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DO VOTERS VOTE FOR GOVERNMENT COALITIONS?

Testing Downs' Pessimistic Conclusion

André Blais, John H. Aldrich, Indridi H. Indridason and Renan Levine

ABSTRACT

In many countries, elections produce coalition governments. Downs points out that in such cases the rational voter needs to determine what coalitions are possible, i.e. to ascertain their probability and to anticipate the policy compromises that they entail. Downs adds that this may be too complex a task and concludes that 'most voters do not vote as though elections were government-selection mechanisms' (Downs, 1957: 300). We test Downs' 'pessimistic' conclusion in the case of the 2003 Israeli election, an election that was bound to produce a coalition government and in which the issue of what the possible coalitions were was at the forefront of the campaign. We show that voters' views about the coalitions that could be formed after the election had an independent effect on vote choice, over and above their views about the parties, the leaders and their ideological orientations. We estimate that for one voter out of ten, coalition preferences were a decisive consideration, that is, they induced the voter to support a party other than the most preferred one. For many others, they were a factor, though perhaps not the dominant one. Furthermore, the least informed were as prone to vote on the basis of coalition preferences as the most informed. Our evidence disconfirms Downs' pessimistic view that voters will decide not to care about the formation of government. When they are provided with sufficient information about the possible options, voters think ahead about the coalitions that may be formed after the election.

KEY WORDS ■ coalitions ■ Downs ■ Israel ■ voting

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Introduction

Electoral research is very much about explaining why, at the micro-level, individual voters vote the way they do and why, at the macro-level, certain parties are more successful than others. The standard approach is to advance explanations of what makes some parties more or less attractive for various subgroups of the electorate. It is assumed that vote choice is a choice among parties.

That assumption has been challenged. A number of studies have shown that there is a strong personal vote component, that is, that vote choice is affected by evaluations of the personal characteristics or traits of the presidential candidates (Wattenberg, 1991), party leaders (Bean and Mughan, 1989; Hayes and McAllister, 1997) or local candidates (Blais et al., 2003; Cain et al., 1987). In many cases, therefore, voters vote for the person that they prefer rather than for the party *per se*.

In this article, we demonstrate that some voters make up their mind on who to vote for not only on the basis of how they feel about the parties or the specific persons running as candidates, but also on the basis of how they feel about the potential coalitions that could form after the election. In other words, some voters vote for (or against) coalitions rather than for (or against) parties.

We are interested in situations where it can be safely assumed that no single party will obtain a majority of the seats and that the government will be formed out of an alliance between two or more parties. This is not an exceptional situation. Indeed, over 70 percent of proportional representation (PR) elections produce coalition governments (Katz, 1997: 162). We examine the 2003 Israeli election, held under pure PR, which was bound to lead to a coalition government (see Aldrich et al., 2004).¹

The question that we address has been raised most elegantly by Downs in his seminal *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. Downs (1957: 7) starts with the assumption that ‘the political function of elections in a democracy . . . is to select a government’ and that ‘rational behavior in connection with elections is behavior oriented toward this end and no other’.

Downs correctly points out that it may be very difficult for voters to behave rationally when they know that the government that is going to be formed after the election will be a multiparty coalition. Under such a situation:

[E]ach vote supports a party which will have to compromise its policies even if elected; hence the policies of this party are not the ones which a vote for it actually supports. Instead the vote supports the policies of whatever coalition the party joins.

(Downs, 1957: 147)

In order to vote rationally, the voter needs to determine what coalitions are possible, ascertain their probability and anticipate the policy compromises that will be made in each case.

Even though Downs indicates that rational voters must anticipate coalitions and the policy compromises they require, he also predicts that most voters do not behave rationally because such a task is so complex and uncertain. This leads him to formulate the very last testable proposition (proposition 25) in the conclusion: 'In systems usually governed by coalitions, most citizens do not vote as though elections were government-selection mechanisms' (p. 300). The bottom line, according to Downs, is that voters vote for parties, not coalitions, because sorting out what these coalitions could be and what they entail is too complicated.

