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## Legislators' use of One-Minute Speeches

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Legislators have multiple roles including enacting legislation, and engaging in oversight, representation and policy-making. (Mayhew 1974; Fenno 1978; Searing 1994; Saalfeld and Muller 1997; Strøm 1997; Blomgren and Rozenberg 2012). Any political institution has its procedures, which define the opportunities and the limitations available to its members in their daily work. In light of the limited time and resources that legislators have, we need to ask why they would choose to use one-minute speeches (hereafter OMS) over other tools available to them. What are the advantages of OMS over other parliamentary procedures? Furthermore, if legislators choose to use OMS, how do they do so—as policy-makers, position takers or in another role? Finally, what considerations motivate legislators to use OMS?

Existing studies on OMS have looked at how legislators in the U.S. House of Representatives use them (Maltzman and Sigelman 1996; Rocca 2007), why they use them (Maltzman and Sigelman 1996; Rocca 2007), and their content (Polletta 1998; Hall 2002). This study will examine the use of OMS in a venue never before considered, the Israeli parliament (the Knesset). Using Israel as the research site will allow us to test existing theories with fresh data. The study will focus on the time period before and after the first wave of the world economic crisis of 2007-2010. We chose to investigate this period of time because through it we can examine two of the roles of legislators--representing their voters and making policy. In addition, unusual events such as economy crises can be a trigger for using the easiest tool available to them – OMS.

Furthermore, in Israel, security issues usually receive priority attention. Hence, it is interesting to investigate whether a crisis in an area other than security causes Members of the Knesset (MKs) to invest their efforts in talking about the subject and in what manner.

We will start with review of the theories about the legislator's role in policy-making. Then, after reviewing the literature about OMS, we will present some background on their use in the Israeli parliament. Relying both on the Rules of Procedure and on interviews with several MKs, we will describe the procedures governing OMS in Israel, which are similar to those used in the U.S. House of Representatives, the European Parliament, the Australian Parliament and the Canadian Parliament. We will argue that in difficult economic times Israeli MKs prefer to concentrate on internal issues rather than external ones, so they do not take the opportunity to make economic policy. In the course of the discussion, we will advance three hypotheses about the characteristics of MKs who use OMS extensively. We will then test these hypotheses using recently available OMS from the 17th and 18th Knesset terms.

## II. POLITICIANS AS POLICY MAKERS

Downs (1957) was the first scholar to argue that the relationship between legislators and their voters determines the policy decisions of the legislators. Furthermore, this relationship is founded on the mechanism of demand (the public's desire for specific policies) and supply (the response of politicians, often rooted in the desire to be reelected). Riker (1982) expanded Downs' (1957) argument and said that legislators establish ad-hoc coalitions with different agendas, but with the same goal of maximizing their chances of being reelected. The combination of the desire to be re-elected (Mayhew 1974) and to enact good public policies (Fenno1978) is a powerful motivation for legislators' actions in parliaments.

Scholars of public choice theory (Taylor 1987; Mueller 1989) claim that reality is determined by rational actors and that public policy is a result of actions of various actors. Studies have shown that legislators usually behave like rational actors, listening to the voters' demands, creating ad-hoc coalitions in order to meet the public's demands and hoping to be rewarded with reelection (Fenno1978; Searing1994; Saalfeld and Muller1997; Blomgren and Rozenberg,2012).

Politicians are just one of three groups that interact in the public policy arena, as Hecló (1978)

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describe 'Iron Triangle'. The phrase was used to denote the close relationship between interest group, congressional committees and government agencies (Burstein 1991; Howlett and Ramesh 1995; Hayden 2002). The scholars of public choice theory assumed that there are reciprocal relations between the three groups (Olson 1965; Mitchell and Munger 1991). Furthermore, they claim that interest groups supply politicians with the information they need to identify the public's preferences (Ainsworth and Sened 1993; Austen-Smith 1998). In addition, they argue that government agencies such as bureaucrats can change the preferred policy of politicians (Monsen and Cannon 1965; Miller and Moe 1983).

The current research concentrates on the relationship between legislators and government agencies (bureaucrats) as they appeared during the debates in the Israeli finance committee about the world economy crisis. The first scholar who studied this relationship was Niskanen (1971) who determined that bureaucrats are driven by the desire to maximize the budget of their office, which increases their power. Subsequent scholars found that politicians adopt strategies to control bureaucrats. Therefore, the relationship between politicians and bureaucrats has built-in conflicts (Miller and Moe 1983). Miller and Moe (1983) offered an explicit model of interactions between bureaucrats and political committees with four general assumptions. First, the relationship between the actors is a bilateral monopoly. Second, the relationship is hierarchic. Third, there are two polar modes of legislative oversight. Fourth, the committee, knowing that its only information about costs comes from the bureaucrats, does not try to arrive at a comprehensive estimate of the latter's cost function. Miller and Moe claimed that bureaucratic behavior must be understood in its legislative context.

