

**THE PINHAS SAPIR CENTER FOR DEVELOPMENT
TEL-AVIV UNIVERSITY**

**Candidates, Parties and Blocs:
Evidence from the 1999 Elections**

Asher Arian and Michal Shamir

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I. Introduction

Political systems change, and they change in complex ways. Just as a range of factors affects the decision of the individual voter, myriad forces drive the transformation of a society and its political system. The rules of the game may be altered; new groups of voters may emerge; international or economic shifts may present new challenges. Were one to seek an apt site and an appropriate setting to study these matters, the choice of the 1999 elections in Israel would be most felicitous.

In 1999, Israel held elections for the second time under the rules for the simultaneous direct election of the prime minister and the selection of the Knesset (parliament) based on a fixed-list proportional representation formula. The change in the electoral system was legislated before the 1992 elections, but applied for the first time in 1996. The prime minister was elected under a winner-take-all system, with a second-round runoff between the two candidates with the most votes two weeks later if no candidate received a majority in the first round. The Knesset was elected as in the past, using a strict proportional representation list system with very few procedural or technical obstacles facing a group that chose to compete. The threshold for Knesset representation was raised before the 1992 election from 1 percent to 1.5 percent.

The reform which gave the voters two ballots instead of one changed their calculus, and altered the nature of the campaign, the party system, and the relations between the legislative and executive branches.

The voters intuitively understood the potential of the reform and acted accordingly. Large parties were abandoned since voters assessed that the arena for policy setting would be the election of the prime minister and not the vote for the Knesset. The list of special group parties which did better in 1999 than ever was wildly variegated: it included the haredi, ultra-orthodox, non-Zionist Shas; the passionate anti-haredi secular Shinui; two parties

appealing to immigrants from the former Soviet Union; and Arab parties. The usual large parties, Labor and Likud, became much smaller.

Some observers, especially in the foreign media, interpreted the election of Ehud Barak as prime minister as a fundamental sea change in Israeli priorities and belief patterns. This analysis was encouraged by the fact that the voting resulted in the largest margin ever achieved in Israeli elections. Consider: No party had ever won an absolute majority of the votes; the Netanyahu-Peres contest of 1996 was decided by less than one percent of the vote; accordingly, the 1999 spread (Barak 56%, Netanyahu 44%) seemed like a landslide. But this view was incorrect. Old patterns funneled into a new system of voting produced the 1999 results. As always in elections, and probably more than before, the candidates played a fundamental role in determining the results. A more appropriate way to think of the 1999 Israeli elections is that a weak candidate (Barak) bested a wounded prime minister abandoned by most of his political allies (Netanyahu).

Based on the landslide, political scientists might be tempted to view 1999 as a realigning election. But that would also be incorrect at worst, premature at best. Barak's plans for peace with the Arab world may or may not be realized, but the election was not focused on those plans. Both candidates made great strides toward the center of the Israeli political spectrum in forming their platforms and while their styles and temperaments differed, on fundamental positions they were not that far from one another. Moreover, the election results do not signify significant readjustments in the size or in the social and ideological makeup of the opposing camps.

In a sense, Israeli elections have been privatized. The prime minister is directly elected, and he then becomes the focus of power and policy. But since he cannot rule without a majority in the Knesset, he becomes hostage to coalition negotiations in both time and money. And since the system now fosters middle and small sized parties, those parties have greater bargaining power in the absence of large-sized parties. Election campaigns focus on the personalities of the candidates for prime minister, momentarily forgetting that after the campaign, much of Israeli politics will continue as before. Candidates are at the

center of the stage, rather than political parties. Sectarian politics are on the rise; political parties are changing and more of them resemble single-issue or single-constituency interest groups. Voting also becomes privatized as we encounter growing numbers of cognitively mobilized voters and more issue voting.

In the following sections, we will analyze the 1999 elections, focusing on patterns of continuity and change in voting behavior and in the party system. We will especially concentrate on the four turnover elections in Israeli history (1977, 1992, 1996, and 1999), and through them we shall analyze the dynamics of the Israeli party system over the last quarter of a century.

II. Realignment and Dealignment

Political scientists who study elections resort to two major concepts useful in sorting out elections and interpreting electoral dynamics: *partisan realignment* and *dealignment* (Dalton, Flanagan and Beck 1984). A realignment is electoral change that persists. It is characterized by "more or less profound readjustments...in the relations of power within the community, and in...new and durable election groupings..." (Key, 1955, 4). A partisan realignment involves significant shifts in the ideological and social group bases and in the strength of party coalitions. Dealignment is defined in terms of weakening parties and party bonds, and as a result -- increasing volatility and unpredictability of elections.

This conceptual frame efficiently organizes the dynamics of the Israeli party system and the four turnover elections of 1977, 1992, 1996 and 1999. The first turnover of 1977 was the climax of a partisan realignment (Arian 1975, 1980; Goldberg 1992; Shamir 1986). Despite the fact that the 1977 results were extremely dramatic, it is more instructive to discuss realignment in terms of a realigning electoral era, rather than a single critical election, especially in a dominant party system. The 1977 turnover certainly signaled a realignment of the party system, of the electorate, of the elites, and of public policy. Ethnic and religious group allegiances crystallized, and demography combined with the territorial issue cleavage to redefine the political system.

The 1992 election was clearly different (Arian and Shamir 1993). Even though the policy shift following this election was as significant and perhaps even more abrupt and dramatic than the change following the ascent of the Likud in 1977, in terms of electoral alignment, 1992 was not 1977. The electoral shift in 1992 was less complex and numerically smaller than the one in 1977, and was grounded more in issue positions than in social groupings. It did not result in a notable and enduring restructuring of the power distribution and the political cleavage structure. There was no realignment in 1992; nor were the two following elections of 1996 and 1999 elections of realignment. Careful inspection of Table 1 clearly refutes a realignment interpretation. The elections of the 1990s do not involve significant and enduring shifts in the strength of the left or the right (including the religious parties); nor are significant changes in the ideological and social group bases of party coalitions at the heart of these changes (as can be seen in Table 3).

The 1992 election was the last one held under the old one-constituency proportional representation system. Even though it took place after the electoral reform legislation had been passed, and Rabin conducted his campaign as though these were personal elections, the reform took force only in 1996. Already in the 1992 elections there was evidence of greater individual and aggregate level volatility in the vote with an attendant increase of potential impact of leaders in the voting booth, and the sense of empowerment of the electorate "call[ing] upon Labor to perform for this term, with the implicit threat that they too could be replaced in future elections" (Arian and Shamir, 1993, 341; Hermann 1995). Now that two more elections have taken place, it seems even more obvious that the 1992 election was the beginning of the dealigning era in Israeli electoral politics, soon to be exacerbated by the electoral reform.

For the first 40 years of Israeli political history there was only one turnover election (1977); in the decade of the 1990s, each of the three elections was a turnover election. The 1990s were characterized by low predictability of outcomes, by unprecedented instability in party fortunes, and by the waning of party loyalties.

