The Winners and Losers of 2003

Ideology, Social Structure and Political Change*

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There were major vote swings on both the left and right wings of the Israeli party system in 2003. The Likud and Shinui experienced massive gains, while Labour, Meretz and Shas lost on the order of 30%-40% of their supporters. On the face of it, two political factors might explain these upsets. The return to single-ballot voting ought to have favored the two largest parties and shrunk support for the smaller, "sectorial" parties that bloomed during the 1990s. This is only partly what happened. The Likud doubled its representation to 38 seats, almost equal to its 1988 share, while Labour's share sank to an all-time low. Among the smaller parties, whereas Shas was downsized to its stature in 1996 and Meretz reduced to an unprecedented 6 seats, Shinui garnered a spectacular 15 mandates.

The return to prior electoral rules was of course not the only change of circumstance in 2003. The elections took place in the shadow of the "death of Oslo". While during the peacemaking decade domestic issues were politicized, bringing "internal collective identity dilemmas" high on the agenda (Shamir and Arian 1999), the rekindling of violence between Israelis and Palestinians propelled the "external" dimension to renewed prominence. This could well explain the enormous electoral success of Ariel Sharon and the Likud at the expense of Labour and Meretz, parties that had staked their political fortunes on the peace process. The resurgence of the national conflict presumably sidelined "identity politics" issues and economic disputes. Yet in that case, why did Shas manage to retain two-thirds of its 1999 vote share and what explains Shinui's stunning success?

In this chapter we will argue that answers to the puzzles posed here must address the prevalence of class voting and its political meaning. Our purpose is not only to explain particular trends of stability and change between the 1999 and 2003 elections, but also to deepen the understanding of class voting in Israel and its relationship to other types of interests and other forms of collective identity. We will demonstrate empirically that class powerfully influenced the vote of non-Arab Israelis in the 2003 elections.[1] This finding may seem surprising given the canonical research on electoral behavior in Israel, which has repeatedly shown that net of other cleavages, class position has no substantial effect on voters' preferences. In contrast, but in line with an earlier study on the 1996 and 1999 elections (Shalev and Kis 2002) we maintain that class persistently structures the vote in Israel, independently of or in conjunction with the impact of ethnicity (the Ashkenazi-Mizrachi divide). Yet explaining class voting is never a straightforward task, since class politics are always mediated by both history and culture. This is especially so in Israel, which lacks political articulation of class-based

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[1] We use the term non-Arabs, instead of Jews, as it better reflects the composition of the Israeli population following the 1990s' immigration from the FSU (Lustick 1999).

identities and demands. We need an analytical framework to explain the paradox of class voting without overt class politics (cf. Brooks and Manza 1997). One such framework, which we shall adopt but also adapt, is the notion of "multiple citizenship discourses" developed by Shafir and Peled (2002).

Interpreting Class Voting in Israel

The interpretive framework offered by Shafir and Peled's recent book *Being Israeli* provides analytical tools that greatly assist the task of interpreting the complex ties between class, culture and politics in the Israeli context. They show how class interests are linked to the divisions between Ashkenazim and Mizrachim, traditional and secular Jewishness, and different visions of Israeliness. Their analysis is concretized in persuasive explanations of the two most striking political phenomena in 1990s Israel: the spectacular rise of Shas, and the success (in policy terms, if not always in elections) of the left's synthetic program of "peace and privatization". Shafir and Peled shed much-needed light on these two phenomena, by portraying Shas and the liberal and dovish left as offering competing visions of Israel's future and of the relations between citizens and the state. One is an "ethno-national discourse" that rests on Israel's self-definition as a Jewish state and on a religion-based understanding of Jewishness. The alternative "liberal discourse" promotes a civic view of the state, the criteria for membership in the polity and citizen obligations. Ethno-nationalism and liberalism both contend to take the place of the previously hegemonic "Republican discourse", which elevated the state above either Judaism or the individual citizen and celebrated the virtues of contributing to the collective tasks of settlement and security.

Shafir and Peled interpret the ideology of Shas as advocating an ethno-national version of Israeliness, rather than (as Shas has been more commonly understood) an expression of nostalgic traditionalism and ethnic pride. For its core supporters, disadvantaged Mizrachim, Shas has been a vehicle for battling both economic and symbolic exclusion. In contrast, advantaged Ashkenazim found that their class and status advantages could be preserved and enhanced in a "new Israel" set to embrace global trends of economic integration and liberalization. This group had come to believe that the national conflict and the related centrality of the state had become anachronistic barriers to these transformations. Thus, Shafir and Peled expected ethnicity, religiosity, hawkishness and the choice between "democratic" and "Jewish" versions of Israeliness to run broadly parallel to class interests. By implication, the fate of political parties would depend on their ability to activate these linkages between interests, ethnicity and ideology.

While we find the broad lines of Shafir and Peled's analysis compelling for interpreting class voting in Israel, consideration of the 2003 elections exposes a number of shortcomings. As long as the peace process seemed unstoppable and the triumph of

globalization and the "new economy" were not to be doubted, it made sense to portray the left as representing the Ashkenazi winners and Shas as the reactionary representative of Mizrachi losers from the twin transformations, peacemaking and economic liberalization. However, with the upsurge of violent conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, hawkishness and enmity towards Arabs increased and liberalism vis-à-vis Israel's Palestinian citizens was eroded virtually across the political spectrum (e.g. Segiv-Shifter and Shamir 2002). Moreover a dichotomous understanding of voter ideologies (hawks versus doves, Jewish particularism versus civic cosmopolitanism) is at odds with the Likud's current success as a cross-class party practicing a new centrism that blends a hawkish foreign policy with neo-liberal domestic reform.