In contrast to Downs' 'pessimistic' position, the theoretical literature has generally assumed that voters do take into account which coalitions are likely to be formed after the election and the policy compromises that follow. Austen-Smith and Banks (1998) present a model of coalition formation in which voters' strategies are contingent on the outcome of the coalition formation process. Similarly, in Alesina and Rosenthal (1996), the voters cast their votes for candidates for the executive office and the legislature anticipating how their votes will affect the policy outcomes as bargained between the two branches. Models of multiparty electoral competition have posited various types of relationship between electoral outcomes and policy outcomes allowing voters to cast their votes so as to maximize their policy benefits (De Sinopoli and Iannantuoni, 2003; Ortuño-Ortín, 1997; Persson and Tabellini, 2000). These theoretical models, which assume that voters vote on the basis of their preferences over the ultimate outcome of the election, predict different patterns of voter and party behaviour than what would be observed if voters cast their vote simply on the basis of party preference.

Is Downs right? Do voters in multiparty systems simply vote for the party they like best or do they also consider the potential coalitions? As far as we can tell, no study has directly addressed this question (for an exception, see Gschwend, 2001). This article examines vote choice in the 2003 Israeli election, an election that was bound to produce a coalition government, and we ascertain whether vote choice reflected considerations about the coalitions that could be formed after the election. We argue that most voters are able to think about and form opinions about plausible coalitions, and that many do factor in these views when deciding how to vote.

The Israeli party system is dominated by divisions on peace and security issues and questions over the role of religion in the state (see Arian and Shamir, 2002; Hazan and Diskin, 2004). Likud leads the nationalist bloc on the right, which also includes the more extreme *Ihud Leumi*. Three religious parties, the National Religious Party (NRP), Shas and United Torah Judaism [*Yahadut Hatorah*] also tend to espouse hawkish views. Labor is the largest party in the peace bloc on the left. This bloc also includes the dovish Meretz and three parties predominantly supported by Arab citizens of Israel. In the centre, there are several secular parties. Shinui combined centrist views on the peace process with strident rhetoric

opposing the religious parties. Yisrael B'Aliya catered to Russian immigrants and Am Echad appealed to trade unionists.

There was no doubt whatsoever that the government that would be formed after the election would be a coalition. The issue of what the possible coalitions were was very much at the forefront of the campaign. Most commentators assumed that incumbent Prime Minister Ariel Sharon would lead the post-election coalition, but the composition of that coalition was uncertain. After winning the last direct election of Prime Minister, Sharon led a national unity or grand coalition including the two largest parties, Likud and Labor. One option would be to reassemble a national unity coalition, but Labor leader Amram Mitzna pledged that his party would never join a national unity coalition. Shinui campaigned for a secular coalition of Likud, Labor and Shinui and promised that the party would not join a Likud-led coalition if the religious parties were included. Meanwhile, religious parties urged their supporters to prevent a secular coalition, and Likud spokesmen ambiguously assured right and religious party supporters that Sharon would not desert his 'natural' allies.

Given the prominence of such discussion in the media, it makes sense to assume that most voters had heard about the possible coalitions and their policy implications, and had formed opinions about them. When asked about four potential coalitions, very few (less than 2 percent) were unable to provide an evaluation. Of those who did provide an evaluation, 60 percent expressed a clear preference for a specific coalition; 93 percent of the remaining respondents indicated some preference among the four coalitions.

We show that individuals' coalition preferences had an impact on vote choice in that election, that is, some voters voted for a party other than their most preferred one because of their views about the potential coalition governments that could be formed after the election. The hypothesis is tested in two different ways: by an indirect and a direct method. The indirect method consists of estimating a multivariate model of vote choice that incorporates preferences among coalitions, and in showing that these preferences have a systematic effect on vote choice, even after controlling for attitudes over the parties and candidates. The direct method entails defining a set of conditions that must be satisfied for us to conclude that a given individual voted mainly on the basis of coalition preferences and determining how many voters met these conditions.

We use the 2003 Israel National Election Study (INES). A total of 1,234 telephone interviews were conducted during the last two weeks of the election campaign, between 12 January and 25 January. The study was directed by Asher Arian and Michal Shamir.² The survey included questions about vote intention but also ratings of eight major parties as well as four potential coalitions. We demonstrate that voters did not make up their mind solely on the basis of how they felt about the individual parties; their views about potential coalitions also mattered.

Table 1 shows the link between vote intention and preference among the eight major parties.³ The table shows that a substantial number of voters intended to vote for a party that was not their most preferred one.⁴ Many of those who preferred the National Religious Party (NRP), *Ihud Leumi* or *Yisrael B'Aliya*, in particular, ended up voting for another party. We argue that some of these voters did so because of their preferences among the potential coalitions.

