Who Controls the IDF? Between an "Over-Subordinate Army" and "a Military that has a State"

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Two opposite arguments are heard in political and academic discourse in Israel about the status of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF): One argument is that the IDF possesses too much power and that military thought governs political thought (see, for example, Barak & Sheffer, 2006; Ben-Eliezer, 1997; Grinberg, 2009; Michael, 2007; Peri, 2006). This argument is captured by the phrase "A Military that has a State" (Sheffer, Barak & Oren, 2008). Others, most prominent among whom is Stuart Cohen (2006), contend that the military is over-supervised by civilian groups, thereby limiting its space of operation. Can both these arguments be right at the same time? How can the contradiction between them be reconciled?

To better illustrate this contradiction, let us look at recent developments in civil-military relations. There has been increasing civilian intrusion into the military domain, culminating in an overly subordinate military. Areas that were conventionally considered as falling within the military's sphere of professional competence became subject to civilian control. The impetus for this change came from social movements and interest groups (including parents) backed by the media, and focused on issues ranging from recruitment policies and the investigation of operational accidents to military operations themselves (Cohen, 2006).

At the same time, during the 1980s, the political culture underwent militarization, generally attributed to the empowerment of a coalition of ethno-national groups composed mainly of religious groups and Russian immigrants. This grouping comprised about one half of the electorate and supported a belligerent approach towards the surrounding Arab world. As a result, despite the civilian intrusion into military areas, which undermined the autonomy of the military and of its political operators, the government increased its ability to deploy the military on missions that were hitherto politically disputed. A clear manifestation of this paradox was the launching of the Second Lebanon War in 2006.

Never before had the government decided to go to war so quickly, within hours of the incident that set off the crisis. Throughout the war, the media displayed an unquestioning adherence to the military agenda. However, this support ran in tandem with unprecedented media penetration into the fighting army, exposing its operational failures during the war (Levy, 2010a). It follows that increased civilian control of the military did not curb the use of force. The military mindset governed politics though the military became more subordinate than ever, even if not necessarily over-subordinate. What we therefore identify here is two manifestations of civilian control.

I argue that a distinction should be made between two modes of civilian control over military affairs: control of *the military* and control of *militarism*. Control of the military, which is the main focus of students of civilian control, concerns itself primarily with the military organization, particularly the operational aspects of the military's performance (doctrine, deployment, resources, etc.) and their expected political implications. In contrast, control of militarism deals with controlling the mechanisms that legitimize the use of force. It draws on political discourse, seeking to guarantee that the implementation of military force follows a thorough, open and deliberative process of decision-making in which the citizenry plays an active and autonomous role. The encounter between the modes of control yields four possible results; in each pair, the two modes are mutually reinforcing. Most interesting and relevant to the case of Israel is the situation in which a high level of control of the military encounters a low level of control of militarism. In such situations, effective civilian control may not only fail to restrain militarism, but, under specific conditions, actually encourages it.

The next section presents this distinction and the conditions under which an increase in control of the military decreases the control of militarism. It is followed by the third section in which this theory is applied to the case of Israel and further exemplified through the case of the Second Lebanon War.

Distinguishing Two Modes of Control

A distinction should be made between *control of the military* and *control of militarism*. *Control of the military* focuses on joint institutional arrangements aimed at restraining the military, which is the state's tool for exercising monopolistic control over violence. Control of the military seeks to restrain the elected civilians' autonomy to activate the military and limit

the military's autonomy itself in the main areas of activity that have political implications, such as military doctrine and policies, operational plans, weapons systems, organization, recruitment, and promotion of officers. Control of the military is effective when civilian state institutions (primarily the executive and legislative branches of government) are able to set limits on the freedom of action of the military and its deployment. Such limits correspond with political objectives and the resources required for attaining those goals that civilians (in a democracy, popularly elected civilians) shape autonomously. These goals are regarded as expressing the will of society as a whole. The military, in turn, unquestionably abides by these civilian directives (see mainly Burk, 2002; Desch, 1999, 4-6; Feaver, 1999; Kohn, 1997).

Control over the army operates mainly through institutional mechanisms that have an effect on the manner in which policy-makers deploy the military. In addition to the monitoring of the military by elected civilians, collective actors working outside the formal institutions, mainly social movements and interest groups, often affect institutional policy-making through lobbying, protests, court appeals and the media.

While control of the military is aimed at restraining the organization and its supervisors, *control of militarism* is concerned with controlling the mechanisms for legitimizing the use of force. Militarism, according to the combined definition of Lutz (2002, 723) and Mann (1987), refers to the extent to which war and preparations for war are regarded as normal and even desirable social activities. This outlook develops through a process of discourse involving a shift in general societal beliefs and values in ways necessary to legitimate the use of force, the organization of large standing armies and their leaders, and the higher taxes or tribute used to pay for them.