However, the technology and the information revolution of the last two decades have created a new environment for the relationship between legislators and bureaucrats. How has this new environment affected the abilities of both sides to create public policy? Is there an optimum point in their interaction that is beneficial for both sides? Makris (2006) tried to supply an answer. He found that "despite its informational disadvantage due to its lack of experience, the Congress can, by simply exploiting its political authority and deciding on the rules of the budgetary game, ensure, under certain conditions, the design of an efficient administrative bureau" (p. 285).

Public policy is composed of a collection of decisions made by politicians, interest groups, bureaucracy and the public, and is usually expressed as a law or regulation. The current research will look at public policy made by politicians using parliamentary tools other than legislation. Specifically, we will analyze one-minute speeches, motions for the agenda and the

work in the finance committee regarding the world economic crisis.

### III. OMSS IN THE US HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

What are the characteristics of legislators who use OMS and what motivates them to use this communication method? Research from the United States suggests that OMS are favored by members of Congress (MCs) who are on the margins of political activity. Scholars have suggested that those who tend to use OMS are individualistic and institutionally disadvantaged (Morris 2001; Rocca 2007), ideologically extreme (Morris 2001; Rocca 2007), members of a minority party (Maltzman and Sigelman 1996; Morris 2001), electorally insecure, and rank low in terms of tenure, party identification and party rank (Morris 2001).

Maltzman and Sigelman (1996), who were the first to study OMS, claim that they are viewed as a safety value for MCs who feel left out of the decision making process. They found that unconstrained floor time was used primarily for policy purposes and that electoral factors did not matter. The most recent study, conducted by Rocca (2007), maintains that MCs minimize risk by discussing issues that appeal to the voters. If taking a position may be rewarding, MCs will do so hoping that the voters will translate it into electoral gain. Other explanations for the use of the OMS include the introduction of television onto the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives by the Cable Satellite Public Affairs Network, which gave members a forum from which they could pursue their personal and political goals (Maltzman and Sigelman 1996). The same explanation may be relevant to the Israeli parliament because there is a direct broadcast of the parliament's proceedings on television (Sheafer and Wolfsfeld 2004). In addition, when the party chooses to, it may control the use of OMS (Harris 2005). Finally, changes in the control of Congress affected members' speeches (Hall 2002).

What is the content of OMS? Aristotle was the first academic to analyze the content of speeches. He divided them into three parts: the Ethos, the Logos and Pathos. Since his day, very few studies have used this terminology. Hall (2002) examined how MCs refer to individuals in government on the House floor. He claimed that members use symbols to send signals to their constituents and to frame the debate on public policy issues (Hall 2002). Hall concluded that the parties use different symbols to frame political debates. While Hall's analysis emphasized the Logos of the speeches, Polletta (1998) combined the Ethos and the Logos when she examined how, when, and why African American legislators referred to Martin Luther King during their OMS. She argued that congressional representations of King assimilated him into a pluralist framework by

presenting community service and institutional politics as the proper legacy of his activism. Neither Polletta nor Hall examined the Pathos of the speeches.

Most studies have analyzed one specific term of the Congress. Maltzman and Sigelman (1996) examined the 103rd Congress; Morris (2001) examined the 104th Congress; Harris (2005) examined the 101st Congress. Hall (2002) and Rocca (2007) examined more than one term. Hall examined two terms, the 103rd and 104th Congresses, and Rocca examined multiple Congresses from the 101st to the 106th. Since the current research will examine the period before and after the world economic crisis, the database includes speeches made during part of the 17th Knesset and part of the 18th Knesset.

Scholars have used a wide range of methodologies in order to explore OMS. Morris used a negative binomial event count model to predict who would use OMS and who would engage in partisan rhetoric (Morris 2001). Maltzman and Sigelman used a regression model to examine the number of lines spoken in the Congressional Record about a number of policy-oriented and electoral-based variables (Maltzman and Sigelman 1996). Harris (2005) used four logistic regression models that examined the impact of electoral margin, tenure, party leadership position, ideology, and DMB (Democratic Message Board) membership on whether or not a speech giver was on message. Content analysis was used in order to determine the way in which terms such as "bureaucrats" and "public servants" were manipulated in the floor speeches and the political gain members sought to achieve from these moves (Hall 2002). In addition, Hall used logistic regression in order to determine the factors that influenced the use of the term "bureaucrat" as a foil (Hall 2002). Polletta (1998) also conducted a content analysis; for each congressional session she scanned all documents that referred at least once to "Martin Luther King" or "Dr. King." The current research will use both content analysis and statistical models in order to draw as complete a picture as possible of the use of the OMS in the Israeli parliament during economic hard times.

