

# Public Opinion and Senate Treaty Ratification

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## **Abstract**

This paper investigates how public opinion has affected the United States Senate's votes on arms control treaties. Applying multilevel modeling with post-stratification to national polls, this paper produces estimates of state-level opinion on both the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty of 2010 and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty of 1999. Using these estimate, this paper examines the relationship between public opinion and the Senate's votes on the treaties. This paper finds that the influence of public opinion was mostly significant but indirect. These findings indicate that some version of the delegate model of representation is more applicable to foreign policy making in Congress.

## **Keywords**

Public Opinion, Foreign Policy, Congress, Arms Control Treaty, Multilevel Model, Posts-tratification

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When Republican Senator William Roth from Delaware — who was up for re-election — voted against the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty in 1999, Democratic Senator Joe Biden, another senator from Delaware, said, “Bingo! That’s \$ 200,000 worth of ads” (Lindsay 2000). When he said this, he assumed that voters in Delaware cared about the treaty and were willing to punish politicians if they behaved against public opinion. However, this assumption that public opinion influences foreign policy-making in Congress is inconsistent with the conventional wisdom about the relationship between public opinion and foreign policy. Traditionally, the consensus has been that the public is not influential in the foreign policy making process. The well-known Almond-Lippmann consensus states that public opinion is volatile, unstructured, and of little significance to foreign policy (Lippmann 1922; Almond 1950). Although the first two components of this consensus have been challenged by many studies (See Aldrich 2006A), there is less agreement on the influence of public opinion. For instance, while Jacobs and Page (2005) and Page and Bouton (2006) find a disconnect between public opinion and foreign policy, other studies argue that public opinion is influential in foreign policy-making (Baum 2004; Foyle 1999, 2004; Holsti 1992; Page and Shapiro 1983; Powlick 1991; Sobel 2001).

This study aims to contribute to this debate by examining the connection between public opinion and foreign policy with a focus on Congress. The possible connection via Congress is less studied because existing works tend to focus on the manner in which public opinion on foreign policy influences presidential or executive decisions. Although such focus is understandable given the tradition of the executive branch’s dominance on foreign policy, a growing number of studies show that Congress has

become a significant player in foreign policymaking especially after the Vietnam War (Meernik 1993; Lindsay 1992A; Scott and Carter 2002; Auerswald and Maltzman 2003; Carter, Scott, and Rowling 2004; Howell and Pevehouse 2007; Prins and Marshall 2009; Krutz and Peake 2011). As such, the connection between public opinion and foreign policy through Congress deserves another look.

While this study is not the first to examine the connection in Congress (Bernstein and Anthony 1974; McCormick and Black 1983; Fleisher 1985; Carter 1989; Lindsay 1990; Bartels 1991; Overby 1991), it is distinctive in two respects. First, this is one of only a few studies that examine how public opinion is related to Senate treaty ratification. As one of the Senate's constitutionally guaranteed powers, treaty ratification has traditionally been considered one of its more important functions. Thus, high politics issues in foreign policy—like arms control agreements—are generally conducted through treaties rather than executive agreements, which do not require consent from two-thirds of the Senate. Indeed, studies have documented that the Senate has played a significant role in shaping foreign policy through its advice and consent powers (Lindsay 1994A; Auerswald and Maltzman 2003; Prins and Marshall 2009; Krutz and Peake 2011). Despite the importance of Senate treaty ratification, there are few studies that examine the connection between public opinion and Senate treaty ratification.

Second, this study is the first to examine how constituent opinion affects senators' treaty ratification votes using a direct measure of constituent opinion. Prior studies have used districtor state-level characteristics that capture economic benefits (Fleisher 1985; Carter 1989; Lindsay 1990) or the electoral vulnerability of legislators (DeLaet and Scott 2006) in place

of district-level opinion. However, a major problem with these approaches is their assumption that district or state characteristics and constituent opinion are equivalent. This assumption is problematic because the same district characteristics might affect public opinion at one time and not at another because of the media (Groeling and Baum 2008; Baum and Potter 2008). Therefore, a measure of public opinion at the district or state level is necessary for a direct examination of the connection between public opinion and legislators' votes. To this end, this paper employs recent advances in estimating state-level opinion from national opinion polls. More specifically, this paper implements Bayesian multilevel estimation with poststratification.