The two large parties, Labor and Likud, respectively, declined from 44 and 32 Knesset seats in 1992, to 34 and 32 seats in 1996, and to 26 and 19 seats in 1999. Labor and Likud together commanded almost 80 percent of the votes at the height of their combined grip on the system in 1981. From the mid-sixties through 1992 their combined strength was at least 71 seats in the 120-member Knesset. They dropped to 66 seats in 1996 and to 45 seats in 1999 (see Table 1). The 1999 election left the Knesset without large parties, only with medium-sized and small parties.

Considering the vote for prime minister and for the Knesset, split ticket voting has become the rule. The floating vote for parties is steadily growing as large parties are drastically cut in size. In the late sixties and in the eighties the floating vote was around 25%. During the realigning era it was a third in 1973; 50% in 1977 and 40% in 1981. The elections in the 1990s exhibit similar levels of floating vote. In 1992, it was about a third, it increased to almost 40 percent in 1996, and continued to grow in 1999 above 40 percent of the electorate.

Weakening parties, loosening party ties, and growing volatility all indicate trends of dealignment. The direct election of the prime minister provides much of the explanation for the dealignment of political parties in Israel, but there is more to it than just institutional change (Korn 1998). The fact that we saw signs of it already in the 1992 election before the actual implementation of the reform attests to other social and political processes behind it. Dealignment trends in other advanced Western democracies (Dalton 1996; Dalton et al. 1984) have been associated with changes in the mass media and its role in politics, in party organization and tactics, in the nature of social bonds, and in the education, political resources and values of the electorate. All of these also apply to Israel.

III. Party System Phases

Israel has moved through three electoral phases in its political development, easily discerned in Table 1. The dominant party period from 1948 and up to 1977 coincided with the period of nation building, during which the precursors of the Labor party (Mapai, the

Alignment, and others) were by far the largest political party and formed all government coalitions.

A second, competitive party system phase began after the victory of the Likud in 1977, characterized by two large parties of similar size forming the nucleus of two party blocs. These two blocs, commonly labeled left and right, crystallized around the major cleavage dimension of security, peace and the future of the territories. While the system indicated signs of competitiveness, in fact the Likud had a superior position during this 15 year period, because of the larger size of the right bloc. The parties of the right and the religious parties combined won the majority of Knesset seats and supported the Likud position regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict. This was true even in the period between 1984 and 1990, during which Likud and Labor joined in a National Unity government that featured a rotation of the prime minister position between the two antagonists. Throughout this period, the Likud dominated politics, even if it never achieved a dominant party status similar to Labor in the first decades of statehood.

The 1992 election broke this pattern with the left bloc winning a majority (61) of the seats for the first time since 1973. From that point on, power shifted between the two largest parties, the Likud and Labor, and between the right and left camps they led. The third phase began in 1996 and coincided with the introduction of the direct election of the prime minister, and with post-Oslo politics. Suddenly the Palestinian issue was being negotiated and territories were being returned. Up until the electoral reform, the winning coalition of parties determined who would rule. Since the direct election of the prime minister, the parties no longer determine who will be head of government, and the two parts of the election day ceremony became more and more separate from one another.

The post-Oslo characteristic of the system is important in that it re-introduces multidimensionality into the party system after some two decades in which the system was focussed on the Israeli-Arab conflict issue dimension. The combination of institutional reform and changing political realities reintroduced the religious parties as willing coalition partners for any prime minister, just like most other sectarian and center parties. The two large parties

declined, and the small parties, in particular sectarian ones – Arab, Russian immigrants, haredi, and anti-haredi – flourished in the Knesset elections. While irrelevant in the prime-ministerial race, these parties gained in power in coalition politics since the growth of their share of the votes came at the expense of the large parties.

Figure 1 presents the sizes of the three largest parties in five elections representing different phases of the party system. The first period, characterized by the dominant Mapai (later Labor), is represented in Figure 1 by the 1959 election. The Likud (in 1959, Herut) was a very distant second followed in third place by the National Religious Party. Realignment occurred in 1977. The 1981 results portray the period of competitiveness. The 1992 elections, and 1999 even more, indicate how the large parties shrink as the direct election of the prime minister takes hold and reshapes the calculations and the behavior of individual voters.

We can follow the shifting fortunes of the parties in Figure 1 which graphically displays the strength in the Knesset of Labor, the Likud, and the third biggest winner. In 1959, at the height of the period of Labor dominance, the Likud and the third biggest winner (the National Religious party) were almost the same size. In 1977, Likud forged ahead of Labor for the first time, with the emergence of the Democratic Movement for Change in third place, supported by many voters who supported Labor in the past. In 1981, Labor and Likud were neck-and-neck, leaving very few votes for all of the other parties. Rabin's 1992 election was at the expense of Shamir's Likud. In 1999, both Labor and Likud were greatly weakened, and Shas, the third party with 17 seats, was as large as was Herut in 1959 when it was in second place.

The change from one ballot to two ballots facilitated an alteration in the unit we use to measure victory and defeat in the elections, and that shift has led some observers to erroneously believe that the system has been fundamentally changed. What has changed is the way we conceive of the winner in the elections. In the pre-reform period (through 1992), it was measured by the largest party in the Knesset elections. Until 1977, that party was always Labor, it always formed the government, and this dominant-party-system was highly

stable. For the three elections in the 1980s Labor and Likud were very close to each other, and what determined the coalition government in this competitive decade was the bloc share. In the 1990s, since the legislation of the direct election of the prime minister, power shifted three times: from Shamir to Rabin in 1992, from Peres to Netanyahu in 1996, and from Netanyahu to Barak in 1999. Under the new electoral system what determines the winner is the prime minister race, not the Knesset party shares. The fortunes of the political parties became detached from political victory and defeat.

Table 2 summarizes the change in the Labor and Likud Knesset votes and seats in the four turnover elections, pointing at their declining fortunes in the last two decades. Labor's uninterrupted reign ended in 1977, after which the Likud and Labor competed for power. The Likud emerged as the largest party in 1977, grew more in 1981, and then began a downward trend. Labor peaked in 1969; its reemergence in 1992 was only relative to the poor showing of Likud that year. In the period of dominance the system was one-sided; the period of competition saw a heightening of the concentration of the vote for the two parties at first and then their weakening and the reemergence of smaller parties.

By 1981 the race between the Likud and the Alignment was very close; between them they won almost 1.5 million of the almost 2 million votes cast, but only 10,405 votes separated them. Within the Jewish population the Likud was a bigger winner, since Arabs accounted for more than 40,000 of the Alignment total. The Likud continued its steady growth and added more than 100,000 votes to its 1977 total. The Alignment bounced back from its 1977 trauma and grew by 50 percent. But comparing the results of the elections between 1984 and 1996 to the Alignment's more glorious past leads to the inevitable conclusion that despite the good 1981 showing, it remained a party in decline. The number of people who actually voted increased between 1969 and 1988 by almost 900,000. The difference between the Labor vote of 1988 (685,363) and the Alignment (Labor and Mapam) vote of 1969 (632,035) was only slightly more than 50,000 votes. (In 1988, Mapam ran alone and won 56,345 votes.) The Likud, on the other hand, added more than 370,000 votes, growing from 338,948 in 1969 to 709,305 in 1988.