The goals of the study are based on the desire to deepen our understanding about the way OMS are used in the Israeli parliament with respect to these three legislative areas. The first goal is to examine how MKs use OMS as a tool for policy-making. To accomplish this goal, we investigated policy-making by MKs with regard to the global economic crisis. The second goal is to investigate the motivations for MKs to use OMS. How are MKs who use OMS extensively different from those who make little use of it? The two goals complement each other and allow us to address the three subjects with which the literature deals. The unconstrained nature of OMS facilitates position taking, and the motivations for using OMS shed light on why legislators design the

institution the way they do and on legislative participation.

#### IV. OMSS IN THE ISRAELI PARLIAMENT

##### a) *Procedures governing OMSs*

Only five legislatures have adopted OMSs: the US House of Representatives, the European Parliament and the parliaments of Australia, Canada and Israel. A comparison of the procedures governing OMS in these five legislatures yields several insights. First, OMS provide one of the few opportunities for non-legislative debate, where debate is almost always confined to the pending legislative business. Second, the recognition of the right to give a OMS is the prerogative of the Speaker. Third, in the US House OMSs are not provided for in the rules of the House, while in the Israeli parliament, the Australian parliament and the European Parliament they are. Fourth, there are set periods when OMS can be given. Finally, each Member can give only one speech each legislative day. In sum, we can see that the opportunities OMS give the Members in all five legislatures are similar. The speeches are not about legislation. The speech is initiated by a Member at a given time and lasts for a specified period. In the light of these restrictions, the main question is what motivates MKs to use OMS?

#### V. POLICY-MAKING BY OTHER MEANS

One of legislator's roles is to make policy, usually by legislation. However, this study analyzes the policy-making role by other means: OMS, committee debates and motions for the agenda. All of these tools are available to legislators in their daily work and have never before been analyzed as instruments for policy-making.

The first question is, what is the essence of OMS used by legislators regarding the world economy crisis? How are they used for policy-making? To answer these questions, we must first understand the role of OMS in the legislator's life. An ordinary legislator has two types of tools at his/her disposal: lightweight procedural tools and heavyweight procedural tools. He or she must decide the number of tools to use, how often, with what content and in what combination.

Our interviews showed that there are three strategies for using the OMS: beginning with the lightweight procedural tools, beginning with the heavyweight procedural tools or combining the tools as needed. Disadvantaged MKs prefer to adopt the first strategy. Recently well-established MKs use the second one. Senior MKs, committee chairs and party leaders tend to adopt the third strategy.

Given that the OMS is a very easy tool for ordinary MKs to use, we expected them to use it to address the issue of the world economic crisis. However, only 4 OMS out of 1630 dealt with economic

hard times, two by MKs from the ultra-Orthodox party, United Torah Judaism, one from the extreme left The Democratic Front for Peace and Equality (Hadash) Party and one from the center-left Labor (Avoda) Party. No right-wing party members gave speeches on this topic. While there were a lot of speeches about the Israeli economy, specifically about the hard times people were experiencing, they were no different from the speeches given before the research period. Furthermore, none of them referred to the worldwide economic crisis.

a) *Can OMS be used as a tool for policy-making?*

Legislation is one of the major tools for policy-making, but can OMS be used as a first step toward policy-making? In order to answer this question, we analyzed the content of the OMS that referred to the world economic crisis looking for suggested alternative policies or criticizing the current government's policy.

Table 1 : Content analysis of OMSs

Who?	When?	What?	Policy?
MK Braverman Labor (Avoda)	26.2.2008	The budget and the fact that indicators such as the economic crisis should be taken into account.	He did not suggest a policy.
MK Khenin The Democratic Front for Peace and Equality (Hadash)	18.3.2008	The world economic crisis and the fact that Wall Street capitalism had brought down the American economy.	He criticized the government policy and suggested an alternative policy.
MK Halpert United Torah Judaism (Yahadut HaTorah)	3.6.2008	He quoted a resolution from the American government that decided to compensate poor people for the losses they had sustained due to the economic crisis and offer them a special grant.	He suggested an alternative policy.
MK Cohen United Torah Judaism (Yahadut HaTorah)	15.6.2008	He wondered why, when most people in Israel were experiencing hard times, the government had a positive balance sheet.	He criticized the current policy, but did not suggest an alternative policy.

While all four of the speeches used the world economic crisis as the background to a specific issue they wanted to raise on the floor, none of them discussed the economic crisis as the main issue. Nevertheless, most of them used OMS as a tool for criticizing existing policies and suggesting alternative policies. We define this use as a first step toward policy-making. However, it is uncommon for legislators to use OMS as a tool for policy-making, and the issue of economic hard times rarely arose in the OMS. Furthermore, whenever it was used, its use was only indirect. The question is why, even though this tool was available to the MKs, did they not use it more often to discuss economic hard times, criticize existing policies or suggest alternatives? Is it because they did not see the world economic crisis as an important issue or because there were other procedures they could use to talk about economic hard times and criticize existing policies or suggest alternatives?