The Indirect Approach

We estimate a conditional logit model that takes into account party and leader evaluations, ideological orientations, coalition preferences and religiosity. We have two party evaluation variables. The first is a scale from 1 to 10 on which respondents indicated how they evaluated each of the parties. The second is a dummy that takes the value of 1 for the strictly preferred party and 0 otherwise. For leader evaluations, we use respondents' ratings (on a 1 to 10 scale) of Ariel Arik Sharon and Amram Mitzna. We also had an ideological left–right variable that goes from –1 (extreme left) to +1 (extreme right). Religiosity is a dummy that takes the value of 1 when the respondent considers herself an Orthodox or an ultra-Orthodox Jew.

The hypothesis we test is that coalition evaluations had an independent effect on vote choice, over and above party and leader preferences, ideological orientations and religiosity. Evaluations of coalitions were tapped through a 5-point scale running from strongly oppose to strongly support the following four coalition options: Likud–Right–Religious, Likud–Labor–Shinui, Labor–Meretz–Arab parties, and a National Unity coalition, described in the survey as Likud, Labor, Religious (Orthodox), ultra-Orthodox and additional parties.

Table 2 gives the findings of the conditional fixed-effects logit model in which party evaluation and party preference are choice specific variables, while evaluations of Sharon and Mitzna, religiosity, left–right ideology and coalition preferences are individual specific. The results confirm that, controlling for party and leader preferences, ideological orientations and religiosity, those who positively evaluated the Likud–Right–Religious coalition were less likely to vote for Meretz or Labor than for Likud. More significantly, Table 2 also shows that these voters were also more prone, controlling for party, leader and ideological preferences, to vote for NRP or Shas than for Likud.⁵ Those who scored the Likud–Labor–Shinui coalition favourably were more likely to vote for Shinui and less prone to vote for Shas, while there was little difference in support for Labor, in comparison to Likud (the comparison party). As for the left-leaning coalition, those who rated the Labor–Meretz–Arab parties coalition highly were more likely, even after controls, to vote for Labor and for Meretz, as expected. For these

Table 1. Voting and preference

Party	Preference										Total
	Labor	Likud	Meretz	NRP	Shinui	Ihud Leumi	Shas	Yisrael B'Aliya	Ties	Total	
Labor	86.4%	3.1%	19.6%	11.1%	7.6%		2.2%	8.0%	23.8%	22.2%	
	108	6	20	3	8		1	2	44	192	
Likud	4.0%	88.6%	4.9%	33.3%	11.4%	28.1%	15.2%	40.0%	47.0%	37.2%	
	5	171	5	9	12	16	7	10	87	322	
Meretz	4.0%	0.5%	75.5%		1.9%			8.0%	10.8%	10.9%	
	5	1	77		2			2	20	94	
NRP		1.0%		51.9%					3.8%	2.5%	
		2		14					7	22	
Shinui	4.8%	1.6%		3.7%	78.1%	7.0%		8.0%	10.8%	13.6%	
	6	3		1	82	4		2	20	118	
Ihud Leumi		3.6%				64.9%	4.3%	12.0%	3.8%	6.5%	
		7				37	2	3	7	56	
Shas	0.8%	1.6%			1.0%		78.3%	4.0%	5.4%	6.0%	
	1	3			1		36	1	10	52	
Yisrael B'Aliya								28.0%	1.1%	1.0%	
								7	2	9	
Total	14.5%	22.3%	11.8%	3.1%	12.1%	6.6%	5.3%	2.9%	21.4%	865	
	125	193	102	27	105	57	46	25	185	865	

three coalitions, there is evidence of a statistically significant effect, boosting the likelihood of voting for parties most directly implicated in the various coalitions, based on evaluations of that coalition.⁶ No party was significant in the fourth coalition.

These results make intuitive sense. A preference for the Likud–Right–Religious coalition induces some voters to vote for NRP and Shas because shifting weight from Likud to those parties makes that coalition more feasible than a Likud–Labor–Shinui coalition for example. A similar explanation can be offered for the greater propensity to vote Shinui among those who liked the Likud–Labor–Shinui coalition.

The indirect approach allows us to show that evaluations of coalitions *per se* mattered, but it is not well suited to finding out exactly which voters voted for parties that were not their most preferred because of their views about coalitions. In order to fulfill this part of the analysis, we turn to the direct approach.