The 1992 election result that brought Labor back to power and allowed Rabin to reach an accord of mutual recognition with the PLO in Oslo, was made possible more by the decline in the Likud vote than by a renewed Labor party. Labor won 44 seats, the same that it had in 1984.

In 1996, Labor won more Knesset seats than Likud but lost the prime minister's race. Competitiveness remained high, but the combined size of the two parties in 1996 was as low as it had been in the early years of statehood. This was also a period of sectarian politics and fractionalization. In 1999, the size of the two parties was even smaller

The drop to 34 seats and 32 seats respectively in the 1996 election was a harsh blow to both Labor and Likud. Likud had 32 seats in 1992 also, except that in 1996 Gesher and Tzomet were partners in the joint list with Likud. David Levy's Gesher had been part of the Likud until 1995, but Rafal Eytan's Tzomet had independently won 8 seats in the 1992 elections. Labor won 818,570 votes to the Likud-Gesher-Tzomet's 767,178 votes. In the prime minister race of 1996, the division between Netanyahu and Peres closely followed the Likud-Labor split in 1981. With almost 3 million votes cast, Netanyahu won 1,501,023 votes, Peres 1,471,566. The votes of the Likud-Gesher-Tzomet list was only 51.1 percent of those that Netanyahu won, Labor won only 54.5 percent of the Peres total.

In the 1999 vote, One Israel (a list made up of Labor, Gesher and the moderate-Orthodox Meimad) won only 26 seats, with 670,484 votes (20.3%). The Likud fell to 19 seats, reflecting the 468,103 voters (14.1%) that supported it. Netanyahu's 1999 total (1,402,474; 43.9%) was 100,000 votes less than he had won in 1996. Barak won 1,791,020 votes (56.1%), more than 300,000 votes more than Peres won in 1996. Labor's size was 37 percent of Barak's; Likud's was a third of Netanyahu's (see Table 2).

Throughout Israel's 50 years the party system had been highly fragmented. The number of lists represented in the Knesset varied between 9 and 15 with no apparent trend. The fifteen lists in the 1999 Knesset were no exception – three other elections also had that high a number of successful lists. However, unlike the others, the 1999 Knesset had no large party, only medium-sized and small parties, and thus it was more fractionalized. Moreover, in

1992 the threshold for representation in the Knesset was raised from 1 percent to 1.5 percent. We can see in Table 1 that this reform reduced the number of lists in the next two elections, but by 1999 the number of successful lists returned to the pre-reform level. Thus it would seem that the two elements of the electoral reform from 1992 cancelled each other out. Small parties competed and many of them achieved office. In 1999, two lists received 1.9 percent of the vote entitling them to two Knesset seats each; three other lists obtained between 1 and 1.5 percent, leaving them outside the Knesset.

IV. Parties, Issues, and Candidates

It is clear that parties and voters interact in bringing about the dealignment of the party system. We focus here on the voters, and emphasize the increase in issue voting and the growing importance of performance evaluations – trends in evidence throughout Western democracies (Dalton and Wattenberg 1993; Franklin, Mackie, and Valen 1992).

Table 3 presents data on the major factors in the vote for Barak versus Netanyahu in 1999,¹ in comparison to voting patterns for Netanyahu versus Peres in 1996 and the vote for the right and left blocs in the years preceding the electoral reform. This bloc vote can be used meaningfully only for the elections since 1981, following the clear emergence of the bipolar structure of the party system. Table 3 is for the period of 1981-1999, using the prime-ministerial vote since the introduction of the direct election of the prime minister, in 1996 and 1999, and the right-left bloc vote for the Knesset (parliament) between 1981 and 1992.²

We conducted the analysis using logistic regression. For each year, we present three regression analyses, performed only on respondents who disclosed their voting intention. First we analyze voting behavior in reference to the major socio-demographic variables (Age, Gender, Density of Dwelling, Education, Income, Religious Observance, and Ethnic Background). In the second stage we combine socio-demographics with indicators for the major issue dimensions in Israeli politics (the Socio-Economic Issue, the Territories Issue,

and the State-Religion Issue). In the third stage we add performance evaluation variables (Performance – Economy and Performance – Security).³

To assess the relative importance of each group of variables in the three-step regression model, we consider the percent of correct predictions in each model. We find that the socio-demographic model achieved between 67 percent and 74 percent correct predictions, with no clear trend over the years. In 1981, the socio-demographic model correctly predicted 67 percent and in 1999 – 68 percent. Thus it seems that the predictive potential of the social characteristics of voters has not changed significantly over the two decades.⁴ The contribution of the issues beyond the socio-economic variables in the second-stage regression, however, increased over time. In 1981 issues added 3 percent to the socio-demographics model.⁵ From 1984 and on, issues added between 8 and 16 percent correct predictions. The third-stage regressions indicate the growing importance of performance evaluations, especially since the direct election for prime minister.

Like most other advanced industrial democracies, in Israel issue voting has increased over time. Unlike these other systems, however, the predictive potential of socio-demographics (and of socio-demographic and attitudinal variables in combination) has not declined (Franklin, Mackie, and Valen 1992). The source of this pattern lies in the collective identity dilemmas raised by the issues on the agenda and their interrelationship with group characteristics (Shamir and Arian 1999). The rise of issue voting can be traced to the increased salience of the external collective identity dilemmas manifesting themselves in the policy issues relating to the peace process and the territories, and of the internal identity dilemmas around citizenship, nationhood, and religion.⁶ These two dimensions are indicated in the regressions in Table 3 by the willingness to return territories item and the state-religion question about the role of government in seeing to it that public life be conducted according to Jewish religious law.

The territorial debate was clearly dominant throughout the period covered in Table 3. Among the three issue domains, all measured on a similar range from 1 to 4, the issue of the territories is without doubt the most influential issue factor. Moreover, it grew in importance

over time. The 1984 election seems to be the cutting point, the point in time in which the territory issue emerged as the overriding dimension ordering the party system and it has registered a major increase in its impact on the vote. That was the election that followed the war in Lebanon, and the first election in which Yitzhak Shamir replaced Menachem Begin as the head of the Likud. Since 1984, the impact of the territories issue on the vote remained very high. According to the full equations, the largest size parameter is observed in the 1988 election, but fluctuations since 1984 are not large.

