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**COLLECTIVE IDENTITY AND
ELECTORAL COMPETITION IN ISRAEL**

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Collective Identity and Electoral Competition in Israel

I. Introduction

Social cleavages -- class in particular but social cleavages more generally -- have declined in their ability to explain electoral behavior in advanced industrial democracies, while issue voting has become more important in the calculus of voters (Dalton, Flanagan and Beck, 1984; Dalton and Wattenberg, 1993; Franklin, Mackie, Valen et al. 1992; Rose and McAllister, 1986). This generalization also fits Israel as well, but only in part.

The changes in the bases for electoral politics have been explained by the social, economic, communication, and political processes characteristic of advanced societies. As a result of these processes, many groups' cultural distinctiveness, social homogeneity, and organizational density have been weakening, to use Bartolini and Mair's terms (1990, chap. 9). Groups' political cohesion is greater the more organized they are into exclusive and overlapping networks and associations whose internal structures are personalistic and hierarchical (Zuckerman, 1982). As Zuckerman points out, such conditions are usually not prevalent, and postindustrial societies with their atomizing influences are even less likely to produce them. These influences include urbanization, social and geographic mobility, growing heterogeneity, secularization, and embourgeoisement; diverse and multiple mass media, higher levels of education and cognitive mobilization; changing organizational structures and ties, and the emergence of values and issues that are only weakly linked to specific social groups.

These processes take place in some countries later than in others (Franklin, Mackie, Valen et al. 1992). and there are exceptions to this general pattern of decline in the importance of social cleavages in electoral politics (Crewe and Denver 1985). In the United States, for example, the importance of religion, race and ethnicity has not disappeared, as

witnessed by the voting behavior of blacks, Jews, and evangelical groups. Other examples are regional identity concerns, such as in Canada or Belgium.

Electoral politics in Israel provide another case where identity dilemmas intertwine issue and social-group based voting. It is within this framework that we see the 1996 election. Two major points need to be emphasized. First, issues differ in their potential to generate group allegiance. Some issues may be only weakly related to specific social groupings, as the postindustrial literature argues (Inglehart and Abramson 1995), but others can connect and can reinforce existing cleavage structures by providing new reasons for the same people and groups to support the same parties (Franklin, Mackie, Valen et al., 1992, 402). Thus the extent to which vote is related to group characteristics of voters depends at least in part on the nature of the issues on the agenda (Budge and Farlie 1983; MacDonald, Listhaug, and Rabinowitz 1991). The role of religion in public life and the future of the territories are such reinforcing issues in the Israeli polity.

Second, even in postindustrial societies, some people remain integrated into traditional social networks, and perhaps even more importantly, alternative communication networks may fulfill a similar role of raising group consciousness and political cohesion in an age of profusion and pluralism in mass communication (Barnes, forthcoming). The spread and diversity of this phenomenon in Israeli society was an important background factor to the fractionalized vote in the 1996 Knesset elections (Liebes et al., 1996).

In many countries the amount of the vote variance explained by social structure and attitudinal variables has decreased from the 1960s through the 1980s. This has not been the case in Israel. The difference lies in the nature of the issues which have captured the agenda. In most Western countries issues involving postbourgeois versus materialist values, gender issues, public versus private consumption, and state employment have gained ascendancy. In Israel these issues have energized only limited publics and have not become as central, critical, and engulfing as the major issue dimension in Israeli politics: the territories and the Israeli-Arab conflict that of the role of religion in public life. And

both issues are strongly tied to social groups. Voting in Israel became more structured, and issues – in particular security issues – became a more important determinant of it over time. Religious, Sephardim, and less educated and lower-status workers voted for the Likud and religious parties, and the Labor and Meretz had a disproportionate share of secular, upper-class Ashkenazim voting them.

The changing bases of electoral behavior have been attributed with causing greater individual and aggregate level volatility in the vote. And this liberation, where it occurs, means that the fortunes of political parties and leaders have become much less certain, and are dependent more on leadership skills than on organizational factors (Franklin et al. 1992, 403). The 1992 elections seemed to empower the electorate and the Labor party was called upon to lead for the next term, with the implicit threat that it too could be replaced in future elections. As it was in 1996.

The 1996 election may be remembered in Israel's electoral history as occupying an interim phase between territorial electoral politics and internal identity politics. The Knesset results reflected the expression of ethnic and religious identities to an unprecedented degree. But the core issues of the election were not subordinate group identities whose expression was encouraged by the new electoral system, but issues involving the nature of the Jewish state on its territorial and internal dimensions such as concerns of citizenship, state-religion relations, and the definition of who is a Jew. While the notion of Israel as a Jewish state provides a common denominator for most Israeli Jews, the meaning assigned to it differs dramatically across groups, and forms the basis for what has developed into a conflict between cultures. A basic consensus regarding a Jewish state exists among Jews; the conflict over the meaning of this notion was a basic theme of the 1996 elections, and this overriding aspect of the politics of identity was present in both the contest for prime minister and the race for the Knesset.

The majority of Jewish voters had opinions on these matters, but only a minority espoused extreme positions. They preferred peace and a Jewish state, and were less

enamored with greater Israel or democratic rights for all (meaning Arabs). Accordingly, the strategy of the election campaign of the two major parties, and other parties as well, was to appeal to the centrist voters on the basis of these consensual values. Political parties which positioned themselves in the center or tried to avoid controversial issues were big winners, and political parties positioning themselves at the extremes of the political continuum did poorly, unlike in the 1980s. The winner-take-all feature of the race for prime minister, unlike the previous proportional system which featured the more soothing feature of building coalitions after the vote, heightened the sense of an internal struggle between two opposing and unyielding camps.

The close election results and the mobilization patterns of the various contenders further emphasized dissensual themes and highlighted the strong overlap of the two dimensions of identity — the external one relating to the state's borders and relations with other nations of the world, and the internal one over the nature of the Jewish state. The impression was that the country was divided between right-wing religious hawks, and left-wing secular doves. Like Yitzhak Rabin's assassination on November 4, 1995, the race for prime minister served to reinforce the major value conflicts over the definition of Israel as a Jewish state and over the peace process. After the elections, the stand-off between these two groups became a dominant frame used by the media and politicians of both sides.

This paper explores these issues of consensus and dissensus in Israeli politics in general and then in the 1996 elections. After exploring the cleavage systems and voting patterns in the last quarter century in Israel, we then relate this analysis to the 1996 elections and examine the intersection of these internal and external identity dimensions.

II. Cleavage and Voting Patterns 1969-1996

Three prevalent correlates of the vote are place in the social order, issues, and an assessment of political performance. All have gained wide acceptance in the literature, and their use in tandem provides a powerful potential to explain the vote. So we conduct our

analyses through use of (1) the major socio-demographic variables; (2) the major issue dimensions in Israeli politics; and (3) performance evaluation variables.

Using these three elements, we analyzed the eight Israeli elections between 1969 and 1996¹, seeking to discover the major factors in voter alignments, and to identify continuity and change in these processes. This analysis was carried out using logistic regression analysis. We performed these regression analyses for each of the elections, once using the vote for the two major parties (Likud or Labor) as the dependent variable, and once using the vote for parties of the right or left bloc as the dependent variable.² The analysis of the bloc vote was done from the 1981 elections, after the bipolar structure of the party system clearly emerged. In 1996 we used the vote for the prime minister for the bloc vote; for earlier elections we combined the vote for various parties into left and right blocs, a common practice in Israeli political discourse and academic research, in which the religious parties are included in the right-wing bloc.