Here we have the same question Polletta (1998) raised—is anything actually accomplished on the floor? Polletta noted that MCs are now investing more time and effort in their constituencies. In addition, congressional committees and sub-committees have expanded their roles (Polletta 1998). Perhaps these explanations also help us understand why few in the Israeli parliament have used the OMS to address the world economic crisis.

b) *Can the finance committee be used as a tool for policy-making?*

Digging deeper into the finance committee, we found that during the 17th Knesset there were 11 discussions regarding the effect of the world economic crisis on the Israeli economy. In the 18th Knesset there were eight discussions regarding the same subject. We conducted a similar examination in the economic committee, but failed to find any discussion of the topic there. Note, however, that the economic committee's mandate is to deal with internal affairs, so the fact that it did not have any discussions about an external issue is not surprising.

The finance committee has 17 members including the chair committee. In 8 out of the 11 discussions on the topic, there was an impressive attendance by MKs (ranging from 7 to 17 MKs), while in 3 discussions attendance was poor (ranging from the chair only to 6 MKs). The list of guests was longer than the number of MKs who attended (from 5 up to 45!). Most of these guests held important positions relevant to the subject of the discussion: the finance minister, the Governor of the Bank of Israel, the CEO of the finance ministry, CEOs of economic organizations, and bank managers. Miller and Moe (1983) would consider these guests as bureaucrats who are important actors in the public policy process. Here we can see that their

presence in the committee meeting is significant both in their number and in the content of the discussion. Most of the discussion time was devoted to the presentations of the guests, which provided important information about and analysis of the Israeli economy. The discussions lasted from half an hour to three hours, and most of them focused on the relevant issues.

The world economic crisis was not the main issue in 10 out of 11 discussions, but it was part of the background and helped place the Israeli economic crisis in the global context. We see here much the same picture as in the OMS that did talk about the world economic crisis. One discussion was all about the consequences of the world economic crisis for Israel. Most of the time the finance minister discussed the actions his ministry was going to take in order to cope with the crisis. We found a similar picture in the 18th Knesset with eight discussions regarding the world economic crisis.

c) *Can motions for the agenda be used as a tool for policy making?*

In addition to OMS, MKs can propose a motion for the agenda, another lightweight procedural tool. When we looked at the floor debate, we found just one motion for the agenda about the world economic crisis during the 17th Knesset, which was initiated by seven MKs. At the end of the debate, 14 MKs voted to pass the motion on to the finance committee, a decision that is considered the best option for a motion for the agenda because it allows a longer and more professional discussion on the motion. A similar picture emerged from the 18th Knesset, where there was one motion for the agenda, initiated by several MKs and passed on to the finance committee. The legislator utilizes this tool, but the government's representative can ask the Knesset to reject the motion. Therefore, if the government is not in favor of the policy suggested in the motion, it has the ability and the power to keep it from coming to a vote. Unfortunately, legislators in the Israeli parliament do not consider motions for the agenda as relevant tool for policy-making about the world economy crisis.

## VI. RESEARCH DESIGN

The world experienced an economic crisis in two waves. The first wave was between 2007 and 2009<sup>ii</sup>. The second wave began in 2010 and is still going on. The definition of this period of time is based on a review of the major daily newspapers<sup>iii</sup> that reported on the economic crisis. The reasons for this crisis and the steps taken by governments to overcome it are beyond the scope of this research. We are using the first wave of the economic crisis simply as a framework for our study, which will examine OMS delivered in the Israeli parliament between 2007 and 2010. Our database includes 1630 OMS; 250 of them from January 2007,

before the economic crisis, until July 2007, the beginning of the crisis; 757 of them from July 2007 until August 2009, the period of the crisis; and 623 of them from August 2009 until June 2010, the period after the economy crisis. Between 2007 and 2010 there were two Knesset terms and two governments: the 17th Knesset began on 4 May 2006 and ended on 31 March 2009 with the 31st government. The 18th Knesset began on 31 March 2009 with the 32nd government. The relevant database for the 17th Knesset has 717 OMS and the relevant database for the 18th Knesset has 913 OMS.

The research uses both qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze how MKs use OMS and to understand what motivates them to do so. First we analyzed the content of the OMS manually. During the manual analysis, we also checked for inter-coder reliability. Then, we examined the research hypotheses by using a statistical analysis. The database contains the following information for each OMS: the name of the initiator, his/her party affiliation, opposition/coalition affiliation, junior/senior rank, nationality and the subject of the speech. In a separate data file we entered the text of each OMS and used content analysis to obtain the essence of each speech. The final step was a series of in depth interviews we conducted with MKs in order to understand the "behind the scenes" process at work with regard to OMS. We sampled 15 MKs out of 90 who were not ministers or deputy ministers. The sampled MKs covered the broad spectrum of elected representative in the Knesset. Each interview took 45 minutes and dealt with general questions about the goals of the MK, the way he/she uses the parliamentary tools and specific questions about their motivation for using OMS. In addition, we analyzed the content of the finance committee protocols and transcripts of floor debates.