This study focuses on two recent treaties on arms control: the Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms of 2010—also called the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty or New START—and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty of 1999. Although the limited availability of survey data on arms control treaties from earlier periods has constrained case selection, these two cases still provide a good opportunity to test the connection between public opinion and foreign policymaking in the Senate.<sup>1)</sup> This is because increased partisan polarization since the 1990s makes these cases least likely or hard cases to find a significant connection between public opinion and Senate treaty ratification. That is, the fact that these treaties were considered in an environment of partisan polarization makes it less likely that constituent opinion significantly affected senators' voting. Indeed, recent studies of

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1) Using the Roper Center's iPOLL Databank (accessed in June 2015), I searched for the survey data that have information on individual attitudes on arms control treaties as well as respondents' geographic information.

Senate treaty ratification find partisanship to be increasingly more important (DeLaet and Scott 2006; Peake, Krutz; and Hughes 2012). Furthermore, unlike issues dealing with economic consequences—such as foreign trade—the issue of arms control is often less salient. It is thus even less likely for constituent opinion to have had a significant influence. Ripley (1969), for instance, shows that party leaders are more successful on issues less visible to the public. Therefore, if we find a significant role of constituent opinion in these two cases, we can expect a stronger role of constituent opinion in other cases.

In the end, the notion that there is a disconnect between public opinion and foreign policy is found to be too pessimistic. At least when the Senate considered the two aforementioned treaties, there was a significant connection between constituent opinion and Senators' voting decisions. However, this connection was indirect. First, consistent with existing studies (Bernstein and Anthony 1974; McCormick and Black 1983; Fleisher 1985, Carter 1989; Lindsay 1990), I find that the ideology of individual senators is the most significant factor in explaining their voting. However, I also find that the ideology of senators is highly correlated with constituent opinion in their states. Thus, we can take this as support for a version of the delegate model of representation—that is, voters delegate decision-making authority to representatives who share their views.

The next section discusses the role of public opinion with respect to foreign policymaking in Congress. Then, I discuss how we can measure constituent opinion at the state level. After that, we first focus on New START because the results on this treaty are more reliable as there are more survey data on this treaty. Then, I introduce the results on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty of 1999 to confirm that New START is not a unique case.

## **I . Public Opinion and Foreign Policymaking in Congress**

According to studies of presidential foreign policymaking (Sobel 2001; Foyle 2004; Baum 2004), public opinion has a significant but limited influence in that it usually works as a constraint — rather than a lead — on presidential decisions. That is, while public opinion sets the parameters within which the President operates, the President has the discretion to choose a policy within the parameters. This type of representation is similar to the trustee model of representation advocated by Edmund Burke.

According to Burke, politicians should serve the interest, not the opinion, of the constituency. With better information on policy, politicians should play the role of a trustee whose job is to implement policy that best serves the interests of the constituency even when the chosen policy might not be representative of constituent opinion. The premise of this model is that politicians have better information. That is, they know what is good for the voters better than the voters themselves. On the issue of foreign policy, this model of representation can be applied to presidential foreign policymaking because, as the commander-in-chief and the chief of the executive branch, the President controls the military and intelligence agencies. These agencies provide information and enhance competence in making foreign policy decisions.

However, can we apply the same model to foreign policymaking in Congress? Or will voters expect the same type of representation from their representatives on foreign policymaking? I do not think so. Instead, a version of the delegate model of representation will be more appro-

appropriate for explaining the relationship between public opinion and congressional foreign policymaking.

In a pure form of delegate representation, politicians closely follow the mandate of the constituency. In this model, politicians choose policies according to the will of the constituency, which may not necessarily be its best interest. However, since it is impossible for voters to express their opinions on every single issue, a more practical form of this model is to have a delegate who shares the constituency's policy preferences. By electing politicians whose policy preferences are similar, voters do not need to express their opinion on every issue but still can be guaranteed that their opinion, albeit latent, will be represented.

This model of representation better captures foreign policymaking in Congress than the trustee model does. First, members of Congress represent a much smaller number of voters in their districts or states than the President. This can make members of Congress more responsive to constituent opinion. By virtue of representing a smaller number of voters, members of Congress are more likely to have more homogeneous voters, whose opinion can be easily heard by their representatives. For this reason, some studies assume that congressional action constitutes a measure of public opinion on foreign policy (Sobel 2001).