For each of these two dependent variables for each year, three regression analyses were run: (1) using only the major *socio-demographic variables* (age, gender, density of living, education, income, religiosity and ethnicity); (2) the socio-demographic variables plus indicators for the three major *issue dimensions* in Israeli politics (capitalism vs. socialism, returning the territories, and the role of the religion in public life) and (3) the first two in addition to two *performance evaluation variables* (one for the economic dimension, and the other for foreign and security policy).

Table 1 presents the results of the logistic regression analyses for the Likud-Labor variable for the 1969-1996 period. Table 2 presents the results of the same type of analysis for the right and left blocs of parties. The time period for Table 2 is more truncated, from 1981 to 1996, but the major patterns for the longer period presented in Table 1 are not dissimilar to the ones of the shorter time period. Both tables present the results in summary form, including only variables which are statistically significant ($p \leq .05$) and $R > .10$.

Summary Table 1
Logistic Regressions: Likud-Labor* 1969-1996

	1969	1971	1977	1981	1984	1988	1992	1996
Predictors	exp(B)	R	exp(B)	R	exp(B)	R	exp(B)	R
Socio-Demographic								
religiosity			0.68	-0.11	0.51	-0.18	0.43	-0.20
ethnicity			0.44	-0.12	0.15	-0.29	0.41	-0.14
age	0.85	-0.14	0.78	-0.022	0.85	-0.12		
education					0.86	-0.12		0.69 -0.11
Total % Correct Predictions		76%		64%		75%		72%
Socio-Iem. + Issues								
religiosity					0.53	-0.14		0.49 -0.13
ethnicity			0.41	-0.12	0.17	-0.22	0.40	-0.12
age	0.78	-0.21	0.85	-0.14				
territories			2.20	0.17	2.37	0.30	2.67	0.36
socio-economic	0.56	-0.18	1.51	0.14	0.38	-0.18	0.52	-0.19
Change in % Predictions		12%		15%		18%		19%
Socio-Iem. + Issues + Perform. Evaluat.								
ethnicity					0.15	-0.18		
territories					2.12	0.22	2.27	0.24
socio-economic					0.10	-0.14	0.56	-0.12
perform. economic					4.01	0.22	3.88	0.22
perform. security			n.a.	n.a.	2.74	0.14	4.42	0.23
Change in % Predictions		n.a.				17%		19%
							2.39	0.22
							2.38	0.15
							6.85	0.36
								110%

* includes variables which are statistically significant: $p \leq .05$ and $R > .10$

Summary Table 2
Logistic Regressions: Right-Left* 1981-1996

	1981		1984		1988		1992		1996**	
	exp (B)	R	exp (B)	R	exp (B)	R	exp (B)	R	exp (B)	R
1. Socio-Demographic										
religiosity	0.51	-0.22	0.52	-0.18	0.44	-0.22	0.36	-0.27	0.31	-0.29
ethnicity			0.19	-0.27			0.44	-0.13		
Total % correct predictions		67%		74%		71%		72%		73%
2. Socio-Dem. + Issues										
religiosity	0.59	-0.15	0.55	-0.11	0.51	-0.14	0.47	-0.15	0.42	-0.17
ethnicity			0.19	-0.21						
territories	1.85	0.19	2.93	0.34	3.66	0.39	3.05	0.38	3.74	0.36
socio-economic			0.38	-0.18	0.51	-0.18				
state-religion			n.a.						0.65	-0.11
Change in % predictions		+3%		+9%		+15%		+10%		+8%
3. Socio-Dem. + Issues + Performance Evaluation										
religiosity			0.17	-0.19			0.45	-0.13	0.46	-0.12
ethnicity			2.71	0.27	3.42	0.14	2.51	0.27	2.92	0.25
territories			0.39	-0.15	0.51	-0.14				
socio-economic			3.20	0.21	3.17	0.14	1.96	0.14	2.52	0.17
perform.economic			n.a.							
perform.security			2.91	0.18	4.51	0.23			3.60	0.19
Change in % predictions				+4%		+2%		+6%		+8%

* includes variables which are statistically significant, $p \leq .05$ and $R > .10$.

** Netanyahu-Peres vote.

Tables A1 and A2 in the Appendix include all coefficients with $p \leq .05$ for the same regression analyses.

The most important and consistent factor among the socio-demographic variables was religiosity. It was statistically significant in all the regressions using only socio-demographic variables (except for 1973 Likud-Labor), and it became more and more important over time. In the left-right bloc vote regressions for socio-demographic variables and issues (from 1981 to 1996), religiosity remained significant, and here too its impact increased with time. In 1992 and 1996, religiosity retained its role as a significant factor in the full regression analysis which included issues and performance evaluation indicators. Moreover, in the 1996 election, Netanyahu and Peres voters were differentiated by their position on the issue of state and religion above and beyond their adherence to religious practice.

There is no doubt that among the socio-demographic characteristics of voters in 1996, religiosity was the most relevant one for the vote, and it had increased in importance over time. The identification of Labor as an anticlerical party strengthened, while the Likud played to the traditional sympathies of much of its voting base, even though the origins and ideology of the Likud are secular. The alliance between the secular right wing parties and the religious parties also became more entrenched in coalition politics and in public perception. The four years of cooperation in government between 1992-1996 between Labor and the more leftist Meretz, and Netanyahu's coalition formation efforts with the religious parties before the 1996 elections, further strengthened this tendency.

The economic cleavage was weak to begin with (Arian, 1980; Shamir, 1986), and in no equation were its social indicators important. Asking about a socialist vs. a capitalist orientation was of importance in most equations from 1969 through 1988, but this dimension failed to distinguish Labor from Likud voters, or left-wing from right-wing voters in 1992 and 1996. The prevalent ethos in the West in support of market economies, privatization, and competition, obviously had entered the Israeli system with great success.

Ethnicity, generally regarded as a major factor in Israeli politics and elections, was indeed of consequence in the realignment and the first turnover election in 1977 through 1981 and peaked in its impact on the vote in 1984. In 1992 it was still meaningful, but much less so in 1996.

Of the three issue domains, that of the territories was clearly the dominant one, growing in importance from the 1984 election onward. The 1984 election thus represents the point in time in which this dimension solidified as the overriding dimension ordering the party system. That was the election which 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, both in terms of distinguishing the left from the right, and Labor from Likud adherents. Over time, Labor had more unambiguously identified itself as the territories-for-peace party, and the platform of Labor became less vague on this issue.

The public perception of the difference between these two parties on the territories issue did not change much; almost two-thirds of the respondents in the 1981, 1984, and 1992 surveys thought these differences were big or very big. By 1996 the figure jumped to 80 percent, despite the campaign rhetoric of both parties pushing toward the middle. The years 1992 and 1996 were different from previous elections in that many more voters said that the territories would be an important consideration in their voting decision. In the 1996 sample, 71 percent said that the issue of the territories would very greatly influence their vote, compared with 52 percent in 1992, and less than a third in previous elections. With the next category of response, 90 percent in 1996 and 81 percent in 1992 said that it would influence them greatly or very greatly, compared with 63 percent in previous elections.

Adding performance evaluation of the teams of the two major parties in the areas of economics and foreign and security policy to the equation presents an altered picture. These performance evaluations, and especially regarding foreign and security policy, had a

powerful impact on the vote, especially since 1988, the first election after the eruption of the Intifada.

The 1996 full logistic regression equation allowed us to predict correctly 89 percent of the voters in the prime minister race, and 91 percent of Likud and Labor voters (analyses were performed only on voters who disclosed their voting intention). Comparing the total percent correct predictions in the three-step regression models, we find that the socio-demographic model achieved between 64 percent and 76 percent correct predictions, with no clear trend over the years. The contribution of the issues beyond the sociological variables increased from 1984 and after, compared to earlier elections, for both the Labor-Likud regressions and for the left-right party bloc regressions. Until 1981, issues added between 0 and 5 percent, and from 1984 they added between 8 and 15 percent correct predictions. Performance evaluations were generally more useful in distinguishing Likud from Labor supporters than in differentiating left from right-wing voters, but in both cases they became more important in the 1992 and 1996 elections, in particular on performance evaluation of the Likud vs. Labor team regarding foreign and security affairs.