These developments suggest that Shafir and Peled underestimated the resilience of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its interaction with the deeply consensual core of Jewish viewpoints on collective identity and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (see Kimmerling 2001). In light of the cultural tenacity of militarism, they overrated the dovish turn in public opinion and the decline of the Republican discourse of citizenship during and prior to the Oslo years. Given the symbiotic relationship between Zionism and Judaism in the construction of Israeliness, also emphasized by Kimmerling, they overstated the dichotomy between liberalism and ethno-nationalism. By incorporating these insights and others, we wish to argue in a constructive vein that an extended version of Shafir and Peled's model can go a long way to explaining the puzzles of the 2003 election.

In what follows, we analyze the results of the 2003 elections using two types of empirical data: the pre-election survey carried out by Shamir and Arian, and aggregate election results and background information for localities. Our findings are presented in two steps that refer to **a)** the conventional wisdom regarding linkages between ethnic groups, socio-demographic characteristics and partisanship, and **b)** the interplay between class, ethnicity and partisanship. This will be followed by a discussion of the main implications of this analysis for the five parties that concern us, and some reflections on the theoretical implications of our work for the "multiple citizenship discourses" framework.

Issue Conflicts, Social Cleavages and the Party System

We will begin by locating the parties in ideological and then social space. Do they in fact embody the overlaps between class, ethnicity, and issue positions anticipated by Shafir and Peled? We use individual-level data from the January 2003 pre-election survey to characterize the parties of interest by the attributes of their supporters, not their declared platforms or the groups which they made explicit efforts to mobilize. The upper panel of Table 1 makes it possible to assess whether they are arrayed along a

coherent left-right dimension. The lower panel of the table shows differences in the social composition of party constituencies.

INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE .

The top panel (1a) refers to six attitudinal questions that tap the ideological domains mentioned in our introductory discussion. These comprise the competing liberal and ethno-national discourses discussed by Shafir and Peled, and two additional questions representing the hot contention between "hawks" and "doves" that takes place within the bounds of the militaristic consensus described by Kimmerling. If Shinui is set aside, the remaining parties rank identically on every issue except economic liberalism (capitalism vs. socialism). Party supporters consistently adhere to a left-right spectrum that runs from Meretz to Shas, with Labour and Likud occupying intermediate positions. While the results for Shinui vary depending on whether or not they include supporters from the FSU (Former Soviet Union), the pattern is clear. Shinui occupies a center position between Labour and Likud with respect to the hawk/dove divide, but is close to Meretz in relation to ethno-nationalism and to Labour in relation to political liberalism (the issue of "transfer"). However, Shinui supporters are unique in their pro-capitalist economic ideology.

In voters' political consciousness, then, the classically competing ideologies of labor and capital constitute the only domain which does *not* follow the left-right continuum. The supporters of Labor, Meretz *and Shas* are mildly in favor of socialism, Shinui voters are clearly pro-capitalist, and Likud supporters are in the middle.

Turning to the socio-demographic attributes of party supporters, our results show that although parties have fairly distinct age and gender profiles it is ethnicity and class that systematically follow the left/right distinction. The results for ethnicity harbor no surprises. Labour and Meretz voters in 2003 exhibited a strong Ashkenazi bias, Shas a strong Mizrachi bias. Shinui attracted as few Mizrachim as the leftwing parties but fully one-quarter of its voters were "Russians".[2] The "catch-all" Likud was the most ethnically balanced party, but it still attracted two Mizrachi voters for every Ashkenazi.

Using a synthetic SES indicator reveals that party supporters were strongly differentiated by class (cf. Andersen and Yaish 2003).[3] A substantial 1.4 standard

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[2] We sometimes use the term "Russians" as shorthand for "new immigrants from the Former Soviet Union". Like the terms Ashkenazim and Mizrachim, that we also apply loosely, this reflects the way they are used in the public realm, itself a comment on the ethnicized character of Israeli society (Levy 2002).

[3] The Arian-Shamir questionnaire presents difficulties for studying class voting, since it provides no information on respondents' occupations and its measure of family income/expenditure is problematic (Shalev and Kis 2002:71,n4). The SES indicator in Table 1 is based on the following

deviations separates Meretz and Shas voters. The parties rank as expected, except that as we found in relation to Shafir and Peled's discourses (though not hawkishness or economic liberalism), Shinui is positioned close to the left rather than defining the political middle ground. In these respects it was the Likud that occupied the center in 2003.

Given the partial overlap between ethnicity and class among Israeli Jews, it is possible that the class character of the parties is only an artifact of their ethnic composition. However, the results of a quite stringent multivariate test of this possibility verify that our SES indicator, even though it is only a crude proxy for class, had strong net effects on the vote for Shas, Shinui and Meretz.[4]

These findings regarding the location of the parties under consideration show that their supporters are located on a consistent left-right ideological dimension but, as Shamir and Arian (1982; 1999) have argued, it concerns interpretations of Zionism and issues of collective identity rather than class conflict. In addition, the parties have distinctive social profiles. They rank similarly with respect to their class and ethnic composition as they do in relation to issues. There were some caveats though concerning Shinui's social and ideological location. But to what extent does the ideological configuration of party supporters in 2003 differ from that of 1999?

INSERT CHART 1 ABOUT HERE .

To address this question, we compared the distribution of voter opinion on two identical questions in the 1999 and 2003 pre-election surveys. Following Shamir and Arian's (1999) distinction between the "internal" and "external" issue conflicts, Chart 1 shows the positions of our five parties' supporters, revealing both continuity and change between the 1999 and 2003 elections. We observe three important trends in the mean opinions of each party's supporters:

a) Differentiation between the leftwing parties, manifested in the leftward shift of Meretz's supporters on the anti-Arab scale against a shift to the right amongst Shinui voters.

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composite formula (where all the variables are binary): high education [college degree] - low education [up to 12 years] + low housing density [under 1.3 persons per room] - high housing density [at or above 1.3 persons per room] + high family expenditure [the top two of the five categories offered] – low family expenditure [the bottom two categories]. The results ranged between -3 and +3 before we converted them to standard scores.