The Lutz-Mann definition, which captures the processes that have taken place in many industrial societies during the past 60 years, is favored over alternative definitions. It moves beyond the narrow focus on the military's institutions, influence and resources and the attitude toward the use of force to address militarized political cultures that are often generated outside of the military. While Lasswell (1941), Mills (1956) and others tend to locate the problem of militarism within the military institution itself and therefore call for greater civilian control, the Lutz-Mann definition prompts us to search for the cultural sources that cultivate militarism in the civil sphere, assuming that it is a socially and politically driven phenomenon. Therefore, the military is not necessarily the most salient part of the political

culture nurturing militarism. This is especially so when the military is more restrained than warmongering politicians and therefore its influence does not result in militarism. Hence, an exclusive focus on the military may mislead.

The control of militarism draws on political discourse, seeking to restrain the elected civilians' use of force by subjecting it to a deliberative process that results in a mindful decision to employ force. The citizenry plays an active and autonomous role in making this decision by addressing the legitimacy to use force.

Several conditions promote this deliberative process. Most important is a relative slowness in decision-making to guarantee that decisions are made through argumentation in which everyone's opinion is in principle equally valuable and equally fallible. Such deliberation takes time and can always be questioned again. Thus, speedy decision-making in response to a threat counters this principle, strengthens the executive branch of government, and suppresses dissent (Huysmans, 2004). Furthermore, debates should not be confined to the operational aspects of military deployment, but should extend to the broader logic behind and rightness of the action. In other words, the debates should focus on the very legitimacy for using force and its utility in promoting the public good (Dauber, 1998). In short, the focus is on the political culture's legitimizing the use of force, rather than taking this legitimacy for granted. Therefore, during the debates there should be a thorough consideration of non-lethal or less belligerent policy alternatives.

The agents of control are almost exclusively collective actors, journalists and politicians mainly outside the executive branch of government. Yes, these agents may work to manipulate the public into supporting the use of force. Alternately, however, they may promote a subversive discourse that challenges military thought. Either way, their actions largely determine the profile of the control of militarism.

This mode of control operates through several forms of public debates that affect the political culture and the degree of legitimacy it awards to the use of force: (1) debates on the political-cultural essence of the use of force; (2) debates on the nature of the threat; (3) debates on the conditions under which the country will go to war; (4) debates on costs which may encourage collective actors to question the cause that demands these sacrifices, rather than focusing on the costs themselves; (5) debates that expose the interests that lead key social and political

actors to advance militaristic values; (6) debates on the mode of recruitment and especially its impact on the propensity to use force (for a broader analysis see Levy, 2011).

In short, the broader the scope of the debates on military affairs in terms of the issues on the agenda, the slow thoughtfulness with which the debates are conducted, the degree of openness in discussing all of the issues, the available information, and the range of speakers, the greater the control of militarism. Thus, a heavily monitored military acting on behalf of its political supervisors but carrying out a highly unquestioned militarized policy signifies a **high** level of civilian control of the army, but a **low** level of control of militarism.

Note that the control of militarism is not a synonym for pacifism. Military restraint does not mean military idleness. The use of military force may be necessary to protect what the polity perceives as a national security interest; my argument does not engage with this normative judgment. What is important is the deliberative process that meets the conditions outlined earlier, rather than the nature of the military action itself. The goal is subordinating military deployment to this process rather than to an ideological, non-bellicose imperative.

Table 1 presents the distinction between the modes of control.

Table 1: Comparing the Modes of Control		
	Control of the military	**Control of militarism**
The focus	Focus on military organization: the operational aspects of the organization's performance, mainly with regard to expected political implications	Focus on political culture: targeting the legitimization of the use of force
The goal	Restraining both the elected civilians' freedom to deploy the military and the military's autonomy itself	Restraining the elected civilians' use of force by subjecting it to a deliberative process that results in a mindful decision to employ force
How it works	Institutional mechanisms that affect policy-making and collective actors who seek to affect these mechanisms	Public debates affecting the political culture and the level of legitimacy it awards to the use of force, promoted by collective actors, the media and politicians

The encounter between the modes of control yields four possible results. Most interesting and relevant to the Israeli situation (as much as to other industrialized democracies in the post Cold-War era) is the situation in which a high level of control of the military encounters a low

level of control of militarism. In such situations, effective civilian control may not only fail to restrain militarism, but, under specific conditions, actually encourage it.

This relationship operates under several conditions. The first condition is the existence of a previous militaristic infrastructure in the civilian political culture. Second, the empowerment of this infrastructure is triggered by an external event that militaristic groups interpret as an external threat that can be removed by using the military. September 11th and the Palestinian terror attacks are examples of such an external trigger. However, assuming that militarization is a socially and politically driven phenomenon, advocates of diplomatic or other non-lethal responses may challenge this interpretation and the derived policy implications. Here, the high level of control of the military may condition the dominance of a militaristic mindset. Three mechanisms are crucial in determining the dominance of a militaristic mindset. Hereafter, I will refer to these three mechanisms as control-related mechanisms.

The first mechanism has a direct impact:

(1) *Civilian control as depoliticization*. As Huntington (1957, 71-76) asserted, the military person should accept the superior political wisdom of the statesman as a fact. Obedience to the political leaders is a professional duty, and political engagement is beyond the scope of military competence. The participation of officers in politics undermines their professionalism. Moreover, the acceptance of political superiority requires the subordination of the armed forces to the entire governmental structure with accountability to the legislature, not to a specific sector, as an expression of the popular will (Kohn, 1997, 145). In turn, however, the more the military is portrayed as a universal entity – derived from the extent to which it is regarded as politically controlled as a depoliticized entity – the greater its ability to influence decision-making. Military thought is then depicted as professional advice devoid of political bias.