We find then in the Israeli case that issue voting has increased over time, but the predictive potential of socio-demographics (and of socio-demographic and attitudinal variables in combination) has not declined. What is the nature of the issues producing this pattern?

Religious behavior was the most relevant social category in 1996, and it was strongly related to the two major issue dimensions, which we label the internal and external identity dimensions. The issues of state-religion relations and the future of the territories both became more important along with religiosity, indicating a mutual reinforcement process between the issue and group membership. Religious groups tend to be clearly defined and are socially and politically cohesive. The twin issues of God (religion) and nationalism (the territories), are the most powerful predictors of the vote, in addition to

performance evaluations. We now turn to look more closely at these two identity dimensions in the 1996 elections.

III. Dimensions of Identity

The 1996 elections raised the issues of identity in a very pointed manner. It was as if the voters were asking themselves the following questions: Who are we and who do we want to be? How secure are we and how secure can we be? What boundaries do we choose for ourselves and our country? In essence, the elections raised basic issues of collective and national identity. We use the term "identity" here as an expression of the boundaries chosen both in the sense of dividing groups into different communal and social entities, and dividing nation-states territorially or geographically. The internal dimension concerns the nature of society, state and citizenship. The external dimension is that of the state's borders which Israelis among themselves, and Israel and its neighbors, have not yet settled.

In order to test this conceptualization and to gain a better understanding of these dimensions, we incorporated relevant items in the survey conducted before the 1996 elections and submitted them to dimensional analysis.³ The variables we used were based on the answers of the respondents to the following questions:

1-4. Value priorities

"In thinking about the various paths along which Israel can develop, there seem to be four important values which clash to some extent, and which are important to different degrees to various people: Israel with a Jewish majority, greater Israel, a democratic state (with equal political rights to all), and peace (that is, a low probability of war). Among these four values, which is the most important to you? And the second? And third? And fourth?"

Based on this question we constructed four variables which indicated each value's priority for the respondent. These four variables are not statistically independent as a result of this measurement procedure, since the respondents' ranking of three of the values fully determines the fourth. The results are presented in Figure 1, and reiterate the pattern we

have identified in the past in which the values of *Jewish majority* and *peace* are ranked high, and the other two values, *democracy* and in particular *greater Israel* are ranked much lower.⁴

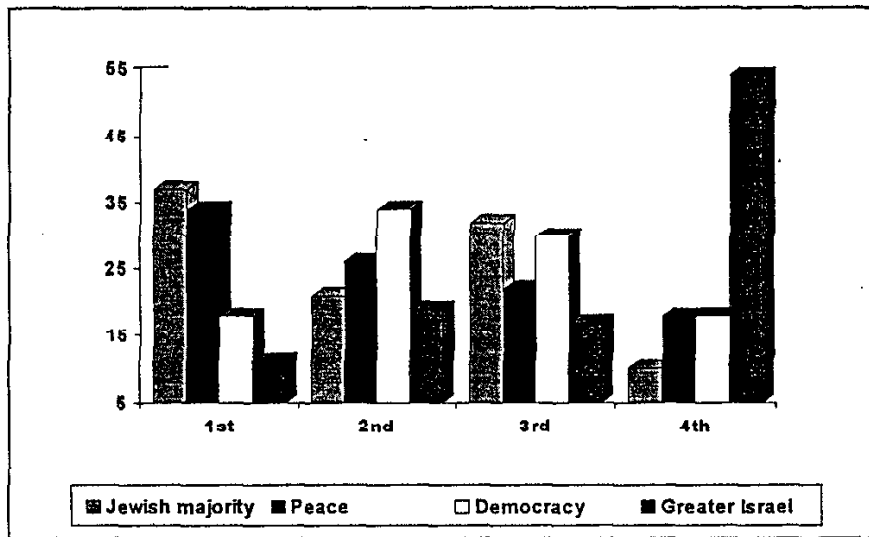


Figure 1. Value Rankings, 1996

5. Identity

Respondents were asked to rank the following four identities in order of importance to them: Jewish, Israeli, their ethnic classification (Ashkenazi or Sephardi) or religion (observant or secular). The overwhelming majority of respondents identified themselves as "Jewish" and "Israeli" in first place and in second place (see Figure 2). Ethnic and religious observance identities were left far behind. Ninety seven percent chose as the most important aspect of their identity either "Jewish" or "Israeli", and for the subsequent analyses we use only this first choice.⁵

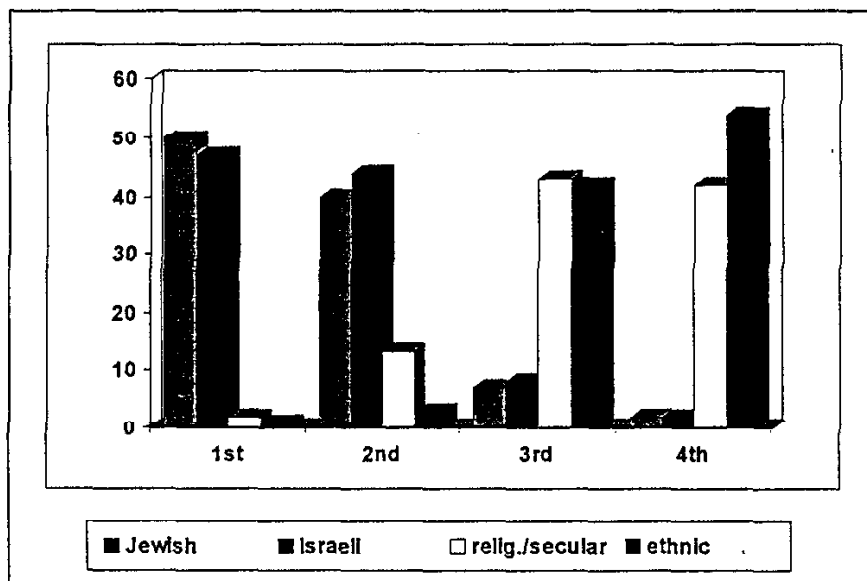
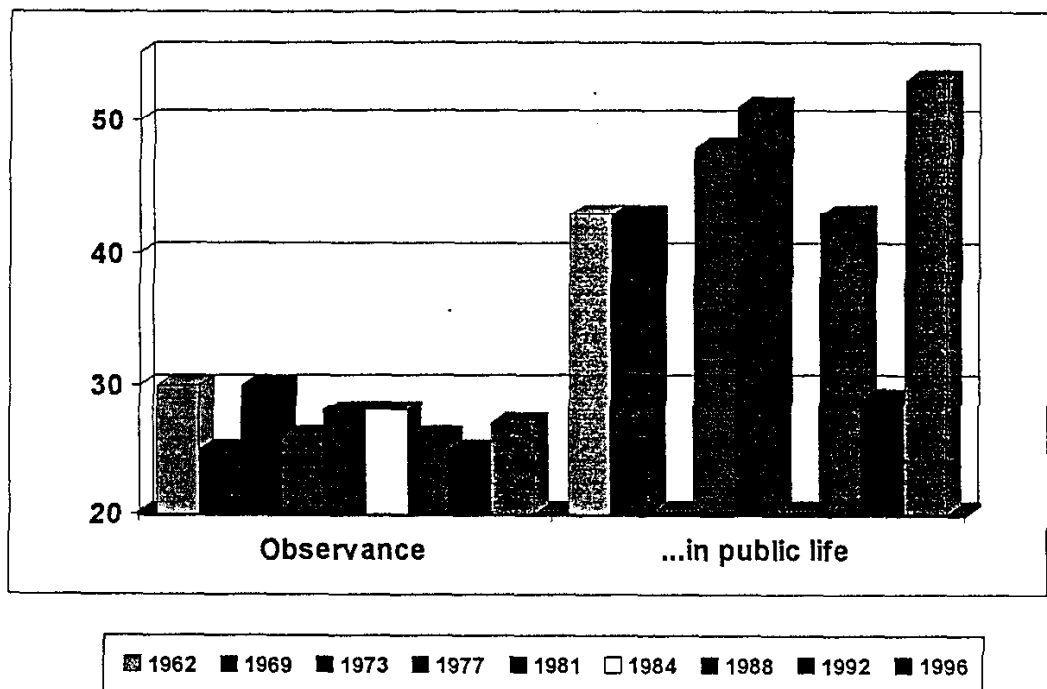