[4] We conducted a series of stepwise logistic regressions testing a range of predictors of the probability of voting for each one of our five parties. The SES indicator was entered along with eight others measuring age, sex, ethnicity, and key attitudinal variables.

b) Shas voters' move from their 1999 position close to the national average to a position of near-absolute intolerance towards Arabs in 2003.

c) A rightward shift of the center of gravity of the political map which underlines the central position of the Likud in 2003.

These trends alone cannot account for the final outcomes of the 2003 elections, however. First, the similarities between the trend characterizing Labour and Likud voters, and between both of them and the notional median voter (the thick line and arrowhead near the center of the map), suggest that ideological change alone cannot account for either the ascendance of the Likud or the decline of Labour. It is striking that despite a doubling in the size of the Likud's constituency, it was the only party which did not experience a noticeable alteration in its supporters' positions. The chart also reveals another apparent disjuncture between behavior and ideology. Ironically, although the acrimonious public conflict between Shas and Shinui in 2003 was overtly about state and religion, their supporters' positions on this issue actually remained unchanged while on the hawkish dimension they moved in exactly the same intolerant direction.

Given the quite modest shifts in the ideological map, it is important to ask whether greater change is evident in the social composition of partisan support. Our task in the following section is to investigate whether the class and ethnic character of party supporters altered in the course of the vote swings of 2003. In order to address this question, we utilize aggregate data on actual election results.

Class and ethnic voting in ecological perspective

This section presents an ecological analysis of connections between class, ethnicity and the vote in the last two elections. Using data for hundreds of localities we explore the correlates of voting for the five parties under consideration, with particular attention to Shas and Shinui. The results will show that the social-structural differentiation of Israeli parties is profound, and that it underwent very little change in 2003.

Based on comparisons of aggregate data across geographical units, ecological correlations infer linkages between voters' partisanship and their background characteristics. Ecological analysis thus utilizes the communities where voters live, rather than the individual voter, as the unit of analysis. The significance of place for politics in Israel is well known. The left consistently does better in the more affluent and Ashkenazi areas with the reverse true for the right (Smith 1969; Weiss 1997; DellaPergola 1991). There are also striking differences between specific types of localities. For instance, the historic ties between the kibbutzim and Labour/Meretz, the critical contribution of Development Towns on the periphery to the rise of Shas, and

the bedrock support for the radical and religious right in the Jewish settlements in the occupied territories all strongly colored the vote in 2003. However, despite the prominence of spatial variation in voter behavior and notwithstanding the long pedigree of ecological analysis in political science (Dogan and Rokkan 1969; King 1997), it has been little utilized in studies of political behavior in Israel (but see Matras 1965; Diskin 1991).

Ecological analysis not only indicates how community characteristics affect the way communities vote, but under some circumstances may also be used to infer the determinants of individual voting behavior. Earlier work which supplemented ecological analysis with other techniques found evidence that ethnic and class effects on voting in Israel operate at both the individual and aggregate levels (Shalev and Kis 2002). We therefore regard the ecological associations presented here as representing some unknown combination of micro and meso (community-level) effects. Although this may seem a weak claim, it must be remembered that the correlations yielded by survey research also conceal an unknown mix of individual and contextual effects (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1993).

The analysis which follows relies on election results and aggregated census data for 482 localities (*Yishuvim*). Detailed technical and methodological information may be found in the earlier study by Shalev and Kis (2002) where virtually the same methods were applied to the 1999 elections.[5] Localities with non-trivial Arab populations and Kibbutzim were excluded. We present our results in two formats. Multiple regression explicitly controls for the effects of other explanatory variables that might be confounded with class and ethnicity. First however we use charts to convey key results for Shas and Shinui. Some potentially confounding influences are literally left out of the picture (we excluded localities from the other side of the "Green Line", the most intensively Haredi areas) and to maximize reliability we exclude observations based on fewer than 10 localities. In both the statistical and the graphical analysis, measurement of the class composition of localities was based on factor analysis of a battery of socioeconomic indicators collected in the 1995 census. The measure chosen was the first and strongest factor to emerge. It is as an indicator of affluence or standard of living since it correlates most strongly with income, housing density and ownership of consumer goods. In the charts it appears on the horizontal axis, divided into deciles. To distinguish the effects of class and ethnicity, the charts present separate results for

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[5] However, the study of the 1999 elections utilized data on smaller units, Statistical Areas, that are typically towns or neighborhoods within cities. Although the present research relies on a smaller number of less internally homogeneous units, we obtained very similar results for the 1999 elections to those reported by Shalev and Kis.

Ashkenazi and Mizrachi localities. The "dominant" ethnic group in a locality was defined as having a plurality of at least 40% of the population.

INSERT CHART 2 ABOUT HERE .

The ideological chasm separating Shas and Shinui, embodying the struggle between the ethno-national and liberal discourses, and these parties' opposed fates in the 2003 elections, render the results in Chart 2 of particular interest. We observe both similarities and differences. Both Shas and Shinui are characterized by class and ethnic biases, but in opposite directions. The distance between the lines reveals the size of the ethnic vote. Because Ashkenazi areas tend to be more affluent and Mizrachi areas less so, we can only judge the ethnic effect at the 7th decile of affluence where there is an adequate number of localities for both ethnic groups. The gap between Ashkenazi areas (black line) and Mizrachi areas (grey line) is 7 points for Shas and 8 for Shinui. The effect of class is revealed by the slope of the lines, which shows that Shas support declines with affluence whereas support for Shinui increases. However there is an interesting interaction with ethnicity. Affluent Ashkenazi areas uniformly furnish virtually no support to Shas (under 1% of the vote), but in Mizrachi areas class voting for this party is pronounced. For example in Mizrachi communities with median affluence Shas garnered about 10% of the vote, while at the lowest decile of affluence its support peaked at more than 25%. The plot for Shinui suggests that in this case too class voting may be confined to Mizrachim, but the regression results to which we now turn imply that this is an artifact due to the truncated range of Ashkenazi communities included in the graphical analysis.

INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE .

We regressed measures of class, ethnicity, Haredim and settlements on the vote share of each party.[6] To assess change over time our model was applied to both elections. To test for possible interaction effects, separate regressions were run for Ashkenazi and Mizrachi localities. Because our interest is in comparing the effects of independent variables between parties, types of localities and elections we report only standardized *beta* coefficients. (To assess the model's overall predictive power, the adjusted R-squared statistic is also reported.) Since large numbers of cases are involved, Table 2 utilizes stringent criteria of statistical significance (one asterisk requires a *t* value of at least 5, compared to the conventional minimum of 2).

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[6] The presence of Haredim in a locality is measured by a scale based on two indicators (percent of Yeshiva-educated men and non-response to the census). "Settlements" is a dummy variable for localities in the occupied territories. We also experimented with a dummy variable for "development towns" and a measure of "Russian dominance" but found they had negligible effects on the results.

The results resoundingly affirm the strong independent influence of both ethnicity and class on voting, even after controlling for locality characteristics that proxy for deep ideological cleavages. Ethnicity exerts the strongest influence on voting, irrespective of which party or election is considered. Still, except for the Likud,[7] the net effect of class on the vote is substantial despite the fact that living standards are quite strongly correlated with two of the variables controlled in the regression, ethnicity (r = -.52) and the presence of Haredim (r = -.48).

A second important question that the regressions help us to address is what changed and what remained the same between 2003 and the previous elections. The results show that the standardized effects of both ethnicity and class are strikingly similar for 1999 and 2003. The only shifts of any note are that the Likud became more attractive to Mizrachim and Shas less so. Thus, the social-structural bases of partisan support exhibit marked continuity in spite of the profound shifts on the distribution of party support that occurred in the latest elections.

Finally, we tested for the possibility that class and ethnic voting are conditional on the ethnic character of localities. This can be inferred from comparison of results for Ashkenazi and Mizrachi areas. (To economize, these are only reported for Shas and Shinui.) The main result for Shas, foreseen by our chart, is the far greater importance of class voting in Mizrachi localities. The determinants of Shinui's success vary substantially with the ethnic character of the locality. In Ashkenazi communities the party benefits from secularism (the absence of Haredim) and affluence. In Mizrachi areas ethnicity is the key factor. These relationships too are similar in 1999 and 2003. The exceptions are interesting, however. In Mizrachi localities the 2003 elections saw the emergence of a class vote for Shinui and a decline in Mizrachi support for Shas. The result for Shas of course reflects the return of many Mizrachim to the Likud. The result for Shinui probably stems from the relatively high concentrations of FSU voters in some Mizrachi areas (notably development towns).

Discussion: (Re-)interpreting Electoral Success and Failure in Israel

How can the Likud's reclaiming of the political center, the rise of Shinui and the decline of Shas be explained, and to what extent do these outcomes reflect a fundamental change in the political preferences of non-Arab voters? Perhaps surprisingly given the extent of the partisan shifts that took place in 2003, many of our findings point to continuity. This is particularly true of the strong and persistent effects of class and

[7] Meretz in 2003 is also an exception. However a conditional regression for 2003 not reported in Table 2 shows evidence of a class vote for Meretz outside of Ashkenazi communities.

ethnicity on issue positions and party choice, effects that are suggested by Shafir and Peled's analysis. In relation to issues, other than the overall rightward shift of opinion our analysis indicates more continuity than change in parties' locations on Israel's left-right spectrum.

We argue here that in order to resolve the paradox of sharp shifts in voting against a background of seeming social and ideological continuity, it is necessary to situate the impact of class on voting in the wider political and political-economic context of the 2003 elections. In addition, because our empirical findings by themselves cannot answer the questions we have posed, interpretation must play a major role. Here we try to build on the Shafir/Peled model which was our analytical starting-point, while also engaging it in debate.

<u>The Likud, Shas, and Mizrachi Voters</u>

What explains the Likud's remarkable success at the polls in 2003? It is no doubt true that the Likud's posture, which privileges military responses to Palestinian resistance and supports an ethnocentric conception of Israeliness, resonates with the re-escalation of armed conflict since October 2000. Our empirical revelation of the Likud's centrism, its ideological proximity to the "median voter", appears to confirm this view. Yet as contemporary commentators repeatedly observe, the Likud holds amorphous and contradictory positions on crucial issues. Indeed, the party's lack of a clear-cut stance on controversial questions was interpreted as explaining its spectacular losses in the 1999 elections (Mendilow 2002). What turned this same stance into an asset in 2003?

Clearly the changing context is what made the difference. But it is worth considering a counterfactual scenario. In principle the most important intervening changes of circumstance—the failure of the Clinton-sponsored peace process, the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada, and the violent turn inside Israel in relations between Arabs and Jews—might have underlined the urgency of more thoroughgoing Israeli concessions and brought a resounding victory to the left. It was the militaristic and ethnocentric biases deeply ingrained in Israel's state institutions and in the hegemonic core of Jewish-Israeli culture that acted as "switchmen", directing the responses of both elites and the mass public onto the ideological tracks that are the Likud's home ground. As we noted in the introduction, this is consistent with Kimmerling's (2001) argument that militarism and Jewishness are the deep cultural pillars on which non-Arab Israeli society stands.[8] It is not consistent with Peled and Shafir's emphasis on liberalization and

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[8] Specifically, Kimmerling (2001, esp. Chapters 6-7) refers to two "meta codes". One is the "military-cultural complex", featuring *kochaniyut* and *bitchonism,* which is to say that Arab-Israeli relations are instinctively interpreted using the language of "security" and resolved by

peacemaking, which in retrospect only partially and conditionally sidelined these more enduring elements of "being Israeli". Peled and Shafir were thus not only unduly optimistic about the viability of the peace process, but also overly attentive to the contentious features of political culture at the expense of its less contingent core.