Furthermore, it would be rational for voters to expect different types of representation from the President and Congress. Since members of Congress have less control over intelligence and information on national security than the President does, voters are less likely to view a member of Congress as a competent trustee. Instead, voters are likely to rely on a member of Congress as their delegate in foreign policymaking by emphasizing ideological congruence between themselves and their repre-

sentatives. A version of the delegate model will thus capture the relationship between public opinion and foreign policymaking in Congress.

In the following sections, I examine how closely this model captures the relationship between public opinion and Senate foreign policymaking. In particular, I examine how constituent opinion affects Senate voting on two major arms control treaties. I chose the issue of arms control because it is a low-saliency issue. While there are many studies that show the influence of constituent preferences on foreign trade (Gartzke and Wrighton 1998; Conley 1999; Bailey 2001; Hiscox 2002; Biglaiser, Jackson, and Peake 2004; Ladewig 2006) and defense spending (Carter 1989; Bartels 1991), there are only a few studies that find significant connections between constituent preferences and Senate voting on non-economic foreign policy issues (Overby 1991). Therefore, examining the opinion-policy connection in arms control treaty decisions will fill the gap in the literature and, at the same time, constitute a hard test.

## **II. Measuring Constituent Opinion on a Treaty**

The first step in investigating the connection between constituent opinion and Senate voting on arms control treaties is to measure constituent opinion at the state level. In recent years, Park, Gelman, and Bafumi (2004) and Lax and Phillips (2009) show that state-level opinion can be effectively estimated using multilevel models with poststratification. The key feature of this method is to model state-level opinion as a function of demographic and state-level characteristics. (See Lax and Phillips (2009) for a demonstration of how this method performs better than the alternatives.)



At the individual level, I use four demographic variables — gender, age, race, and educational attainment — that have been found to be significantly related to individual opinion on foreign policy issues (Gartner and Segura 2000; Hainmueller and Hiscox 2006; Page and Bouton 2006). Individual political variables, like partisan identification and ideology, are certainly important in explaining individual attitudes about foreign policy. However, these variables are often a function of demographic variables. Also, the data on such political variables are not available for poststratification. In order to estimate opinion at the state level, for instance, we need to know the number of white males with college degrees in each state. The United States Census provides such data for demographic variables, but not for political variables.

This can be problematic if we rely only on individual-level information to predict individual attitudes. However, the use of the multilevel model is helpful in this regard because we can use political variables at the state level. At the state level, I use the following variables: income per capita, vote-share of the Republican candidate in the previous presidential election, and regional dummy variables.

For New START, I utilize three national surveys that have both geographic and demographic information: the CNN/Opinion Research Corporation (ORC) surveys in November and December 2010 and the Gallup survey in December 2010. In the CNN/ORC surveys, the question related to the treaty is as follows: “As you may know, President Obama and the President of Russia recently signed a treaty to reduce the number of nuclear weapons of each country, but the treaty will not take effect until the U.S. Senate votes in favor of it. Do you think the U.S. Senate should or should not vote in favor of that treaty?” To estimate state-level

opinion, I recoded “Should” and “Should not” as 1 and 0, respectively. The answer to this question was then modeled using individual and state level variables.

At the individual level, the probability of answering “Should” is shown below:

$$Pr(y_i = 1) = \Lambda(\beta_1 + \beta_2 Age_i + \beta_3 Male_i + \beta_4 White_i + \beta_5 Male_i \times White_i + \alpha_k^{Edu} + \alpha_j^{state}), \quad (1)$$

where  $y_i$  is 1 if a respondent answered “Should”.  $\Lambda(\cdot)$  denotes the logistic distribution function. The effects of education level and state-specific effects are modeled as follows:

$$\alpha_k^{Edu} \sim N(0, \sigma_{Edu}^2), \text{ for } k = 1, \dots, 4 \quad (2)$$

$$\alpha_j^{state} \sim$$

$$N(\alpha_m^{region} + \gamma_1 Rep.Prez_j + \gamma_2 Income_j, \sigma_{state}^2), \text{ for } j = 1, \dots, 50 \quad (3)$$

where  $\alpha_m^{region}$  represents intercepts for different regions.  $Rep.Prez_j$  represents the vote-share of the Republican candidate in state  $j$  from the previous Presidential election.  $Income_j$  represents income per capita for state  $j$ . Finally, the region variable is modeled by:

$$\alpha_{m[j]}^{region} \sim N(0, \sigma_{region}^2), \text{ for } m=1, \dots, 6 \quad (4)$$

Before we discuss the estimation of state level opinion, we briefly discuss the factors that are significantly associated with individual opinion on New START. Table 1 shows the results of the estimation. It shows that gender and race are significantly related to individual opinion on the treaty. In particular, white males are significantly less likely to favor the treaty, whereas females and non-white males are more likely to support the treaty. This most likely captures the greater likelihood of white males to be conservative in their political view. Similarly, at the state level, the states in which the Republican candidate won more votes in the 2008 Presidential election were more likely to oppose the treaty.

