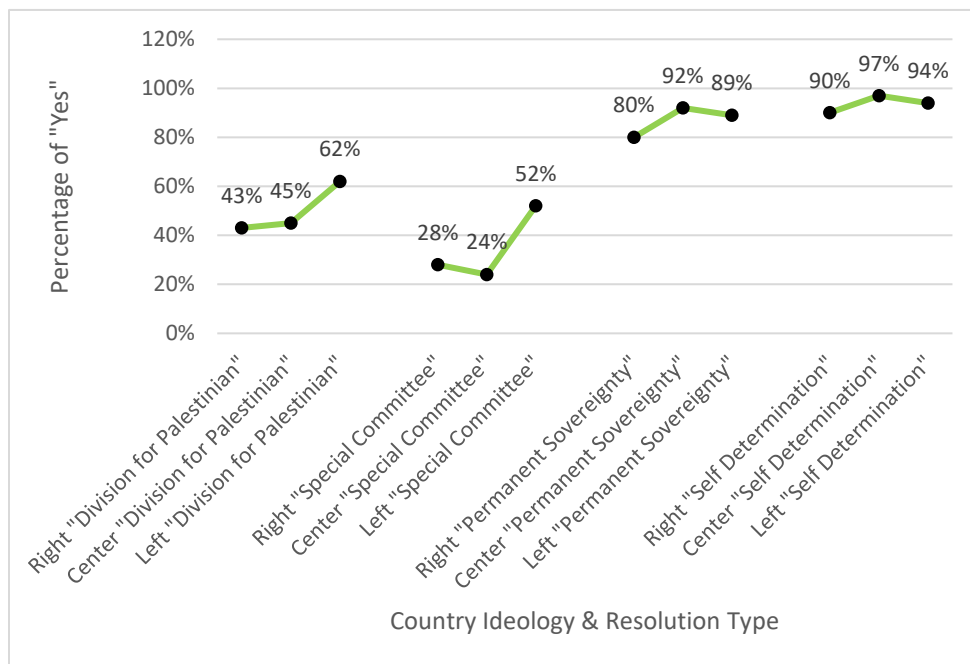


Figure 5.2: The Percentage of “Abstain” for the UN General Assembly Resolutions for Each Type of Government Ideology

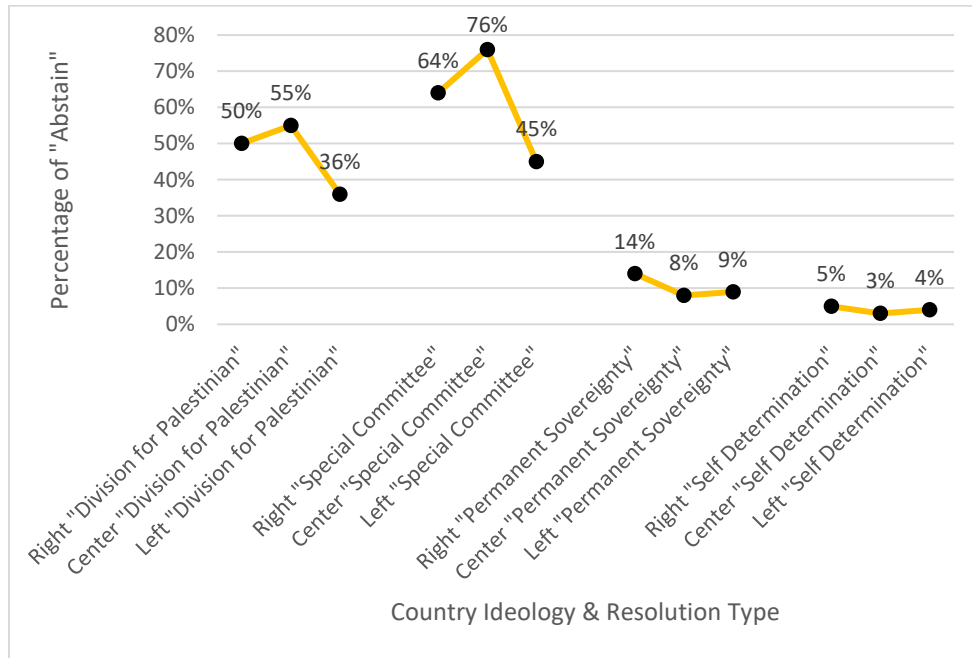
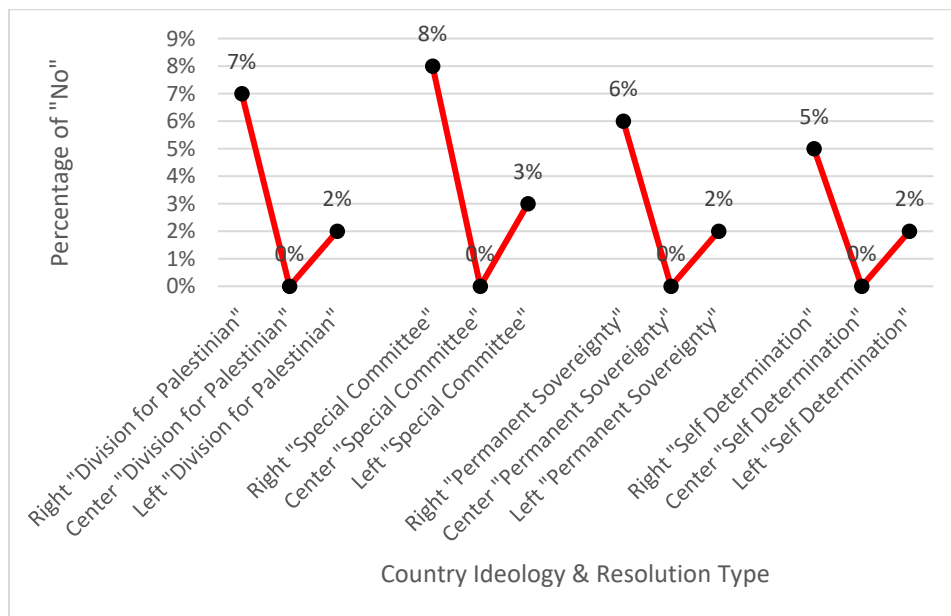