Figure 2. Identities, 1996

6. Respondents were asked whether they agreed (53%) or disagreed (47%) that public life in Israel be conducted in accord with Halacha (Jewish religious law) (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Religious Observance and the Role Of Religion in Public Life
1962-1996



7. When the Halacha and democracy are in conflict, whether they supported Halacha (28%) or decisions arrived at democratically (55%); (17% middle position).

8. Whether they agreed (43%) or not (43%) to return territories for peace (14% middle position).

9. Whether respondents agreed (22%) or not (67%) to stop the peace talks even if it meant war (11% middle position).

10. Whether they agreed (49%) or not (51%) to the establishment of a Palestinian state.

11. Whether they supported (63%) or did not support (37%) the Oslo agreements between Israel and the Palestine Authority.

12. Whether they agreed (43%) or disagreed (57%) to Arab parties participating in government coalitions.

13. Whether respondents supported (40%) or opposed (60%) giving Arab citizens the right to participate in decisions about the future of the territories and the state's borders.

14. Whether the government should (56%) or should not (44%) encourage Arabs to leave the country.

We performed an exploratory factor analysis on these items using principal components analysis and oblique (oblimin) rotation.⁶ Table 3 presents the results. The first column shows the first factor of the initial solution before rotation, in which the extracted factors are orthogonal to each other and the first factor accounts for as much variance as possible. This first factor accounted for 39 percent of the common variance (eigenvalue of 5.5). The rest of the factors accounted for a much smaller portion of the variance; the next two (not presented here) accounted for 9 and 8 percent of the variance respectively (eigenvalues of 1.3 and 1.1). The last three columns of the Table 3 present the three factors obtained in the final rotated solution which generated a simpler and more differentiated picture of the data.

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Table 3. Factor Analysis of Identity Indicators

Variable	Initial Solution (before rotation)	Final Oblique Solution (Pattern Matrix)		
	Factor 1	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
4. Greater Israel Priority	.66	.72	-.02	.02
8. Return Territories	.73	.77	-.08	.06
9. Stop Peace Process	.60	.72	.08	-.10
10. Palestinian State	.72	.68	.06	.11
11. Support Oslo Agreements	.75	.70	.06	.12
12. Arab Parties in Government	.66	.42	-.02	.36
13. Jewish Majority in Critical Decisions	.69	.41	.04	.39
14. Arab Emigration	.47	.40	-.28	.24
3. Democracy Priority	.59	.05	-.09	.72
5. Israeli or Jewish Identity	.53	.05	-.06	.64
6. Public Life According to Halacha	.58	.01	.27	.62
7. Priority of Democracy or Halacha	.65	.15	.08	.62
1. Jewish Majority Priority	.47	-.14	.77	.47
2. Peace Priority	.54	.52	.77	-.19

eigenvalue 5.5
% of variance 38.9

Factor Correlation Matrix

	Factor 2	Factor 3
Factor 1	.13	.51
Factor 2	—	.11

Both initial and rotated solutions provide important insights. The initial solution produced three factors with eigenvalues over 1.0, but it is clear that the first factor is dominant. It accounted for almost 40 percent of the common variance, much more than the following factors, and as can be seen in Table 3, almost all variables loaded highly on it. Indeed only two variables, the value priorities for peace and for Jewish majority obtained a higher loading on the second factor than on the first (not shown in Table 3: .60 for peace and .76 for Jewish majority). All the other variables loaded highest on the first joint factor. It is accordingly appropriate to speak of an overarching identity dimension which includes all the items, except for the preference for a Jewish majority and possibly also the peace priority.

The three factors obtained in the final oblique solution are shown in the next three columns in Table 3. The first and third factors embodied the two identity dimensions about which we hypothesized. The first factor was that of external identity, defined by issues of the Israeli-Arab conflict such as the peace process, the territories, a Palestinian state, the Oslo agreements and the value priority of greater Israel. All these items loaded highly on this factor and did not load on the other two. The third factor (in the last column), that of internal identity, included the primary identity of the respondent as Jewish or Israeli, the value priority of democracy, the preference for conducting public life according to religious law, and for the religious law versus democracy dilemma. This last dimension referred to identity in terms of citizenship, nationalism and religion. The two dimensions correlated strongly ($r=.51$), reiterating the previous interpretation of an overarching identity dimension.

The second factor was basically unrelated to the two other divisive identity factors; its correlations with them being .13 and .11, respectively. This second factor contained the two values of Jewish majority and peace, the two values which were most important for Israeli Jews according to most of our measurements over time and across techniques.⁷ These two values were ranked highest in the May 1996 survey, as was seen in Figure 1. Despite attempts to politicize these two values, they remained valence dimensions (Stokes,

1963). The right-wing parties tried to appropriate the Jewish state value, and the left parties adopted peace, but neither side was successful in monopolizing these values.

The three remaining questions could not be clearly identified as belonging to one factor, and did not load highly on any of them. Especially interesting are the questions which inquired about the participation of Arab citizens in the political process and in critical decisions. In 1992, for the first time in Israel's political history, Arab parties provided the difference needed by the parties of the Zionist left, Labor and Meretz, to prevent the right and religious parties from achieving a parliamentary majority. The significance of this situation was augmented by the bold initiatives undertaken by the Rabin government in achieving mutual recognition between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization. The right attacked Rabin for relying on these Arab parties for his coalition government and in the momentous political decisions that were taken. These dilemmas were also brought up in the debate over the required majority in proposed referendums over political settlements with Syria and with the Palestinians which might involve giving up territories. During the 1996 election campaign, the issue was raised most bluntly in the last minute campaign slogan "Bibi [Netanyahu] is good for the Jews."

The two questions on these issues loaded simultaneously and at a similar level on the two conflictual identity factors. The attitudes of Israeli Jews toward their fellow Arab citizens were related to both identity dimensions, to their understanding of what a Jewish state should be and to their position on the Israeli-Arab conflict. The question on the encouragement of Arab emigration followed a similar but not identical pattern. Note first that it is quite vague, and does not refer specifically to Israeli Arabs. It loads at similar low levels on all three factors, although the highest loading was on the first, external identity factor of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Of the three factors we obtained, one was that of the general ethos, the other two divisive, outlining the major conflict dimensions in Israeli politics. There was broad consensus within the Jewish public over the value of Israel as a Jewish state where the

Jews comprise the majority of the citizenry – the Zionist justification for the establishment of the state of Israel, and over the value of peace. The consensual nature of the first valence dimension in the 1996 election was best indicated by its not being on the campaign agenda in any meaningful way, as in other election campaigns (Herzog 1990). Peace was treated in the 1996 campaign as a classic valence dimension, presented by major parties and candidates as a desired goal; the debates related to the meaning of peace and about who would more effectively make it happen. The Likud's slogan of "Secure Peace" exemplifies this tendency.

