

# **Kadima – Forward in a Dealigned Party System**

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### I. Introduction

At a press conference held on November 21, 2005, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon announced the formation of a new party, initially called “National Responsibility”, but later renamed "Kadima" ("Forward" or "Onward" in Hebrew). On that same day he resigned from Likud and asked President Moshe Katsav to dissolve the Knesset. Sharon thus set in motion the process leading to early elections in March, and launched the long-rumored "Big Bang".

The background to this dramatic move was multifaceted. The short-term triggers were the loss of Labor as a coalition partner following the surprise victory of Amir Peretz over Shimon Peres in the Labor primaries for the head of the party just eleven days before, and Sharon's difficulties with rebels in his own Likud party. Just two weeks before his move Sharon was unable to get approval by the Knesset for several ministerial appointments he wished to make. Likud MKs joined the opposition in voting against his proposal, a vote which was a source of frustration and personal humiliation for Sharon. Sharon's difficulties within his party were evident from the moment he decided on the disengagement agenda for the Gaza Strip.

The "Big Bang" however, is more properly linked to the stagnation of the Israeli party system and its Left and Right camps. A pervasive argument was that the major political parties had lost their visions, and that, in terms used by political scientists, a realignment was long overdue. In an article published in *Yediot Aharonot* in March 2005, Haim Ramon suggested that there are three major ideological conceptions in today's Israel: the Right which is hawkish, conservative neo-liberal and supportive of the hegemony of the religious establishment; the Left which is dovish, socialist and for separation of the secular and religious; and the Center - which is pragmatic in the area of security and foreign affairs, supports unilateral separation from the Palestinians, and is middle-of-the-road in terms of economics and state-religion issues (Yediot Aharonot, 4.3.2005). True to this logic, Ramon anticipated the establishment of a new central movement that would include most of Labor, the new pragmatic Likud, and much of Shinui. It is not surprising to learn that Ramon was one of the leaders of the founding of this type of party.

After Kadima's establishment, many political pundits and politicians attributed its appeal to Sharon's popularity and deemed it opportunistic, non-ideological, inconsistent and vague on policy -- the creation of public relations spins and the brainchild of political consultants (e.g. Eldar, *Haaretz*, 28.11.2005; Lam, *Yediot*

Aharonot, 31.3.2006; Sternhall, Haaretz, 10.2.2006, 23.2.2006). Despite these criticisms, leading figures from Likud and Labor, as well as non-political figures, were anxious to join Kadima; some out of a sense of identification with Sharon's middle-of-the-road policy path, and others in response to the promising prospects of the party demonstrated by the public opinion surveys.

In December 2005 Sharon suffered a mild stroke, followed in January 2006 by a major cerebral hemorrhage, which left him incapacitated, and Deputy Prime Minister Ehud Olmert replaced him as the leader of Kadima. Sharon continued to be an integral part of Kadima's campaign,<sup>1</sup> and Kadima maintained its popularity. In the polls, its support increased even further, then declined in March, and on election day it obtained 690,901 votes, giving it 29 seats, significantly less than anticipated, but still outdistancing Labor, its closest competitor, by 10 seats.

This chapter focuses on the Kadima party in the electorate. The dense and dramatic events preceding the March 2006 election, from the Gaza disengagement in August 2005, through the establishment of Kadima in November, and the incapacitation of Sharon in January 2006, provide a unique setting for the study of the role of party attachment, leadership, ideology and policy positions in voters' considerations. We anchor our analysis in the concepts of realignment and dealignment, to which we now turn.

## **II. Party System Change**

There can be no doubt that the Israeli party system has undergone a dealignment process since the 1990's. Dealignment describes a general loosening of the ties between the society and the political parties in response to processes of social and political modernization (Dalton & Wattenberg, 2000). The weakening of the connections with political parties is a feature of all industrialized Western democracies and is a result of the declining role of parties as political institutions as well as changes in the electorate in recent decades, particularly the increase in the number of highly educated voters, the rise in living standards, and the expansion of political knowledge. In an age of abundant information and a better-educated public, coping with political problems is no longer limited to the party system, and alternatives to politicians and traditional parties become available. More and more citizens find political answers by turning to the media, and the parties' traditional function of serving as a communication channel is filled by other means.

One manifestation of the slackening party system was the instability of the election results, evident in the growing difficulty of accurately forecasting election results. As ties weakened, voter turnout declined, identification with the parties

decreased, and volatility grew. In addition, the tendency among voters to vote for a party other than the one with which they had identified in the past increased, the number of independents became larger, and the decision about which party to vote for was postponed to a later stage of the election campaign. Doubts about parties as political institutions grew and confidence in them sank. As party identification weakened, there was a rise in issue and one-issue voting, and in voting according to the performance of the party candidates, resulting in a fragmentation of the political party system, the disappearance of veteran parties, and the swift rise and fall of new parties in the political system (Crotty, 2006; Dalton, Flanagan & Beck, 1984; Dalton & Wattenberg, 2000; Webb, Farrell & Holliday et al., 2002).

A second concept used to analyze party system change is realignment. It refers to change in the cleavages underlying a party system on their three dimensions: their social structural bases, their value or collective identity characteristics, and their organizational expressions (Deegan-Krause, forthcoming). A realignment involves a shift in the traditional balance of power among parties, a reorganization of ideological and social coalitional bases of major parties, and shifting group alignments, which persist for several succeeding elections. A critical election or realigning set of elections are characterized by great and highly involved voter participation, increased ideological polarization and issue-distances among parties, the emergence of a new cleavage or substitution of one cleavage for another. After these critical elections, a new balance is in place and persists for several subsequent election campaigns (Burnham, 1970; Crotty, 2006; Key, 1955, 1959). The "Big Bang" discussed in Israeli politics in connection with Kadima is part of what a partisan realignment entails: it focuses on change in the party balance of power based on value and policy dimensions, and it also points to a long-term rather than temporary impact.

The weakening of the party system is a general phenomenon that is characteristic of Israel (Arian and Shamir, 2005). In Israel, the 1992 change in the Law of Direct Election for the Prime Minister may have been a catalyst in the acceleration of this trend (Arian and Shamir, 2002), but not its major source. The emergence of Kadima in the 2006 elections can be read either as another manifestation of dealignment or as an indication that the system has embarked on a process of realignment. In the next section we establish the dealignment features of the Israeli party system, further strengthened in the 2006 elections. After that, we analyze the support for Kadima from several perspectives, using various types of empirical data. In the concluding section we return to Kadima to determine whether its emergence and attendant activity were but temporary blips in the pattern of

dealignment in Israel or if they indicated a break with the past and were a sign of movement toward the realignment of the party system.

### **III. A Dealigned System**

#### **A. Electoral Volatility**

Kadima tapped into a growing predisposition on the part of Israeli voters to change their votes from one election to the next. This phenomenon is typical of voting behavior in many democracies (Dalton, McAllister and Wattenberg, 2000). A measure that assesses the extent of change in voters' behavior and in party fortunes is the index of electoral volatility, measuring the shift of votes between parties between one election and the next (Pedersen 1979). The electoral volatility index ranges between a score of 0, indicating lack of volatility between parties, and a score of 100, indicating full volatility.<sup>2</sup> Figure 1 presents electoral volatility in Israel since the end of the 1960s using three measures: volatility of political parties, volatility of political blocs, and individual-level volatility, measured on the basis of voters' report of their past and intended vote in the INES pre-election surveys.<sup>3</sup> All three measures point to the same pattern. The highest level of volatility is of individuals; the two aggregate measures computed for the Knesset parties and for political blocs are lower but follow a similar pattern. We see a trend of increasing volatility in the 1990's which peaked in the 2006 elections. It is also apparent that instability between parties within blocs has increased at a higher rate than between blocs, as the two lines grow farther apart. This pattern may be taken as further evidence of the erosion of party ties, but less of left-right bloc demarcations. Aggregate party instability reached the same level in the mid-nineties as in the 1977 realignment and by 2006 it exceeded it by 17.4 points. Bloc instability almost reached its 1977 high point in 2006 with individual-level switching reaching a higher level in 2006 than in the 1977 realignment (63 to 50 percent).

When direct elections for the prime minister were instituted in the 1996 elections, a rise in electoral volatility was recorded, but the combination of the three measures, as well as the longer time perspective afforded after the reform was annulled do not support the conclusion that this institutional reform was a major factor associated with this instability. In the 2006 elections, individual-level instability reached 63 percent and party instability rose to 42.7 percent – the highest ever. The rise of Kadima at the center of the political map, the decline in Likud's power, the disappearance of Shinui and the success of the Pensioners' Party, are all signs of high electoral volatility. It is interesting to note that a comparative perspective demonstrates these levels of volatility as high but not exceptionally so. In terms of

party volatility Israel ranks in the upper third of 29 countries, compared in Mainwaring and Torcal (2006; see in Arian et al., 2006, Figure 44, p. 75).