## VII. LEGISLATORS' MOTIVATIONS FOR USING OMS

a) *Hypotheses*

Based on the literature review and the preceding discussion, we posited several explanations for the motivations of MKs to use OMS: membership of the MK's party in the coalition or outside it, seniority, nationality and position. Seniority was coded as follows: first term MKs were defined as junior MKs and those who were in their second term or later were defined as senior MKs<sup>iv</sup>. In the category of nationality, we distinguished between Jewish and Arab (non-Jewish) MKs. Given that some of these explanations overlap, to see the effect of each of the variables on the number of OMS, we ran a negative binominal event count model.

*H1: MKs from the opposition will tend to use OMS more often than MKs from the coalition.*

*H2: Junior MKs will tend to use OMS more often than senior MKs.*

*H3: National minority (Arab) MKs will tend to use OMS more often than national majority (Jewish) MKs.*

In general, the hypotheses maintain that MKs who are operating at a disadvantage within the government, either due to their position in the opposition or in their party, will be more likely to use OMS as a tool to make themselves heard.

## VIII. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As mentioned before, our database can be divided into two periods of time: part of the 17<sup>th</sup> Knesset and part of the 18<sup>th</sup> Knesset. Hence, the research hypotheses will be examined separately for each Knesset term.

We examined the independent variables by calculating the ratio between the number of OMS and the number of MKs who used the tool. It is interesting to note that even though MKs have a quota for using various tools, they do not use them to their full potential.

*H1: MKs from the opposition will tend to use OMS more often than MKs from the coalition.*

*Table 1 : OMS by coalition and opposition MKs*

	17 <sup>th</sup> Knesset	18 <sup>th</sup> Knesset
Coalition MKs	35.4% (254 out of 717) 3.25	35.8% (327 out of 913) 4.4
Opposition MKs	64.6 % (463 out of 717) 11.02	64.2% (586 out of 913) 12.7

In the 17th Knesset more OMS were initiated by MKs from the opposition, then MKs from the coalition, we found a similar picture in the 18th Knesset. To get a better picture of the use of OMS, we calculated the proportion between the number of OMS of opposition members and the number of opposition members who used OMS, and created the same calculation for coalition members. The results strengthen our previous findings. Thus, hypothesis H1 is supported for both Knesset terms. Scholars have suggested that those who use the OMS are individualistic and institutionally disadvantaged (Morris 2001). Our findings add to this description by indicating that members of the opposition are more likely to use OMS than members of the coalition. However, why if opposition members use them more extensively than coalition members did they fail to talk about economic hard times or use OMS as a policy-making tool? Again, the answer may be that the bureaucrats in the finance ministry are more powerful, seem to have a better understanding of the subject and have a professional staff to help them determine economic policy.

*H2: Junior MKs will tend to use OMS more often than senior MKs.*

*Table 2 : OMSs by senior and junior MKs*

	17 <sup>th</sup> Knesset	18 <sup>th</sup> Knesset
Senior MKs	62.2% (446 out of 717) 5.86	48.5% (443 out of 913) 5.09
Junior MKs	37.8% (271 out of 717) 6.15	51.5% (470 out of 913) 14.24

In the 17th Knesset more OMS were initiated by junior MKs then by senior MKs. When we looked at the proportion between the number of OMS and the number of junior MKs who used OMS, we found a different picture; 6.15 OMS were initiated by junior MKs, while 5.86 OMS were initiated by senior MKs. In the 18th Knesset more OMS were initiated by junior MKs then by senior MKs. The proportion index shows a similar picture.. These findings are similar to those in Morris' (2001) study; junior members of Congress consider the OMS an easy and readily available tool for communication, so they tend to use it more frequently than senior members. Thus, the proportion index supports hypothesis H2 in both Knesset terms.

We were curious as to whether there was a connection between the variable of being an opposition/coalition member and the variable of being a junior/senior MK. Based on the literature review, we expected junior MKs from the coalition to use OMS more often than senior MKs, in a manner similar to that of senior MKs from the opposition (Maltzman and Sigelman 1996). We ran a chi-square test and found a significant connection as expected ( $\chi^2=170.129$ , sig=0.00). The same tendency emerged from the data from the 18th Knesset ( $\chi^2=65.648$ , sig=0.00).

Why don't junior MKs use OMS as a tool for making economic policy? Based on the interviews, it appears that these newly elected legislators are not yet familiar with the advantages and disadvantages of various parliamentary tools. Therefore, in their first Knesset term junior MKs explore these tools, and only in their second term do they focus on one or more parliamentary tools that they feel will be most useful for them.