The two major cleavage dimensions concerned external aspects of identity in terms of land, borders, and relations with Arab neighbors, and internal aspects of citizenship, nationhood and religion. These are clearly two separate dimensions, but they are strongly correlated. We have seen that these two conflict dimensions have grown in importance over time as determinants of the vote. In addition, religion became more and more intertwined with nationalism since 1967 due to the role of greater Israel in the legitimization of the Jewish state in religious terms, establishing the link between the people, their history, God, and the land. This had been a long-term process in public opinion and in politics which Gush Emunim and the National Religious party best exemplify. Fueled by the growing strength of the haredi (ultra-Orthodox, non-Zionist) camp, the schism along the internal identity dimension sharpened and its overlap with the external identity dimension and with the vote increased. The term "hardal" (literally mustard), an acronym for haredi and "leumi" (nationalist) captures this process within the religious sector, whereby national religious Jews grew closer to the haredim in their religious observance, and the non-Zionist ultra-orthodox community became more nationalistic on the Arab-Israeli conflict dilemmas.

As to the internal dimension, it is imperative to recount the role of the incumbent coalition government before the 1996 elections. When Labor came to power in 1992, the yearning for the secular in Israel was at a peak. In our June 1992 pre-election survey we found an unprecedented low percentage of respondents who supported public life

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according to Jewish religious tradition (less than 30% compared to around 50% in other surveys; see Figure 3). In 1996, this trend was reversed and support for public life according to Jewish religious law soared to the highest rate over the years (53% support). Survey reports of religious observance have been remarkably stable over the years, and the division between those who keep religious tradition to a high degree and those who do not, or do so only to a slight degree, has not changed significantly (see Figure 3). But in 1996 we saw significant changes within the non-religious sector: more respondents reported that they observed religious tradition a little rather than not at all (not shown here), and fewer defined themselves as fully secular. In 1996 the proportion was about 50:20, whereas over the years it was closer to 40:30.

These numbers reflect the demand for more "Jewishness" along the internal identity dimension after four years of left-wing Labor and Meretz government. This demand occurred not only among the more traditional and religious but within the non-religious sector of the population as well; while probably related to developments in the peace process, this surge obviously went beyond it.

IV. Internal and External Dimensions of Collective Identity

We constructed two scales based on the factor analysis, one using the dove-hawk external identity dimension with the five variables of the first factor in Table 5 (coefficient alpha .81), and the Israeli-Jewish internal identity dimension comprised of the four variables loading on the third factor (coefficient alpha .68). The distributions of these scales are presented in Figures 4 and 5. The external dimension scale (Figure 4) is skewed toward the dovish side (skewness of .3; kurtosis -.8); the internal dimension scale (Figure 5) generates a pattern quite close to a normal curve, with 0 skewness but no peak in the middle (kurtosis -1).

Each of these scales was very strongly related to the vote, with the external identity scale being the stronger predictor of the two. Cutting each of these scales at the median, 83 percent of the doves voted Peres, and 87 percent of the hawks voted Netanyahu ($\Phi=.69$). On the internal identity scale, the corresponding numbers were 74 percent for both categories ($\Phi=.48$). We expected to find a significant interaction between these two factors in the prediction of the vote, but none was found when we examined the data in tables based on the variables dichotomized as described, and using logistic regression analysis. The logistic regression model indicated that the external identity dimension had more impact on the vote than the internal identity dimension ($\exp(B)=21.0$, $R=0.32$ compared to $\exp(B)=4.1$ and $R=0.16$), and that we make more prediction errors among actual Netanyahu voters (21%) than among Peres voters (11%). Similar results obtain for Likud vs. Labor voters; here our predictions were even a bit worse: we missed 24 percent of Likud voters and 10 percent of Labor voters.