According to the second-stage equations, which do not include performance evaluations, the territories issues effect reaches its highest point in 1999. The 1999 result is interesting in view of the fact that the differences between the Likud and Labor parties and between left and right on this issue have narrowed following the post-Oslo reality, Rabin's assassination and Netanyahu's term in office. By 1999, after 3 years in which Netanyahu reluctantly pursued the Oslo accords, the process itself had become part of the consensus. The majority of Jewish voters preferred peace and a Jewish democratic state to greater Israel – Israel with its post-1967 war boundaries. Opposition to the Oslo process shrank, and the National Unity list, the right-wing alternative to the Likud and Netanyahu which placed greater Israel and outright opposition to the Oslo process at the forefront of its election campaign, won only 4 seats.

The debate that rages is still fierce, but it is no longer cast in metaphysical terms of divine promises and national destiny, but in pragmatic terms about borders, the nature of security arrangements, and the eventuality of a Palestinian state. In the 1999 survey only about 60 percent perceived large or very large differences between the two major parties on the territories issue, down from 80 percent in 1996, and from around two thirds between 1981 and 1992. Nevertheless, 1999 was similar to the other two elections of the 1990s and different from previous elections in that many more voters said that the territories would be an important consideration in their voting decision. In 1999 and 1996 about two thirds said that the issue of the territories would very greatly influence their vote, compared with half in 1992, and less than a third in previous elections. Summing the two positive categories of

response, around 90 percent in 1999 and 1996 and about 80 percent in 1992 said that the territories issue "will influence my vote" or "will greatly influence my vote" compared with less than two thirds in previous elections.

The state-religion issue was the weakest issue predictor of the vote through 1992, but by 1996 and 1999 it placed second after the territories and before the socio-economic schism. More important however is its increasing role over time in the explanation of the vote, with the highest coefficients in the 1999 equations.⁷ Obviously this dimension has become more potent in structuring the vote and the party system. Before the 1999 elections, Shinui was represented by only one Knesset delegate, and seemed to be doomed to extinction. The party recruited an outspoken journalist to head its 1999 list, built its campaign solely on an anti-haredi message, and leaped in size to 6 seats. The left-wing "Meretz" party, which combined a dovish and secular agenda, grew from 9 to 10 Knesset members. On the other side, the religious parties increased their share of seats in the current Knesset to 27 from their previous record high of 23 seats in 1996, based mostly on the spectacular rise of the ultra-Orthodox Sephardi party Shas. Shas grew from 10 to 17 seats. The strife between religious and secular and between the Jewish and democratic Israel will clearly be on the agenda.

The third-stage regressions illuminate another change in Israeli voting behavior, and that is the increased role of performance evaluations. Voters' evaluations of the performance of the candidates are becoming more important considerations in their vote decision. In 1999 the impact of performance evaluations in security and foreign affairs and in the economic realm reached record highs in the explanation of the vote. The 1999 result may be partly due to the change in question wording⁸ or to the candidates running in the race and in particular the Netanyahu factor, to which we will return. Whatever the explanation, there seems to be a trend here, with performance evaluations contributing 4 and 2 percent in 1984 and 1988, respectively, to the explanation of the vote beyond socio-demographics and issues. In 1992, performance evaluations added 6 percent beyond the other variables. Since the move to direct elections for prime minister in 1996 and 1999, this figure jumped to 8 percent and 11

percent. The election campaigns are more and more candidate-oriented and less party-centered (Lehman-Wilzig 1995), and how well the candidates did or will do in office takes on increased importance in the voting booth, as in other democracies (Bean and Mughan 1989;; Wattenberg 1991).

Another indication of the importance of candidates is provided by our 1999 post-election study, in the field immediately following the election. We presented our sample a list of alternative explanations for the results of the election. The statement receiving the highest level of agreement was that "the elections were basically about Netanyahu's personality and his performance as prime minister." Seventy two percent of respondents agreed with this assessment of the election. Many also agreed that "Barak's victory showed that the public wants to continue the peace talks and reach a compromise with the Palestinians" (67%) and that "Barak's victory showed that the public thinks that he will better keep the rule of law" (59%). But when asked to choose the primary theme of the elections, 41 percent chose Netanyahu's personality and performance. An additional 24 percent chose the social and economic situation, 17 percent picked security and foreign affairs issues, 10 percent said the rule of law, and 9 percent religious-secular relations. The primacy of the Netanyahu factor in the elections cut across political affiliations.

That the prime-ministerial candidate has come to replace the party in the eyes of the voter is evident from Figures 2 and 3. Those figures rely on love-hate thermometer scales for Labor and Likud and for the candidates, Netanyahu and Peres in 1996, Netanyahu and Barak in 1999. The scores given by the respondents are arrayed in those figures by self-placement on the left-right scale. In 1999 (Figure 2) we observe great similarity between the scores given by the respondents to the candidates and their parties. Vestiges of differentiation are still evident in 1996, with Netanyahu support slightly less strong than Likud support, and the rejection of Labor stronger than the rejection of Peres (Figure 3). Those on the right rejected Labor more heartily than they rejected Peres, while those on the left already had a more negative appreciation of Netanyahu than they had of the Likud. On the

other hand, those on the right were more attracted to the party than to the candidate. For the left, Peres and Labor were esteemed to about the same degree.

Table 4 presents means, t-tests for the difference in the means, and correlations between party and candidate thermometer scores in the last three elections. The mean thermometer scores for the candidates and their respective parties are highly correlated (the lowest being the correlation for Labor and Rabin in 1992). But more interesting are the differences in means. Using the t-test for the difference in means, we see that the party-candidate differences for Likud and Labor and their respective candidates are statistically significant in 1992 and in 1996, but not in 1999. Only the Mordechai-Center difference in 1999 is statistically significant, although it too is small. With the 1992 election still conducted under the old electoral system and the 1996 election as the first in which the candidates ran directly for prime minister, the distinction between candidate and party was fresh enough for respondents to differentiate between the two. By 1999, the role of the Labor and Likud parties had receded and the importance of the prime-ministerial candidates had become so central as to blur the difference between candidate and party almost completely.

V. A Glimpse of the Future: Blocs not Parties

The division between *left* and *right* has characterized Israeli politics since independence. This distinction organizes the multi-party system combining politics and ideological stance. Politicians use the labels, as do political commentators and the general public. Over time, with the passing of the dominant party system and the establishment of the two-bloc competitive system, the left and right terms became more meaningful, useful and prevalent. The key electoral division in the multi-party system was no longer between the dominant party, Mapai/Labor, and all other parties, but between the left and right blocs or ideological families. These proved to be useful shorthand codes to organize the complex political world for the public. In intergenerational socialization, passing on the side in the left-right division was more important and relevant than a specific party identification

(Ventura 1997). Left and right were defined in terms of the Israeli-Arab conflict dimension, the major cleavage dimension in the polity (Arian and Shamir 1983; Shamir 1986; Ventura and Shamir 1992).

Using respondents' self-identification in terms of these labels, it is clear from our surveys that the left and right demarcation has increased in relevance and coincides with shifts in power distribution in Israeli politics. The data⁹ we have at hand relate to the years 1962 to 1999 and are displayed in Table 5. The response categories changed somewhat over time with the changing structure of the system, but the general pattern is very clear.