*H3: National minority (Arab) MKs will tend to use OMS more often than national majority (Jewish) MKs.*

The creation of the national majority-minority in the Israeli context began in 1948 with the establishment of the state of Israel. During the British Mandate, before the Israeli War of Independence, Arabs were the majority of the population and the Jews were the minority. Since 1948, the Arabs have been in the minority both de facto and de jure (Smootha 1984; Jamal 2011). Hence, relations between Jews and Arabs in Israel are not simply those of majority to minority. These relations revolve around differences in nationality, religion and the connection to the global Arab world.

**Table 3 :** OMSs by national minority and majority MKs

	17 <sup>th</sup> Knesset	18 <sup>th</sup> Knesset
Majority MKs	5.2	6.5
Minority MKs	14.5	17

During the 17th Knesset there were 12 non-Jewish MKs; 2 were Druze and 10 were Arabs (9 Muslims and 1 Christian). In the 18th Knesset there were 14 non-Jewish MKs; 3 were Druze and 11 were Arabs (10 Muslims and 1 Christian). Most of the non-Jewish MKs were in non-Jewish parties, while just a few were part of Jewish parties. The raw data show that 78.4% of the OMS were initiated by Jewish MKs, while 20.2% were initiated by Arab MKs (the rest were initiated by Druze MKs). However, when we created the index that calculated the proportion between the number of OMS and the number of MKs by their religion, we found a different picture; the proportion of OMS of Jewish MKs was 5.2, while that of the Arab MKs was 14.5 and that of the Druze MKs was 5. The 18th Knesset showed a similar picture. The proportion of OMS of Jewish MKs was 6.5, while that of the Arab MKs was 17 and that of the Druze MKs was 10. Thus, hypothesis H3 is supported. These findings strengthen previous studies about the way minorities use OMS (Maltzman and Sigelman 1996).

Given the findings, why don't Arab MKs use OMS as a policy-making tool? First, the Arab minority in Israel faces a more complex reality than other minorities in Western democracies. They struggle to improve the status of the Arab citizens of Israel and speak up for the Palestinians as well. Second, while they often criticize the government's policies on a variety of issues, they do not have the political power to make policy.

Thus, with regard to all of the research hypotheses, we can say that despite the differences in the political systems between the United States and Israel, with regard to the use of OMS, Israeli MKs tend to behave the same as members of Congress in USA. Those who are outside the corridors of power, including members of the opposition, junior MKs, non-Jewish MKs, rank-and-file MKs, and those who are not party leaders, look to a readily available tool for making their voices heard. That tool is the OMS. Similarly, as previous studies have found, MKs who are at a disadvantage within the legislative institution will also use the OMS to accomplish the same goal.

As noted earlier, one of the weaknesses in our explanation is that in the Israeli context some of the variables we looked at overlap with one another. To see the effect of each of the variables on the number of OMS, we ran a negative binomial event count model the same as Morris (2001) did in his research. (The criterion for assessing goodness of fit was 1.1338, indicating that we used the appropriate statistical model). In the 17th Knesset the only variable that affected the number of OMS was being a member of the opposition ( $\chi^2=11.12$ , Sig=0.0009). The probability of

an opposition MK's using a OMS was 2.4 times greater than for coalition MKs (Mean estimate= 0.4123, sig=0.0005).

To achieve a better understanding of this sole significant variable, we created a new coding for it and separated the party with the largest presence in the coalition Forward (Kadima) from the other parties (including parties from the opposition and the coalition). The t-test we ran showed that MKs from Forward used fewer OMS than all of the other parties combined (F=8.065, Sig=0.006). In contrast to Harris' (2005) point about the power of the majority party to schedule OMS and place limitations on the number of OMS per day, we saw a different picture in the Israeli parliament. The largest party in the coalition does not try to limit or to put restrictions on OMS, perhaps because it regards them as less important and less effective tools compared to other tools that are available.

The data from the 18th Knesset showed a little bit of a difference. Here two variables affected the number of OMS: membership in the opposition party ( $\chi^2=3.87$ , Sig=0.0490) and being a junior MK ( $\chi^2=11.62$ , Sig=0.0007). Opposition MKs were 1.4 times more likely than coalition MKs (Mean estimate= 0.6694, sig=0.0458) to give a OMS. Similarly, junior MKs were twice as likely as senior MKs to give a OMS (Mean estimate= 0.5083, sig=0.0005). The additional presence of the latter variable is not surprising because the data are from the first year of the 18th Knesset when junior MKs had just been elected. Furthermore, there was no significant difference between the use of OMS by the largest party in the coalition and other parties. Perhaps members of the largest party had not assimilated the fact that they were now running the coalition, so they still behaved like members of the opposition.