As C. Wright Mills (1956) explained, politicians use the advice of the military to back their support for or opposition to specific policies, or even to shirk their duty to scrutinize the administration's decisions. From the standpoint of a party politician, a well-trained general or admiral is an excellent legitimator of policies. Making careful use of him often makes it possible to lift policies "above politics," which is to say, above political debate (1956, 200). In this way, the military profession gains ascendancy. As Mills implied, such ascendancy may

signify a low level of control of militarism, especially when the military's stance is utilized to legitimize the use of force. Civilian control thus shapes the standing of the military in society, allowing the military to claim neutrality and depoliticization, thereby perversely enhancing its influence rather than undermining it.

In contrast, when the military fails to blur its partisan identity, its professional opinion is more suspect. An example is the military's contention with President Clinton over policies such as intervention in the Balkans, which was interpreted as arising from the military's bias towards the Republican party (Bacevich & Kohn, 1997).

The next two mechanisms are indirect. Both result from increasing public scrutiny brought to bear on military affairs. These trends have been exacerbated in the post-Cold War era and taken the form of society's reluctance to make military sacrifices.

(2) *Militarization as legitimation*. The state subordinates the military to civilian control to the extent that it builds up its military power through the direct wresting of military means from its own subject population. This process explains two interwoven effects: (1) Bargaining between the state and its citizens over the resources extracted from the population for military buildup. Here the state allocates rights in exchange for the resources extracted. (2) Making the military dependent on civilian institutions for the extraction of the resources the military needs. Dependency is translated into civilian control (Tilly, 1992). However, this rule does not work when the burden, especially the fiscal one, is borne by an external power, which is typical of many post-colonized societies. There, the bargaining between the state and its citizens that accounts for the subordination of the military to civilian control does not occur.

It is the same structural conditions that subordinate the military to civilian control that also promote militarization. Only militarization could legitimize the rising levels of sacrifice for war in monetary and human terms by contextualizing and leveraging the level of the threat (even exaggerating it if need be) and demonstrating the determination to remove it by force (Lake, 1992; Tilly, 1992).

This structure has not been limited to the era of the Western type of state formation. Setting ambitious war goals, a typical mode of militarization, by framing the threat in more apocalyptic and less instrumental terms "are the most effective at generating and legitimating

massive society-wide sacrifice and are today the only narrative form that can sustain war as culturally acceptable" (Smith, 2005, 27). Less ambitious goals are less appealing and may provoke political defiance. Thus, pressures associated with demilitarization, such as casualty sensitivity, paradoxically lead to the simultaneous rise of militarization as a means of re-legitimizing military sacrifice.

(3) *Vocationalization and downsizing.* Civilian control, in terms of the citizens' involvement in determining the human and material resources that society provides to the military, reinforced civilian control of the military. Concerns about human costs generated casualty sensitivity, which sparked debates about military deployment. At the same time, concerns about material resources exerted pressure to spend more on non-military goods and thereby encouraged downsizing and vocationalization, namely, the transition from conscript to voluntary forces, gradually supplanted by a growing trend to contract out military missions (Avant, 2005). While the former generated a higher level of monitoring at the operational level (see Coletta & Feaver, 2006), the latter increased monitoring of the military's internal organization (Dandeker, 1994, 645-648).

Paradoxically, however, vocationalization and military downsizing have transformed militaries into "isolated enclaves." To some degree, the military has become relatively sheltered from political scrutiny because of the shrinking rates of military participation, especially of privileged groups, which, in turn, reduce political participation in military affairs (see Vasquez, 2005). Because they limit the number of people who have a direct stake in the decision to use force and the costs of doing so, vocationalization and downsizing reduce the likelihood of developing a deliberative process about going to war. Conversely, the more people have a direct stake in going to war, the more public support for using force declines (see Horowitz & Levendusky, 2011). In particular, the ability to wage war with so little call for personal sacrifice from the general public may reduce the high threshold for starting wars by neutralizing the traditional republican-type bargaining over the wars' goals and expected utility (see Starr, 2010, 65-66).

Thus, pressures that emerged from increasing civilian control of the military, such as casualty sensitivity and military downsizing, generated the creation of mechanisms aimed at bypassing those pressures.

Viewed from another angle, because of the political costs of recruiting the middle class, democracies build more capital-intensive and technologized militaries than non-democracies, and wealthy democracies use capital more intensively than poor ones. In other words, the burden for subsidizing the armed forces is shifted to the wealthiest groups, the heaviest tax-payers (Caverley, 2009/10). At the same time, manpower is hired rather than conscripted, thus making labor costs an issue. Consequently, the public, the media, NGOs and politicians pay more attention to market-oriented monitoring of military resources, than to monitoring the military's deployment and fire policies (Levy, 2009), not to mention the very essence of the legitimacy to use force.