Its predictive failure does not invalidate Shafir and Peled's theoretical framework however, especially its insight that Israel's enduring identity dilemmas are implicated in conflicting interests and struggles for power, privilege and material resources. In the present context this raises the question of who gains from supporting the Likud and in what way? At first sight the Likud's "beneficiaries" are hard to identify. Our results showed that in 2003 it succeeded in attracting voters that were *relatively* diverse, both socially and ideologically. This heterogeneity lends further credence to the view that the Likud succeeded because of congruence between its chief policy thrust and the ideas that dominate the consciousness and discourse of Israeli Jews. On the other hand, the continuing Mizrachi bias in the Likud constituency, and the specific importance of the Mizrachi vote swing from Shas to Likud, indicate the need to probe the specific motives of this group of supporters.

Shafir and Peled's interpretation of the Likud's advantage among Mizrachim since 1977 emphasizes their rejection of Labour's Republicanism, which had been used to marginalize both Mizrachim and the veteran Ashkenazim who led the Herut party (Shapiro 1991). They build on Peled's earlier work on Shas (Peled 1998; 2001), in which he argued that the party's rapid ascendancy in the 1990s was best explained not in terms of the traditionalist cultural preferences of Mizrachi voters, but rather by political economy and the national conflict that together placed Mizrachi Jews in a contradictory position between middle class Ashkenazim and the Palestinian lower class. In terms of the multiple citizenship paradigm, Shas's variant of ethno-nationalism was seen as offering an alternative to both the Republican and Liberal discourses of citizenship propounded by the dominant Ashkenazim, which excluded or devalued Mizrachim. Instead, Shas promotes a religiously-based conception of Israeliness that accentuates the value of the principal form of cultural capital of poorer Mizrachi voters, traditional Jewishness.

We accept this interpretation, but suggest two modifications. First, Peled correctly argued that there are good reasons to expect Mizrachim to symbolically ally themselves with the Ashkenazim, their antagonists in class terms, rather than the Arabs, the national antagonists of all Jews. But he failed to recognize that this can be achieved by rejection of the Arabs as well as by identification with the Jews. It is no accident that

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the use of force. The other is the "Jewish" collective identity common to all Jewish Israelis that blurs the boundaries between nationalism (Zionism) and religion (Judaism).

the heyday of Shas's religiously-Jewish vision of Israeli identity occurred when the Israeli-Palestinian dispute appeared to be moving towards resolution and the integration of Mizrachim by virtue of their Jewishness was threatened by the rising status of Israeli Arabs and the emergence of a post-Zionist discourse on the far left. This is why the subsequent resurgence of the conflict helps explain the return of many Mizrachim to the Likud. With the Oslo process "dead", with Jews thrown together in a shared experience of victimization by terror and with Arab citizens' political legitimation at a new low, Mizrachim could once again easily position themselves as virtuous Israelis simply by being patriotic Jews.

At the same time, we should be wary of generalizations that bracket "the Mizrachim" as a single homogeneous category. Our ecological analysis strongly suggests that Shas's success among Mizrachim is acutely sensitive to their class situation. We also interrogated the survey data to discover what distinguished voters who remained loyal to Shas in 2003. Results not presented here suggest that Haredim and women predominated among the loyalists but were absent among deserters to the Likud. The religious bias is consistent with the "Haredization" of Shas over the years (Chetrit 2001; Levy and Emmerich 2001; Ben-Haim 2003). But the both effects may also have an economic dimension. To illustrate, Shas's school system has freed many Mizrachi women for employment as well as directly providing jobs as teachers and principals.

This leads to our second comment on Peled's analysis, which is that the significance of status politics in driving Mizrachi support for Shas should not be allowed to overshadow the role of class interests. Shas has not only promised to offset social and economic exclusion by raising the status of Mizrachim; its schools and religious institutions also furnish concrete means for satisfying the material interests of those of them who are economically disadvantaged. This alternative route to social protection is reflected in our data on voter ideologies. Shas supporters are relatively favorable towards economic collectivism (socialism is preferred to capitalism), but results not reported earlier indicate that they are the only group of Jewish voters whose support for expansion of the welfare state is noticeably lukewarm. This is because Shas has served disadvantaged Mizrachim by a different strategy of redistribution, based on state subsidization of religious institutions, parochial schools and settlement in the occupied territories. These subsidies create jobs and lower the cost of childcare, religious studies and housing, strengthening Shas in much the same way as state subsidization of the Histadrut historically fortified *Mapai* (Levy 1995; Tessler 2001).

Thus, putting together cultural and class explanations goes a long way to explaining the Mizrachi vote swing from Shas to the Likud in 2003. Mizrachim were especially susceptible to the symbolic appeal to core Israeli values embodied in the Likud's new

centrism, because at a time when the resurgent conflict with the Palestinians underlines the common destiny of Jewish Israelis their symbolic status as Jews can be validated without invoking a religious conception of Jewishness. But by no means all of them succumbed to the Likud temptation. Those Mizrachim who remained loyal to Shas in 2003 were those who could least afford breaking with the party economically, and/or were most serious about religion in their personal lives.

<u>The Dovish Left and Ashkenazi Voters</u>

Configurations of class, ethnicity and culture are also identifiable on the opposite pole of the spectrum, helping to explain the fate of Shinui, Meretz and Labour at the polls in 2003. Whereas Labour's decline may be easily attributed to political circumstances (its role in the previous national unity coalition; its lack of a credible and undisputed leader, etc.) this will not suffice to explain why support for Shinui has skyrocketed while Meretz suffered decline. Ideology offers a partial answer to this question. Our findings showed that in relation to both hawkishness and political liberalism, Shinui's supporters differed from the other dovish parties and were located midway to the Likud. It might be argued that Shinui's less stringently "leftist" ideology made it more attractive to the leftwing electorate following the outbreak of the Intifada, in comparison with the declining legitimacy of Meretz's conspicuously "pro-Arab" positions on the one hand, and Labour's blurred image on the other. But just as we saw vis-à-vis Shas, ethnic particularities and the class composition of the party's constituency suggest that this is only part of the story.