The second part of the analysis was a qualitative one. In order to tell the story behind the numbers, I interviewed 15 MKs, usually by telephone. Most of the interviews lasted about 45 minutes. I asked them questions such as: why do you use the OMS so often, and how do you choose the subject of a OMS? Several insights arose from the MKs' answers. First, the respondents pointed to the availability of the tool and that fact that the MK can use it as much as he or she wants. There are almost no restrictions on its use. Junior MKs in particular are looking for any forum available to gain prominence. In addition, OMS are usually not interrupted. Hence, MKs can talk loudly and clearly for one whole minute. Finally, statistics from the television channel covering the Knesset show that many people watch the show. Therefore, for MKs the OMS is a quick way to attract potential voters. These answers can help us understand the motivation of MKs for using OMS. The tradeoff between using OMS and using other parliamentary procedures is insignificant, especially because there are almost no restrictions and MKs need



only to be on the floor and register. The benefit MKs gain from using OMS is a one-minute weekly exposure to potential voters, which is consistent with what Mayhew indicated as the primary goal of being re-elected.

As for the subject matter of the OMS, MKs initiate OMS based on events from the newspaper or stories of ordinary people that have not receive the attention they deserved. Here their benefit is the ability to represent the voters, a goal that is consistent with the representatives' mandate to enact good public policies. MKs can take a stand on issues of public policy using OMS. The content analysis we conducted revealed a broad range of subjects in the OMS: unemployment, the life of the elderly, the poverty report, land expropriation, illegal building, anti-Semitism, problems facing minorities, violence, security issues, strikes, and inequality in society. These topics resemble those that Rocca (2007) found in his research. In addition, we found that three MKs chose to concentrate on a single subject during their OMS. MK Menahem Ben-Sasson from Kadima talked about new research and gave a mini lecture about the constitution. MK Ran Cohen from New Movement – Meretz (Meretz) talked about the number of soldiers who committed suicide every year and MK Michael Ben Ari from National Union talked about the section of the Torah read on the Sabbath in synagogue. An interesting innovation was Kadima's invitation to the public to submit OMS that Kadima's MKs would read on the floor<sup>v</sup>. They called this initiative direct democracy and were very proud of it during the speeches.

Given that OMS have been studied only in the US House, it is important to understand the similar characteristics that can lead MKs to behave in the same way as members of Congress. While we acknowledge that there are essential differences between the US House and the Israeli parliament, we maintain that the legislators' core behavior is similar. For example, in the US House, the "safety-valve" aspect of OMS allows members of Congress who are at a disadvantage (e.g., freshmen and minority party members) to use this forum because they are shut out of other informal activities. Similar behavior is evident in the Israeli parliament (Hazan and Rahat 2006). Freshmen want to get reelected, so they must take a position on issues and be able to claim credit for doing so. Given that they cannot pass policy on their own, and are unlikely to participate in important informal activities, they turn to public and guaranteed forums such as OMS to show voters they are working on their behalf. Although Israel has three candidate selection methods, each of which leads to a different number of voters to address (Akirav 2010), we can still see similar behavior among Israeli freshmen MKs as among first-year members of Congress. Despite differences in candidate selection methods,

type of government, size of country, or culture, the unconstrained nature of the OMS seems to make it an ideal tool particularly for legislators with less clout to make themselves seen by the public. Thus, we can understand why the Israeli Knesset adopted it as a tool and why certain MKs are eager to use it.

One might argue that the issue of OMS, which is a tool that exists in only five legislatures worldwide, is a minor one. There are already numerous studies about legislation and committees (Gamm and Huber 2002; Tsebelis 2002). The main questions in these studies are about the distribution of power among the different players in the legislatures (e.g., minorities, coalition/opposition members, religious groups, and constituencies). The procedures surrounding legislation and committees are complex because of the need to create checks and balances among the various forces in a legislature. In this context, OMS is an easy tool to use, one that offers short-term benefits, such as allowing a legislator to take a position on a topic of special interest to him or her, and long-term benefits, such as demonstrating ongoing participation in legislative procedures. Hence, it is relevant tool, and we should deepen our understanding about it in two ways. First, in those parliaments in which OMS does exist, we should determine who uses it, how it is used and for what purpose. Second, in those parliaments in which it does not exist, we should consider the pros and cons mentioned above in arguing for its introduction.

Four of the five legislatures that have OMS are federations (Canada, Australia, US and the EU). Israel is the exception. In these four entities, the electoral system is based on constituencies. Israel is the exception. In addition, these four entities are spread out over a wide geographical expanse. Israel is the exception. Looking at the electoral system of the five legislatures, we can see that two are strong legislatures (the US Congress and the European Parliament) and two are ex-Westminster systems (Canada and Australia). Once again, Israel, with its system of proportional representation, is the exception.