Figure 1

## **B. Weakening Party Attachment**

The diminishing attachment on the part of voters to political parties is a major aspect of dealignment. This weakened attachment is most beneficial to a new party such as Kadima. This quality is characteristic of the Israeli party system as it is of other countries in which the party system is waning. (Wattenberg, 1998; Dalton, 2000).

A prominent measure of the parties' strength and functions is the number of their supporters, members, and activists. Party membership was once considered to be significant for many reasons, the primary one being the need for fundraising. Members' dues were vital to ensure the party's existence and its organizational renewal. In the course of time, income from membership dues dropped drastically and in 1973 the parties promoted the Political Parties (Financing) Law which became an alternative source of funds. Political parties had in the past provided many important services for their members: housing, health, education, cultural services, and mediation between their members and state institutions. Parties had activists, members, and many supporters, but the numbers eventually dwindled and the attraction of political parties progressively dimmed. Over time, we find a long-standing and moderate trend of detachment from the parties. More and more people profess no support for any specific party and are not active in, nor are they members of, any party. Based on INES data for Jewish respondents<sup>4</sup> in 1969, 58% indicated that they supported a specific party or were active in or members of a party, whereas in the 2000s, their number dropped to about 40%. The rate of respondents who indicated they were party members but were not active also dropped sharply: from a height of 18% in 1969 to 16% in 1973, to 8-10% in 1981 through 1996, and to 5-7% in 1999, 2003, and 2006 (Arian et al., 2006, p. 82).

Data from CSES<sup>5</sup> allow us to compare the electorate's closeness to parties over the last decade, and they indicate a similar trend. These surveys posed two relevant questions: "In general, do you see yourself close to a particular party?" and "How close do you feel to the party you indicated?" The answers to these questions were obtained in three post-election surveys in 1996, 2003, and 2006, and the data point to a drop in citizens' identification with political parties, suggesting a weakening of the party structure in general. In 1996, 64% saw themselves close to a party; in 2003 – 62%, and in 2006 – only 54%. Out of those, 37% felt very close to a party in 1996, dropping to 28% in 2003 and to 24% in 2006.

### **C. Disaffection**

The skeptical attitude that many Israelis have developed toward the parties and toward the Knesset was another factor that made Sharon's break with his Likud party attractive to many. The low and declining trust in the parties and the legislature, and a propensity to indifference toward them, are once again not unique to Israel (see Arian et al., 2006, p. 78; Norris, 1999; Pharr & Putnam, 2000; Sapanov, 2002). The trust of the Israeli public in the parties and in the Knesset is not high, and it is ranked lowest in a series of surveyed political institutions (Arian et al. 2006, figure 18, p. 41). According to surveys of the Israel Democracy Institute, only 22 percent of respondents in 2006 stated that they trust political parties to a large extent or to some degree, similar to a 2005 rate, but lower than the rates of 27 percent and 32 percent respectively observed in 2003 and 2004. In 2006, 42 percent indicated they do not trust political parties at all, and 36 percent had little trust in them.

Political corruption is a prominent factor in the public's attitude toward the parties. Revelations of corruption during the previous Knesset term, together with the ensuing legal discussions and decisions created a growing sense of unease toward the political system among many voters. In the 2006 Israel Democracy Institute survey, 62 percent felt that the system was corrupt to a large extent, and only nine percent thought that the extent of corruption was small or non-existent. Furthermore, the public thought that a political career meant renouncing integrity: 49 percent of respondents noted that getting to the top in politics requires one to be corrupt. Respondents also thought that politicians do not keep their promises: only 17 percent agreed with the statement: "The politicians we elect try to keep the promises they made in the election campaign."

In sum, skeptical attitudes toward the parties are endemic to Israeli politics and have increased over time. The evidence points to increasing distrust of political parties and politicians' promises. This atmosphere worked to the advantage of Kadima, although in the final days of the campaign it seemed to benefit the Pensioners' Party.

## **IV. The Support for Kadima in 2006**

### **A. Voters Attracted to Kadima: The Role of Sharon, Policy, and Party Identification**

Kadima attracted most of its votes from those who had previously voted for three parties: Likud, Labor, and Shinui. Our INES post-election survey in April 2006<sup>6</sup>

revealed that 42 percent of the Kadima vote came from voters who had selected Likud in 2003, 23 percent from past Labor voters and 17 percent from Shinui. New voters made up only four percent of Kadima's total. Most of the analysis in this section is based on a three-wave panel study conducted at three critical junctures: in July 2005, shortly before the Gaza disengagement; in December 2005, right after the establishment of Kadima and the announcement of early elections<sup>7</sup>; and in April 2006, following the elections.<sup>8</sup> This unique data set enables us to track voters, their attitudes, and their vote intentions from the period prior to the disengagement, through the establishment of Kadima and until after the elections. According to the December phase of this survey, 53 percent of respondents who revealed their 2006 vote intention, and who reported that they voted for Likud in 2003, 37 percent of 2003 Labor voters and 74 percent of Shinui voters said they would vote for Kadima. In the end, according to the April post-election survey, these figures were 31% of 2003 Likud voters, 27% of former Labor voters and 42% of Shinui voters. The bulk of the votes that Kadima lost in that period from former Likud voters went to the Pensioners' party. Most of the votes lost to Kadima from former Labor voters reverted to Labor, and many of the votes Kadima lost from former Shinui voters went to Israel Beiteinu (Avigdor Lieberman's party). Many of those in the last group were immigrants from the former Soviet Union. Moreover, comparing the characteristics of the respondents who stayed loyal to Kadima until election day with those who said in December that they intended to vote for Kadima but eventually voted for another party, we see that the former were those who better fit the profile of the typical Kadima voter, as we shall demonstrate.<sup>9</sup>

In the analysis below we focus on those Kadima voters whose previous choice was Likud, Labor, and Shinui-- the bulk of Kadima voters. When asked why they chose Kadima instead of their 2003 party in an open-ended question in the December survey, a wide variety of responses were collected and grouped according to the major reason offered (see Table 1). More than half of former Likud voters cited personal support for Ariel Sharon. Former Labor voters talked most often about Sharon's and Kadima's policy, and former Shinui voters pointed out their dissatisfaction with their former party and its leaders. It appears therefore, that the factors influencing former Likud and Labor voters to switch to Kadima were mainly "pull" factors, while former Shinui voters were more influenced by "push" factors (since their former party was no longer a viable electoral option).



Table 1. Major Reason Given for Voting Kadima<sup>1</sup> by 2003 Vote

	2003 Vote		
	Likud (N=88)	Labor (N=37)	Shinui (N=45)
Personal support for Ariel Sharon	56%	5%	9%
Positive performance evaluation of Sharon	3	19	9
Disappointment with former party or its leadership	16	22	55
Support for Kadima's candidates	3	11	4
Support for Kadima/Sharon's policies	7	32	7
Kadima is a better choice	8	8	2
Change in the public agenda	2	3	9
Other	5	-	5

<sup>1</sup> December 2005 survey

These data suggest the pivotal role of Sharon in propelling the defection to Kadima. Likud adherents pointed out their personal support for him (56%) and former Labor voters emphasized his policy and performance (51%). Whether these differences reflected actual differences or a form of expression, the first panel in Table 2 shows the high levels of evaluative and affective support for Sharon among all groups that supported him, as measured in July 2005, before Kadima was founded. We offer a comparison between five groups:<sup>10</sup> Loyal Likud voters; switchers from Likud to Kadima; loyal Labor voters; switchers from Labor to Kadima; and switchers from Shinui to Kadima. There is no group of loyal Shinui voters because there were almost no Shinui voters left by the end of 2005. Among those who had voted Likud in 2003 but later said they planned to vote Kadima, 18 percent said Sharon was the best Prime Minister Israel ever had. Among those who remained with Likud, only four percent chose Sharon. Among those who had voted Labor but said they would vote Kadima, 14 percent chose Sharon compared with three percent who chose Sharon among those who continued to vote Labor. Sharon's love-hate feeling thermometer means tell the same story: Support for Sharon seems to be the common denominator for those who selected Kadima.