Like Labour and especially Meretz, Shinui attracts very little support among Mizrachim and voters with low socioeconomic standing.[9] The similarities between the socio-demographic profile of Shinui's non-Russian supporters and Meretz voters accentuates the puzzle of why the political fates of these two parties were so different in 2003. Writing prior to this parting of the ways, Shafir and Peled emphasized the commonalities of the discourse propounded by Meretz, Shinui and the Labour Party factions that together came to represent the liberal, affluent and dovish segment of the Ashkenazi middle class. In retrospect it is clear that "peace and privatization" was always a loose common denominator for these groups, and has become increasingly so in the new millennium. As Uri Ram (2000) pointed out, the twin transformations of globalization and peacemaking in the 1990s underscored a perennial contradiction between the domestic and geopolitical aspirations of the Israeli left. Meretz's own left

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[9] The average SES score of Shinui supporters was depressed by Shinui's large contingents of Russian supporters and young first-time voters. Nevertheless, data from an analysis of voter transitions not reported here shows that Shinui's voters in both of these groups were noticeably more affluent than their counterparts who voted for other parties.

wing explicitly embodied this contradiction, with its aspiration to make peace without succumbing to privatization. Shinui, on the other hand, was always less dovish (a difference accentuated after Yosef Lapid took over) and more capitalist.

After the collapse of the Camp David summit in summer 2000, these differences between the two parties became even more salient to their prospects. But previously, during the 1990s when the middle classes continued to benefit from the new geopolitical and economic order, Meretz could still be seen as genuinely representing the liberal discourse of citizenship. Subsequently, when the peace process stalled, the terms of its competition with Shinui for the support of affluent or would-be affluent voters were altered. Shinui's particular attraction to three specific groups explains its current victory over Meretz.

• *Middle class Ashkenazi voters* were attracted by Shinui's enmity towards Shas, which symbolized deeper discontent with the social and economic as well as political gains achieved by Mizrachim during the 1980s and 1990s. It is true that Meretz militantly echoed the cry of "anything but Shas!" that was popular among leftwing voters after Ehud Barak's election in 1999. But by 2003 the party was tainted by its problematic collaboration with Shas in Barak's governing coalition. Shinui's vociferous anti-Shas campaign in the 2003 elections consolidated its advantage.

• *FSU voters'* attraction to Shinui is also consistent with the hypothesis of ethnic competition over material and symbolic resources. Here too ethnic animosity was the most visible expression of this competition. But no less importantly, those of the immigrants with more favorable economic prospects found positive attractions in Shinui's pro-market orientation. In addition, given the lack of religiously-certifiable Jewishness among many Russian immigrants, they have a clear interest in Liberal or Republican criteria of membership and deservingness rather than Shas's religiously-based ethno-nationalism. At the same time, FSU voters recoil from Meretz (which agrees with Shinui that Israeliness should be constituted on non-religious grounds) because of its socialist heritage.

• *The younger and first-time voters* who perform most of the military service demanded by the upsurge of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict appear to reject Meretz's extreme dovishness, even though they might otherwise be attracted to its insistence (shared with Shinui) that all citizens including the Haredim ought to comply with the Republican obligation to serve in the army.

Hence although our findings are incongruent with Shafir and Peled's anticipation that the middle class would remain loyal to its "peace and privatization" program, class

interests did play a major role in the vote shifts on the left.[10] Shinui's voters are the more affluent (or would-be affluent) amongst the left and their vote for the more hawkish Shinui did not endanger their class interests, as is evident from the current government's economic policy which promotes the vision of a neo-liberal Israel. Nonetheless, the shift of votes from Meretz (and to a lesser degree from Labour) to Shinui was also bound up with a shifting conception of Israeli identity. The resurgence of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, that revitalized Jewish ethno-nationalism on the left, helped drive these voters away from Meretz's "universalism" and, by the same token, sharpened the conflict between the "secular" middle class and the "religious" lower class. Under these circumstances, for those seeking to re-cast their vote within the confines of the Jewish-Israeli consensus, Shinui's combination of liberalism and ethno-nationalism became more attractive than any other party on the left.

One final reflection is in order. The linkages that we have posited between class interests and partisan choice are for the most part indirect — based on the "objective" class situation of the actors but not always on their "subjective" consciousness. Shas and Shinui show the most consistency between these two realms. More than the other parties under consideration here, they not only express cultural and ethnic rivalry but also represent opposed pairings of social base and perceived class interest: middle-class and "pro-capitalist" Shinui supporters versus the lower-class and "pro-socialist" Shas electorate. But in the Israeli setting, this overlap only partially evolves into overt class politics. The reasons for this are explained by Shafir and Peled's model, to which we now return.

Conclusion

We began this endeavor suggesting that neither the return to single-ballot voting nor the ideological preferences of non-Arab voters can adequately explain the major vote swings in the 2003 elections. We proposed that by reaffirming the effect of class voting we may better account for the outcomes of the elections. But to provide a firm interpretive base for the empirical result that class shapes voting, we also suggested utilizing Shafir and Peled's model of "multiple citizenship", with the hope of adding to its power to explain the connections between class interests, cultural manifestations and voter preferences.

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[10] Analysis not reported here of voting transitions between 1999 and 2003 supports this claim. Shinui's recruits from the left were not only younger but also more affluent than those who remained loyal to either Labour or Meretz. Ideologically they were much more capitalist in their worldview (they were also more secular and less dovish, but not as sharply). In fact, more than 1.3 standard deviations separated the positions of Meretz loyalists and deserters to Shinui on the socialism/capitalism question.

