Democratizing the Hegemonic State

Political Transformation in the Age of Identity

This book provides a new, comprehensive analytical framework for the examination of majority-minority relations in deeply divided societies. Hegemonic states in which one ethnic group completely dominates all others will continue to face enormous pressures to transform because they are out of step with the new, emerging, global governing code that emphasizes democracy and equal rights. Refusal to change would lead such states to lose international legitimacy and face increasing civil strife, instability, and violence. Through systematic theoretical analysis and careful empirical study of fourteen key cases, Ilan Peleg examines the options open to polities with diverse populations. Challenging the conventional wisdom of many liberal democrats, Peleg maintains that the preferred solution for a traditional hegemonic polity is not merely to grant equal rights to individuals, a necessary but insufficient condition, but also to incorporate significant group rights through gradual or megaconstitutional transformation. The future of societies divided over ethnic relations remains critically important to the possibility of global harmony.

Ilan Peleg is the Editor-in-Chief of Israel Studies Forum (since 2000) and the author of Begin’s Foreign Policy, 1977–1983: Israel’s Turn to the Right (1987) and Human Rights in the West Bank and Gaza: Legacy and Politics (1995, selected as Choice Outstanding Academic Title in 1996) and many other scholarly books and articles. His recent studies have appeared in journals such as the Middle East Journal and Nationalism and Ethnic Politics. Dr. Peleg’s expertise is in ethnic relations in deeply divided societies, Middle East politics, Israeli society, and U.S. foreign policy, and he has spoken on these topics on CNN, Voice of America, and National Public Radio. Dr. Peleg is the Charles A. Dana Professor of Government and Law at Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania.
To my son Gil
Democratizing the Hegemonic State

Political Transformation in the Age of Identity

ILAN PELEG
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## Contents

**Preface**

- Introduction .................................................. 1
- National Conflict in Multinational States .............. 1
- Approaches to Solutions: Political Engineering and Megaconstitutional Transformation ...... 4
- The Structure of the Book .................................... 7
- Some Methodological Considerations .................... 12
- The Basic Questions .......................................... 14
- The Thesis .................................................. 15

1 Ethnonational Conflict in Multinational Polities ........ 20
- The Emergence of Ethnic Conflict ....................... 20
- The Need for Solution ....................................... 23
- Strategies for Solutions: Individual- and Group-Based ................................................. 28
- Mechanisms and Methods for Reducing Ethnic Conflict ............................................... 33
- The Hegemonic Option: Long- vs. Short-Term Results ...................................................... 46

2 The Crucial Triangle: Democracy, Statehood, and Hegemony in Multinational Settings .......... 49
- Prerequisites of Contemporary Democracy ......... 51
- The Multinational State Facing Diversity .......... 56
- Hegemonic Behavior of Multinational States ........ 60
- The Consequences of Hegemony ......................... 65
- Transforming the Hegemonic State ..................... 68

3 Classifying Multinational States .......................... 78
- The Logic of Classification ............................... 78
- Accommodationist vs. Exclusivist Multinational States .................................................. 83
- Exclusivist Regimes: Minority vs. Majority Hegemony .................................................... 85
- Accommodationist Regimes: Individual- vs. Group-Based ................................................. 89
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contents</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group-Rights Regimes: Power Sharing vs. Power Division</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of System Transformation</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Transforming Uni-national Hegemony in Divided Societies:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Gradual Option</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Set of Empirical Questions: Comparing Transformative Experiences</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative Variants of Gradual Modes of Transformation</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Transforming Uni-national Hegemony: Megaconstitutional Engineering</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daring to Dream: Redesigning the Political Order</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radical Modes of Transformation – Alternative Variants</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 The Reverse Trend: Sustaining or Strengthening Ethnic Hegemony</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mild Democratization: Israel and Turkey</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mild Ethnicization: Estonia and Latvia</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radical Ethnicization: Sri Lanka and Rwanda</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Beyond Hegemony in Deeply Divided Societies: Transforming Hegemonic Systems</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Terminological Debate: The Nature of Ethnohegemony</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explaining the Transformation of Ethnic Constitutional Orders</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Consequences of Unyielding Ethnic Hegemony</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Preface

This volume is the result of several years of focused intellectual reflection and deeply felt anxiety about the fate of our ever-shrinking but increasingly conflictual world. It started with writing about the seemingly endless conflict in the Middle East but gradually evolved into intense interest in other, similarly intractable blood feuds. The breadth of the volume reflects my current thinking about the origins of interethnic or intranational conflict in a number of the world’s polities and possible ways of solving that conflict using a variety of governmental structures.

