

definitely appreciate Margolis' attempt to take the first step in showing the effects of politics on religiosity, yet her life-cycle theory may not be successful in explaining religiosity in other countries. For example, in Islamic terms the religiosity of a Muslim starts when a child reaches puberty, during which time political knowledge has not been shaped. Therefore, although partisan identities may shape religiosity in some countries –such as Turkey– we cannot explain this with life-cycle theory. This may lead us to look at other variables such as social identity formation, especially the family environment. And Margolis is not really successful in discrediting the importance of family environment in identity formation. For example, she argues that the wish to be independent from family plays a role in individuals' putting a distance between themselves and religion during early adulthood, while she maintains that family plays a role in the formation of partisan identities

during the very same period. This seems to be a major contradiction that the author fails to address.

Nevertheless, *From Politics to the Pews* is an important theoretical contribution as it reverses our understanding of the relationship between religion and politics. If other researchers extend the scope of this argument, explain the political implications of political identities' effects on religiosity and clarify some theoretical arguments, this book will constitute an important first step to explicate a controversial issue in American politics.

## Endnotes

1. The publisher provided an early copy of the book to the author before publication. Therefore, exact pages of the citations are not referred to in the review.
2. Fabio Petito and Pavlos Hatzopoulos, *Religion in International Relations: The Return from Exile*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

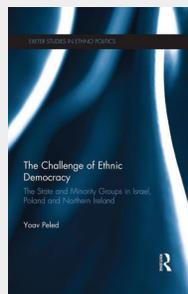
## The Challenge of Ethnic Democracy: The State and Minority Groups in Israel, Poland and Northern Ireland

By Yoav Peled

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In the midst of political discussions over Israel's controversial Jewish Nation-state Law adopted in July, re-examining Israel's alleged ethnic democracy becomes more pivotal. In the late 1980s, the Israeli sociologist Sammy Smooha conceptualized the concept of ethnic democracy, and considered Israel as an archetype. Yoav Peled, author of *The Challenge of Ethnic Democracy*, was one of the Israeli



scholars to accept identifying Israel as an ethnic democracy, albeit with reservations regarding the stability of this political system. Peled argues that in states built upon ethno-nationalism, ethnic democracy could be a mediating formula between ethnocracy, that denies individual rights for minorities, and liberal democracy that guarantees equality for all citizens. In ethnic democracy, the state combines

majoritarian electoral procedures and individual citizenship rights with the institutionalized dominance of a majority ethnic group over the society and the state. Although this model has received much criticism regarding the quality of the democratic sphere it offers, this book warns that Israel's ethnic democracy is barely sustainable in the wake of several economic and political changes since 2000.

In chapter one, Peled explores his comparative methodology between the cases of Israel, Northern Ireland (1921-1969), and Poland (1918-1939) to create a pattern of the pre-conditions required to guarantee the stability of an ethnic democracy. He argues the necessity of a third principle to mediate between ethno-nationalism and liberal democracy, as well as sufficient economic capabilities to sustain this third principle. In chapter two, Peled concludes that populism was the undeclared principle adopted by the Unionist government in Northern Ireland to forge an alliance between Protestant middle and working classes, and thus prevent any class-based united action between workers in both majority and minority communities. Populism sustained ethnic nationalism in Northern Ireland for 48 years, but the lack of independent economic capabilities led to its collapse in 1969.

In chapter three, Peled argues that ethnic democracy failed in Poland because the state did not create the third principle required for stability. Rather, it relied on exclusionary and authoritarian political policies to address ethnic and economic problems. Moreover, the Polish economy in the inter-war period could not provide a material base for a non-ethnic principle of solidarity for the core ethnic group. Chapter four considers that Israel's ethnic democracy started in 1966; prior to that, Israel was not a democracy because of its suspen-

sion of the Palestinians' citizenship rights by the military regime imposed on them. It also argues that since 2000, Israel's ethnic democracy has begun to erode as a consequence of series of suppressive policies and discriminatory legislation against non-Jewish minorities, specifically the Arab minority.

*The Challenge of Ethnic Democracy* adopts the same logic used by Sammy Smooha in defending the model of ethnic democracy. It makes Israel an archetype; thus, it builds the model by describing the Israeli case, rather than combining various case studies to extract features and theorize an ideal type, which opens the door to criticisms regarding the objectivity and integrity of this work. Yoav Peled argues that between 1966 and 2000, Israel succeeded in creating a balanced ethnic democratic system by enhancing the principle of civic republicanism. The core of this principle, according to Peled, was "endowing Israeli Jews with solidarity based on a common moral purpose, which is, the fulfilment of Zionism" (p. 13). By arguing that, Peled disregards that Zionism reflects, literally, Jewish ethno-nationalism in Israel, and thus could not be considered as a mediating principle in any case, especially when you look to the major minority group in Israel. For the Arab minority, assimilation with Zionism, which sees Israel as the historic exclusive homeland for Jewish people, means abandoning their identity as indigenous inhabitants.

If one accepts Peled's understanding of Israel's ethnic democracy, one finds several explanations for its long-term stability from 1966-2000. During this period, Israel launched six wars and military operations against either Arab countries or Palestinian groups, suppressed the Palestinian civil uprising (first intifada), and used excessive violence against Arab protesters in Israel. One can argue that

military and violent deterrence was the critical factor behind sustaining the system and trailing off any resistance against discrimination.

The model of ethnic democracy itself has several shortcomings. Many scholars deny its democratic nature, arguing that it is closer to ethnocracy or the *Herrenvolk* system. Other scholars challenge its viability to become an ideal type and defend the singularity of the Israeli case. However, Peled's book accepts the model as a democratic system and a useful ideal type for several case studies, without sufficiently addressing its shortcomings and criticisms.

No doubt that defining "demos" correctly is essential and critical in studying democracy. However, one of the obvious methodological mistakes is adopting the pre-1967 border as Israel's borders. Peled, as Smootha before, fails in tackling the dilemma entailed in the difficult choice between studying Israel's de facto borders (expanded to their domination limits to include Gaza and the West Bank) which means, at the end of the day, obvious similarities between Israel and South Africa's Apartheid regime. The second choice is to study Israel within the pre-1967 borders, ignoring the fact that there are more than 700,000 Israeli settlers engaged to the Israeli electoral process (demos), and they cannot be excluded from his study. Peled defends his stance by arguing

that, "states can be democratic with respect to [their] own demos, but not necessarily with respect to all persons subject to the collective decisions of the demos" (p. 12). That means defining 1.8 million Israeli citizens belonging to the Arab minority as subjects to the will of the majority group, excluding them from being an active and influential part of the demos, and enhancing a two-tier system of citizenship, which is the exact definition of Apartheid.

In conclusion, Peled's book shows that the Israeli scholars who accept the alleged 'model' of Israel's ethnic democracy have serious concerns about democracy in Israel as it has functioned for the last few years. The diluted and controversial formula of democracy in Israel has been eroding since 2000 as a consequence of several discriminatory legislations and repressive actions such as the October 2000 events, the 2003 Nationality and Entry into Israel Law, and the 2014 National Civil Service Law (p. 201). In July 2018, the Israeli Knesset adopted the Jewish Nation-state Law that formalizes the two-tier system of citizenship by giving the majority group a cluster of exclusive individual, judicial and political rights. This law took discrimination against non-Jewish groups to a further level by embodying it in the constitution. Thus one can argue that it puts the final nail in the alleged ethnic democracy in Israel.