Figure 5.3: The Percentage of “No” for the UN General Assembly Resolutions for Each Type of Government Ideology



Step Five: A Closer Look at Voting Patterns

Even after analyzing the regressions, we can gain greater insight into the patterns of voting by a closer look at the total percentages of yes, no, and abstains for each resolution and by breaking these down by the ideologies of their governments. Firstly, Figure 5.1 highlights the percentages of yes for each resolution from each government ideology. It confirms the general pattern found in the regression analysis. Left-wing governments consistently have more often voted “yes” for each resolution than have Right-wing governments. But the magnitude of the difference is substantially smaller for the Permanent Sovereignty and Self-determination resolutions. Secondly, Figure 5.2 highlights the percentages of abstain for each resolution from each type of government and this shows something interesting. The Centrist governments were substantially more likely to abstain than either Right-wing or Left-wing governments on the Division for Palestinian and Special Committee resolutions, but were indistinguishable from Left-wing governments on the Permanent Sovereignty and Self-Determination resolutions. Lastly, Figure 5.3 highlights the percentages of no for each resolution. The Right-wing governments were more likely to vote “no” on each resolution Centrist governments, on the other hand, did not vote “no” on any of the resolutions. It would appear that Centrist governments abstained rather than vote “no” on the Division for Palestinians and Special Committee resolutions, but voted “yes” rather than abstain on the Permanent Sovereignty and Self-determination resolutions.

Currently, support for Israel has improved over the years for resolutions “Division for the Palestinians” and “Special Committees” but not necessarily for “Permanent Sovereignty” and “Self Determination.” Through the research, it became relevant to discuss the resolutions and their impact on voting behavior. After reviewing the resolutions and the voting behavior

designated to each it is evident that there is a pattern that resolutions “Division for the Palestinians” and “Special Committees” share and “Permanent Sovereignty” and “Self Determination” share. After brief analysis of the resolutions, the “Division for the Palestinians” and “Special Committee” resolutions are more anti-Israel while the “Permanent Sovereignty” and “Self Determination” resolutions are more pro-Palestinian. It was even noted by the Anti-Defamation League that the first two resolutions on the Division for Palestinians and Special Committee were established and funded by the Arab bloc. Israel’s representative in the 73rd UN General Assembly said “The Division for Palestinian Rights is the only office of the Secretariat promoting an agenda that directly targets one Member State.” The data supports the claim because the most impactful variable for the resolutions are the Muslim majority and Muslim percentage variables. However, the pro-Israel resolutions seek to improve the treatment of Palestinians with the ultimate hope of them having their own land and be living coexistent with Israel. This is further supported by the data because the most impact variable was usually the right ideology, which according to the theory seeks stability, which occurs through peace. Lastly, this makes further sense because the resolutions that are seen as anti-Israel are heavily contested, while the resolutions that are seen as pro-Palestinian are seen as one sided.

6. Conclusion

After reviewing all the results, the data clearly strengthens the hypothesis that Right-wing governments are more likely than Left-wing governments to vote against the resolutions and in support of Israel. The results also clearly strengthen the hypothesis that Centrist governments are more likely to have a balanced voting behavior. Even though the different ideologies were not necessarily the most impactful variable for the resolution, it does not take away from the hypothesis because the hypothesis addressed variable's impact, by itself, that was never studied or applied to the UN General Assembly regarding the Israeli Palestinian conflict.

After concluding that the hypothesis was indeed corroborated, one can begin to study further the connection between political ideologies and their impact on voting behavior at the UN General Assembly and more specifically its relation to Israel. The research provided the Political Science community a new avenue to take when studying the Israeli Palestinian conflict at the UN General Assembly. Moreover, the research can provide Israel with a better idea of which countries will be more likely to support Israel strictly by their government ideology. As a result, using the alternative variables as well as government ideology, Israel can begin reaching out to countries they believe they have an opportunity to improve voter compliance and support with.

The research used a variety of reliable sources, such as peer reviewed literature and dataset, however if one would like to take the extra step to strengthen or weaken the conclusion one should seek to find a dataset regarding political ideologies that includes more countries over a longer period of time. Additionally, with further time in-depth research would allow one to see patterns among the resolutions and to better explain differences in the vote for each resolution.

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