The dominant party system, in which many more identified with the left than with the right, eroded gradually. By 1973 the two camps were about equal in size, and by 1977 with the turnabout in government, the right superseded the left. The right continued to grow until 1988, when it comprised about half the Jewish population, but from then on its strength decreased. The fortunes of the left presented a mirror image with the low points in 1977 and 1981, after which it increased in size. By 1999, the size of the two groups was almost equal. There was obvious interaction between election results and the left-right self-identification of the electorate.

Of even more interest in terms of our concerns here is the increase in the number of respondents defining themselves as right or left. As the two-bloc party system established itself in the 1980s, more and more respondents acquired the labels and identified themselves accordingly. By 1988, 75 percent did so, compared to 39 percent in 1962, and 50 percent in 1981. In the 1999 survey, 79 percent divided themselves almost equally into the two blocs. The depletion of the center and no-identification categories is the other half of the same process. Adding together those who defined themselves in the center and those who did not identify themselves along this continuum presents a convincing trend. From about half of the sample up to and including the 1981 elections, this group declined to about a third in 1984, and between a quarter and a fifth in the next four elections.¹⁰ Two processes are at work: The electorate has become more and more identifiable using the left and right

labels, and has also become more polarized with fewer center and non-identified voters, more left and right identifiers, and growing parity in the size of the blocs.

There is a general correspondence between the fortunes of the left and the right in the voting booth and in the self-identification survey data. Interestingly, this is not the case with respect to the center. The proportion of the electorate defining itself as center declined over the years, but there is no simultaneous trend in the voting for center parties (see Table 1).¹¹ From the data, it is clear that center position or identification does not necessarily translate into party choice. And voting for a center party does not rule out identifying with either the left or the right. Many of the center parties served politicians and voters as vehicles for electoral mobility when they did not feel they could move to the other side. The DMC provides the most prominent example in the 1977 election; it allowed a vote against Labor without supporting Likud. The Center party in 1999, and especially the role of Mordechai as candidate for prime minister, signaled a preference for a right of center persuasion without supporting Netanyahu.

In many ways, center parties perform the function of train platforms, something to get in on, not to stand on. Once in, the pulls of coalition bargaining quickly transform ideals into bargaining chips. Center parties are often formed to perpetuate the leader's hold on office. Some voters might be attracted to the leader, others to the usual call for "clean government" and a new kind of politics. But after the election, history has shown these parties almost always find themselves in the coalition, and gone by the next election.

This interpretation of the center position as inhospitable to long-term occupancy is supported by the survey results. Respondents were asked about the possibility of shifting from one bloc to another. Of the 15 percent of respondents who located themselves in the center of the political continuum, 73 percent said they would consider moving to either left or right. A very different picture obtained for respondents who identified themselves with the left or the right. Only 10 and 12 percent of each of those groups respectively indicated that they could see themselves changing blocs. Of the small minority who indicated that they might shift, only a handful said that it would be easy for them to do so. When asked if they

felt that people like them would be able to feel at home in the other bloc, the results were similar. Seventy percent of right-wingers and 78 percent of leftists did not think that it would be possible to feel at home in the other camp after such a shift. The left was more apprehensive than the right, but large majorities in both camps did not think that such a switch could be done with comfort. Identification with the bloc, with all it implies in terms of politics and ideology, is highly entrenched.

The party system has undergone dealignment, almost deconstruction. But we have found that another gird of the political system, the division into identificational or ideological blocs of left and right, is as sturdy as ever. The blocs are alive, well, and vigorous. It is no coincidence that we observe the growth in vitality in bloc alignment and the simultaneous weakening of political parties and party ties. Also in the new party system, structured by the direct election of the prime minister and multiple cleavages, there will be a need for the structuring power of the ideological families or political blocs of left and right.

Political parties are likely to persist in the emerging system, mostly because the future will be played out under rules that were fashioned for political parties in a different era under different conditions. Parties will persist in name and form because the law provides that the candidate for prime minister must be the head of his party's Knesset list in the parliamentary elections. Parties are also the main building block of the coalition need by the prime minister once the Knesset is formed. Also, the structure of campaign financing is focused on party competition. But these are throwback arrangements to an earlier system. The party in Israel is unlikely to be a mass organization with a defined and articulated program. The party will be in hibernation mode until a candidate for prime minister awakens it for a few golden moments immediately before and immediately after elections. Competition in the future will be based on the ideological families and political blocs of left and right. The future will be built on the ruins of the past.

VI. Conclusion

The Israeli party system, its parties and its voters, have undergone tremendous change since independence in 1948. From a stable dominant party system through a competitive two-party system, it finds itself at the beginning of the new millennium in a most unstable state. It was always a highly fragmented system, but after the 1999 election there was no large party to structure its political life. In the past, the parties – large and small – were by far the most powerful actors in the system. While we do not yet see “the demise of parties” (Korn 1998) we definitely observe a decline in their power, and serious shrinking in the size of the large parties. Turnovers, unpredictability, volatility and instability are the rule – in stark contrast to the dominant party era:

Electoral politics have become privatized and candidate-centered. The nomination process has been democratized, with primaries highlighting the process. Campaign financing in 1996 and in 1999 was essentially privatized, with claims made that the restrictions on party spending did not apply to candidates for prime minister. Sectarian single-constituency and single-issue party lists abounded. Issue and performance considerations, along with identification with the labels of left and right, gained in importance.

Many of these changes are similar to those occurring in other advanced industrial societies. Changes in political communication and in the value structure of post-industrial societies occurred in Israel as they did in other countries. With all the similarities, the direct election of the prime minister makes the Israeli case unique. The Arab-Israel conflict structured Israeli voting for many decades; the unfolding of the Oslo process will be played out within that familiar form, but it is likely that the system will be transformed in the process.

The dealignment is easy to discern and document. The potential realignment is harder. Certainly issues of social equality, the tensions between religious and secular Jews, and an appropriate role for Palestinian Israelis in the democratic and Jewish state of Israel will fashion its parameters. The emergence of significant groups of voters will have to be taken into consideration. The immigrants in the 1950s from the Middle East and North Africa impacted the electoral arena by largely switching from Labor to Likud in 1977, thus bringing

about the demise of the dominant party system and the 1977 realignment. The immigrants in the 1990s from the former Soviet Union came to a different system, and seem to have had an immediate impact, but of a different sort. They were important forces in the three turnovers in the 1990s, casting a protest vote against the incumbent in each election. They split their vote in favor of Rabin in 1992, for Netanyahu in 1996; and for Barak in 1999. Since they vote in large numbers for sectarian parties, they are fundamentally dealigning the Israeli party scene.