Table 2. Voter Characteristics by Transition/Loyalty Groups, 2003 and 2006

2003 vote choice	Likud		Labor		Shinui
2006 vote choice	Kadima	Likud	Kadima	Labor	Kadima
Reaction to Ariel Sharon					
Mean Sharon thermometer score <sup>1 3 4</sup>	7.05	5.25	6.41	4.90	7.13
% seeing Sharon as the best PM in Israel's history <sup>1 4</sup>	18%	4%	14%	3%	11%
N	(101)	(48)	(37)	(60)	(46)
Major Factor Determining Vote Choice <sup>2 4</sup>					
Party identification	6%	23%	11%	26%	22%
Party's candidate for prime minister	52	45	51	16	33
Party's stand on certain issues	33	28	30	55	40
Status of party in coalition or opposition	9	4	8	3	5
N	(98)	(47)	(37)	(62)	(46)
Party Identification, Membership and Activity <sup>1 5</sup>					
Neither identifier nor active in any party	82%	83%	90 %	71%	85%
Identifier with a party but not a member	14	13	5	21	15
Party member (active/non-active)	4	4	5	8	-
N	(101)	(48)	(37)	(60)	(46)

<sup>1</sup> Questions asked in July 2005

<sup>2</sup> Question asked in December 2005

<sup>3</sup> Scale 1-10 (1 – hate; 10 – love)

<sup>4</sup> Differences between Likud loyalists and switchers and between Labor loyalists and switchers statistically significant (p<.05)

<sup>5</sup> Differences between Likud loyalists and switchers not statistically significant (p=.97); differences between Labor loyalists and switchers statistically significant at p=.08.

The critical role played by Sharon in the establishment and success of Kadima may also be understood by examining what supporters of Kadima coming from both Likud and Labor said was the most important factor that determined their vote compared to Likud and Labor loyalists. Over 50 percent in each group of these switchers said in December that they chose their party because of the candidate for the prime ministry (see second panel in Table 2). Loyal Likud voters were not much different (45 percent offered the same rationale), but those loyal to Labor were more likely to say that their voting choice was based on ideology (55 percent), and only 16 percent said that it was determined by the candidate for prime minister. A third of 2003 Shinui voters chose the candidate for prime minister as the determining factor of their vote.

Likud and Labor loyalists also mentioned party identification as the factor determining their vote more often than Likud and Labor deserters, although they amounted only to about a quarter of each group (23 and 26 percent respectively). A better basis for assessing the role of party identification in electoral behavior in 2006 is provided by examining the distinction between respondents defining themselves as party members, activists or identifiers (see last panel in Table 2). Among 2003 Likud voters, party identification did not matter at all in determining their support for Kadima in December, but among 2003 Labor voters 21 percent of those who remained loyal

to Labor defined themselves as identifiers compared to only 5 percent of the switchers to Kadima ( $p=.08$ ).

Further support for this difference between Labor and Likud with regard to support for Kadima is obtained from an open-ended question we asked in the December 2005 survey about the political atmosphere in the home in which the respondent grew up. In Table 3 we can see that many of those who chose Kadima after having voted Likud in 2003 identified their home environment as committed to one of the parties that made up the Likud (41 percent), more than among those who remained loyal to the Likud (13 percent). By contrast, those who remained loyal to Labor were more likely to label their home as committed to constituent parties of Labor than those who switched to Kadima (38 and 18 percent respectively). Although based on small N's and not statistically significant, these results reinforce those in Table 2 to suggest that party identification was still of significance in determining vote intention for Laborites but not for Likudniks.

Table 3. The Political Environment at Home<sup>1</sup> by Transition/Loyalty Groups

Former vote choice Present vote choice	Likud		Labor		Shinui
	Kadima	Likud	Kadima	Labor	Kadima
Socialist, Communist	13%	6%	11%	9%	7%
Left, radical left, moderate left	4	19	39	35	14
Labor, Alignment, Mapai	8	12	18	38	25
Center, center-left, center-right	10	-	11	6	7
Liberal, Bourgeois	-	-	-	-	11
Likud, Herut, Beitar	41	13	11	6	7
Right, radical right, moderate right	16	31	-	-	18
Religious, National Religious	-	6	5	3	4
Other	8	13	5	3	7
N	(51)	(16)	(18)	(32)	(28)

<sup>1</sup> December 2005 survey.

Chi square test for full table statistically significant  $p<.01$ ; former vote choice Likud only:  $p=.12$ ; former vote choice Labor only:  $p=.40$ .

The self-reports of switchers to Kadima (Table 1) seemed to indicate that for 2003 Likud voters Sharon himself was the major factor rather than policy, whereas for 2003 Labor voters Sharon's policy and performance were what mattered. However when we examine the ideological and policy underpinnings of the move to Kadima in greater depth, by means of further comparisons of Likud and Labor loyalists and switchers to Kadima, a different picture emerges.

Based on cross-sectional survey data usually used in election studies, it is difficult to ascertain the role voters' attitudes play in electoral shifts, given the

likelihood of voters' adopting the positions of the new party to which they have shifted for other reasons. Our panel design offers information on a respondent's attitudes espoused in July 2005, before the establishment of Kadima, and even before the implementation of the Gaza disengagement. We can therefore confidently establish the role of policy positions in voters' transition to Kadima. Even though only few of the Likud switchers to Kadima attributed their move to policy considerations, Table 4 shows that they were significantly different from Likud loyalists in their attitudes on security and foreign policy issues, with differences reaching 30-40 percentage points on some items. Compared with Likud voters who remained with Likud, Likud switchers to Kadima were more inclined to remove settlements, to support the unilateral disengagement, and to believe that it was possible to reach an agreement with the Arabs. They were also more moderate in their assessment of the aspirations of the Arabs and more willing to compromise on the Golan Heights (although these two differences are statistically significant only at  $p=.09$  and  $.08$  respectively).

Table 4. Voter issue positions<sup>1</sup> by transition/loyalty groups

2003 vote	Likud		Labor		Shinui
2006 vote	Kadima	Likud	Kadima	Labor	Kadima
1. No settlement evacuation whatsoever	18%	52%	14%	13%	9%
Evacuate only small and isolated settlements	60	33	51	43	50
All settlements should be evacuated	22	15	35	44	41
2. Should not return any part of the Golan Heights	59	75	30	29	35
Return only a small part	26	21	35	20	43
Return a significant part	15	4	35	51	22
3. Support the disengagement plan	76	31	92	92	95
4. Arabs aspire to conquer all of Israel	60	71	22	28	46
5. Not possible to achieve peace agreement with the Palestinians	59	77	33	34	47
6. Government should see to it that public life is conducted according to Jewish tradition	54	60	30	41	36
7. Capitalist (rather than socialist) economic structure	51	57	38	36	58
N	(100)	(48)	(37)	(61)	(46)

<sup>1</sup> July 2005 survey

All chi square tests for Labor loyalists and switchers non-significant. For Likud loyalists and switchers, questions 1, 3 and 5 –  $p<.05$ ; question 2:  $p=.08$ ; question 4:  $p=.09$ ; questions 6 and 7 non-significant.

Labor voters who shifted their support to Kadima did not differ significantly in their security and foreign affairs positions from those who continued to support Labor. The two Labor groups were similar in their support of the disengagement plan, in their belief in a settlement with the Palestinians, and in the degree of outright opposition to compromise (although more Labor loyalists compared to Labor deserters supported wide scale territorial compromise in the West Bank and the Golan Heights, but these differences were not statistically significant). Kadima voters from Shinui were more similar to Kadima voters who came from Labor than to those who came from Likud.

There were no significant differences between Likud switchers and loyalists and between Labor switchers and loyalists in terms of a socio-economic viewpoint, although Labor-Labor voters were more likely to identify themselves as strong supporters of socialism (47%) compared to the Labor voters who shifted to Kadima (35%; not shown in table). In terms of state-religion relations, Kadima switchers from both Likud and Labor espoused somewhat more secular points of view than loyalists, although these differences were not statistically significant.

As to socio-demographic characteristics, there were no significant differences between those loyal to the party and those who defected by age, ethnic origin, gender and education. Two differences are worth noting however. Among loyal Likud voters 14 percent reported being religiously observant, compared to three percent among those who switched to Kadima (statistically significant at  $p=.09$ ). Among loyal Labor voters, 29 percent reported a living density higher than one person per room, compared with only 14 percent among Labor switchers to Kadima (statistically significant at  $p=0.08$ ).