Our major findings show that Shafir and Peled still offer the most adequate framework available for analyzing the effects of class and ethnicity on the voting of non-Arab Israelis. Their model's framing of the key axis of political conflict in Israel as a struggle between liberalism and ethno-nationalism offers an explanation for positions on the hawk/dove cleavage, rather than simply defining it as another issue. It also explains why this struggle is colored in ethnic colors, confirmed by our evidence that vote swings among the Mizrachim occurred mainly within the confines of the right, whereas Ashkenazim shifted their votes mainly within the left. However their model is limited by its assumption that the various discourses of citizenship are mutually exclusive. As we argued in the previous section, this perspective may have worked during the era of domestic dissent and Israeli-Palestinian rapprochement, but not in the context of the 2003 elections, characterized by internal consensus and external confrontation. The political consequences are most visible in the gains made by the Likud and Shinui, parties that both advocate, with different weights, key elements of all three of the citizenship discourses.

We do not mean to imply though that the restructuring of the relationship between the three discourses is in some sense the inevitable consequence of external pressures. It is important to recognize the mediating role of political leadership in defining the contours of the public debate, and also the specific interests of the state in highlighting one discourse and dimming another (Levy and Emmerich 2001). In their dual capacity as politicians and state executives, government leaders have used both rhetoric and policy to invoke the twin "meta codes" that reshaped the consciousness of non-Arab voters. After the failure of the Camp David talks, Prime Minister Barak and Foreign Minister Ben-Ami sought to reinvoke the hegemonic consensus and regain legitimacy by accentuating the significance of the "Jewish holy places" (*Kodshei Yisrael*). When Ariel Sharon came into office, he and his Foreign Minister Shimon Peres asserted that military might is the necessary response to the Intifada, while insisting on the need to secure the Jewish character of the state. The major winner from this ideological restructuring was the Likud but Shinui gained as well from the disengagement between the peace process and economic liberalism.

As Peled himself has recently pointed out,[11] this disengagement is made visible in the policies of the Sharon-Netanyahu government that represent a synthesis between economic neo-liberalism and militant ethno-nationalism. By the same token, Shinui's electoral success appears to be the result of its unique combination of political and economic liberalism with a centrist (which in today's conditions means hawkish)

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[11] Peled's remarks were made at a workshop convened to discuss the Shafir/Peled volume at the Van Leer Institute in Jerusalem on May 9th 2003.

position towards Arabs and the national conflict. Yet the resurgence of the hegemonic militaristic and Jewish discourses does not necessarily contradict developments in the political economy. The fact that issues of economic reform are once again overshadowed by Arab-Israeli bloodshed is of course one explanation for the timing of the far-reaching reform program introduced by Netanyahu and the Finance Ministry. The renewed salience of militarism and ethno-nationalism may therefore actually serve the proponents of economic liberalization.[12]

To recapitulate, Shafir and Peled erred not only by failing to anticipate the violent resurgence of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the subsequent revival of the hegemonic Zionist consensus, but also by overstating the dichotomy between ethno-nationalism and liberalism. This was made apparent in 2003 by the vote swings between Shas and the Likud on one side and Meretz and Shinui on the other. While the constituencies of both right and left remained clearly identifiable by class and ethnicity, we have shown that less privileged Mizrachi voters were not strictly confined to the religiously-based identity offered by Shas, and neither were more privileged Ashkenazim exclusively committed to liberalism. The Likud's posture made its "less religious" version of ethno-nationalism appealing to those Mizrachim whose class interests were less contingent on Shas's success, and thereby re-established itself as the political home of the Mizrachim. Similarly, Shinui successfully addressed the interests of middle class Ashkenazim in economic liberalization, while its evocation of their "secular" variant of ethno-nationalism allowed these voters to reclaim their position as patriotic Jews — a position incompatible with Meretz's "radicalism". Thus Shas's losses on the right and Shinui's gains on the left affirm the prevalence of class voting in Israel, while at the same time showing how the national conflict, status competition and cultural diversity continue to prevent class voting from developing into class politics.

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[12] We do not mean to imply that this combination can win out in the longrun. The welfare state still remains indispensable to legitimating the burdens imposed on Israeli citizens by the war with the Palestinians, and the fiscal and distributional costs of settlement and military conflict make it virtually impossible for the state to wither away economically in favor of "free markets".

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<p style="text-align:center">Table 1
Characteristics of Party Supporters in 2003</p>

1a. Issue Positions (means of Standard Scores)

	Shas	Likud	Shinui*	Labour	Meretz
Ethno-national Discourse					
Favors "Greater Israel"	.35	.17	-.38 (-.58)	-.44	-.48
Favors state adopting *Halacha*	1.11	.15	-.64 (-.56)	-.24	-.68
Liberal Discourse					
Opposes transfer of Arab citizens	-.77	-.15	.34 (.32)	.36	.60
Prefers capitalism to socialism	-.30	.07	.42 (.23)	-.21	-.45
Hawkishness					
Prefers force to talks	.51	.27	-.22 (-.37)	-.53	-.83
Hates Arabs	.59	.26	.01 (-.23)	-.54	-1.00

1b. Socio-demographic Characteristics

	Shas	Likud	Shinui	Labour	Meretz
Percent Mizrachim	49%	39%	12%	18%	11%
Percent Ashkenazim	12%	20%	32%	52%	59%
Percent FSU Immigrants	8%	18%	25%	8%	1%
Percent Women	63%	46%	44%	49%	60%
Percent under 30	48%	21%	33%	11%	26%
Percent 55 or over	8%	26%	17%	44%	23%
Percent with College Degree	16%	26%	50%	37%	55%
Mean SES (standard score)	-.80	-.21	.29 (.49)*	.17	.58

* Figures in parentheses are for Shinui voters other than immigrants from the FSU.
** Derived from factor analysis of questions concerning favorability to increased public expenditure.

<u>Notes</u>: Authors' analysis of the January 2003 Arian-Shamir pre-election survey, with a total of approximately 1,100 non-Arab respondents.