Why would Israel, whose characteristics differ so markedly from those of the other four entities with OMS, have adopted this tool? To answer this question, we looked at the House Committee's protocol from January 2000 (when MKs voted in favor of having OMS). Adopting the OMS in the Israeli parliament was part of the procedural reforms introduced by the Speaker of the House, MK Burg. Adoption of the OMS was designed to keep the Knesset's agenda relevant (House Committee Protocol 4.1.200 p. 2). This goal is echoed in the motivations of the other legislatures that have adopted the one-minute speech<sup>vi</sup>. For example, in the case of the Canadian Commons, the adoption of OMS was a practical response to a need strongly expressed by legislators to speak out on matters of current and often local interest. The Members felt that this need was vital

enough to modify the rules of the House to allow for such statements. Thus, the Members clearly did not feel that the statements were extraneous to the work of the House. Similarly, in the US, OMS help the individual legislator because it is a candidate-centered electoral system. If parties were completely in charge of the system, there would be less need for OMS. OMS serve the interests of the individual Congressperson because they allow him or her to take a position on an issue or claim credit for the successful passage of a piece of legislation.

Still, why do Israeli MKs make such limited use of OMS as a tool for economic policy-making? Our interview with those MKs who did make extensive use of the OMS yielded four explanations. First, MKs prefer to talk about issues that are close to them. The world economic crisis is a distant and abstract issue that is less relevant to the daily work of the ordinary MK. Second, the Israeli political system is very turbulent, so political issues such as Israeli-Palestinian conflict considered more urgent than other issues. Third, MKs may use other tools such as urgent motions or motions for deliberation in a committee to discuss the world economic crisis. Fourth, senior officials at the finance ministry are considered very powerful in the decision-making process about the economy. Perhaps MKs felt that the world economic crisis was their major official responsibility rather than an issue that the MKs needed to address. Such an explanation accords with Miller and Moe's (1983) finding that the power of the bureaucrats trumps the power of legislators in economic issues.

Finally, perhaps the infrequent use of OMS is related to the characteristics of the MKs who use them extensively. There are two rewards for using OMS. First, through them, the MK can make his or her voice heard by taking a position on an issue. Second, disadvantaged MKs who have fewer tools available to them than their more well-established peers are more likely to use them.

## IX. CONCLUSION

Representatives in different assemblies tend to behave in the same manner. The current research provides empirical proof that Israeli MKs behave in the same way in their use of the one-minute speech as MCs in the US House of Representatives. Those who favor this format tend to be individualistic and institutionally disadvantaged MKs, just like the MCs who Rocca (2007) and Morris (2001) found in the US House of Representatives. MKs from minority parties use OMS more often than other MKs, just as Maltzman and Sigelman (1996) and Morris (2001) found among MCs.

Our study examined the use that MKs make of OMS as a tool for making policy in response to the world economic crisis. We argued that in economic hard times Israeli MKs prefer to concentrate on internal issues rather than external ones, so they do not take the

opportunity to talk about worldwide economic policy. The findings strengthened our claim. The data showed that MKs talked about a wide range of subjects during their OMS, including the Israeli economy, but only four talked directly about the world economic crisis, and few used it as policy-making tool. After interviewing MKs, analyzing the content of the finance committee's protocols and motions for the agenda, we offered some explanations for this puzzling data. We suggested that MKs prefer to talk about issues that are close to them. Second, political issues in Israeli politics are more urgent than other issues. Third, it is possible that MKs talked about the world economic crisis using other tools available to them. Finally, given the power of senior officials in the finance ministry in the decision making process about the economy, MKs might have felt that the world economic crisis was their area of concern rather than one the MKs should address.

Given that this study about the use of OMS in the Israeli parliament is a pioneering one, we must bear in mind that we have just scratched the surface of the issue. Future research should dig deeper into the content of the speeches, with the goal of determining how characteristics such as gender, being a member of a minority group, humor in political speeches, religion, and criticism of the government affect the choice of this parliamentary tool. In addition, given that there are no studies about OMS other than in the US House of Representatives, future research should compare the use of OMS in parliamentary environments such as in Israel, Australia, Canada, and the European Parliament with that in the US House of Representatives. Although the twenty-first century provides legislators with new challenges and new opportunities to be accessible to their audience through social networking tools such as Twitter and Facebook, the good old-fashioned speech, which has been around since the days of Aristotle, is still an important communication tool.

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#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> This analysis is based on Part D, Chapter two, Article 33a of the Rules of Procedure of the Knesset and on Mulvihill, Mary. 1999. *One-Minute Speeches: Current House Practices*. CRS Report for Congress.

<sup>2</sup> Our research continues through 2010 in order to examine the period after the crisis.

<sup>3</sup> Such as *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* from the USA, and *The Guardian* and *The Times* from the UK.

<sup>4</sup> In the Israeli parliament, a term lasts for four years. Previous studies indicate that MKs adjust very quickly to the fast-lifestyle of being an MK. Therefore, we made a clear-cut distinction between the first term, which we called junior term, and the following terms, which we defined as senior terms.

<sup>5</sup> It was taken into account when the OMSs were coded and assessed

<sup>6</sup> We asked the speakers of those legislatures by email about the use of OMS.