Given these results, the most interesting questions relate to the impact of party identification, issue positions and affect toward Sharon on voters' decision to remain loyal or desert their party in favor of Kadima. Table 5 presents multivariate analyses allowing for more incisive scrutiny of electoral choice and changes during the campaign. We performed binary logistic regression analysis separately for past Labor and past Likud voters to assess the combined effect of (1) Sharon's evaluation, (2) attitudes in the areas of security and foreign affairs, social-economic policy and state-religion relations, and (3) party identification on their vote intention in December 2005 and in their actual vote as they reported it in the post-election (April 2006) survey.<sup>11</sup>

The upper panel of Table 5 displays the results for 2003 Likud voters. The major factors that distinguish Likud loyalists from Likud switchers to Kadima are their evaluation of Sharon and their policy position in the area of security and foreign affairs (indicated in the model by their position on the evacuation of settlements. Both

effects are bigger in April than in December, and this increase is most striking with regard to the voters' policy position. In other words, in the end, when it came to the actual vote, policy mattered more than at an earlier stage, and it mattered more than affect toward Sharon.<sup>12</sup> None of the other variables reached standard levels of statistical significance, however it is worth noting that two more variables grew in importance in April and reached a level of statistical significance of .11: party identification and the voter's position on state-religion relations. While not statistically significant under commonly used criteria, there is an indication that among past Likud voters, those less strongly identified with the party were more likely to actually desert it (even though in December there was no sign that party identification made any difference – b was .20 and non-significant). The same was true of those holding a more secular position on the state-religion dilemma. But above all, more dovish voters, and voters with greater sympathy toward Sharon, were the ones to switch to Kadima.

Table 5. Logistic Regression for Labor and Likud loyalists and Kadima switchers

	December 2005		April 2006	
	b	(SE)	b	(SE)
<b>2003 Likud voters</b>				
Party attachment	0.20	(0.57)	-1.57	(0.97)
Sharon affect	0.19*	(0.08)	0.26*	(0.13)
Evacuate settlements	0.78*	(0.35)	1.94**	(0.69)
Oppose Halakha in public life	0.08	(0.21)	0.60	(0.37)
Support socialist over capitalist approach	0.20	(0.18)	0.28	(0.30)
Constant	-2.70*	(1.23)	-5.00*	(2.24)
N		(130)		(68)
LL		-70.5		-29.7
Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup>		.18		.48
Chi Square (significance)		17.8 (.003)		28.9 (<.001)
<b>2003 Labor voters</b>				
Party attachment	-0.57	(0.70)	-0.88	(0.96)
Sharon affect	0.16	(0.10)	0.17	(0.16)
Evacuate settlements	-0.19	(0.40)	-0.47	(0.54)
Oppose Halakha in public life	-0.02	(0.25)	0.58	(0.37)
Support socialist over capitalist approach	-0.39	(0.23)	-0.91**	(0.34)
Constant	0.95	(1.67)	1.28	(2.36)
N		(75)		(57)
LL		-47.4		-29.7
Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup>		.12		.29
Chi Square (significance)		7.0 (.218)		13.2 (.002)

Dependent variable: 0 – party loyalist; 1 – Kadima switcher

\* p<.05 ; \*\* p<.01

The lower panel of Table 5 presents the same logistic regressions for 2003 Labor voters. The number of observations we have here is smaller, and all goodness of fit measures indicate that we are much less successful in predicting their vote than

the vote of those who voted Likud in 2003, both with respect to vote intention revealed in December and vote reported in April after the elections. Socialist vs. capitalist orientation is the only factor with an appreciable effect on voters' loyalty to Labor or switching to Kadima (in the April equation), meaning that (other things being equal) 2003 Labor supporters who switched to Kadima were more capitalistic in their socio-economic orientation, whereas those loyal to Labor (and Amir Peretz) were more socialist in their orientation. The party identification coefficient is not statistically significant, although it is in the predicted direction in both equations.

In summary, the Kadima electorate which voted for Likud in 2003 did so because of their affinity for Prime Minister Sharon, and even more so, because of Kadima's more moderate position on foreign and security matters, with which they concurred. We are less successful in explaining the shift to Kadima by former Labor voters; however, what is most pronounced in the multivariate analysis is that those who agreed with the party's economic policies formulated by the new leader, Amir Peretz, were more likely to remain loyal to Labor than those who tended toward a more capitalistic orientation. These results concur with the voters' agenda as they stated it in our post-election survey. Past Likud voters, and in particular those who moved to Kadima, stated more often that negotiations with the Arabs and the security situation were the topics that most affected their vote rather than the socio-economic situation. Among 2003 Labor voters, the picture was more complex, and it was therefore harder to predict their vote. Loyal Labor voters overwhelmingly mentioned the socio-economic situation as the factor that most affected their vote. The priority of Labor switchers to Kadima lay in the realm of security and foreign affairs.<sup>13</sup> As to Shinui voters who voted Kadima, here the explanation is much simpler – they were utterly disaffected with Shinui and were looking for another center option which Kadima naturally offered.

### **B. Accounting for the Kadima Vote versus Other Parties**

We will now examine the Kadima electorate in comparison with the other parties, beginning with their views on major policy issues. Table 6 presents policy positions of voters for the major parties, and we find Kadima voters in-between the left and right parties. They are similar to Labor voters in terms of unilateral moves, territorial compromise, and the Arab neighborhoods of Jerusalem. Regarding the concessions to which they are ready to agree (such as the evacuation of settlements in Judea and Samaria or withdrawal from the Golan Heights), the Kadima voters are somewhere in-between the Likud and Labor groups. They reject solutions that call for "not one

inch" and for complete withdrawal. They are also between the two other groups regarding the aspirations of the Arabs.

On socio-economic matters, Kadima voters are more similar to Likud voters than to Labor voters. Regarding religious matters, Kadima voters are more similar to voters of Labor and hold more secular views than Likud voters.

Table 6. Voter issue positions by vote choice<sup>1</sup>

	Meretz	Labor	Kadima	Israel Beiteinu	Likud	Shas + Yahadut Hatorah	Ihud Leumi-Mafdal
No settlement evacuation whatsoever	-	13%	18%	46%	54%	62%	82%
Evacuate only small and isolated settlements	38%	42%	65%	50%	38%	38%	18%
All settlements should be evacuated	62%	45%	17%	4%	8%	-	-
N	(21)	(93)	(127)	(50)	(60)	(37)	(38)
Should not return any part of the Golan Heights	5%	28%	48%	81%	80%	86%	95%
Return only a small part	33%	29%	32%	15%	12%	9%	5%
Return a significant part	62%	43%	20%	4%	8%	5%	-
N	(21)	(93)	(126)	(52)	(61)	(35)	(38)
Support further unilateral withdrawal	86%	72%	62%	17%	18%	14%	8%
N	(72)	(247)	(407)	(153)	(181)	(132)	(104)
Arabs aspire to conquer all of Israel	22%	31%	49%	83%	72%	86%	88%
N	(74)	(239)	(412)	(156)	(181)	(132)	(104)
Should give up Arab neighborhoods of Jerusalem	81%	70%	62%	66%	30%	25%	21%
N	(21)	(92)	(126)	(50)	(60)	(36)	(38)
Government should see to it that public life be conducted according to Jewish tradition	20%	32%	37%	35%	69%	95%	88%
N	(71)	(191)	(379)	(156)	(169)	(129)	(104)
Capitalist (rather than socialist) economic structure	27%	21%	49%	80%	49%	30%	40%
N	(74)	(247)	(402)	(154)	(179)	(129)	(100)

<sup>1</sup> March 2006 survey

All chi square tests statistically significant  $p < 0.001$

But do these ideological and policy differences between Kadima voters and the voters of the other parties hold once other factors are taken into consideration? To conduct a more in-depth exploration of the vote for Kadima, we analyzed the differences between Kadima and the other party voters by means of a multinomial logistic regression. In this analysis, Kadima served as reference in comparison to



other parties: Meretz, Labor, Likud, Israel Beiteinu, Yahadut Hatorah, Shas, Ihud Leumi-Mafdal. The vote predictors included socio-demographic background characteristics of voters (education, density of living, age, gender, immigrant vs. veteran, and religiosity); the issues of territories, state-religion relations and socio-economic policy; prospective performance evaluations in the security, economic and social realms, and affect toward Sharon.<sup>14</sup> The detailed results are presented in Appendix 1.

