Institutional-Constitutional Change and Political Behavior:
The Municipal Elections in Tel -Aviv-Jaffa (1993) and Split Ticket Voting

Dr. Gad Barzilai

Abstract:

The phenomenon of split ticket voting is intriguing, and has partially been explicated in the scientific literature. Studies have offered several inconclusive reasons why a voter may decide to split his/her vote, and to support rival candidates, and opposing political parties. The candidate's visibility, on the one hand, and partisan identification, on the other hand, have been the most cited explanations for the degree of split ticket voting in democracies. This article explores the theoretical efforts to comprehend that trend of electoral behavior, and discusses its institutional ramifications. I examine the arguments of social choice models and behavioral studies, comparing them in historical perspective. Accordingly, two assumptions were phrased for empirical test. The first, emphasizes the importance of partisan identification. The second illuminates the issue of personal visibility.

Then, the Israeli electoral sphere is examined. The constitutional reform in 1978, when the municipal elections for mayorship became personal and direct was my departure point. I have focused on the direct municipal elections in Tel- Aviv-Jaffa (1993) for mayorship. More concretely, I have illuminated the voting for the three larger political parties: Labor, Lev, and Likud in Tel-Aviv-Jaffa, and for the two principal candidates for mayorship: kaalani and Milo. Following a content-analysis of the electoral campaigns, and a multi-variate analysis of voting patterns, I have established that partisan identification was of much importance in determining the elections results for mayorship. Yet, the institutional-constitutional reform has had its repercussions. The candidate's visibility was of some significance as well. Accordingly, around 33% of the electoral support was a result of split ticket voting, when the voters of one political party supported the candidate of the rival party for mayorship. Much of it was due to the candidates visibility, based on their respective

strategies. Roni Milo, the candidate of Lev and the Likud in Tel -Aviv-Jaffa, enjoyed more personal visibility, and in turn received the lion share of the split ticket voting.

This research encourages to analyze the social discourse, electoral strategies, and the electoral trends of split ticket voting which are generated within a specific constitutional context. In 1992 a similar constitutional reform took place in Israel, when the national elections for the executive became direct and personal. Accordingly, the results of the 1996 national elections in Israel demonstrate that the endeavor to study split ticket voting is even more challenging than ever before.