To sum up, these are the cumulative conditions under which an increase in civilian control may reduce the control over militarism. In democracies, a low level of control of militarism is conditioned by a high level of control of the military. In such a case, civilian control actually promotes the use of force, not just fails to prevent it. While the seeds of militarism and external threats are the necessary preconditions for this relationship, the three control-related mechanisms are cumulatively necessary to permit the use of force unhampered by a subversive anti-war discourse. These conditions may override other democratic mechanisms designated to encourage public debates such as the reconstruction of a decision-making hierarchy regarding the use of force (for example, reinforcing parliamentary power in relation to troop deployment). This relationship between the modes of control indicates that governments have **more freedom** to use force, but the manner in which the force is used is **more politically monitored**. How is this model applied to the case of Israel?

Israel: A Politically Monitored Military in a Militaristic Society

General Background

The principle of political supervision over the military organization was consolidated in Israel even before the formal establishment of the state in 1948, with the subordination of the main underground paramilitary organizations to political authority, largely thanks to the development of strong pre-state Jewish institutions. These funded the paramilitary organizations and recruited the human resources (volunteers) needed, thereby establishing the material dependency of the organizations on the political institutions. Central to this process of state building was the middle-class-based Labor Party (and its previous forms), which established itself in the pre-state period as the dominant party; it held this position for about

fifty years, showing impressive institution-building ability (Shapiro, 1984). Within the framework of this structure, the young state could realize its monopolist control of the means of violence in 1948 by establishing the IDF while smoothly dismantling pre-state underground organizations.

In spite of this, however, friction between politicians and generals did develop in the state's first years, when the IDF carried out reprisal raids against neighboring Arab countries and often acted independently and in defiance of Defense Minister Pinhas Lavon and Prime Minister Moshe Sharett (both successors to the first prime minister and defense minister, David Ben-Gurion). In some cases, the IDF virtually imposed a series of operations or exceeded what the politicians approved or did not even report its cross-border activity to the prime minister (for examples, see, Morris, 1993, 300–303; Sharett, 1978, 34–41, 446–447, 514–526, 670–680). The most notorious case was the telling "mishap" in 1954 that involved intelligence activity in Egypt, including planting bombs in several facilities, without clear or at least formal approval from the political level (Eshed, 1979).

Subsequently, because of the military's dependence on state institutions, the politicians effectively resolidified their supremacy. To some extent, exchange relations were in force: the army accepted politicians' unquestioned authority in exchange for huge material and human resources that allowed it to maintain a massive, long-term buildup, beyond the direct needs of the early 1950s. At the same time, politicians internalized the military way to deal with the perceived Arab threat (Ben-Eliezer, 1997; Levy, 1997). In practical terms, the civilian leadership upgraded political supervision over the army by formalizing a procedure for approval of military operations. At the same time, the IDF formed relations of partnership, rather than instrumental obedience, with politicians. These relationships resulted in attenuated motivation among the generals for overt intervention in politics (Peri, 1983).

In 1967, this partnership was called into question. Following the mass entrance of Egyptian troops into the Sinai Peninsula on Israel's border and Egypt's closing of the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping in May 1967, senior IDF officers exerted pressure on Prime Minister and Defense Minister Levi Eshkol to launch a preemptive war against Egypt. Eshkol attempted to exhaust diplomatic means to resolve the crisis, but the generals perceived this as excessive risk taking and unnecessary hesitancy. With the increasing tensions between the sides (which was even perceived as a sort of revolt), Eshkol handed the Defense portfolio over to former

Chief of the General Staff Moshe Dayan, and the government approved the offensive. Yet, the green light for war was given only after diplomatic moves had failed and the United States had signaled its passive support for Israel's attack (Segev, 2008, 289–305). It follows that, to some extent, the generals extended the scope of the partnership to an attempt to dictate policy to the government, but, in the end, the government approved the offensive when the preconditions it had earlier set were met. Such a "revolt" has not been repeated since. On the contrary, formal procedures that ensure political supervision of the military were further consolidated, owing largely to the transition of senior officers into politics (Peri, 1983).

On the formal level, two efforts were significant. In 1976, the Knesset passed the "Basic Law: The Military", asserting that the military should be subordinate to the government and thereby removing ambiguity in the legal status of the IDF (Barzilai, 1997). Similarly, protests during Israel's first Lebanon War in 1982 led to the 1992 amendment to the "Basic Law: The Government," according to which the state may begin a war only pursuant to a government decision (article 51(a)). This amendment was inspired by the claim that Minister of Defense Ariel Sharon manipulated the cabinet into launching a full scale war while only asking for authorization for a limited operation (Hofnung, 1996, 203).

In tandem with the enhancement of civilian control of the military, control of militarism declined as well, to the extent that the political culture was militarized. Historically, militarization passed through three main stages: (1) accepting the use of force as a legitimate political instrument during the pre-state period (1920-1948), subsequent to confrontation between pacifism and activism; (2) giving this instrument priority over political-diplomatic means in the state's first years up to the point at which (3) military discourse gradually predominated over political discourse after the 1967 War. Each stage was correspondently accompanied by gradual intensification of resources devoted to war preparation and amplification of force-oriented preferences reflected in foreign policies (Levy, 1997). Consequently, previously debated issues gradually became a point of departure rather than a matter of debate, increasingly narrowing the boundaries of political discourse.