The results bolster the analysis of loyal Likud and Labor voters versus switchers to Kadima (Tables 4 and 5), and the differences we observed between the vote groups in Table 6. Policy issues and prospective performance evaluations significantly discriminate between Kadima and the other party voters, and security and foreign affairs are pivotal, both in terms of issue position and in terms of prospective performance evaluation when comparing Kadima to other party voters. Voters' position relative to territorial compromise in the West Bank is significant in all comparisons with Kadima (except for Yahadut Hatorah for which only the issue of religion and state is significant). Kadima voters are more hawkish than Labor and Meretz voters, and more dovish than all the parties to the right of it. With respect to the parties to the left of Kadima, voters' positions on social-economic policy also matter. Only for these parties does prospective performance on welfare-oriented policies reach standard levels of statistical significance. Compared to Kadima, left-wing party voters tend to have a socialist position on the structure of the economy (although this difference is only significant for Labor). Right-wing party voters tend to be more capitalistic, but the differences are not statistically significant (except for Israel Beiteinu). For all parties to the right of Kadima (except for Israel Beiteinu), the issue of state-religion is significant.

Another interesting result of this analysis is that controlling for all the other variables in the model, affect toward Sharon was a factor in people's support for

Kadima versus all the other parties, even though Sharon was incapacitated and not an active candidate or potential office-holder.

In terms of the social underpinnings of the vote, religiosity stands out as the most persistent variable determining vote choice, statistically significant in the Meretz equation, just about significant in the Likud equation ( $p=.06$ ), and significant for all religious parties. Kadima voters are less secular than Meretz voters, similar to Labor and Israel Beiteinu voters, and less religious than all other parties to the right of it. Our class indicator (household density) has an effect for Likud, Yahadut Hatorah and Shas, indicating that voters of higher economic class are more likely to endorse Kadima than these three parties. Compared to Israel Beiteinu, Kadima was much less likely to attract FSU immigrants, but more likely to do so than Labor.

Figure 2 presents probabilities of voting for Kadima, Likud, and Labor, based on our multivariate model.<sup>15</sup> We vary here respondents' positions on territorial compromise, government involvement in the economy, and state-religion relations, while setting all other variables at their means. Nominal variables are set such that the hypothetical respondent is a female, and not an immigrant from the former Soviet Union. The probabilities on the vertical axis then are the predicted probabilities of endorsing each of the three parties for a hypothetical "average" individual given the relevant range of positions on the three issues.

The first panel of the figure presents a voter's inclination to endorse each of the three parties as she moves from supporting a territorial compromise as part of a permanent agreement with the Palestinians to opposing it. As the figure shows, the less a voter is willing to compromise, the less likely she is to endorse both Kadima and Labor, with a decline of about sixteen percentage points in the likelihood of endorsing Kadima and about thirty percentage points in the likelihood of endorsing Labor. The likelihood of endorsing Likud, on the other hand, increases from about six to thirty as the voter becomes more apprehensive about territorial compromise. While the pattern for Labor and Likud is linear, the pattern for Kadima is curvilinear,

reflecting its center position on this dimension. The highest probability for voting Kadima is among moderate doves. Among the most dovish voters, the highest probability is for voting Labor (and very close to it – voting for Kadima). Among the two middle categories, Kadima is the most likely choice. Among the three parties Likud is the most likely choice for the most hawkish respondents.

While voters seem to be reacting similarly to Labor and Kadima on the peace-security dimension, a different pattern emerges from the economic dimension, as seen in the second panel of the figure. Kadima voters are indifferent to government involvement in markets, while Labor voters clearly prefer such involvement. As we move from those expressing support for a capitalist way of life to those endorsing socialism, the likelihood of supporting Labor increases by twenty percentage points. The opposite holds for Likud support: the likelihood of supporting Likud moderately decreases with greater preference for government involvement in the economy

An examination of the third issue regarding the relations between religion and state reveals an interesting pattern. It is similar in its general outline to the peace-security dimension and consistent with the interpretation of these two dimensions as internal and external dimensions of collective identity in Israeli politics (Shamir & Arian, 1999). Here too, Labor supporters resemble Kadima supporters, and both groups show a mild decline in their vote intention as we move toward involvement of the state in maintaining Jewish life. Likud voters are also set apart; supporting involvement of the state defining Jewish life increases one's likelihood of endorsing Likud by fifteen percentage points. However, the potency of this internal identity dimension in the 2006 elections (with respect to the three parties examined here) is significantly weaker than that of the external dimension – as in the past. The primacy of the security-peace dimension over the other issue dimensions in electoral behavior is clearly established.

### **C. Kadima as a Center Party**

As demonstrated so far, and in accordance with the Big Bang thesis, the story of Kadima is more than just Sharon's whim. The unilateral withdrawal from Gaza and Sharon's leaving Likud were the catalysts for the formation of Kadima but only offer a partial explanation. It is likely that Kadima would not have been established without Sharon, but it is also true that Kadima was more than a one-man show, and it would not have endured were it not for its resonance with the public's preferences. Perhaps the best evidence was its continued existence after Sharon's strokes removed him from the political scene. The party tapped into fertile soil in offering the Israeli electorate a party alternative that epitomized the median voter's stance – a specific combination of the Left and the Right: a growing willingness for compromise from the Left together with deep mistrust of the Palestinians (and Arabs in general) from the Right. These were the distinctive features of Sharon's policy and heritage, embodied in the unilateral disengagement and the separation fence. This is the thrust of the meaning of the Center -- falling between Labor and Likud and between Left and Right: a pragmatic middle ground with a specific platform detailing well-defined foreign and security policies. Unlike most new and center parties, Kadima came to the elections with a platform which was already being put into effect by Sharon. In 2005 post-disengagement Israel, Sharon was inescapably associated with the disengagement and with unilateralism, as was Kadima. In this sense Kadima was different from other Center parties Israel has known. Examples include the Democratic Movement for Change (DMC) which conquered the center of the political map in 1977 after gaining 15 Knesset seats, and Shinui which repeated this success in 2003.

In 2006, Kadima captured 29 seats in the 2006 elections to the Seventeenth Knesset. Another new party – the Pensioners party—gained seven seats. As the Pensioners party did not have a clearly defined position on political and defense issues, and its mandate was to protect the civil rights of the elderly in Israel, it cannot

be defined as either a leftist or rightist party. Thus 36 of the 120 Knesset seats (30 percent) went to center parties, at the same time that 29 percent of the 2006 respondents placed themselves in the center of the left-right political continuum.

The size of the center vote and bloc in the 2006 Knesset is unprecedented; not so the percentage of citizens identifying themselves as Center rather than Left or Right. This was the average size of the center-identifiers since the beginning of the Israeli election studies in 1969 through the mid-1980's (Arian and Shamir, 2005, Table 1.2, p. 17).

There is clearly a less than full correspondence between center self-identification and the vote. Indeed, as in previous election years, there is the least amount of correspondence between self-placement and a vote for the center, compared to the left and the right. Fifty-seven percent of center identifiers voted for one of the two center parties, but 73 percent of right-wingers voted for a right-wing/religious party, and 71 percent of the left-wingers for a left party. Looked at from the other direction, 51 percent of the vote for Kadima and the Pensioners party came from voters identifying themselves as center. This compares with 72 percent of the left-wing party vote which came from left-wingers, and 78 percent of the vote for the right coming from voters identifying with the right. This is the general pattern also observed in previous elections, although the differences are somewhat attenuated because in 2006 more voters of all groups voted for a center party.<sup>16</sup>

The interpretation of Kadima as Center is well supported by an examination of voters' self-placement on the left-right scale, defined in Israel primarily by the security and foreign affairs dimension. Table 7 presents the mean self-identification scores of the INES respondents on a 1-7 right-left scale as measured shortly before the elections in March, grouped by their vote report. Kadima voters are located pretty much in the middle of the scale (3.93), next to the Pensioners party (3.88), and the order of parties we obtain spreads across almost the full spectrum and corresponds to common placement of the political parties in Israeli politics. It is worth noting that

the order of parties according to a left-right self-placement mean, as presented in Table 7, is identical to the order of parties relative to security and foreign affairs positions, as reflected in Table 6. Our July-December panel data allow us to assess voters' stability on this scale. During the six turbulent months between July and December 2005, there were no significant differences between the placement of the voters planning to vote for Kadima (paired samples t-test  $p=.867$ ), nor for that matter for any of the other party groupings.<sup>17</sup>

Table 7. Left-right self-placement, by vote<sup>1</sup>

Vote Choice	Left-Right Placement Mean	N
Hazit Leumit Yehudit	1.00	5
Ihud Leumi-Mafdal	3.03	37
Yahadut Hatorah	3.38	13
Likud	3.39	41
Shas	3.45	22
Israel Beiteinu	3.67	48
The Pensioners	3.88	17
Kadima	3.93	86
Labor	5.13	61
Meretz	5.62	13
shHada	6.11	9

<sup>1</sup> INES data: Vote report from April post-election survey; left-right self-placement from March pre-election survey. Differences statistically significant at  $p<.001$ .