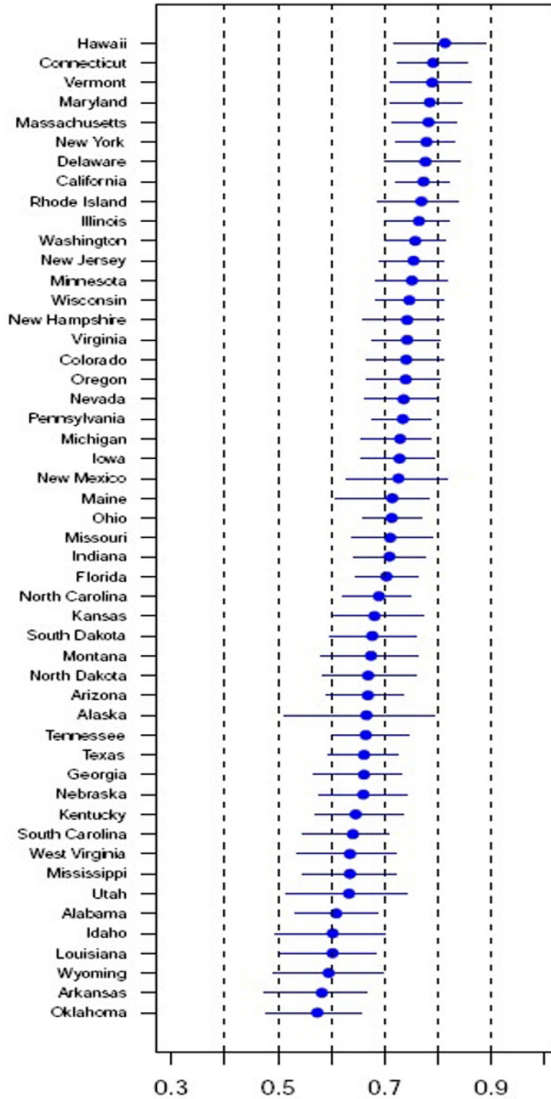
The results here are important because the significance of the demographic and state-level variables indicates that individual opinions on arms control are systematically related to individual demographic and state-level variables. In other words, while the issue of arms control is not salient to the public, low saliency does not necessarily mean that individual opinion is unstable or ambiguous (See Overby (1991) for similar evidence). While individuals may care less about arms control, their political views—which are captured by the demographic and state-level variables—guide them to have a coherent view on the issue.

**Table 1. Demographic and State-level Determinants of Individual Opinion on New START**

Individual Level Variable	
Intercept	0.791** (0.353)
Age	-0.036 (0.049)
Male	0.586** (0.280)
White	0.334* (0.210)
Male × White	-0.798*** (0.292)
Intercept for No High School Degree	-0.097 (0.284)
Intercept for High School Degree	-0.201 (0.256)
Intercept for Some College	-0.106 (0.254)
Intercept for College and Beyond	0.297 (0.254)
State Level Variable	
Republican Presidential Candidate Vote-share	-0.238*** (0.092)
State Income Per Capita	0.069 (0.087)
N	2809

The entries are the means of the posterior densities of the coefficients. Standard deviations of the posterior densities are in parentheses.\*\*\*, \*\*, and \* indicate that 0 is not included in the 99%, 95%, and 90% credible intervals, respectively. Region and state intercepts are not reported.

Figure 1. Estimated State Level Opinion on New START



The entries are the means of the posterior densities of the coefficients. Standard deviations of the posterior densities are in parentheses.\*\*\*, \*\*, and \* indicate that 0 is not included in the 99%, 95%, and 90% credible intervals, respectively. Region and state intercepts are not reported.

After the effects of individual variables and state-level variables are estimated, I use disaggregated demographic data from the Census to compute the proportion of the population in each state that would answer “Should” to the survey question.<sup>2)</sup> This step, called poststratification, produces estimates of state opinion.