The 1973 War and, more profoundly, the first Lebanon War (1982) marked a change in the mode of civilian control with the emergence of extra-institutional control mechanisms. Extra-institutional control is action generally taken by nonbureaucratic actors (mainly social movements and interest groups) acting in the public sphere in an attempt to bargain with the

military or to restrain it, either directly or through civilian state institutions (Levy & Michael, 2011). For Stuart Cohen (2006), this process overly undermined the IDF's professional autonomy when the media, civil rights organizations, parents and other actors entered into adversarial confrontations with the military authorities and many times subjected its performance to their priorities. For Levy & Michael, collective action led to institutionalizing or reshaping institutional control mechanisms, either by legislation, court rulings and government decisions. Likewise, administrative moves may strengthen the military's internal control, thereby enhancing civilian control.

More important, growing political participation in the military realm went beyond the level of control of the military and prompted demilitarization, and by extension, also enhanced control of militarism. Most significant was the appearance of antiwar movements. Among these movements were *Peace Now*, established in 1978, and later organizations of reservists (most prominent was *Soldiers against Silence* following the first Lebanon war) and parents (most prominent was *Four Mothers* during 1997-2000). These and other forms of collective action contributed to the setting of limits on the IDF's functioning in politically debated domains. As such, they enhanced the control of militarism by questioning the logic and legitimacy of the use of force. Most prominent was the political discourse that emerged following the first Lebanon War. Then, for the first time in Israel's history, that war was depicted as a 'war of choice,' as opposed to what had previously been described as 'wars of no choice.' Unprecedentedly, opponents raised the idea of alternatives to bellicosity.

Antiwar movements did not act in a vacuum but were drawn from the growing reluctance of the secular middle-class to sacrifice its wealth (as taxpayer) and body (as soldiers) for war, as its gains from war declined (Levy, 2007). Multiple forms of resistance to sacrifice have appeared since the 1980s; most important was growing casualty sensitivity (Lebel, 2007). Largely owing to this trend, Israel deescalated its military moves, attested by the Oslo Accord (1993-1995) and the two unilateral withdrawals from Lebanon (in 1985 and 2000).

At the same time, the right wing also contributed to the bolstering of control of militarism with the rise of *Gush Emunim* (formed in 1974). *Gush Emunim* attempted to subject the national project to religious principles and hence challenge the dominant secular paradigm of security (Kimmerling, 1993).

Nonetheless, demilitarization gave rise to remilitarization and the IDF regained its legitimacy for operating forcefully and enjoyed a high level of autonomy in implementing policies that might otherwise have been politically disputed. While it retreated under protest from Lebanon in 1985 and restricted its belligerency two years later when the first Intifada broke out, it could sustain a prolonged military conflict on the Palestinian scene, as when the Al-Aqsa Intifada broke out in 2000. Furthermore, despite its withdrawal from Lebanon in 1985, the IDF was able to regain control over the security zone it occupied in southern Lebanon and to wage guerrilla warfare against Hezbollah militias for another fifteen years. It withdrew only when the casualty toll significantly increased following the helicopter disaster in 1997, during which 73 soldiers died, giving rise to the Four Mothers-prompted action to withdraw the IDF from Lebanon in the years1997-2000. On top of this, the government regained a broad freedom to initiate the Second Lebanon War, which is the starting point of this article How can we explain this shift? Here the inverse relations between the modes of control may be helpful.

The Second Lebanon War
On July 12, 2006, a few hours after Hezbollah abducted two Israeli soldiers on the border between Israel and Lebanon, the government of Israel made the fastest decision the country had ever seen to launch the Second Lebanon War. After a month of fighting, during which Israel aerially bombed Lebanon and launched limited but flawed ground incursions, and Hezbollah fired missiles at Israel's northern towns, Israel accepted a ceasefire brokered by the UN Security Council. The overall feeling about the war was a sense of failure (Levy, 2010a).

As predicted by my argument, the control of militarism declined in tandem with the increase in the civilian control of the military. The first precondition, in the form of the seeds of civilian militarism, was met with the ethno-national front, which emerged following the 1967 War and was empowered following the Oslo moves. It included peripheral segments of *Mizrachim*, the national-religious and ultra-Orthodox communities, and immigrants from the former Soviet Union. This is a cohesive alliance advocating the slowing down of globalization, the exclusion of Palestinian citizens from full citizenship, and the retention of much of the West Bank with its holy sites and Jewish settlements (see Shafir and Peled, 2002, 87–94). This coalition brought about the political collapse of Eud Barak's relatively dovish government in 2000 and the political revival of Ariel Sharon, who succeeded Barak in 2001.

The second precondition is a triggering threat, this time in the form of the Hezbollah's provocation on the border. So, both preconditions were met. Then, the control-related mechanisms were also at work.

Civilian control as depoliticization. In the period prior to the war, some depoliticization of the IDF took place. The period between 1999 and 2005, the years of the withdrawal from Lebanon and the Al-Aqsa Intifada, saw a series of frictions between the Chiefs of General Staff – Shaul Mofaz and Moshe Yaalon – and the political leadership. Both expressed their opinions publically in a way that disputed the policies enacted by elected civilians. Much of the dispute stemmed from the political nature of military engagement in low intensity conflict (Peri, 2006, 91-170). Against this background, both figures were portrayed as political chiefs of staff and as such their policies drew criticism. However, tensions were calmed.