It has been argued that over time the left-right division in the Israeli multi-party system has become more meaningful, useful and prevalent (Arian & Shamir, 2002), and in intergenerational socialization the left and right labels have become more important and relevant than a specific party identification, especially since the structural change from a dominant party system to a competitive system (Ventura, 2001). Within this context it is interesting to return to Table 3, which provides a glimpse at political socialization sources. It shows that Kadima attracted voters from both right-wing and left-wing political homes. Offspring tend to choose a party acceptable to their parents; in multi-party systems of the Israeli type, this is a party from the same political bloc, defined primarily in left and right terms (Ventura, 2001). The fact that Kadima's leadership included prominent figures from both Likud and Labor made it easier for voters from different political backgrounds to opt for Kadima, without alienating themselves from their political homes. Whether Center has become or will become another identification category on this continuum is

questionable, but it is clear that new center parties like Kadima enjoy advantages in attracting voters over parties on the left and on the right.

## V. Conclusion

The unprecedented success of Kadima in winning an election a few months after its establishment is far beyond that achieved by any other center party in Israel's electoral history. In the past, the Israeli party system has been inhospitable to center parties, and their historical course deserves attention. The Democratic Movement for Change (DMC) aroused great enthusiasm in the 1977 elections, gaining 15 seats, but disbanded after about a year. Its heir, Shinui, gained only two seats in the 1981 elections. The Center Party headed by Yitzhak Mordechai participated in the 1999 elections and captured only six seats. Its members soon abandoned it and the party sank into oblivion. Shinui, under the leadership of Tommy Lapid, was the surprise of the 2003 elections, gaining 15 seats. In the Seventeenth Knesset it too obtained no representation, following its dissolution after internal elections in the party council on the eve of the 2006 elections. Other center parties, like Moshe Dayan's party, Ezer Weizman's party and the Third Way fared even worse, and were also short-lived.

How can we explain Kadima's extraordinary achievement? Will Kadima's future be different from other center parties?

Like other center parties, Kadima also drew together figures from both sides of the political spectrum. It talked about new politics and about change, and placed itself in the center of the policy space. However, unlike any of its predecessors, Kadima ran as the ruling party, with a perceived strong chance at forming the next government. In the past, Israeli voters who opted for a center party waived the opportunity to determine who would be the next ruling party in government. In 2006, for the first time in Israel's electoral history, people could vote for a center party that was also a potential ruling party. As a newly established party it was also the outgoing ruling party, headed by an experienced leader who had just pulled off the unprecedented unilateral disengagement from the Gaza Strip. Furthermore, it did not locate itself simply in the middle of the policy space, but rather raised a clearly defined policy banner -- unilateralism -- which combined growing willingness for compromise together with deep mistrust of the Palestinians. The policy of disengagement had become the reference point in the political discourse, and Kadima entered the campaign with a platform and a suggested policy path. While it was not a policy outgrowth of a grand vision such as Greater Israel or a New Middle

East, but rather the product of pragmatic adjustment to pressing and changing realities, at the time of the elections of 2006 it seemed that this path would in some sense be duplicated in the West Bank as well. Other major factors in favor of Kadima were Ariel Sharon – present and absent, and the gallery of senior and eminent leaders from both the left and the right. The Likud brought Ehud Olmert, Tzipi Livni, Shaul Mofaz and Tzachi Hanegbi. Labor offered Shimon Peres, Haim Ramon, and Dalia Itzik. Other popular non-political figures included ex-chief of the Shin Bet Avi Dichter, and Prof. Uriel Reichman. But above all, as we amply demonstrated, Kadima fit the median voter's stand on the major issue dimension of Israeli politics relating to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Sharon is no longer part of Israeli politics, and the policy of unilateralism has become obsolete since Hamas' rise to power in the Palestinian Authority in January 2006, the Kassam rockets fired from the Gaza strip into Southern Israel, and the second Lebanon war in the summer of 2006. Sharon's Gaza disengagement did not produce the hoped-for results, Olmert's convergence or realignment plan was shelved, and the unique policy blend Kadima offered dissipated. Above and beyond the difficulties encountered by the unilateralism policy, the question of agency is of course crucial for the future of Kadima: Leadership and organization are vital. However, as our focus is on Kadima in the electorate, the major question in this context is whether the Israeli party system has been undergoing a realignment or a dealignment.

Our conclusion, in accordance with previous research, is that the Israeli party system has undergone dealignment, and the striking success of Kadima was made possible by the depth of this dealignment, at the same time that it contributed to it. However, in a dealigned system a new party may thrive for a variety of reasons. In the political discourse about Kadima, two theses were presented. One was the "Big Bang" thesis, and the other the spin and ideology vacuum interpretation. Our analysis firmly established the "Big Bang" interpretation over the ideological vacuum interpretation. Our panel data on voter issue positions, as well as our multinomial choice analysis, demonstrated the solid policy basis of Kadima in the electorate, in particular on the major issue of contention in Israeli politics – the Israeli-Palestinian and Israeli-Arab conflict. Kadima was thus not a spin, nor merely the making or re-making of Sharon, but a timely response of the party system to voter preferences, grounded in policy. Indeed many voters of moderate and middle-of-the road views on the Israeli-Arab conflict found their place in Kadima.

The 2006 elections were characterized by a dramatic change in party balance. This restructuring was unmistakably based on policy, and was also buttressed by the



prevailing social divides of religiosity, class and ethnicity. Their role seems to have been heightened, as the more religious and less affluent past Likud voters, as well as FSU immigrants, were less likely to vote for Kadima, leaving Likud more religious and less well off than ever before. Thus, with the Likud split, the right has become more homogenous on these social characteristics. But the shifting vote patterns were not grounded in changing social coalitions or issue dimensions. They restated the existing ones. No significant new dimension emerged, nor did we find any indication for a shake-up of the traditional social bases of the vote. The social economic agenda promoted by Amir Peretz, which seemed to eclipse security concerns in November and December 2005, lost its lead as the campaign dragged on. Most significantly, the social-economic cleavage did not emerge as a significant dimension in voters' considerations (except for voters of the left parties) nor did it materialize in a significant redrawing of the social basis of the vote. Amir Peretz as Minister of Defense, and the insignificance of Labor in the formulation of social and economic policy in Olmert's government, banished the thought that this cleavage would emerge as a dominant force in Israeli politics in the foreseeable future. In terms of policy dimensions, security and foreign affairs remained the major issue of contention on which Kadima occupied a central position (see Figure 2). There was no emergence of a new cleavage or substitution of one cleavage for another. Moreover, the 2006 elections did not exhibit any of the typical symptoms of realignment – particularly high electoral involvement, concern and turnout and increased ideological polarization. If anything, there was no electoral enthusiasm, turnout dropped to a record low, and perceptions of party differences were smaller than in the past (Arian et al., 2006, Figure 54, p 92).

Above and beyond all these findings which negate a realignment interpretation, our conclusion that a lasting partisan realignment is not on the horizon is based on the depth of the dealignment of the Israeli party system, which in the most fundamental sense works against such a possibility. The establishment and success of Kadima befits the dealignment model much more than it does a realignment model.

Our results agree with the dealignment model, which posits, as we found, volatile, unattached voters with weak party identification which, in turn, has limited effect on vote choice, as well as great weight of issues and candidates in voters' considerations. In the vote choice model, apart from social affiliations, issues and performance evaluations mattered, as well as affect for Sharon. Kadima was the beneficiary of this dealigned party system in 2006, but in future elections it may well be on the losing side. Despite the appearances of a realignment, and despite the

apparent correspondence of Kadima to the median voter on security and foreign affairs, the emergence of Kadima is primarily one more milestone on the long road of the dealignment of the Israeli party system.