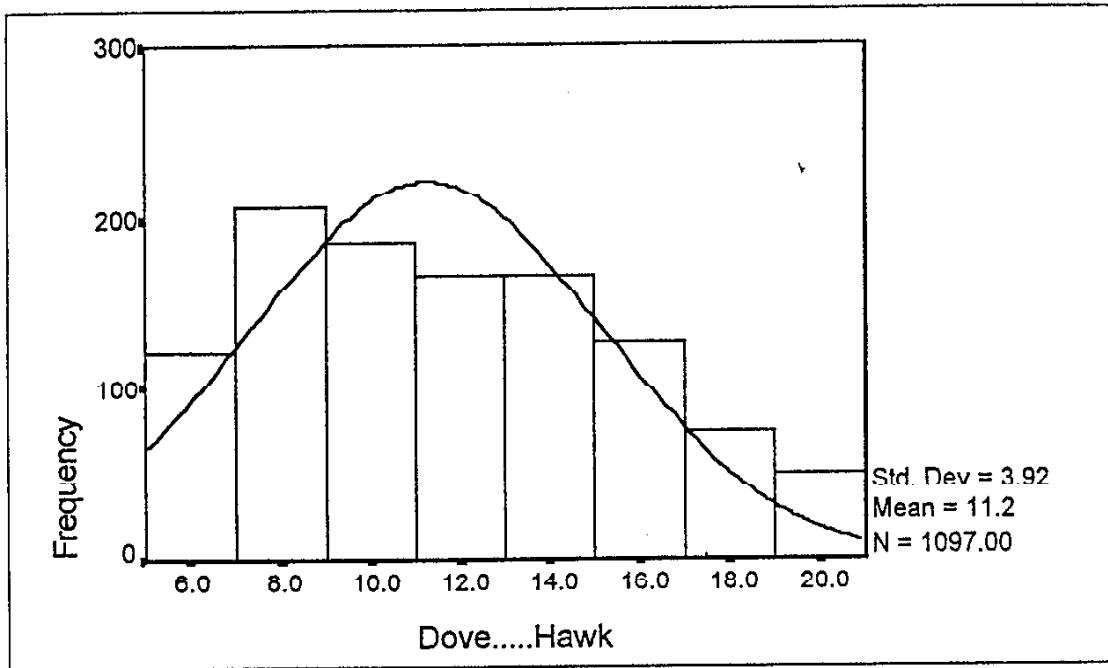


Figure 4. External Identity Scale Distribution

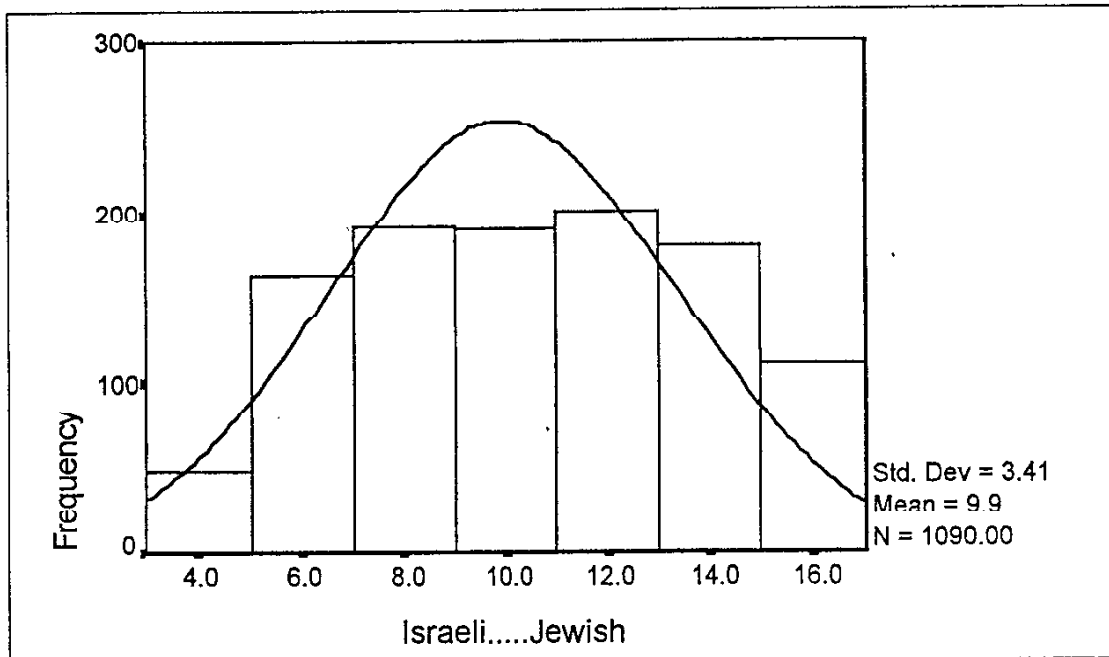


Figure 5. Internal Identity Scale Distribution

We focus now on the intersection of the two scales. We cut each of them into three, with the extremes representing a quarter to a third of the sample, and the middle category the rest. Their intersection generated nine scale types and they are displayed in Table 4. This provides a richer mapping of the attitudinal underpinnings of Israeli democracy than the single-dimension notions of dove-hawk or religious-secular. Of course the size of the groups is arbitrary since it was determined by our dividing the groups into relatively equal groups, but the intersection of the groups is of interest. The nuances here are all important. Using this convention, doves (scale types 1, 2, and 3) and hawks (scale types 7, 8, and 9) make up 30 percent each of the sample. Similarly, Israelis (scale types 1, 4, and 7), and Jews (scale types 3, 6, and 9) make up 27-28 percent of the sample. The size of the middle category of the external dimension (scale types 4, 5, and 6) is 40 percent, and the middle position of the internal dimension (scale types 2, 5, and 7) comprised 45 percent. The sizes of the categories in Table 4 indicate their strong interrelationship; the "consistent" categories are the largest (scale types 1, 5, and 9) and the "inconsistent" ones very small (categories 3 and 7).

Table 4. The Intersection of External and Internal Scale Types
(N = 1,168)

Scale Type	Sample Size (%)	External Scale Type	Internal Scale Type
1	18.3	Dove	Israeli
2	10.4	Dove	Middle
3	1.3	Dove	Jewish
4	8.2	Middle	Israeli
5	21.7	Middle	Middle
6	10.4	Middle	Jewish
7	1.9	Hawk	Israeli
8	12.9	Hawk	Middle
9	15.0	Hawk	Jewish

When we look into the different scale types by ethnicity (Table 5) and by religious observance (Table 6), the two social characteristics most significant politically, we find again differences along the two dimensions, but the more striking ones are along the internal identity dimension.⁸ This is especially so in the case of ethnicity. Within the Jewish categories (3, 6, 9 in Table 5) the ethnic proportions do change at all; within the other categories they vary, but less than when comparing the internal dimension categories. This is also the general pattern for religiosity (see Table 6).⁹ Doves and Israelis are by and large secular (observe religious tradition little or not at all). As we move down Table 6, the more hawkish and more Jewish types become more religious. The hawkish and Jewish categories are mixed; Jewish hawks are most observant. Even though the two more highly observant categories make up about a quarter of our sample, they make up two thirds of the hawkish Jewish category (9)!

Table 5. Ethnicity by Scale Type

Scale Type	Sephardim	Ashkenazim	Israel
1 DI	19%	59%	22%
2 DM	35%	49%	16%
3 DJ	62%	31%	8%
4 MI	33%	44%	23%
5 MM	45%	42%	13%
6 MJ	62%	27%	11%
7 HI	40%	50%	10%
8 HM	52%	31%	16%
9 HJ	58%	27%	15%

Key for Scale Types: For External Scale, H = Hawk, M = Middle, D = Dove
For Internal Scale, J = Jewish; M = Middle, I = Israeli.

Table 6. Religious Observance by Scale Type

Scale Type	Observe all	Observe most	Observe some	Do not observe
1 DI	1%	4%	48%	47%
2 DM	1%	11%	62%	26%
3 DJ	23%	8%	39%	31%
4 MI	0	9%	54%	37%
5 MM	4%	14%	64%	17%
6 MJ	14%	32%	51%	3%
7 HI	0	5%	65%	30%
8 HM	11%	18%	59%	13%
9 HJ	28%	37%	30%	5%

Key for Scale Types: For External Scale, H = Hawk, M = Middle, D = Dove
For Internal Scale, J = Jewish; M = Middle, I = Israeli.

IV. Identity Dimensions and Political Choice

The vote choices for prime minister and for the Knesset by scale type are reported in Table 7, and it is most revealing. Among the most hawkish respondents measured by the external identity scale (scale types 7, 8, and 9), the vast majority indicated they intended to vote for Netanyahu, and among those who chose either Likud or Labor, these hawks went overwhelming for the Likud irrespective of their internal scale position. The numbers are astounding. The Likud vote in this category varied between 93 to 96 percent, and the vote for Netanyahu between 88 and 96 percent. The mirror image is obtained among the third most dovish voters. Between 88 to 98 percent of them voted for Labor rather than Likud, and between 92 and 97 percent for Peres. The external identity dimension drove these two extreme groups of respondents. Moving along the internal identity dimension makes a difference, but only a marginal one. The middle category is much more interesting in this context because both identity dimensions mattered. Indeed, scale type 5 voters, the middle-middle category comprising of more than one-fifth of the sample, split their vote just about in half. It is clear that the external identity dimension is still dominant, and the internal one matters mainly among those who are not determined on this issue dimension. It is important to reiterate though that they comprise a large portion of the Jewish electorate. The opposite is not true; i.e. within each internal identity category, including the middle one, external identity matters, and to a similar degree.

Table 8 indicates the degree of polarization of the 1996 Knesset vote in terms of these two dimensions.¹⁰ Almost all of the doves voted the left (Meretz) and Labor, and almost all of the hawks voted for the Likud, and religious parties and those of the right. The highest concentration of "no decision" responses was among those with a middle position on the external dimension. This was the group targeted by the Likud with their appeal of a "secure peace."

In 1992, the small right and left parties provide a mirror image: Basically only doves voted for the left, and among them, most pronouncedly Israeli doves.¹¹ Similarly, mostly

hawks voted for the small parties of the right, and among them again most often Israeli hawks. The pattern is similar for both right and left parties, but sharper for the left, as we also find voters for the right among the middle categories on the external scale, and the middle and Jewish hawkish categories. The Likud and Labor votes were structured more by the external than by the internal identity dimension, but here the internal dimension differences were most pronounced for the middle category (4, 5, and 6). Only for the religious parties was the more dominant dimension the internal one, but here too both mattered.

Table 7. Choice of Netanyahu and Likud by Scale Type

Scale Type	% Netanyahu	% Likud
1 DI	3%	2%
2 DM	7%	12%
3 DJ	8%	8%
4 MI	28%	36%
5 MM	48%	47%
6 MJ	69%	66%
7 HI	88%	93%
8 HM	89%	95%
9 HJ	96%	96%

Key for Scale Types: For External Scale, H = Hawk, M = Middle, D = Dove

For Internal Scale, J = Jewish; M = Middle, I = Israeli.

Note: Based only on total Netanyahu or Peres choices, and total Likud and Labor choices. The complement of the percentages for Netanyahu and Likud are for Peres and Labor, respectively. Other responses not included.