In 2005, the military cooperated with civilians in carrying out the unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, despite previous reservations that also entailed shortening the term of office of the Chief of General Staff (Moshe Yaalon) in 2004. With a new military leadership, the politically debated withdrawal was implemented effectively and with minor disobedience by religious soldiers who opposed this move, backed by many civilian rabbis (Cohen, 2007). An important indication of this apolitical image is that the military enjoyed the highest level of public trust of all state institutions. In fact, its score actually improved marginally, from 78% in 2005 to 79% in 2006, while the degree of public trust in other state institutions dropped significantly during this period (Arian, Atmor & Hadar, 2006, 11-12, 101).

Even if the rupture between the military and the religious sector could be used to portray the military as "leftist," it may have bolstered the image of the military as a professional and apolitical institution when it came to a bellicose move, in this case the Second Lebanon War which erupted a year later. Not surprisingly, the cooperation between the military and the government in steering this war helped legitimize it. It is indeed telling that there was no criticism linking the war with a sectarian agenda on the part of the military, during and even after the war.

Militarization as legitimation. Setting ambitious goals played a role in galvanizing support for the war in Israeli society where the motivation for military sacrifice had declined, especially among the secular middle class. The government set out the grandiose, albeit unrealistic, goal

of disarming Hezbollah by means of a military assault, ending the risk of Hezbollah missiles fired against Israel, and the unconditional return of the abducted soldiers. Ultimately, none of these goals was attained, and Israel agreed to the deployment of a multinational force in southern Lebanon (Eran, 2009, 43-44). However, a more modest set of aims would have further reduced the legitimacy for military sacrifice and made the war unjustifiable. Moreover, given the criticism directed at previous governments for having reconciled themselves to the empowerment of Hezbollah in southern Lebanon following Israel's unilateral withdrawal from there in 2000, the government's ability to articulate any goal other than the disarming of Hezbollah was limited (Levy, 2010a, 798).

Vocationalization and downsizing. Although Israel has remained faithful to the draft system, it conducted rearchitecturing of the military, implying a fundamental change in the social composition of those performing military missions and in the nature of the armaments that they operated. This restructuring resulted in the downsizing of missions assigned to middle-class soldiers, either by allocating them to other groups or by reducing the intensity of the mission and the risk and sacrifice in which they are involved, by increasing the use of technology. Rearchitecturing had a number of components, of which the most significant were:

1. Downsizing of the reserve army and minimizing its deployment in friction zones.

2. Realignment of the social composition of the field units by encouraging the integration within the combat units of lower class groups, who had previously been relegated to a peripheral status in the army's ranks because of cultural, formal, or educational barriers. This change in the army's composition began in the 1980s. With the Oslo process and the withdrawal from Lebanon, which further aggravated the drop in motivation among members of the secular middle class, the process speeded up during the 1990s. With this realignment, the IDF filled the ranks with conservative groups, mostly ethno-national (such as religious, Russian immigrants and *Mizrahim*). All were inclined to display loyalty to the military mindset out of their expectations to benefit from military service, either in terms of social mobility, or in terms of the desire to stamp their ideological imprint on the military policies. Unlike their middle-class peers, it became less likely that a antiwar protest would emerge from these ethno-national groups (Levy, 2007).

3. Adopting the counterfire doctrine. This doctrine signified the partial transformation of the IDF from a labor-intensive organization to a technology-intensive one, with heavy reliance on

aerial assaults, precision weapons, and artillery and reduced use of intrusive ground troops. Standoff precision firepower supplanted the concept of the classic army maneuver (Kober, 2008). The new doctrine aimed to decide wars not through direct tactical encounters on the battlefield but rather by inflicting various effects aimed at paralyzing the enemy's system and suppressing its operational effectiveness to drive it to terminate the war immediately (Tira, 2007, 9). This approach largely emulated similar tactics conducted in other militaries such as effects-based operations in the U.S. military. This doctrine answered the need to shorten the war as well as the need to avoid the use of ground forces and the mobilization of the reserves, from which anti-war protests and casualty sensitivity had emerged (see Cohen, 2000).

Given the work of the control-related mechanisms, low level of control of militarism manifested itself. The quick decision to go to war clearly failed to meet the condition of a deliberative process involving thoughtful debate. When the government considered its reaction to Hezbollah's attack, reliance on the Air Force during the first days of the war was the most favorable option (Kober, 2008). Similar to the argument raised by Starr (2010, 65-66), shortening the military buildup meant also avoiding public debates concerning the political and economic costs that the war entailed. Avoiding such a debate was crucial particularly in the wake of "Lebanon phobia," namely, Israel's negative historical memories of being dragged into Lebanon from which it rescued itself in 2000 under public pressure (Merom, 2008). In other words, owing largely to the rearchitecturing of the military, the conditions for questioning the legitimacy to use force were not created.