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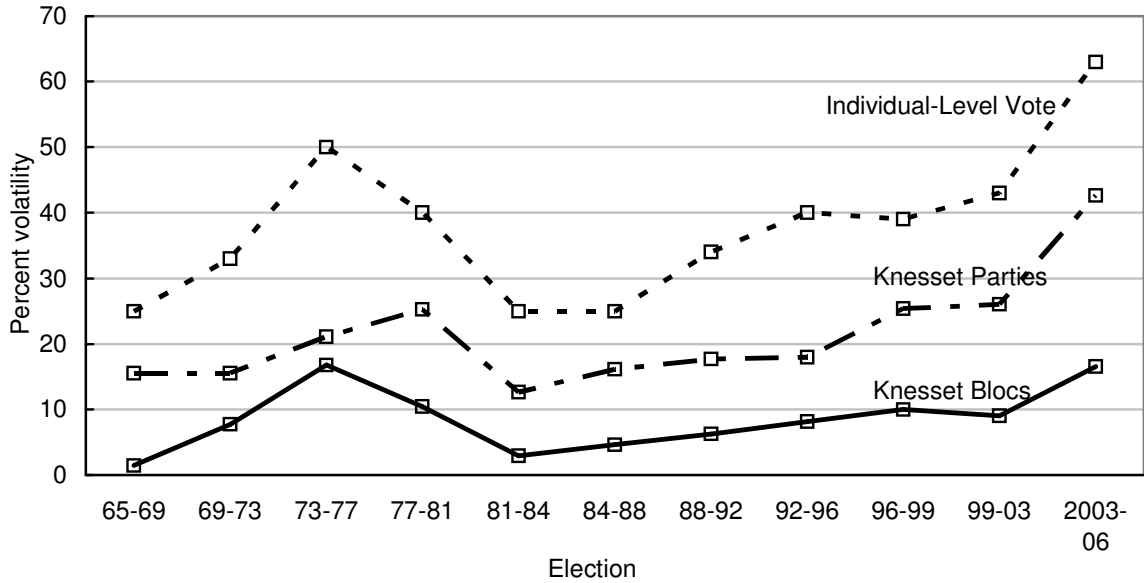
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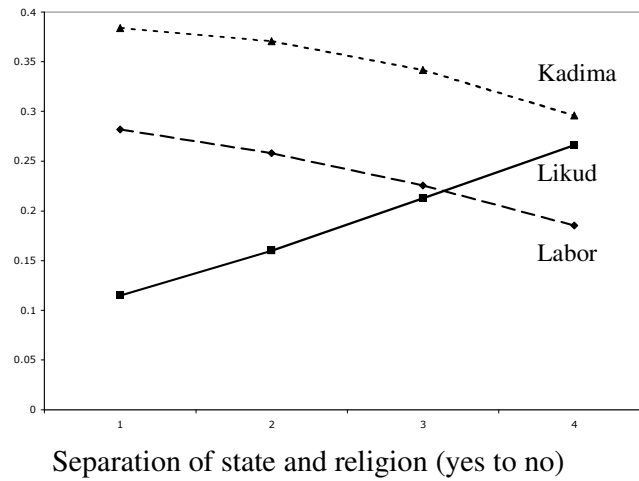
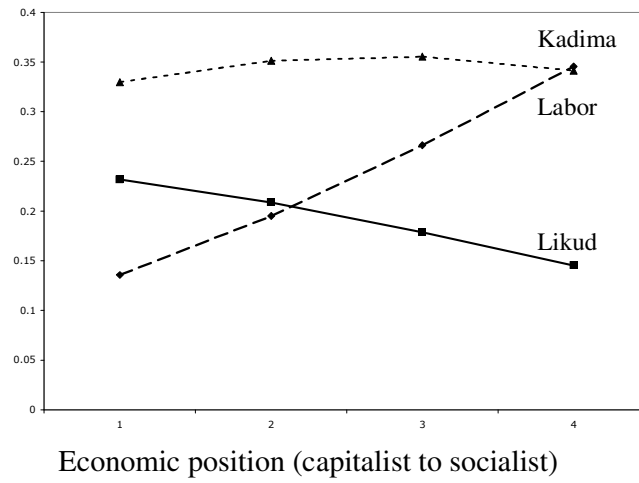
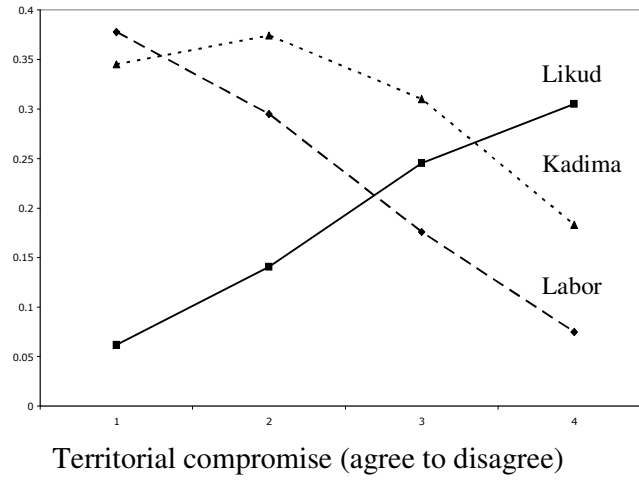
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Figure 1. Electoral Volatility in Knesset Parties, Knesset Blocs and in Vote, 1969-2006 (percentages)



Electoral Volatility is computed according to Pedersen (1979), once for Knesset Parties, once for Knesset Blocs (Left, Center, and Right-Religious), and once for individual-level vote. See footnote 3.

Figure 2. Probabilities of voting Kadima, Labor and Likud, by issue positions.



## Appendix 1. Multinomial Logit analysis

	Meretz	Labor	Likud	Israel Beiteinu	Yahadut Hatorah	Shas	Ihud Leumi- Mafdal
Household density	-0.03 (0.56)	0.10 (0.40)	0.80* (0.39)	0.32 (0.43)	1.10* (0.50)	1.51** (0.44)	0.21 (0.45)
Former Soviet Union	-0.29 (0.72)	-1.91* (0.79)	0.61 (0.42)	2.30** (0.39)	--***	-0.37 (1.13)	-0.48 (0.68)
Religiosity	-1.13** (0.32)	-0.11 (0.22)	0.41 (0.22)	0.25 (0.24)	3.94** (0.67)	1.56** (0.28)	0.99** (0.26)
Age	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	-0.003 (0.01)	-0.04* (0.02)	-0.03 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
Female	0.93** (0.36)	0.01 (0.27)	-0.39 (0.29)	-0.23 (0.30)	-0.51 (0.53)	-1.08** (0.41)	-0.38 (0.37)
Education	-0.01 (0.06)	0.01 (0.05)	-0.03 (0.05)	0.08 (0.06)	0.17 (0.10)	0.02 (0.07)	0.13* (0.06)
Religion and state	-0.27 (0.20)	-0.05 (0.14)	0.37* (0.15)	-0.07 (0.16)	1.13* (0.51)	0.73** (0.25)	0.67** (0.21)
Economy	0.32 (0.18)	0.30* (0.14)	-0.17 (0.14)	-0.40* (0.16)	-0.35 (0.24)	-0.06 (0.19)	-0.28 (0.18)
Territorial compromise	-0.95** (0.27)	-0.33* (0.16)	0.74** (0.16)	0.59** (0.16)	0.40 (0.29)	0.89** (0.23)	1.55** (0.22)
Kadima prospective Performance: economy	-0.37 (0.22)	-1.15** (0.20)	-1.08** (0.22)	-0.74** (0.20)	-0.73 (0.45)	-0.55 (0.30)	-0.80** (0.30)
Kadima prospective Performance: social	-0.71** (0.23)	-1.14** (0.21)	-0.29 (0.21)	-0.31 (0.20)	-0.24 (0.45)	-0.10 (0.29)	-0.48 (0.29)
Kadima prospective Performance: security	-0.90** (0.21)	-0.92** (0.16)	-1.59** (0.19)	-0.91** (0.19)	-0.79 (0.42)	-0.96** (0.27)	-1.10** (0.26)
Sharon affect	-0.37** (0.07)	-0.27** (0.06)	-0.29** (0.06)	-0.32** (0.06)	-0.49** (0.09)	-0.38** (0.07)	-0.47** (0.07)
Constant	8.73** 1.75	7.50** (1.31)	3.34* (1.39)	2.72 (1.48)	-12.91** (3.62)	-4.06* (2.00)	-2.53 (1.77)

March 2006 survey; Reference category is Kadima. N=997, LL = -1026.89; Chi Square (significance) 1692.34 (p<.001).

\*=p-value<0.05. \*\*=p-value<0.001. \*\*\* None of the 185 immigrants from the FSU included in this model endorsed Yahadut Hatorah.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Months after the election, Kadima's internet site was still labeled <http://kadimasharon.co.il>.

<sup>2</sup> The formula for calculating the index is to subtract the votes that each party (bloc) received in the previous election from the votes it received in the current election, sum the absolute values of the differences, and divide it in two.