Numerous individuals and several organizations should be thanked for being of assistance to me, and I do thank them with genuine delight and deep gratitude. The University of Oxford invited me to spend the academic year 2002–2003 on its “campus,” this hallowed ground of intellectual pursuit for almost 800 years. Special thanks are due to Sir Marrack Goulding, St. Antony’s gracious Warden, and to Professor Avi Shlaim, who sponsored my membership at the college. While at St. Antony’s, I maintained a “dual citizenship” at the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies (OCHJS), located in the village of Yarnton, outside Oxford. I would be remiss if I did not thank OCHJS’s president, Professor Peter Oppenheimer, and the other Fellows at the centre. Several Oxford professors were particularly helpful in commenting on my early thinking, especially Peter Pulzer of All-Souls College and Renee Hirschon of St. Peter’s College, as well as the Oxford/New York publisher Dr. Marion Berghahn.

I spent part of the academic year 1999–2000 at Rutgers University as a guest of, again, two outfits: the Center for Russian and East European Studies and the Bildner Center for Jewish Life. While there, I took part in a weekly seminar on “Democratization in East Europe, Israel, and Beyond,” writing a paper that eventually became part of the current book. My thanks are extended to Professors Jan Kubic and Myron Aronoff, the seminar’s able leaders, for their insightful comments; to Professor Yael Zerubavel, Director of the Bildner Center for Jewish Life; and to Professor Israel Bartal, a member of the same seminar.
Preface

Throughout the last few years, I have discussed the ideas included in this book with numerous individuals who, thus, contributed to the volume, often without ever knowing it. Among them I would like to give special thanks to three individuals who have read the entire manuscript and have given me priceless advice on improving it: Alan Dowty, Adrian Guelke, and particularly William Safran. I am also grateful to a long list of colleagues with whom I have discussed through the years the ideas included in this volume: Gad Barzilai, Kevin Cameron, Eliezer Don-Yehiya, Uri-Ben Eliezer, Katalin Fabian, Bob Freedman, David Forsythe, Naomi Gal, Asad Ghanem, Hanna Herzog, Edward Kolodejci, Sandy Kedar, Ian Lustick, Howard Marblestone, John McCartney, Jonathan Mendilow, Joshua Miller, Joel Migdal, Luis Moreno, Benny Neuberger, Emanuele Ottolenghi, Yoav Peled, Gil Peleg, Nadim Rouhana, Gershon Shafir, Sammy Smooha, Jeff Spinner-Halev, Ilan Troen, Dov Waxman, Robert Weiner, Oren Yiftachal, Yael Zerubavel, and Eric Zikolkowski. Special thanks are also due to the organizers of the International Political Science Association (IPSA) seminar on “Ethnic Conflict in Divided Societies” in Belfast, Northern Ireland, in the summer of 2001 (and particularly to Professor Adrian Guelke), to the organizers of the IPSA’s seminar on judicial issues in Jerusalem the very same summer (and especially Professor Menachem Hofnung of the Hebrew University), and to Drs. Guy Ben-Potat and Eiki Berg, organizers of the March 2006 workshop on “Partition or Power Sharing? The Management of Borders and Territories in the Globalized World” of the Mediterranean Programme of the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies at the European University Institute in Florence, Italy.

Thanks are also due to the members of the “home front.” My Lafayette College assistants Chantal Pasquarello, Metin Aslantas, Noah Goldstein, and Dustin Antonello for researching the cases included in this volume and David Greenberg for designing the graphical artwork. My secretary for decades, Ruth Panovec, has been helpful in numerous ways.

Last but not least, special gratitude is due to my wife Sima and the rest of my immediate family: my daughter Talia, my daughter-in-law Harpreet, and my grandson Seth, a source of happiness and hope for a better world. To one member of my wonderful family, my son Gil, this book is dedicated with love.