The Direct Approach

Comparing how individual voters cast their votes with their preferences over parties and coalitions gives us the opportunity to evaluate the extent of coalition voting as well as to determine which parties benefited from the voters' concerns with what coalition might form after the election. Since our primary goal is to establish that coalition voting does exist, we define a set of conditions that gives us a conservative estimate of the extent of coalition voting.

First, the voter must have voted for a party other than her preferred one. As a conservative test, we assume that those who voted for their preferred party voted on the basis of party, rather than coalition, preferences. This is a conservative test because it is possible for an individual to vote for the party she likes most because she expects that party to be part of her preferred coalition. We took the party that was given the highest evaluation as the preferred party.⁷ We have 182 respondents out of 865 (21 percent) who fulfilled this condition.

The second condition concerns coalition preferences. The respondent must have a strict preference for one of the four coalitions. Ninety-two respondents (11 percent) respect the first two conditions.

Finally, we require the respondents to have voted for a member of their preferred coalition. We assume Ihud Leumi, NRP, Shas and, of course, Likud to be the members of a Likud–Right–Religious coalition, and Labor, Likud, Yisrael B'Aliya, Shas and NRP to be the members of a national unity coalition. We then have 71 respondents (9 percent) who meet the three conditions; these are voters for whom coalition considerations were decisive, that is, these considerations were powerful enough to convince them to vote for a party that was not their first preference.

Table 2. Conditional logit: vote choice

<i>Independent variables</i>	<i>Choice specific</i>	<i>Labor</i>	<i>Meretz</i>	<i>NRP</i>	<i>Shinui</i>	<i>Ihud Leumi</i>	<i>Shas</i>	<i>B'Aliya</i>
Party evaluation	0.32** (0.05)							
Preferred party	1.42** (0.18)							
Constant		-0.06 (1.11)	-1.18 (1.44)	-5.30 (2.31)*	-1.70 (1.13)	-3.97** (1.42)	-3.89* (1.80)	-7.31 (4.05)
Likud-Right-Religious		-0.59** (0.23)	-0.69* (0.30)	1.01* (0.40)	-0.30 (0.20)	0.30 (0.20)	0.64* (0.29)	0.18 (0.49)
Likud-Labor-Shinui		-0.07 (0.20)	-0.01 (0.20)	0.15 (0.28)	0.55** (0.20)	-0.01 (0.20)	-0.50* (0.24)	0.36 (0.48)
Labor-Meretz-Arabs		0.62** (0.21)	1.02** (0.25)	-0.63 (0.66)	-0.03 (0.23)	0.13 (0.29)	0.43 (0.33)	0.71 (0.59)
National Unity		0.13 (0.18)	-0.20 (0.23)	-0.23 (0.28)	-0.06 (0.17)	0.02 (0.18)	-0.38 (0.24)	0.17 (0.61)
Political spectrum		-1.68** (0.45)	-2.20** (0.58)	-0.85 (0.81)	-0.97* (0.42)	1.20* (0.58)	-0.17 (0.66)	2.44 (1.65)
Religiosity		-0.41 (0.99)	-0.77 (1.34)	1.48* (0.65)	0.12 (0.96)	0.27 (0.50)	0.12 (0.10)	-30.28 (.)
Mitzna evaluation		0.21* (0.08)	0.07 (0.10)	0.18 (0.15)	0.12 (0.08)	0.13 (0.10)	0.14 (0.12)	-0.39 (0.28)
Sharon evaluation		-0.28** (0.09)	-0.17 (0.12)	-0.06 (0.13)	-0.06 (0.08)	-0.02 (0.08)	0.12 (0.10)	-0.01 (0.18)

n = 834

Log likelihood = -530.3556

% Correctly predicted = 76%

** Significant at $p = 0.01$; * significant at $p = 0.05$.

Nine percent may appear to be a small number. We would argue that it is a big number. Our objective has been to establish that there exist voters who cannot be considered to be casting anything other than a vote for a coalition, if they are voting at all reasonably. There were many other voters who cared about the potential coalitions but for whom these considerations do not appear to have been decisive, most especially those who voted for their preferred party partly because they expected that party to be a central player in a coalition. Furthermore, the minimum proportion of 'coalition' voters estimated here is higher than the proportion of strategic voting in single-member plurality systems (Alvarez and Nagler, 2000; Blais et al., 2001).