<sup>3</sup> The Israel National Election Study (INES) surveys have been conducted since 1969. The surveys between 1969 through 1977 were carried out 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. Since 1996 all election surveys included both Jews and Arabs. Interviews through 1999 were face-to-face interviews. Since 2001 the surveys were conducted by telephone, and representative of the adult population, including kibbutzim and settlements. All surveys were pre-election surveys, although in some of them (including the 2006 elections) they were complemented by post-election surveys. The following institutes carried out the surveys since 1981: Dahaf between 1981 and 1992; Modi'in Ezrachi in 1996, and Mahshov since 1999 (<http://isdc.huji.ac.il/ehold1.shtml>).

Individual-level vote volatility is computed from cross-tabulations of voters' vote intention by their report of past vote in INES pre-election surveys. The categories are: Left, Labor, Center, Likud, Religious, Right, and no answer. The number reported is the percent that generated a change in category over the two periods. The figures are based on Jewish respondents only, since until 1992 the samples were of the Jewish population only. Respondents with no previous election vote report (no vote or no right to vote) were excluded. Respondents who gave "no answer" once were considered volatile. Those who gave "no answer" to both questions were not included in the calculations.

The two aggregate volatility measures were computed according to the following rules (see Mainwaring and Torcal, 2006, p. 222): When a party splits into two or more parties from election T1 to T2, we compared its T1 total with the largest split off. We then treated the smaller new splinter party as if it had no votes in election T1. When two or more parties merged and created a new organization, we calculated volatility using the original party with the highest percentage. Thus if two or more parties merged for election T2, but competed in election T1 as separate parties, we assumed that the one(s) with fewer votes disappeared in election T2. We gave a zero value to this party in T2 and counted its share of the vote in T1 as



its percentage of change. When a party changed its name but had an obvious continuity with a previous party, we counted them as being the same organization. Kadima in 2006 was counted as a new party, as was Tehiya in 1981. We included only parties that passed the threshold and were represented in the Knesset. If a party had seat(s) in one election but in the previous or next election received votes but no seats, we counted their vote in that election as 0% (even if they received some non-zero share of the vote).

The Left bloc includes Israel One, Labor, Maarach, Mapai, Ahdut Haavoda, Rafi, Mapam, Civil Rights Movement, Ratz, Meretz, Maki, Haolam Haze, Sheli, Am Echad , Arab parties. The Right-Religious Bloc includes Likud, Herut, Liberals, Merkaz Hofshi, ShlomZion, Tehiya, Moledet, Kach, Israel Beiteinu, HaIchud Haleumi, Mafdal, Agudat Israel, Poalei Agudat Israel, Degel Hatora, Yahadut Hatorah, Tami, Shas, Zomet, Israel BaAliya, The Center Bloc includes the Independent Liberals, DMC, Shinu, Hareshima Hamamlachtit, Telem, Yachad, Flatto-Sharon, Ometz, Merkaz party, Haderech Hashlishit, Kadima, Gil (Pensioners).

We wish to acknowledge the research assistance of Nir Atmor in the volatility measurement.

<sup>4</sup> For appropriate comparison over time, the figures are based on Jewish respondents only, since until 1992 the INES samples were of the Jewish population only

<sup>5</sup> The Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (<http://www.umich.edu/~cses>).

<sup>6</sup> The 2006 INES was carried out in a panel design. Our pre-election sample of the Israeli electorate included 1,919 respondents interviewed by phone in the month before the March 28 elections, in Hebrew, Arabic and Russian. Our post-election survey returned in April to 1,411 of the respondents. The field work was carried out by Mahshov Survey Research Institute. Of the 1,411 interviewees, 272 indicated that they had voted for Kadima. The two waves are well representative of the population on gender, age, education and ethnicity, although somewhat biased toward the more highly educated and older, as well as second generation Israeli-born Jews and Israeli-born Jews of European origin. In the April wave, there is also a slight bias toward European-born respondents, and a further slight bias in favor of university graduates and older respondents.

<sup>7</sup> The December poll entered the field on December 28, and the last interviews were conducted on January 22, 2006. Most interviews (over 70%) were conducted before Sharon's second cerebral event on January 4, 2006.

<sup>8</sup> The July 2005 survey was conducted among a representative sample of the Israeli adult population, N=2004. The second wave was collected in December and 898 respondents were re-interviewed. The third wave was carried out in April 2006, following the March 28 elections, and returned to 744 of the 898 respondents interviewed in the December survey. The interviews were conducted by phone in Hebrew, Arabic and Russian by Mahshov Institute. All three waves are well representative of the population on gender, age, education and ethnicity, although somewhat biased toward the more highly educated and Israel-born Jews of Ashkenazic origin; and the successive waves become slightly more biased in the direction of women, mid-age and older respondents.

<sup>9</sup> Voters who remained loyal to Kadima until election day were significantly more moderate in their views on peace and security, they had a stronger tendency to support capitalistic economic policies, they were more secular, and they had a much more positive view regarding Ariel Sharon and the Kadima party. They were also older on average and of higher socio-economic status than those who intended to vote Kadima (in our December survey) but eventually switched to another party (in our April 2006 survey).

<sup>10</sup> The transition/loyalty groups in Tables 2 to 4 are defined on the basis of vote intention and past (2003) vote reported in the December 2005 survey.

<sup>11</sup> We used one indicator for each policy dimension. In none of the analyses was there any multicollinearity problem which might have blurred the results.

<sup>12</sup> We computed the probabilities of voting Kadima for voters being one standard deviation above and one standard deviation below the mean, once for Sharon affect, and once for the evacuation of settlements variable, while setting all other variables at their means. The difference in these probabilities of voting Kadima between Sharon moderately weak and strong supporters in December 2005 was .21, and in April 2006 .30. The difference in the probabilities of voting Kadima between moderate hawkish and moderate dovish voters (so defined in terms of their position on settlements in the West Bank) was .25 in December, and in April .49.

<sup>13</sup> These results stipulate an interaction specification between issue position and priority, but our N is too small for such analysis.

<sup>14</sup> We performed this analysis on the general sample but the dummy variable for Arabs caused serious multicollinearity problems which forced us to leave Arab voters out. The results thus pertain only to Jewish voters.

We performed the analysis with several specifications and measures. We did it twice, once with the pre-election vote intention and once with the post-election vote report as dependent variable (in the latter specification we also included the Pensioners' party as a category; we could not include it in the first specification because there were too few respondents who indicated a vote intention for this party before the elections). For both dependent variable specifications, we performed the analysis once with ethnicity coded as one dummy variable with veteran Israeli Jews as reference and FSU immigrants as 1; and also with ethnicity represented by 3 dummy variables for former Soviet Union (FSU) immigrants from the 1990's, for Ashkenazim (first and second generation), and for Mizrahim (first and second generation), with second generation Israeli-born as the reference category. The results for the different models were robust and in most cases similar, and none of the Ashkenazi or Mizrahi dummies were statistically significant. We present the model with the pre-election vote intention - with the larger N - and the one ethnicity distinction (the full model is reported in Appendix 1). The model includes as predictors: socio-economic status indicated by density of living (high score, high density); education (in years); ethnicity (with veteran Israeli Jews as reference and FSU immigrants as 1); age (in years), gender (1 – female); and self-defined religiosity (in terms of religious practice; high score religious); three issue dimensions: territories (measured by agreement to territorial compromise and evacuation of settlements in the West Bank); state-religion relations (measured by agreement that the government should see to it that public life be conducted according to Jewish religious tradition), and socio-economic policy indicated by R's preference for capitalist (rather than socialist) economic structure; comparative prospective performance evaluations of the Kadima team in the areas of security and foreign affairs, economic policy, and social policy; and affect toward Sharon.

<sup>15</sup> Other probabilities can be calculated from the table as well.

<sup>16</sup> In 2003, 32% of Center identifiers voted for a center party compared to 82% of left-wingers who voted for a left party and 88% of right-wingers who voted for a right-wing party. In 1999, the corresponding figures were 51% for the Center, 88% for the left and 90% for the right. In 2006 thus the overall correspondence between identification and vote was somewhat

weaker than in the previous elections, although the percentage of consistent center identifiers and voters was slightly higher than in 1999 and significantly higher than in 2003.

<sup>17</sup> The overall stability of the two placements is high: between July and December 2005, 37% of the panel respondents placed themselves exactly on the same point on the 1-7 right-left scale, 33% changed their self-placement by only one place, 15% moved two places, 10% - three places, and 5% - four or more places (N=864). Only 9% moved from one side to the other. As a benchmark, we may point out that the probability of an Israeli voter marking exactly the same point on the scale twice if the two events are independent is 0.17 (based on data from 2005-06).