With the absence of critical debates, the main criticism during the war was focused exclusively on operational failures. Although the media's penetration of the army reached a level never before achieved during an emergency and exposed its failures (a clear manifestation of control of the military), the tone was that the war was just and right, but it was conducted poorly (Keshev Report, 2007; Neiger, Zandberg & Meyers, 2010). The public discourse justified the goals of the war, presented the political leaders as steadfast and strong, backed the military establishment's claims that the politicians were preventing the IDF from acting freely and not allowing it to win, presented the IDF's failures in terms of defeat rather than criticizing the logic of the action, and legitimized the massive damage Israel inflicted on Lebanese civilians. Therefore, there were minimal pressures to end the war. Pressures to exit the war increased only when it became clear that the alternative to air bombings was a ground incursion that would bring with it intolerably high death tolls on the Israeli side (Merom, 2008).

This is not to argue that rearchitecturing of the military did the job alone. But when rearchitecturing reduces the human costs of war and encourages swift decisionmaking, it limits the potential for the emergence of countervailing pressures leaning toward questioning the legitimacy or at least the logic of the war relative to its expected benefits. Under such conditions, the war-prone front cannot be easily balanced, especially when the leadership intensifies the militaristic tone by setting ambitious war goals.

Low control of militarism was extended to the period following the war. Despite a relatively high level of casualty sensitivity that predominated that period, now even combined with "Lebanon phobia," and the deviation from the principles constituting the rearchitecturing by deploying reserve units, the war elicited a limited protest. Its main achievement was the appointment of the *Winograd Committee* to investigate the war. The committee provided the most detailed description of decision-making during war ever seen in Israel (Levy, 2010a, 790). Again, control of the military saw enhancement in tandem with attenuated control of militarism.

In this case, the protest discourse strayed from the critical tone that had been used to decry the first Lebanon War of 1982, focused on 'war of choice.' In the Second Lebanon War, however, the voices that questioned the justification of the war remained in the minority, although diplomatic alternatives to the war and missed opportunities for an earlier ceasefire may have been raised (Levy, 2010b). Rather, the protest focused on the flawed performance of the government and the military. Thus, the debate over this war represented a low level of control of militarism. Criticism was not founded on the argument that the war should have been avoided altogether but rather asserted that there could have been better results, as well as fewer casualties, had the military's performance or the quality of the political directives been of a higher standard. Such rhetoric encouraged better performance and readiness rather than setting ideological limits to the future use of force.

Although reservists and bereaved parents played a leading role in the protest, their protest was largely affected by the realignment of the military. With the military ranks changing to reflect a large presence of lower-status groups, a critical mass of upper-middle-class soldiers could not be formed. And, despite the large number of reservists, about 50 percent of the casualties among reservists belonged to lower-status and religious groups, compared to about a third in the first Lebanon War (Levy, 2012, 105). As surveys conducted in the years 2000 and 2002

suggest, the less educated among the reservists were more motivated to serve in wartime than the better educated (Ben-Dor et al., 2008), so the potential for antiwar protest among reservists declined as well. In sum, a limited coalition supported the protest while the protestors accepted the legitimacy of the war as a point of departure.

Furthermore, market-oriented monitoring of the military was reflected in the post-war discourse. Criticism was aired, tracing the IDF's flawed performance back to the downsizing of its resources in the years prior to the war. To counter this criticism and the calls to re-increase the defense expenditure, Sever Plocker (2006), an editorial writer at Israel's most popular daily, *Yediot Ahronoth*, conducted a cost-benefit analysis of the war. According to Plocker's calculations, it cost the IDF $3.5bn to kill 250 Hezbollah fighters (the number of reported casualties); that is, each terrorist cost Israel $14m to kill. For a billion dollars, Plocker suggested, Israel "could have bought the retirement of 2,000 Hezbollah fighters—and saved the economy $2.5bn. This would have been done without a war . . ."

Indeed, as a response to such calls, the government appointed a special committee (the Brodet Committee, 2007) to examine the defense budget, and subsequently approved its recommendations. The committee found a number of significant flaws in the IDF's economic management. In practice, the committee advocated that not only should the IDF's management be subjected to the strictures of the market economy; so too should aspects of its operations. Amongst the committee's recommendations were proposals that the IDF emulate management practices now common in business organizations, that it build training programs in collaboration with businesspersons, that it implement pay incentives to units and commanders who meet efficiency targets, and that it outsource and civilianize missions that are not part of the IDF's core business. Moreover, the committee called for the development of a model that would calculate the munitions costs of destroying certain targets, and recommended that this model be incorporated in evaluations of commanders' performances. In other words, to all intents and purposes, the report recommended instigating the economic measurement of military activities.

Under such circumstances, the logic of the market rather than political logic may guide military policies. It can either restrain military activism or, conversely, encourage over-aggressiveness to shorten the war and the costs it may involve. A greater economic control of the military spells out lower control of militarism.

Market-oriented discourse is a major character of a broader phenomenon that typifies the public discourse in Israel. The 1990s signified a retreat from a discourse focused on macro issues of war and peace. *Peace Now* and *Gush Emunim* advanced this discourse from both the left and right and reinforced the control of militarism by addressing the legitimacy to use force. It was a retreat towards discourse focused on micro issues. Parents, rabbis, human rights organizations, feminist groups and others focused on the organizational aspects of the IDF's performance, such as recruitment policies, cultural arrangements, policing and settlement policies in the West Bank and more. Macro issues of war and peace were neglected. In other words, extra-institutional control (which Cohen, Levy and Michael studied), while it enhanced civilian control of the military, also weakened control of militarism. Largely, the way the media covered the military also reflected this transformation (Peri, 2007).