Table 3 shows the party preference and the vote choice of the 71 respondents for whom coalition preferences were decisive in their vote choice. Among these 71 individuals, Likud is the big winner: 37 voters voted Likud though this was not their preferred party, while 7 voted for another party even though Likud was their first choice. This produced a net gain of 30 votes, or about 3 percentage points for Likud. Likud gains come from all over the political spectrum, but most especially from the religious right. Labor also makes a net gain of 18 votes, or about 2 percentage points, mostly from Shinui and Meretz. Shinui gained one net vote while all other parties lost.

According to our estimations, therefore, Likud would have obtained 3 percentage points fewer votes if voters had not voted on the basis of how they felt about the potential coalitions. This would have meant a 10 percent decrease in Likud's vote share and 4 fewer seats in the Knesset, and 3 more seats for the religious right religious parties. In a highly fragmented system, such differences can substantially alter the bargaining leverage of the various parties.

Who Voted for a Coalition?

We estimate, on the basis of the direct method, that 9 percent of those who voted for one of the eight major parties voted for a party other than their most preferred one on the basis of their coalition preferences. Who are these voters whose minds are focused on the potential coalitions that could be formed after the election? Logically, we would expect these people who are willing to put aside their preference among the parties because of their views about the coalitions to have weaker party preferences (and thus to be willing to abandon their first choice), but also to have stronger coalition preferences (and thus to be prone to factor them into their vote choice). It could also be argued that thinking about the coalitions that could be formed after the election requires a high degree of political sophistication and that consequently only the most informed segment of the electorate votes for a coalition. The three hypotheses are tested below.

Table 3. Voting and preference among coalition voters

Party	Preference										Total
	Labor	Likud	Meretz	NRP	Shinui	Ihud Leumi	Shas	Yisrael B'Aliya			
Labor	57.1% 4		76.9% 10	14.3% 1	50.0% 6			18.2% 2			32.4% 23
Likud	40.0% 2		23.1% 3	71.4% 5	50.0% 6	90.9% 10	100.0% 5	54.5% 6			52.1% 37
Meretz											0.0% 0
NRP		14.3% 1									1.4% 1
Shinui	60.0% 3			14.3% 1		9.1% 1		27.3% 3			11.3% 8
Ihud Leumi											0.0% 0
Shas		28.6% 2									2.8% 2
Yisrael B'Aliya											0.0% 0
Total	7.0% 5	9.9% 7	18.3% 13	9.9% 7	16.9% 12	15.5% 11	7.0% 5	15.5% 11			71

Table 4 gives the results of a binary logit estimation where the dependent variable is whether the voter voted on the basis of coalition considerations, i.e. whether the three conditions outlined under the direct approach were satisfied. Because the proportion of voters who vote on the basis of coalition preferences is small (9 percent), we use King and Zeng's (2001) rare events logit correction method. Intensity of party and coalition preferences corresponds to the difference between the score given to the preferred party or coalition and the score given to the least preferred. The information variable is an index made up of responses to questions about the frequency of newspaper reading and political discussion. The variable goes from 0 for those who are not informed at all about politics to 1 for those who are very informed. Note that interest in politics is quite strong in Israel with a left-skewed distribution in favour of high information.

Table 4 reflects a positive and significant effect of coalition preference intensity on the propensity to vote for a coalition. As expected, party preference intensity is negatively correlated with the decision to vote for a coalition, and the coefficient does reach statistical significance. As for information, it does not seem to be related in any way to the dependent variable. Less informed voters appear to be no less capable or willing to factor concerns about potential coalitions into their vote choice than their most informed counterparts, which suggests that the issue of which coalition would be constituted after the election was covered with enough intensity in the media that the 'message' reached even those who do not follow politics very closely (Zaller, 1992). Voting for a coalition was not confined to the elite.

One might ask how the predicted probability of voting for a coalition is affected by the intensity of preference among the potential coalitions.⁸ Coalition preferences were measured on a 5-point scale and the difference between the first and last choices ranged from 0 to 4. Unsurprisingly, the probability of voting for a coalition is practically nil among those with no coalition preference, who constitute 3 percent of the sample. That probability reaches 12 percent among the 30 percent of the respondents who had very strong preferences (with differentials of 4). While the probability is not

Table 4. Determinants of coalition voting: a logit estimation

<i>Independent variables</i>	<i>Coefficients</i>
Intensity of preference for a party	-0.15** (0.06)
Intensity of preference for a coalition	0.40** (0.14)
Information	-0.03 (0.47)
Constant	-2.49** (0.59)

n = 847

**Significant at $p = 0.01$; *Significant at $p = 0.05$.

very high, voters who had a strong preference for a coalition were four times as likely to cast a vote for that coalition as those who were indifferent.