If the parties are in disarray and the mobilizing potential of the establishment has disappeared, the lust for power has not been diminished. Ambitious candidates will make use of the direct election of the prime minister to foster their own chances. As of the 1999 elections, these candidates had no incentive to reinvent the party system since political goals could be achieved without investing the hard work that it takes to build a party. The separation between prime minister and party was acceptable to them. Their parties were simply one more group to bargain with once the election was won and the coalition had to be formed. This characterizes the entire spectrum. The new system has been used twice so far. Once, in 1996, the last of the founding father generation, Shimon Peres, competed with a young upstart from the right-wing of the Likud, Binyamin Netanyahu. In its second use, in 1999, Netanyahu competed against Ehud Barak, a prince of the left with a brilliant military record. The younger candidates were from the party system but not of it, and they did both run campaigns that ignored their parties. This abandonment of the parties in favor of the candidates and the blocs with which they are loosely identified is a clear symptom of the privatization of the electoral system. The parties have been sorely weakened; alternative forms of democratic governance have yet to emerge. In the short-term, the prognosis is for turnover, volatility, and instability; long-term complications could be much more severe.

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ENDNOTES

- ¹ The survey was conducted during April and May 1999 in face to face interviews among a representative sample of voters by Machshov Research Institute. It was funded by the Sapir Center for Development of Tel Aviv University and the Israel Democracy Institute. The data analyzed in this paper cover only the Jewish electorate.
- ² We conducted a similar analysis of the vote for the two major parties, Likud and Labor, throughout the period for which we have survey data, from 1969 through 1999. It is not presented here because the distinction between these two parties has become less meaningful as the contest generated by the direct election of the prime minister has won most attention. The overall pattern of results is similar to that for the bloc vote in Table 3. For the 1969-1996 results, see Shamir and Arian (1999).
- ³ For the wording of the questions, see Shamir and Arian (1999), Appendix B. All surveys, including the 1999 survey, were pre-election surveys collected through face-to-face interviews in the respondent's home. They were representative samples of the adult Jewish population, not including kibbutzim and Jewish settlements in the territories under Israel's control since 1967. The surveys between 1981 and 1992 were carried out by the Dahaf Research Institute, the 1996 survey by Modi'in Ezrachi, and the 1999 survey by Machshov. The sample sizes were 1,825 in October 1969; 1,917 in May 1973; 1,372 in March 1977; 1,249 in March 1981; 1,259 in July 1984; 873 in October 1988; 1,192 in June 1992; 1,168 in May 1996; and 1075 in May 1999. The 1981 and 1984 surveys were supervised by Asher Arian; those since 1988, in collaboration with Michal Shamir.
- ⁴ The same stability in the percent correct predictions of the socio-demographic model also holds for the Likud-Labor vote throughout the 1969-1999 period (not presented here).
- ⁵ In the analysis of Likud-Labor vote (not presented here), issues added between 0 to 5 percent between 1969 and 1981.
- ⁶ The impact of the socio-economic issue oscillates over time, with the highest levels observed in 1984 and 1988.
- ⁷ This issue dimension is closely related to religiosity. In our surveys it is measured by a question asking the degree to which an individual observes the strictures of rabbinical Jewish law (Halacha). This measure of religious observance is based on behavior but indicates at the same time one of the most meaningful definitions of an individual's social affiliation and identity in modern Israel. Among the socio-demographic variables, religiosity has become the most meaningful social distinction. It has increased in its impact on the vote up to 1996. In 1999 it weakened somewhat, while the role of the state-religion issue increased.
- ⁸ Up to and including 1996, the question asked for a comparison between the two major party (Likud and Labor) teams. In 1999 we asked the respondents to compare the prime-ministerial candidates, and assess who will deal better with the country's problems in the two areas. Since up to the eve of the election three major candidates were in the race, our question referred to all of them. The answers were recoded as 3 – Netanyahu; 1 – Barak; and 2 – other answers (other candidates, none of them, all of them).
- ⁹ The surveys between 1962 through 1977 were conducted by the Israel Institute of Applied Social Research and were based on a representative sample of the adult urban Jewish population. Later surveys were representative of the adult Jewish population, excluding kibbutzim and settlements in the territories. The following institutes carried out the surveys:

Dahaf between 1981 and 1992; Modiin Ezrachi in 1996, and Machshov in 1999. Each survey, except for 1962, was a pre-election survey.

¹⁰ A reflection of changes in the party system can be seen in the responses of those who identified themselves as religious using this measure. Through the 1981 elections about 6 percent were not willing to identify themselves in left-right terms and voluntarily offered self-identification with the religious camp. From 1984 on, this number shrank by about half, as the religious dimension became more and more associated with the hawkish, right-wing position on the Israeli-Arab conflict dimension, the major dimension of the left-right continuum. This dimension evidently overrode other calculations for many religious voters; with growing multidimensionality this pattern may well reappear.

¹¹ What the center means, which parties qualify as a center party, and whether the center exists at all (Duverger, 1964) are questions for which there are no straightforward answers. Based on commonly accepted classifications and the self-definition of parties, center parties include the following: The Independent Liberals through 1977, the State list (1969), the Democratic Movement for Change (DMC) in 1977, Shinui in the '1980s and in 1999, Telem (1981), Yahad and Ometz in 1984, the Third Way in 1996, and the Center party in 1999 (Arian 1998; Korn and Shapira 1997; Neuberger 1997).

The Independent Liberals obtained 4-6 seats in most elections throughout the 1950s and 1960s; in 1977 the DMC won 15 seats; in 1981 4 Knesset seats went to two center parties, in 1984 – 7, in 1988 – 2, and none in 1992. In 1996 the Third Way elected 4 Knesset members, and in 1999 the reinvigorated Shinui and the newly established Center party won six seats each. If one counts Israel Baaliya as a center party (rather than a sectarian ethnic party representing immigrants from the former Soviet Union, the figures for 1996 and 1999 jump to 11 and 18 seats, respectively.

Most of the party lists defined as center since 1977 were candidate-centered ad-hoc groupings which did not survive more than one election. Yadin's DMC, Dayan's Telem, Weizmann's Yahad, and Kahalani's Third Way are good examples. The 1999 Center party featured Mordechai, Lipkin-Shahak, Meridor and Milo.

Candidates, Parties and Blocs 25

Table 1. Knesset Election Results 1949-1999: Fragmentation, Competitiveness, Blocs

Election Year	1949	1951	1955	1959	1961	1965	1969	1973	1977	1981	1984	1988	1992	1996	1999
<u>Fragmentation</u>															
Number of lists	12	15	12	12	12	12	11	9	13	10	15	15	10	11	15
Largest party	46	45	40	47	42	45	56	51	43	48	44	40	44	34	26
Two largest parties Combined	65	65	55	64	59	71	82	90	75	95	85	79	76	66	45
<u>Competitiveness</u>															
[Difference between two largest parties	27	25	25	30	25	19	30	12	11	1	3	1	12	2	7]
Turnover (+/-)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+
<u>Blocs^a</u>															
Left	71	70	70	71	68	72	66	62	41	52	53	53	61	52	48
Center	5	4	5	6	-	5	8	4	16	4	7	2	-	4	12
Right	22	28	28	25	34	26	28	39	45	51	47	47	43	34	27
Religious	16	15	17	18	18	17	18	15	17	13	13	18	16	23	27
[Right+Religious	38	43	45	43	52	43	46	54	62	64	60	65	59	57	54]

^a Left bloc includes One Israel, Labor, Alignment, Mapai, Ahdut Haavoda, Rafi, Mapam, Civil Rights Movement, Meretz, Communist, Haolam Haze, Sheli, Arab parties. Right includes Likud, Herut, Liberals, Free Center, Shlomzion, Tehiya, Tzomet, Moledet, Kach, Ihud Leumi. Religious bloc includes National Religious party, Agudat Israel, Poalei Agudat Israel, Degel Hatorah, Tami, Shas. Center includes Independent Liberals, Democratic Movement for Change, Shinui, State list, Telem, Yahad, Ometz, Center party. Not included in this analysis are Sephardi, Yemenite, Wizo, Flatto Sharon, and Israel Baaliya, and hence the total for some years does not add up to 120.