At least in part, this phenomenon can be linked to vocationalization and downsizing. With the partial retreat of the secular middle-class from combat roles, this group lost much of its interest in the human costs of the war while its interest in the consumption of military resources (human and material) and the impact of military action on Israel's global status increased. Small, relatively cheap wars could be then waged more autonomously with limited opposition from middle-class groups.

Small wonder, the post-war discourse paved the road to Israel's response to the intensified rocketing of Israel's civilian population from the Gaza Strip, leading to the Cast Lead operation in December 2008. Now, control of militarism declined once more relative to the Second Lebanon War. Unlike in the Lebanese scene, aggressive fire policy allowed a ground operation by effectively reducing the exposure of IDF soldiers to risk at the expense of heavy losses to Gazan civilians, and this fire policy gained unquestioned legitimacy at home. Learning the lessons of Lebanon, the IDF applied to Gaza what can be called the *Dahiyah doctrine* (named after the South Beirut neighborhood of Dahiyah, which was heavily bombarded by Israel during the Second Lebanon War). This doctrine referred to the use of disproportionate power against every village in Lebanon from which rockets were fired on Israel, with the aim of causing immense damage and destruction, rather than hunting down individual missile launchers, which the IDF had failed to do during the war through a costly ground attack (Shalom, 2008).

Furthermore, by controlling cost-informed discourse, in this case, human costs, and thereby leveraging the politicians' belief that the public would not tolerate casualties, the military could dictate the fire policy. It could either convince the politicians to delay the ground operation in Lebanon or drive the politicians to allow a more liberal fire policy in Gaza that would provide more protection for the Israeli forces (Levy, 2012, 196).

Technical discourse also typified the discourse of response to the Goldstone Report, produced after the UN-nominated fact-finding mission to investigate alleged violations of humanitarian law during the Cast Lead operation. The report accused Israel (and Hamas) of war crimes. However, while the discourse was focused on the accuracy of the report and the degree to which international law had been broken and maybe should be changed to adjust itself the reality of asymmetric wars, absent from this discourse was the strategic question of whether the use of excessive force promotes Israel's strategic goal of living in peace with its neighbors. "Inhabitants of Gaza who survived a fortnight of heavy bombardment against which they had no possible defense will not soon forget or forgive that experience," claimed Stuart Cohen (2009), who predicted that they would desire revenge, as indeed the following rounds of hostility confirmed. However, this wisdom was not embraced by policy-makers and the citizens endorsing them.

As predicted, pressures associated with demilitarization and increased control of the military, such as casualty sensitivity and military downsizing, paradoxically led to the simultaneous rise of militarization, that is low level of control of militarism.

Conclusions

In this article I offer an analysis to reconcile between two opposing arguments: an "over-subordinate military" versus "a military that has a state." My conclusion is that both arguments are correct if we relate each of them to a distinct mode of civilian control.

The contribution of this article is in its distinction between two modes of control: control of the military versus control of militarism, and the relations between them. While the former focuses mainly on the armed forces as an institution and how it is supervised by elected civilians, the latter focuses on the political culture that legitimates the use of force. Controlling the mechanisms of legitimation is the key to military restraint, not just restraint of the military.

Therefore, Stuart Cohen has correctly identified that the IDF became increasingly subordinated to civilian control. At the same time, those ascribing too much power to the military are also right. However, it is military thought that is powerful rather than the military organization itself. As an organization, the military has lost a lot of autonomy while military thought still governs civilian politics.

As the definition of militarism implies, the military is not necessarily the most salient part of the political culture nurturing militarism, especially when it is often more restrained than warmongering politicians. Militarism can arise outside the military ranks. In the case of Israel, where the ethno-national coalition plays a prominent role in shaping politics, this assumption is further validated. The dominant mode of military thought is not just limited to the mode of thinking in the military itself. Instead, it is a whole ideology that is deeply rooted in civilian-political thinking and is relatively autonomous from the army as an organization.

Conditions in Israel were met to create the inverse relationship between the modes of control. Civilians were effective in controlling the military, but not militarism. Reducing the control of militarism was conditioned on the increased civilian control of the military. In addition to the necessary preconditions, three control-related mechanisms were at work: civilian control as depoliticization, militarization as legitimation and vocationalization and downsizing. It seems safe to assume that low scores in the profile of each of these mechanisms, not to mention low scores in all three, could tip the scale in favor of a higher degree of control of militarism, thereby creating better conditions for resistance to the use of force. A military that was suspected of being politically biased, modest, instrumental war goals that were apparently not worth the sacrifice, and broader military participation with the potential for dissent that it entailed might have led to different outcomes. With these inverse relations, an "over-subordinate army" can not only coexist with "a military that has a state" but the former is the condition for the latter.

This distinction has been drawn from the theoretical literature on civil-military relations. As such, it does not exclusively apply to the case of Israel but deserves broader scholarly attention.

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