Table 8. The 1996 and 1992 Votes by Scale Type

A. 1996

Scale Type	Left	Labor	Likud	Religious	Right	No Decision
1 DI	20%	75%	2%	0	0	3%
2 DM	10%	69%	10%	1%	0	11%
3 DJ	0	92%	8%	0	0	0
4 MI	3%	47%	25%	0	0	26%
5 MM	0	42%	37%	4%	1%	16%
6 MJ	1%	23%	44%	16%	0	16%
7 HI	0	5%	68%	0	5%	21%
8 HM	0	4%	76%	6%	5%	9%
9 HJ	0	3%	62%	16%	6%	13%

B. 1992

Scale Type	Left	Labor	Likud	Religious	Right	No Vote in 1992
1 DI	30%	67%	2%	0	3%	8%
2 DM	11%	68%	8%	1%	2%	10%
3 DJ	8%	54%	8%	8%	0	23%
4 MI	3	44%	19%	0	10%	25%
5 MM	1%	43%	29%	7%	9%	12%
6 MJ	1%	22%	38%	18%	8%	12%
7 HI	0	21%	32%	0	42%	5%
8 HM	2%	11%	39%	10%	17%	21%
9 HJ	1%	6%	43%	20%	15%	15%

Key for Scale Types: For External Scale, H = Hawk, M = Middle, D = Dove
 For Internal Scale, J = Jewish; M = Middle, I = Israeli.

Thermometer questions provide additional understanding of the relationship of the identity dimensions to politics. Respondents are asked to indicate on a scale from 0 to 10 their hate or love (rejection or attraction) of various subjects. This procedure was applied to the Likud and Labor (Figure 6), to Netanyahu, Peres, and Rabin (Figure 7), and to Meretz and the "religious" (Figure 8).

The average score for the Likud was 5.9, and 5.8 for Labor, indicating attraction. This was also true for Netanyahu (5.7) and Peres (6.3). The slain Rabin's score (7.6) was very high, and his score was higher than Netanyahu's for all respondents except for the three hawkish groups. The scale types do not form an interval scale, yet we can see that as they are presented here they come very close to generating a smooth progression in terms of the attraction of political groups and leaders, reiterating the dominance of the external identity scale over the internal one, and their ordering within each of the dimensions. Most thermometer scores generated almost straight lines, and the Likud-Labor and Netanyahu-Peres thermometer scores intersected just about in the middle category.

Meretz, the left-wing pro-peace and anti-clerical party, and the major coalition partner of the Labor party in the 1992-6 government, had an average of 4.1. Its array was also linear, indicating that assessment of it was more on the external dimension than on the internal one. We asked about the "religious" as a general cue, and not about the religious parties, and they obtained an average thermometer score of 4.8. Here the internal dimension carried more weight and the pattern in Figure 8 deviated most from linearity: within each external dimension category, there was increasing attraction of the religious as one moved from the Israeli toward the Jewish type. This relationship differed though in magnitude, and was weakest and least consistent among the doves, and strongest among the hawks. All dovish and all Israeli groups (1, 2, 3, 4, 7) felt weak levels of attraction toward the religious, and at similar levels; they were by far most liked by the Jewish hawks. The interaction between the thermometer scores of Meretz and the religious was more

complex, the lines intersected twice, and the interesting results were of course those for the middle categories.

Our argument is that it is important to conceptualize Israeli politics in terms of the full spectrum of the dimensions of collective identity that we have discussed, and not just in terms of the extreme dovish and hawkish positions. It is the overlap of the external and internal dimensions which drove the 1996 elections, but as we have seen, the degree of this overlap has shifted in the past (as viewed in the analysis of the 1992 vote) and may shift again in the future. While we cannot predict the future, we must be impressed with the consistent patterns that have been dominant in Israeli electoral development.

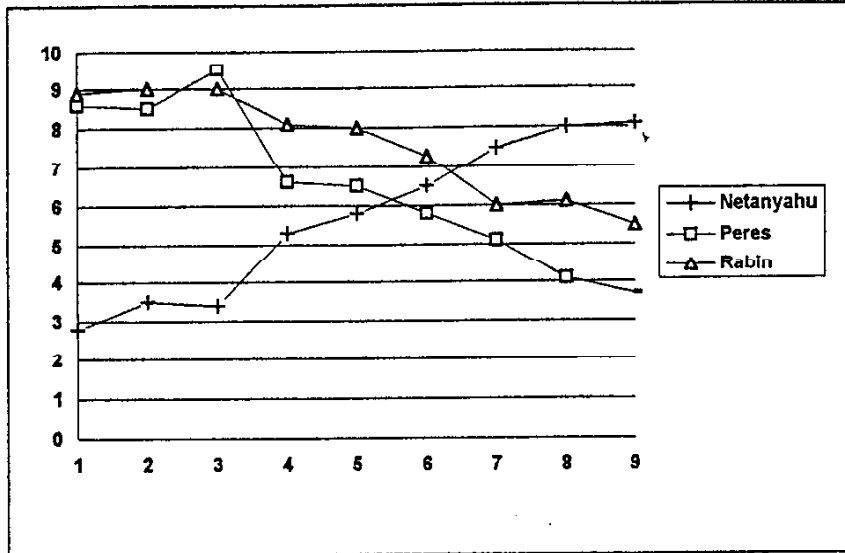


Figure 6. Means for Netanyahu, Peres and Rabin by Scale Type (0 = rejection, 10 = attraction)

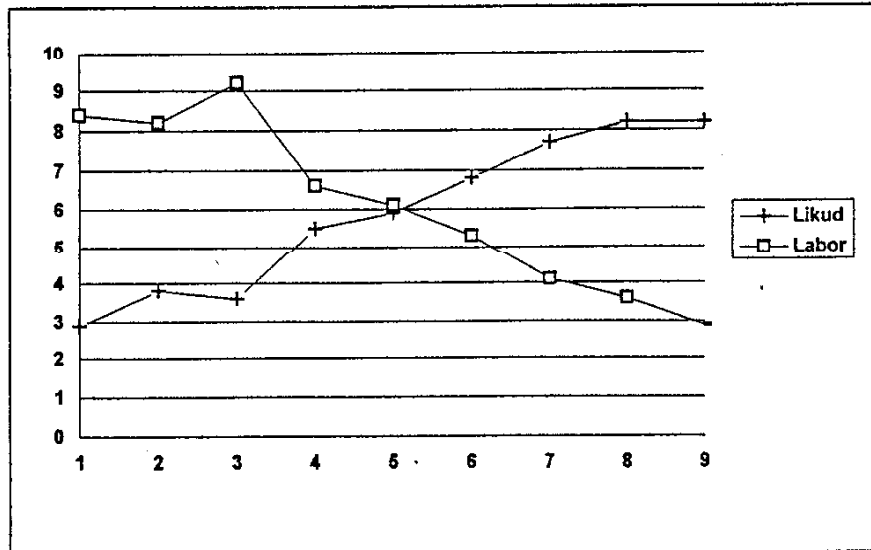


Figure 7. Means for Likud and Labor by Scale Type (0 = rejection, 10 = attraction)