Table 2. Change in Knesset Votes and Seats, Labor and Likud in Turnover Years

Period	% Increase Valid Votes	% Change Votes for Labor	% Change Votes for Likud	% Change Knesset Seats for Labor	% Change Knesset Seats for Likud
1973-7	11.5	-30.8	23.4	-37.3	10.3
1988-92	14.6	32.3	-8.2	12.8	-20.0
1992-6	16.6	-9.7	-6.1	-22.7	-20.0 ^b
1996-9	8.4	-18.1	-39.0	-23.5 ^a	-40.6

^a One Israel in 1999.

^b Likud-Gesher-Tzomet in 1996.

Table 3. Logistic Regressions: Prime-Ministerial Candidate / Right-Left Bloc, 1981-1999^a

Variable	1981 (N=1,249)		1984 (N=1,259)		1988 (N=873)		1992 (N=1,192)		1996 (N=1,166)		1999 (N=1,075)	
	b	(s.e.)	b	(s.e.)	b	(s.e.)	b	(s.e.)	b	(s.e.)	b	(s.e.)
I. Socio-Demographic												
Age	-0.07*	(.03)	-0.14***	(.04)	-0.12**	(.04)	-0.14***	(.03)	-0.10**	(.04)	-0.06*	(.03)
Gender	-0.43**	(.17)	.11	(.18)	.43**	(.16)	.05	(.17)	-0.60***	(.17)	-0.27	(.16)
Density of Dwelling	.36**	(.13)	.29	(.17)	.43**	(.15)	.19	(.13)	.46**	(.15)	.36*	(.16)
Education	-.01	(.09)	-.10	(.10)	-.46***	(.09)	-.27**	(.10)	-.23*	(.10)	-.28*	(.12)
Income	.05	(.09)	.00	(.09)	-.01	(.09)	.05	(.07)	.14	(.08)	-.12	(.07)
Religious Observance	-.68***	(.10)	-.66***	(.12)	-.81***	(.13)	-1.01***	(.11)	-1.18***	(.13)	-.95***	(.11)
Ethnic Background	-.46**	(.18)	-1.68***	(.20)	-.39*	(.20)	-.82***	(.18)	-.57***	(.18)	-.52**	(.17)
	N=723 ^b	67%	N=676	74%	N=596	71%	N=821	72%	N=771	73%	N=795	68%
II. Socio-Demographic + Issues												
Age	-.05	(.04)	-.08	(.05)	-.09	(.06)	-.10*	(.04)	-.03	(.04)	-.05	(.04)
Gender	-.45*	(.18)	.25	(.24)	.41*	(.21)	.23	(.17)	.50**	(.21)	-.27	(.21)
Density of Dwelling	.32*	(.14)	.24	(.22)	-.46*	(.20)	-.39**	(.12)	-.02	(.12)	.14	(.20)
Education	.12	(.10)	.03	(.13)	-.02	(.12)	-.06	(.09)	.08	(.09)	-.22*	(.15)
Income	.02	(.11)	-.07	(.12)	-.67***	(.17)	-.75***	(.15)	-.87***	(.15)	-.31*	(.15)
Religious Observance	-.52***	(.11)	-.60***	(.14)	-.05	(.27)	-.80***	(.23)	-.56**	(.22)	-.56*	(.15)
Ethnic Background	-.59**	(.20)	-1.65***	(.26)	-.05	(.27)	-.80***	(.23)	-.56**	(.22)	-.56*	(.15)
Territories	.62***	(.10)	1.08***	(.11)	1.30***	(.12)	1.11***	(.09)	1.32***	(.11)	1.55***	(.13)
Socio-Economic	-.36***	(.10)	-.96***	(.18)	-.67***	(.13)	-.39**	(.12)	-.23*	(.12)	-.47***	(.13)
State-Religion	-.23**	(.08)	-.13	(.13)	-.13	(.13)	-.29**	(.11)	-.38***	(.10)	-.51***	(.13)
	N=682	70%	N=610	83%	N=536	86%	N=750	82%	N=758	81%	N=761	84%
	(+ 3%)*		(+ 9%)*		(+ 15%)*		(+ 10%)*		(+ 8%)*		(+ 16%)*	
III. Soc-Demo. + Issues + Performance Evaluation												
Age	-.07	(.06)	-.04	(.06)	-.08	(.06)	-.08	(.06)	-.06	(.06)	-.01	(.07)
Gender	.14	(.28)	.39	(.25)	.61**	(.25)	.18	(.21)	-.36	(.25)	-.04	(.37)
Density of Dwelling	-.05	(.15)	-.44	(.23)	-.44	(.23)	-.36*	(.15)	.41*	(.20)	.11	(.35)
Education	-.02	(.13)	-.09	(.14)	-.09	(.14)	-.07	(.11)	-.01	(.14)	.05	(.27)
Income	-.57***	(.17)	-.47**	(.19)	-.47**	(.19)	-.80***	(.19)	.08	(.18)	-.22	(.17)
Religious Observance	-1.75***	(.31)	-.09	(.31)	-.09	(.31)	-.88***	(.29)	-.78***	(.26)	-.23	(.27)
Ethnic Background	1.00***	(.13)	1.23***	(.14)	1.23***	(.14)	.92***	(.11)	1.07***	(.13)	.02	(.37)
Territories	-.93***	(.20)	-.62***	(.15)	-.62***	(.15)	-.34*	(.14)	-.20	(.14)	1.10***	(.20)
Socio-Economic	1.17***	(.19)	.78***	(.19)	.78***	(.19)	-.20	(.13)	-.24*	(.12)	-.23	(.21)
State-Religion	.57**	(.20)	1.07***	(.21)	1.07***	(.21)	.67***	(.15)	.93***	(.17)	2.44***	(.30)
Performance: economic									1.28***	(.20)	1.52***	(.26)
Performance: security									1.28***	(.20)	1.52***	(.26)
	N=603	87%	N=527	88%	N=527	88%	N=740	88%	N=751	89%	N=761	95%
	(+ 4%)*		(+ 2%)*		(+ 8%)*		(+ 6%)*		(+ 8%)*		(+ 11%)*	

^a Dependent variable: Vote for Prime-Ministerial Candidate 1996-99; for Right-Left bloc 1981-1992.

