

*Locality and Nationality:*

*A Marginalized Communalism and the Elections in Tel Aviv-Jaffa*

Professor Gad Barzilai

Recent studies in political science, law, and sociology have pointed to the importance of localities as crucial sources of social capital and civic culture. These studies, like those of Robert Putnam, have expressively or implicitly rejuvenated meaningful theoretical works of Jurgen Habermas and Hannah Arendt from the 1960s, that inter alia dwell on nineteenth century's works like those of Alexis de-Tocqueville. Such studies presume that localities as municipalities are vital in democracies due to multifarious reasons and aspects that I have illuminated in my study.

However, there is a significant theoretical absence of studies that investigate the relations between the nation-state and localities in a non-Western context, outside the realm of the USA and Western Europe. The purpose of my article is to deal with such an absence through the examination of a split-ticket-voting during the municipal elections in the city of Tel Aviv-Jaffa in 1998 and 1993.

For testing the theoretical aspects of locality vs. nationality and of communalism vs. state power, and in order to explore the complementary dialectic relations between these dimensions of political power, I have gathered a large data-set that has enabled a

multivariate analysis of a split- ticket- voting over time. The phenomenon of a split- ticket- voting is a good criterion to see whether a legislation that established direct elections in municipalities has affected the evolvement of local cultures or whether despite that legislation the state and its ideology have been more influential over voting patterns and political discourse. Through a detailed analysis of multivariate models and content analysis presented in the article it is explored why despite the legal reforms in the late 1970s, no local culture separated from the state culture has been evolved. Hence it is expounded that nationality prevails and that the effect of localities over democratization processes in a non-Western setting is rather confined. Hence, a significant refinement in the theoretical literature is required, in a way that better expounds the struggle between localities and the nation-state in the midst of neo-liberal globalization.

---

Professor Gad Barzilai is a political scientist and a jurist in the Department of Political Science, and the co-director of the interdisciplinary program of Law, Politics, and Society, at Tel Aviv University. Barzilai has published extensively on law and politics. His recent new book: Gad Barzilai, Communities and Law: Politics and Cultures of Legal Identities (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003).