Conclusion

This article has established that in the 2003 Israeli election, voters' views about the coalitions that could be formed after the election had an independent effect on vote choice, over and above their views about the parties, the leaders and their ideological orientations. We have estimated that for nearly one voter out of ten, coalition preferences were a decisive consideration, that is, that they induced the voter to support a party other than their most preferred one. For many others, undoubtedly, coalition considerations mattered, though they were not decisive in the strict sense defined here. Furthermore, voting for a coalition was not confined to the elite, as the least informed segment of the electorate was as prone to vote for a coalition as the most informed fragment. These results may not surprise scholars studying Israeli politics, but to the best of our knowledge this is the first systematic attempt at testing the effect of coalition considerations on vote choice.

We thus have compelling evidence which disconfirms Downs' pessimistic view that in a highly fragmented party system voters would feel bewildered by the complexity of sorting out the potential coalitions, would forget about what might happen after the election (the formation of the government), and simply vote for the party they prefer. Our evidence pertains to only one election in one country, and more research is needed to determine whether the pattern uncovered in the case of the 2003 Israeli election applies more generally.

Much depends, we suspect, on the intensity of information provided by the parties and the media about the potential coalitions. Discussions about who was willing and unwilling to ally with whom were prominent in the campaign, and this greatly facilitated the voters' task. Our study shows that voters are able to digest and use information about the possible coalitions when that information is made available to them.

There is no reason to believe that Israeli voters are exceptional in this regard. Gschwend (2001: 127) has shown that in Germany, where the possible coalitions are generally clear at the time of the election, 'voters consider several viable coalitions of parties and try to support their most preferred coalition if the party they otherwise like most has no chance of gaining a majority of seats in Parliament'.

The situation could be different when the parties choose not to indicate before the election which coalitions they are willing or unwilling to entertain and/or the media provide little or ambiguous information on the subject. Then we would expect many voters to feel bewildered and possibly to give up thinking about the ultimate goal of the game, the formation of

the government. This raises other questions. If voters care about who will govern in the end and want to obtain information about the possible coalitions, is it not in the interest of the parties to provide that information? Do voters punish the parties who choose to remain silent on those matters? What are the (electoral) benefits and costs for parties to be clear or ambiguous about their willingness or unwillingness to ally with other parties? If, as in Israel in 2003, a coalition forms different from those discussed during the campaign, do voters penalize the relevant parties or lose trust in the political system?

We do not have the answers to these questions. The main lesson of this study, however, is that voters think ahead about the coalitions that may be formed after the election, at least when they are provided sufficient information about the possible options. Elections are, after all, about who should have the right to make laws, and voters understand this very well.

Notes

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- 1 Israel reverted to its nearly pure PR system for the 2003 election, dropping the separate votes for Prime Minister and Knesset party that had been used in the 1996, 1999 and 2001 elections. Israel has a 1.5 percent threshold for winning a first seat and allocates surplus votes via the d'Hondt method that slightly favours the two largest parties.
- 2 The study was conducted by Mahshov, a private research institute. The sample is of all adults. In this article, we follow standard practice and exclude Arab respondents whose voting behaviour is quite different from that of Jewish respondents. Data can be obtained through the Israel Social Sciences Data Center at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.
- 3 Respondents were asked to rate each party on a scale from 1 to 10. Respondents are assumed to prefer the party to which they gave the highest rating. Those who gave the same highest rating to two or three parties are characterized as having 'tied' preferences. The table, and the analysis that follows, excludes those who intended to vote for a party other than one of the eight major parties or who declined to rate any of the parties or any of the potential coalitions.
- 4 In fact, 22 percent of those who rated a single party as their first choice voted for a different party.
- 5 In the case of Shas, the coefficient is statistically significant only at the 0.1 level.
- 6 We should note that the coefficients of each of the three coalition evaluations pass a joint significance test.
- 7 As can be seen in Table 1, a number of respondents had tied preferences. Their first preference was imputed on the basis of the findings of a multinomial logit estimation of the effect of party ratings, ideology and religiosity on party preference among those with a strict party preference.

8 The estimations are based on simulations, using Stata 8, in which all individuals were given a score of 0, 1, 2, 3 or 4 on intensity of preference for a coalition and kept their actual scores on the other two variables.

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