The estimated state-level opinion is reported in Figure 1. First, the figure shows that public support for the treaty was generally high, as more than 50% of the public was in support of the treaty even in the states with the lowest level of support. More importantly, the figure shows that the level of support for the treaty varies across states quite significantly. Public support for the treaty was strongest in Hawaii and Connecticut (at about 80% on average) and weakest in Arkansas and Oklahoma (at about 57% on average). In the next section, I examine how this variation of opinion across states is related to Senate voting on the treaty.

### **III. Determinants of Senate Treaty Votes**

Once we have the estimates of constituent opinion on the treaty, we can use the estimates to check their connection with senators’ voting on the treaty via a logistic regression model.

In addition to the estimates of state-level opinion, this model accounts for membership in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Since all

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<sup>2)</sup> The data are from the *Current Population Study* of the Census.

treaties submitted by the President must go through the committee, we can expect members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to share some common characteristics that might affect their voting behavior. For instance, several committee members may have military backgrounds. Also, they might represent states that have special interests in foreign affairs. Or, alternatively they may have access to additional information that may not be available to other senators.

Our second control variable is the ideology of individual senators. To capture the ideology of senators, I use the first-dimension scores of DW-NOMINATE, which are computed using all roll call votes (Poole and Rosenthal 1997). According to Poole and Rosenthal (1997), the first dimension of DW-NOMINATE captures the typical left-right or liberal-conservative spectrum. The more conservative members are, the less likely they will be to support the treaty (that is, I expect to see a negative coefficient).

Also, models for congressional voting commonly include a political party variable. However, in both of our cases, all Democratic members voted in favor. Thus, a political party variable cannot be included as a control variable. Instead, I re-estimated the models using a split sample that contained only Republican senators to confirm if the exclusion of a political party variable affected the results.

Finally, while some studies (McCormick 1985; DeLaet and Scott 2006) include other variables, like regional dummy variables, we do not need to control for such variables in this investigation because the estimates of constituent opinion already take them into account.

Table 2. Senate Voting on New START

Variable	All Senators		Republican Senators	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Intercept	7.257** (3.031)	1.392*** (0.337)	-1.919** (0.746)	-1.046** (0.453)
Constituent Opinion	0.100 (0.783)	1.485*** (0.330)	0.082 (0.664)	1.012** (0.434)
Foreign Relations Committee	2.099 (1.377)	0.152 (0.652)	2.097 (1.377)	0.183 (0.960)
DW-NOMINATE	-8.113*** (3.060)		-3.474** (1.360)	
AIC	32.925	88.933	32.922	48.48
N	97	97	40	40

Maximum Likelihood Estimation. Standard errors in parentheses. Positive coefficients mean a higher probability to vote yes. \* $p < 0.10$ ; \*\* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.01$  (two-tailed tests).

Table 2 shows the results. The first column reports the estimates of the coefficients for Model 1, which includes opinion estimates, membership in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and the ideology of senators. In this model, constituent opinion is not significantly related to Senate voting on the treaty. The only variable that is significantly related to senators' voting on New START is DW-NOMINATE, which accounts for individual senators' ideology. Conservative members (those with high DW-NOMINATE scores) were, as predicted, less likely to vote for the treaty. This result is consistent with studies that show the ideology of legislators to be more important when legislators make foreign policy decisions (Bernstein and Anthony 1974; McCormick and Black 1983; Fleisher 1985; Lindsay 1990; Rosenson, Oldmixon, and Wald 2009).

However, it would be incorrect to conclude that constituent opinion does not matter based on the results from this model because other



studies of Congress find a significant correlation between a legislator's ideology and constituent ideology (Erikson and Wright 1991; Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan 2002).<sup>3)</sup> These studies suggest that members of Congress believe roll-call voting affects their reelection prospects even when district voters are not organized (Arnold 1990). Since DW-NOMINATE measures the ideology of legislators using roll-call data, if these studies are correct, DW-NOMINATE scores will be correlated with constituent opinion. Indeed, the correlation between constituent opinion on the treaty and DW-NOMINATE scores is both substantively and statistically significant. The correlation coefficient is -0.68 and is significantly different from 0 at the 99% level.

Given the significant correlation between senatorial ideology and constituent opinion, a model that includes both variables suffers from a collinearity problem. Thus, DW-NOMINATE scores are excluded in Model 2 to gauge if constituent opinion is significantly related to senators' voting on the treaty. The result shows that public opinion is significant at the 99% level. Therefore, a proper interpretation of the results is that the connection between public opinion and Senate treaty ratification is indirect. In other words, constituent opinion is indirectly represented through voters' tendency to elect representatives with similar ideologies.