Table 2

Ecological Regressions of Vote Shares by Locality

	Standard of Living	% Mizrachim	Haredim	Settlements	R-squared
Meretz 2003	.12	-.54**	-.21*	-.23*	.505
Meretz 1999	.21*	-.53**	-.20*	-.21*	.584
Labour 2003	.35*	.-.42**	-.20*	-.25*	.664
Labour 1999	.36**	-.40**	-.21*	-.24*	.680
Shinui 2003	.30*	-.50***	-.33**	-.07	.711
Shinui 1999	.26*	-.44**	-.36*	.08	.561
Likud 2003	.14	.74***	-.36*	.23*	.569
Likud 1999	.10	.65***	-.28*	.36*	.422
Shas 2003	-.25*	.55**	.16	-.12	.548
Shas 1999	-.24*	.65**	.11	-.12	.668
Shinui 2003					
Mizrachi localities	.25*	-.65**	-.22*	-.11	.602
Ashkenazi localities	.33*	.04	-.49*	-.06	.618
Shinui 1999					
Mizrachi localities	.14	-.59**	-.17	.07	.453
Ashkenazi localities	.31	.07	-.40*	-.08	.442
Shas 2003					
Mizrachi localities	-.39*	.29*	.28*	-.08	.417
Ashkenazi localities	-.20	.31*	.44*	-.19	.406
Shas 1999					
Mizrachi localities	-.36*	.43*	.19	-.05	.417
Ashkenazi localities	-.17	.33*	.51*	-.22	.406

Notes: Coefficients are standardized (beta).
Significance levels are * t>= 5   ** t>=10   *** t>=15

Chart 1

**Changes in the Ideological Map of Party Support
1999-2003**
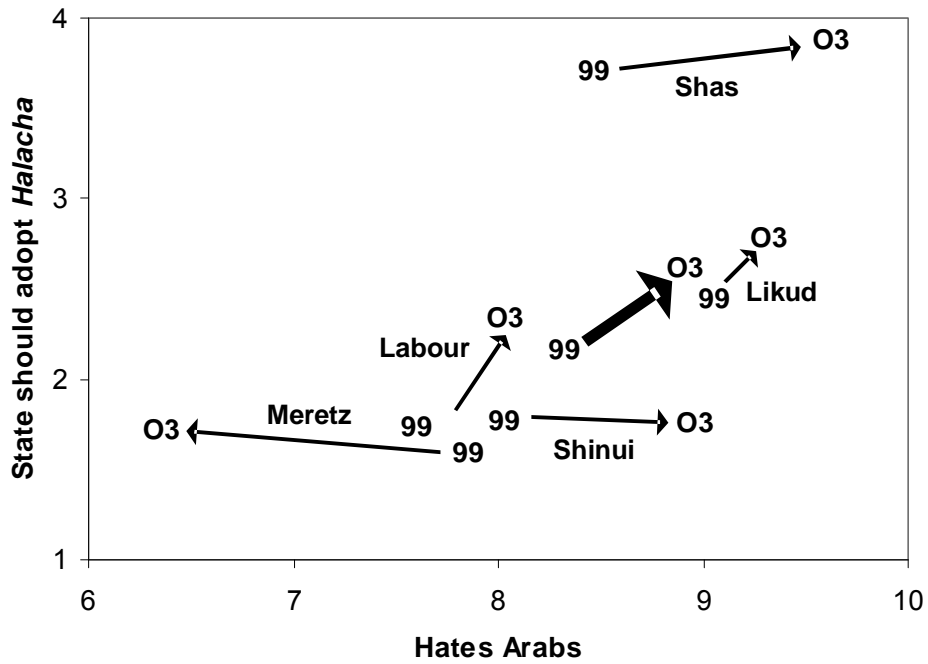
Notes: Authors' analysis of the May 1999 and January 2003 Arian-Shamir pre-election surveys, with basic ethnic and educational attributes of the non-Arab population re-weighted according to the CBS Labor Force Survey for 2001.

Chart 2

Ecological Analysis of Class and Ethnic Voting for Shas and Shinui in 2003

Shas

Shinui
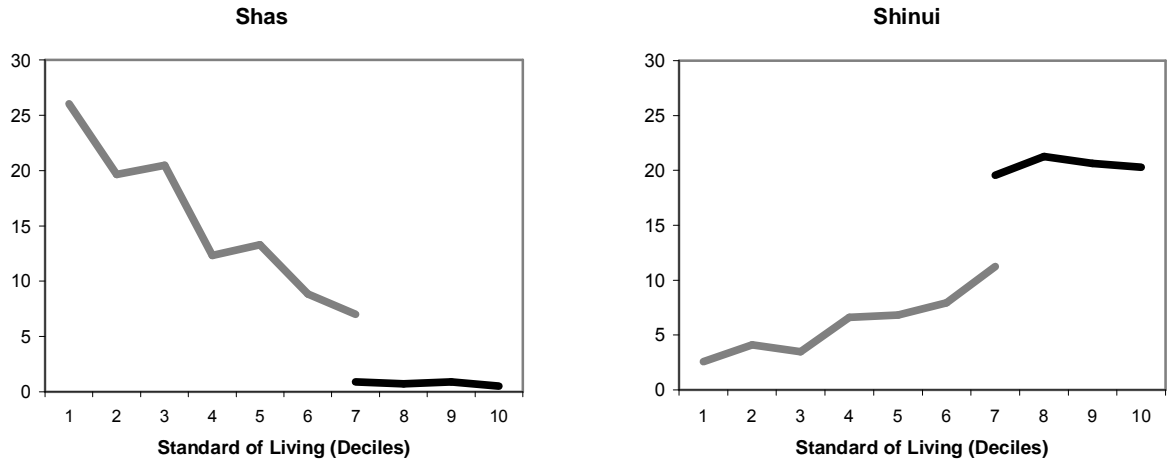
Legend: The black lines represent the average vote in Ashkenazi localities and the grey lines are for localities where Mizrachim are "dominant".