^b Sample size. For details on the samples, the wording and the coding of the variables see Shamir and Arian, 1999, Appendices A and B.

^c Total percentage of correct predictions.

^d not available.

* Change in percentage of correct predictions.

** p ≤ .05 *** p ≤ .001.

Table 4. Thermometer Scores – Parties and Candidates

	Mean		Correlation	N	t-test
1992					
Labor	5.5	\			
Rabin	5.8	/	.69***	1162	-6.335***
Likud	5.6	\			
Shamir	5.3	/	.83***	1157	5.682***
1996					
Labor	5.8	\			
Peres	6.2	/	.82***	1135	-7.741***
Likud	5.9	\			
Netanyahu	5.7	/	.85***	1141	2.852**
1999					
Labor	6.3	\			
Barak	6.4	/	.86***	1030	-1.210
Likud	5.6	\			
Netanyahu	5.7	/	.89***	1025	-1.071
Center	6.0	\			
Mordechai	6.1	/	.81***	1034	-2.169*

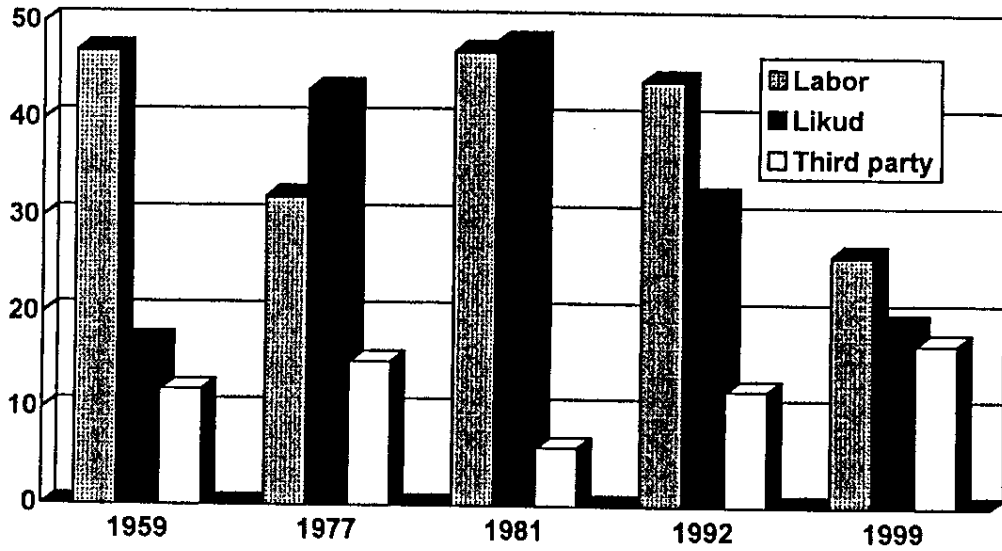
Table 5. Left- Right Identification, 1962-99^a

	1962	1969	1973	1977	1981	1984	1988	1992	1996	1999
Left-right Identification ^b (in percent)										
Left/moderate left	31	25	22	18	17	23	26	30	36	39
Center	23	26	33	29	39	21	11	18	16	11
Right/moderate right	8	16	23	28	33	38	49	42	39	40
Religious	5	6	7	6	6	2	4	3	3	2
No interest in politics; no answer	33	27	15	19	6	15	10	7	6	9
[Center and no answer	56	53	48	48	45	36	21	25	22	20]

^a From 1962 through 1977 the surveys were conducted by the Israel Institute of Applied Social Research; from 1981 through 1992 by the Dahaf Research Institute, in 1996 by Modi'in Ezrachi, and in 1999 by Machshov.

^b The question was "With which political tendency do you identify?" The first responses were suggested to the respondent, the "religious" and "No interest in politics; no answer" responses were not. In 1962, "Left" and "Right" were not used; "Marxist left" and "Herut" were offered in their place.

Figure 1. Sizes of Three Largest Parties in Five Elections



In 1959, Labor was Mapai, the Likud was Herut; in 1999, Labor was One Israel. The third party winners were the National Religious Party in 1959 and 1981; 1977 – Democratic Movement for Change; 1992 – Meretz; and 1999 – Shas.

Figure 2. Parties and Candidates by Left-Right Self-Placement Thermometer Scores, 1999

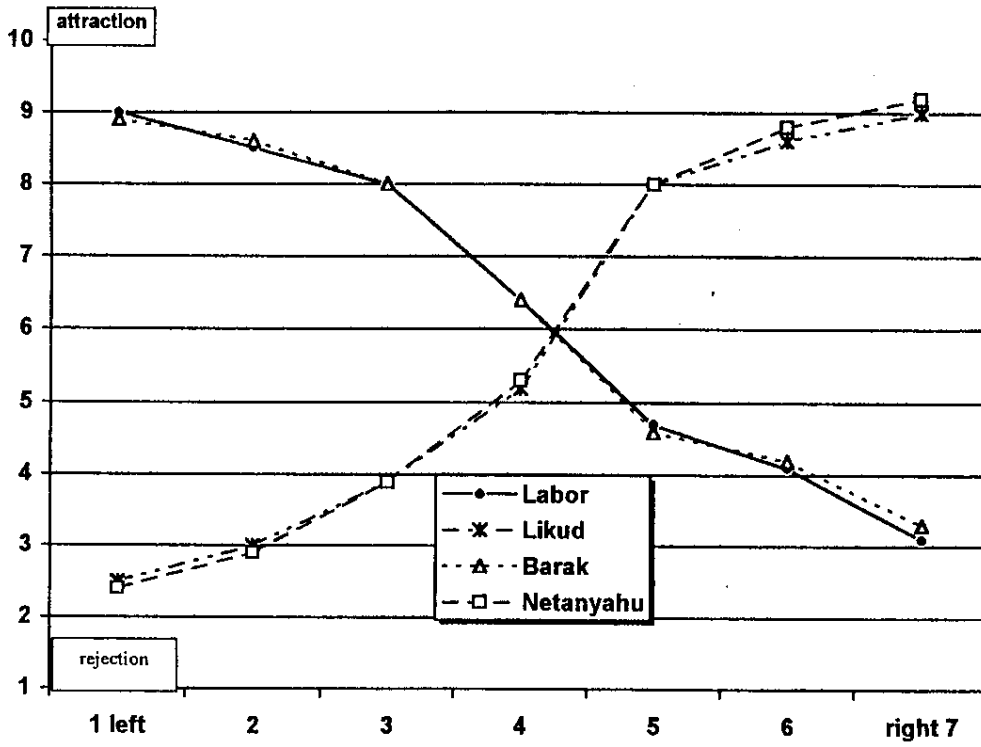


Figure 3. Parties and Candidates by Left-Right Self-Placement
Thermometer Scores, 1996