The results are similar when I estimate these models using only Republican senators' votes (see the third and fourth columns). State-level opinion is not significantly related to Republican senators' voting on the treaty, when ideology is included in the model. However, when the

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3) In fact, Jackson and Kingdon (1992) argues that the use of roll-call based measures of ideology in explaining legislative voting behavior "overestimates the influence of personal ideology and underestimates the relationship with other variables" (808).

measure of ideology is excluded, constituent opinion becomes significant. The similarity of the results makes it unlikely that the results including all senators suffer seriously from the omission of the political party variable.

## **IV. Sensitivity to Uncertainty in Opinion Estimation**

One possible concern with using opinion estimates as a predictor of senators' voting on treaty ratification is that we are ignoring uncertainty in the estimation of constituent opinion. As Figure 1 shows, state-level opinions are estimated with some degree of uncertainty, but only the means of these estimates were used in the logit models of the previous section. Thus, we need to check how much the results are sensitive to uncertainty in opinion estimation.

On this issue, Bayesian estimation, which uses the Markov Chain Monte Carlo (MCMC) method, is quite useful. The crux of the Bayesian MCMC estimation is to sample from the posterior density of the parameters and to use the samples to do inferences on the parameters. For instance, each of the point estimates in Table 1 is the mean of 1000 draws from the posterior density of each coefficient. These draws are also used in the poststratification process to estimate state-level opinions. Thus, there are 1000 sets of state-level opinions, which are used to produce Figure 1.

Therefore, we can check how much the results are sensitive to uncertainty in opinion estimation by fitting 1000 logit models using each set of state-level opinions. For each logit estimation, we can check whether or

not the correlation between DW-NOMINATE scores and opinion estimates is significant and whether or not the coefficient for opinion is significant at the 95% level in Model 2. By computing the percentage of these conditions being met, we can evaluate how much the results in the previous section are sensitive to uncertainty in opinion estimation.

After fitting the logit model 1000 times using the 1000 sets of opinion estimates, I find that the results in the previous section to be quite robust. First, the correlation between DW-NOMINATE scores and opinion estimates is significant (at the 95% level) and negative in all 1000 tests. Also, the coefficient for constituent opinion in Model 2 is insignificant at the 95% level in only one test. The coefficient is significant in the remaining 999 tests. That is, if we use any given sample from the posterior density, the probability that we will obtain the same substantive results as in the previous section is 99.9%.

## **V. A Test for Reverse Causality**

The results of the previous section indicate that there is a significant, albeit indirect, connection between constituent opinion and senators' voting on treaty ratification. However, the connection can be a result of either the influence of constituent opinion on senators' voting or the influence of senators on constituent opinion. Indeed, studies have shown that public opinion on foreign policy is often affected by the media and members of Congress (Howell and Kriner 2009; Baum and Groeling 2010). In particular, we need to consider the possibility of partisan cue-taking—that is, members of the mass public usually follow the lead of politicians and

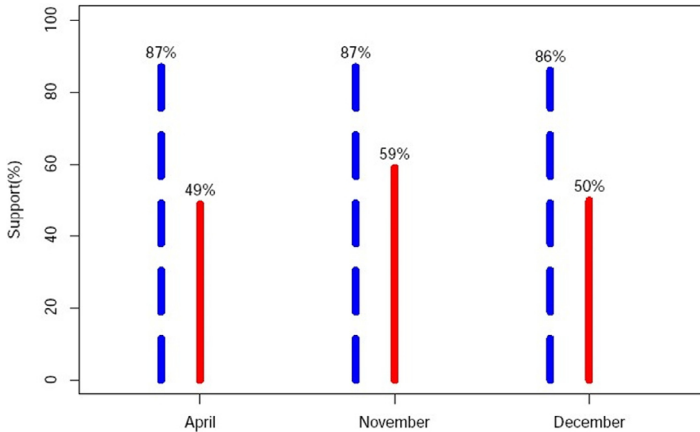
take positions on foreign policy issues that are similar to the positions of politicians who share their political ideology (Lupia 1994; Popkin 1994; Meernik and Ault 2001; Berinsky 2007).