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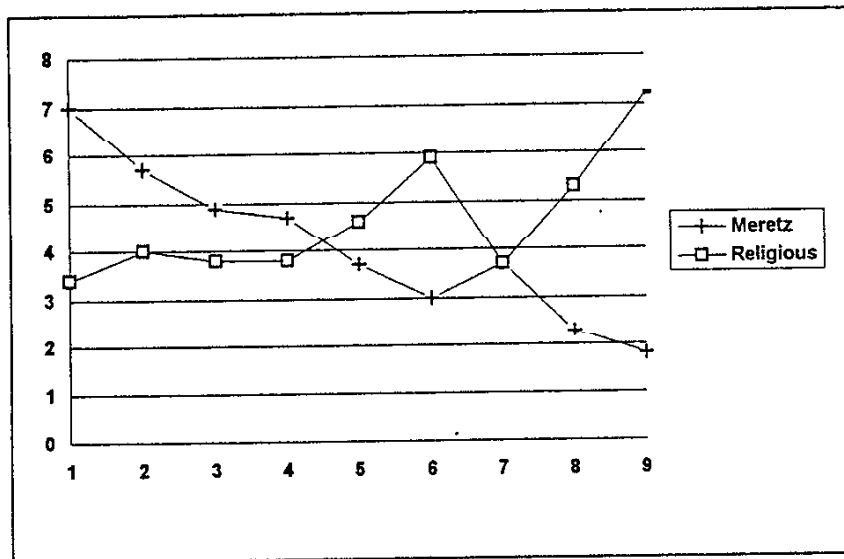


Figure 8. Means for Meretz and Religious by Scale Type
(0 = rejection, 10 = attraction)

V. Summary

We started our exploration from the perspective of electoral politics in advanced industrial democracies, but with the expectation that the Israeli case could further enlighten our general understanding of the relationship between social and issue cleavages and electoral behavior. If in most countries issue voting has risen while social cleavages have declined in their ability to account for voting patterns, and on the overall our ability to explain the vote has decreased, only the first of these generalizations applies to Israel. While various countries may be at different phases of development at different times, we see the major source for variance in cross-national analysis, based on these data, in the nature of the issues on the agenda.

As in these other countries, issues have become more important in structuring the vote in Israel over time, and the issues of relevance are those involving *identity dilemmas*. These entangle issues and social group allegiances, reinforcing existing social cleavage structures. We therefore find no decline in the vote structuring potential of social cleavages, nor a general decrease in the explanation of the vote, observed in other advanced industrial democracies.

Internal and external collective identity concerns were dominant in the 1996 prime minister and Knesset elections, and we investigated their meaning, their considerable overlap and their translation into political choices. Only by exploring the full spectrum of *these two dimensions and their interrelationship can we discern the complex pattern of consensus and dissensus characterizing current Israeli politics and the last election*. The overlap of the dimensions, accentuated in the Prime Minister race, as in Rabin's assassination earlier, brings out dissensus and polarization. But the distribution of opinion preferences, like the *electoral competition courting the voters and structured by these opinion distributions*, point toward consensus somewhere in the heavily populated middle categories of our scales, where peace and the Jewish state carry the day.

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Notes

¹ Each was a pre-election survey based on a representative sample of the adult urban Jewish population collected through face-to-face interviews in the respondent's home. The surveys for 1969 and 1973 were conducted by the Israel Institute of Applied Social Research; those between 1977 and 1992 by the Dahaf Research Institute, and the 1996 survey by Modi'in Ezrachi. The surveys were supervised by Asher Arian, and since 1988, in collaboration with Michal Shamir.

² Thanks to Fanny Yuval who prepared the data for the runs.

³ The survey was conducted during May 1996 in face to face interviews among a representative sample of voters conducted by the Modi'in Ezrachi Research Institute, funded by the Sapir Center for Development of Tel Aviv University and the Israel Democracy Institute. The questionnaire was prepared and the data analyzed by the authors.

⁴ This question format has been applied in several surveys since 1988 and produced a generally consistent picture as described. Another question (not used in the analysis) indicates that respondents indeed sense the value conflict: seventy percent agreed that Israel could not achieve all of these goals at once. For further details on the measurement procedure, its logic, validation and substantive results, see Shamir and Arian, 1994; Shamir and Shamir, 1993, 1995, 1996.

⁵ These results strongly support the interpretation that the widespread Knesset vote for religious, Russian and Arab parties was the result of the changed electoral system and not indicative of a disintegration of Israeli Jewish society.

⁶ We used oblique rather than orthogonal rotation because we hypothesized that the different factors are related.

⁷ The priority for peace also loads on the external identity (first) factor, and the priority for Jewish majority also loads on the internal identity (third) factor. But both of these loadings are much lower than those on the consensual (second) factor.

⁸ The sample was composed of 43% Sephardim, 41% Ashkenazim, and 16% born in Israel.

⁹ The sample was composed of 9% who reported observing all, 17% observe most, 53% observe some, and 21% who do not observe.

¹⁰ The sample reported the following 1996 vote: left 5%, Labor 38%, Likud 36%, religious 6%, right 2%, and no decision 13%.

¹¹ The sample reported the following 1992 vote: left 8%, Labor 36%, Likud 25%, religious 8%, right 10%, and no vote 14%.

Appendix — Table A1
 Logistic Regressions; Right-Left, 1981-1996*

	N=1240 1981/3		N=1259 1984/7		N=873 1988/10		N=1192 1992/6		N=1168 1996/5	
	Exp (B)	R	Exp (B)	R	Exp (B)	R	Exp (B)	R	Exp (B)	R
Socio-Demographic										
Age	0.23	-0.05	0.87	-0.10	0.89	-0.09	0.87	-0.11	0.91	-0.07
Gender	0.55	-0.07							0.55	-0.10
Density	1.43	0.07	1.34	0.03	1.54	0.08			1.58	0.09
Education					0.64	-0.09	0.76	-0.07	0.79	-0.06
Income									1.15	0.04
Religiosity	0.51	-0.22	0.52	-0.18	0.44	-0.22	0.36	-0.27	0.31	-0.29
Ethnicity	0.53	-0.07	0.19	-0.27	0.68	-0.05	0.44	-0.13	0.56	-0.09
	N=723**	67%***	N=676	74%	N=596	71%	N=821	72%	N=771	73%
Socio-Demographic + Issues										
Age	0.54	-0.07					0.90	-0.06	0.59	-0.06
Gender	1.38	0.06			1.50	0.05			1.64	0.07
Education					0.63	-0.07	0.68	-0.09		
Income										
Religiosity	0.59	-0.15	0.55	-0.13	0.51	-0.14	0.47	-0.15	0.42	-0.17
Ethnicity	0.55	-0.09	0.19	-0.21			0.45	-0.11	0.57	-0.07
Territories	1.85	0.19	2.93	0.34	3.66	0.39	3.05	0.38	3.74	0.36
Socio-economic	0.70	-0.11	0.38	-0.18	0.51	-0.18	0.68	-0.09	0.79	-0.04
State-religion	0.80	-0.08	n.a.				0.75	-0.07	0.69	-0.11
	N=682	70%	N=610	83%	N=536	86%	N=750	82%	N=758	81%
Socio-Demographic + Issues + Performance										
Age										
Gender					1.85	0.08			1.51	0.04
Density					0.65	-0.05	0.70	-0.05		
Education										
Income										
Religiosity			0.56	-0.10	0.62	-0.08	0.45	-0.13	0.46	-0.12
Ethnicity			0.17	-0.19			0.41	-0.09	0.56	-0.05
Territories			2.71	0.27	3.42	0.34	2.51	0.27	2.92	0.25
Socio-economic			0.39	-0.15	0.54	-0.14	0.71	-0.05		
State-Religion									0.78	-0.05
Performance - Economic	n.a.		3.20	0.21	2.17	0.14	1.96	0.11	2.52	0.17
Performance - Foreign + Security			1.76	0.08	2.91	0.18	4.51	0.23	1.60	0.19
	N=603	87%	N=603	87%	N=527	88%	N=740	88%	N=751	89%

* Dependent variable vote for left/right bloc; In 1996 Peres/Netanyahu. Only significant coefficients $p \leq .05$.

** Effective sample size.

*** Total % correct predictions.

