

**Political Parties in Israel and Canada:
How Degrees of Centralization and Decentralization
Influence the Organization of Political Parties**

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The workshop was hosted at the Halbert Center at the Hebrew University on October 7-8, 2015. It was funded by the the Halbert Center with some needed additional generous support from the Nancy S. and Lawrence E. Glick Fund and the Eshkol Institute. Five Canadian political scientists (Kenneth Carty, Bill Cross, Csaba Nikolenyi, Scott Pruyers and David Stewart) and seven Israeli Political scientists (Chen Friedberg, Reuven Hazan, Reut Itzkovitch Malka, Ofer Kenig, Gideon Rahat, Assaf Shapira and Or Tuttnauer) participated in the workshop.

The major goal of the workshop was to develop the comparative perspective of the participating scholars by considering and comparing the experiences of political parties in a highly decentralized polity, Canada, and a highly centralized one -- Israel. This goal was indeed achieved as was evident from the lively discussions and interchanges that characterized the workshop. Two political realities that sometimes appear to be worlds apart were considered together. Sometimes, the differences became clearer, but even more surprisingly, participants found many similarities between party organization in these countries as well as in others. Parties in both countries are facing many of the same challenges. We believe that each participant

benefited greatly from the discussions and from the papers presented at the workshop. Many have told us that this will now help inform their own research.

The workshop included, in addition to an opening and a closing session, eight sessions, in which 12 papers were presented. Each paper also had an assigned discussant who offered comments directly on the paper and also how it spoke to the general themes of the workshop. After this, the floor was opened for discussion and each session generated much lively conversation.

The workshop opened with a presentation by Ken Carty, who presented an analysis of party organization through the prism of his well known *Stratarchy* model. We then continued with a look at various aspects of centralization and decentralization of the organization of political parties: intra-party power sharing of key party activities such as candidate and leadership selection and policy development (Cross); candidate recruitment from local to national politics (Friedberg and Shapira); parties' presence and power in local politics (Kenig and Rahat); party switching in legislatures (Nikolenyi); organizational linkages between regional and national parties (Pruysers); national and local level coalition politics (Tuttnauer); [federal-provincial variation in party leadership selection \(Stewart\)](#); and the legislative organization of political parties (Iitzkovitch Malka and Hazan). In each of these topics participants considered the differences and commonalities between Canadian and Israeli experience and attempted to identify the structural, cultural and institutional factors that explain these. The concluding discussion brought many of these themes together and identified questions for further research.