In the case of New START, a critical moment was when Senator Jon Kyl (R-AZ) announced on November 16, 2010 that he “did not think” the treaty could be completed in the lame duck session (Collina 2011). Up to this point, Republican leaders had not opposed the treaty. Instead, they had negotiated with the Obama administration on the issue of funding for modernizing the nuclear weapons production complex since the treaty was signed by President Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev on April 8, 2010. Therefore, if the Republican leadership had a significant influence on public opinion, we expect individuals identifying themselves as Republicans to have been more likely to change their position on the treaty after Kyl’s November 16 statement.

The CNN poll on the treaty was conducted in three different periods in 2010: April 9-11, November 11-14, and December 17-19. Thus, if the Republican leadership’s opposition had a significant influence on public opinion, the proportion of Republicans supporting the treaty would be significantly lower in the December poll than in the earlier polls.

Organized by party identification, Figure 2 shows the percentage of individuals who supported the treaty as reported in each of the three periods. Support for the treaty among Democrats is constant in all three polls. Support from Republicans shows some fluctuation. It was highest in the November poll at 59%. But it dropped to 50%, which is similar to the percentage in the April poll. Thus, it appears that the Republican leadership’s opposition to the treaty affected Republican voters’ opinion about the treaty.

Figure 2. Percentage of Support for New START by Party Identification



Dotted and solid lines represent the percentage of support among Democrats and Republicans, respectively. Data are from CNN surveys in April, November, and December in 2010.

In order to check if the level of support among Republicans in December was significantly different from that in November (before Kyl’s opposition), I combined the November survey data with the December survey data. Then, I estimated a logit regression model with an interaction term between December respondents and Republican respondents. If Republicans’ support for the treaty was significantly affected by the Republican leadership’s opposition, the coefficient for the interaction term should have been statistically significant and negative.

Table 3 shows the estimated coefficients for the model. The result shows that there is no significant difference in the levels of support among Republicans in November and in December. Even though Figure 2 suggests that Republican support for the treaty might have diminished after the Senate Republican leadership’s opposition to the treaty, such a change is more likely to represent statistical errors rather than significant

changes in support among Republican voters.

**Table 3. Changes in Republican Respondents' Support for New START**

Variable	
Intercept	2.196** (0.453)
Age	-0.114 (0.064)
Male	0.799** (0.373)
White	0.815*** (0.274)
Male × White	-1.019*** (0.393)
Republican	-2.193*** (0.214)
December	-0.180 (0.251)
Republican × December	0.165 (0.285)
N	2018

The entries are the means of the posterior densities of the coefficients. Standard deviations of the posterior densities are in parentheses. \*\*\*, \*\*, and \* indicate that 0 is not included in the 99%, 95%, and 90% credible intervals, respectively.

The results in this section suggest that public opinion on the treaty is not likely to be shaped by members of Congress at least in the short run. The Senate Republican leadership's opposition to the treaty did not result in increased opposition to the treaty by Republican voters. Thus, the connection between public opinion and senatorial voting on the treaty ratification seems to be the result of voters being represented by senators who share their policy positions.

## **VI. The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty of 1999**

While the results on New START suggest a connection between public opinion and treaty ratification in the Senate, a single case study makes it hard to draw a general conclusion on the issue. A stronger conclusion can be drawn if we collect surveys on all arms control treaties and then examine the connection between constituent opinion and Senate treaty ratification votes. However, two obstacles prevent such an endeavor. First, earlier surveys rarely ask questions about such treaties. Even comprehensive surveys on foreign policy, like the Chicago Council Surveys on Foreign Relations, do not usually ask about individual attitudes on specific arms control treaties. Another problem is that many treaty ratification votes are almost unanimous, making it difficult to examine the connection between public opinion and senators' votes. Since the Constitution requires the consent of two-thirds of the Senate for treaty ratification, Presidents are not likely to submit a treaty to the Senate unless there is overwhelming support. Therefore, the Senate rarely rejects a treaty, and treaties that are ratified tend to have near unanimous support.

On this matter, the Senate vote on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) of 1999 is quite useful. First, there is a survey on this treaty that contains respondents' geographic information, which allows us to estimate state-level opinion on the treaty. A survey by Gallup/CNN/USA Today includes a question about the treaty and demographic and geographic information about its respondents. Second, the CTBT is one of the few treaties rejected by the Senate.<sup>4)</sup> Thus, the vote on treaty ratification has sufficient information to test the connection with public opinion. Finally,

the vote on the treaty was highly partisan. Republicans were determined to deny any achievements in foreign policy by Clinton following their impeachment of Clinton and failed attempt to remove him from office in February of the same year (*Congressional Quarterly Almanac*, 1999: 9-45). As mentioned previously, heightened partisanship makes the CTBT another least-likely case because the strong influence of partisanship will make it difficult to find a significant connection between public opinion and the Senate voting on the treaty.

To examine the connection between public opinion and senators' voting on the treaty, I took the same procedure as I did with New START. After estimating state-level opinion using the multilevel model with post-stratification, I fit logit models to check the relationship between constituent opinion and the senators' voting. Like the models for New START, I did not include a political party variable because all Democrats, except for Daniel Patrick Moynihan (NY), voted in favor. Instead, I replicated Models 1 and 2 using a sample that included only Republican senators.

The results in Table 4 are very similar to those from New START. First, the ideology of senators is the most important predictor of their voting on the treaty. When the estimate of state-level opinion is included in the same model, it is not statistically significant. However, constituent opinion is significantly related to voting on the treaty when ideology is excluded. Again, this is because of the significant correlation between senators' ideology and constituent opinion (the coefficient is -0.40 and significant at the 99% level).

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4) Only seven treaties were rejected by the Senate since the rejection of the Treaty of Versailles in 1920.



**Table 4. Senate Voting on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty in 1999**

Variable	All Senators		Republican Senators	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Intercept	0.734 (1.196)	-0.033 ( 0.249 )	-5.421*** (1.997)	-4.793*** (1.607)
Constituent Opinion	0.353 (1.388)	0.871*** ( 0.269 )	0.445 (1.192)	2.088** (0.983)
Foreign Relations Committee		0.572 ( 0.652 )		3.156* (1.736)
DW-NOMINATE	-7.318*** ( 2.647 )		-2.870** (1.321)	
AIC	17.34	121.19	17.18	23.16
N	94	94	51	51

Maximum Likelihood Estimation. Standard errors in parentheses. Positive coefficients mean a higher probability to vote yes. \* $p < 0.10$ ; \*\* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.01$  (two-tailed tests).

Therefore, these results confirm the conclusion that the connection between public opinion and Senate voting on the treaty is indirect. Although senators' voting on treaty ratification seems to be only related to their ideology, their ideology is significantly related to the opinion of their constituents. When senators are being driven by ideology, they are representing their constituents.

## VII. Conclusion

The findings of this paper are, in general, consistent with existing studies that examine the relative importance of ideology, partisanship, and constituent preferences to legislative voting on foreign policy decisions. First, I do not find evidence against the growing importance of political

parties in making foreign policy decisions (DeLaet and Scott 2006). Although a political party variable could not be included in the models, the fact that almost all Democrats voted in favor of both treaties indicates the importance of political parties. Legislative history regarding both treaties also makes it clear that partisanship played a significant role in both cases (Evans and Oleszek 2003; Peake, Krutz, and Hughes 2012).

Second, the findings of this paper are also consistent with the findings of some studies that find that the ideology of legislators is the most important predictor of legislative voting on foreign policy (Bernstein and Anthony 1974, McCormick and Black 1983, Fleisher 1985, Lindsay 1990, Rosenson, Oldmixon, and Wald 2009).

However, my interpretation of the findings is different from existing studies. Since the ideology of legislators and constituent opinion are very closely intertwined, it is difficult to discuss the importance of ideology and constituent opinion in a mutually exclusive manner. When ideological congruence between members of Congress and their constituents is strong (Erikson and Wright 1991), the legislator who follows her ideology is indeed a faithful delegate to her constituents.

In this paper, I demonstrate that this is really the case even with votes on arms control treaties. Using a direct measure of constituent opinion, I find constituent opinion on the New START treaty of 2010 and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty of 1999 to be significantly correlated with senators' ideology. Consequently, I interpret the results as evidence for the indirect connection between constituent opinion and senators' voting behavior. In addition, I find that this correlation cannot be explained by partisan cue-taking at least in the short run. Thus, I conclude that public opinion has indirectly influenced senators' voting on treaty ratification.

Consistent with long standing scholarly works — that even unorganized public opinion matters to politicians because they constantly anticipate public reactions to their decisions (Key 1961; Miller and Stokes 1963; Kingdon 1981; Arnold 1990) — this paper shows that such a representation dynamic is at work even on low-saliency foreign policy issues.

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