

Introduction

Since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, and particularly after the Israeli–Arab War of 1967, a highly informal but at the same time very potent security network, composed of acting and former security personnel and their partners in the state's various civilian spheres, has influenced Israel's domestic sphere, including culture, politics, society, economy, public discourse, and foreign relations. This book discusses this major sociopolitical phenomenon and its impacts in a comparative and theoretical perspective.

The book has six main goals. First, we define Israel's security network and situate it in a broad, theoretical and comparative perspective. Second, we explain how Israel's security network came into being and how it managed to acquire a hegemonic position in the area of national security and foreign policy, shaping various strategic and tactical views, policies, and actions of the state. A third goal is to provide details on the actors, their cultural values, and the mechanisms that make up the security network. Fourth, we discuss the multitude of roles that Israel's security network has come to play both domestically and externally, including but by no means limited to the area of national security and foreign policy. Fifth, in discussing other relevant cases, we point out the similarities and differences between these cases and Israel. Finally, we aim to provide general analytical and theoretical conclusions that would help explain kindred phenomena in these and other states and would also help to study these significant issues better.

ISRAEL'S SECURITY NETWORK – A PRIMER

The main argument advanced in this book is that the civil–security relations in Israel, as well as in some other small states, are characterized by the existence of an informal powerful security network made up of acting and former security personnel and their partners in the state's various civilian spheres. At

the same time we will show that occasionally a number of competing and even clashing subnetworks appear within Israel's security network, and that this phenomenon has become more conspicuous in recent years.

Israel's security network is a type of an informal "policy network" in which one of its members' most significant concerns is security. Thus, we refer to it as a "security network" that has had a significant impact on domestic and external policymaking and concrete strategic and tactical policies in recent decades. Although Israel's security network is quite heterogonous, and despite occasional disagreements between some of its members, its common features, interests, and ultimately its exceptional ability to influence many aspects of public life in Israel, make it a subject worthy of increased attention. In addition, because the Israeli case is not unique, it can be applied to other similar cases.

Three types of actors make up Israel's security network: first, acting and former members of the state's large and powerful security sector, particularly the military, that is, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF); second, former lower-ranking security personnel, also mainly from the army; third, influential actors operating within various civilian spheres (politics, the economy, and civil society), including politicians, bureaucrats, wealthy private entrepreneurs, academics, and journalists.

Such actors can be regarded as members of Israel's security network for a number of reasons: They are interconnected by informal, nonhierarchical links and ties; they share common values and perceptions on Israel's various policy areas, and particularly security, which, despite differing views on how to promote it, they see as paramount; they have identical or similar individual and collective interests; and they are capable of joining hands in order to influence policymaking on different levels and in various spheres.

Despite the relatively large size of Israel's security network – a conservative estimate of membership would be some hundreds per decade since 1948 – and notwithstanding its considerable impacts on policymaking and concrete policies in recent decades, this network is an understudied topic in the otherwise extensive literature on the country's culture, politics, economy, and civil society. Particularly striking is its absence from most debates over Israel's pattern of civil–military relations, which, despite certain advances in recent years, still attach great importance to the state's formal institutions and their positions and relations and overlook more informal factors and their impact on planning, policymaking, concrete policies, and actions.

The scholarly gap regarding the role of policy networks in the area of national security, however, extends beyond the Israeli case. Despite the growing attention to informal aspects of the relationship between the civilian and security spheres, particularly since the end of the Cold War, many studies are still preoccupied with its formal aspects and tend to emphasize them when dealing with both Western and non-Western states.¹ In this book, we address

¹ A notable exception is Wedel (2009), whose book raises important questions about the role of networks in the area of foreign policy in non-Western and Western states.

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this notable gap by closely examining Israel's security network, emphasizing its own specific characteristics but also juxtaposing it to a number of other relevant cases, and developing a more general conceptual framework for studying this phenomenon. In the remainder of this introduction, we provide an overview of the Israeli case, and present the plan of the book.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE ISRAELI CASE

On May 14, 1948, after the termination of the British Mandate in Palestine, the State of Israel proclaimed its independence, and two weeks later it formed its own army – the IDF. In practice, however, Israel's security agencies, like its political and bureaucratic institutions, can be traced back to the period of the Yishuv, the Jewish community in Palestine during the time of British Mandate.

The pre-state voluntary security institutions included, first and foremost, the Hagana and its regular fighting force, the Palmach, but also smaller military organizations such as *Etzel* and *Lehi* (Horowitz and Lissak 1977; Pa'il 1979; Gelber 1986; Ostfeld 1994; Ben-Eliezer 1998; Segev 2000). In addition, Jewish youth served in foreign armies, most notably in the British Army during the Second World War (Gelber 1986: 552).

The circumstances surrounding Israel's independence were by no means hospitable to the new state. When it was established, the long-time conflict between the Jewish and Arab communities in Palestine had already escalated into a full-fledged civil war, and after the end of the British Mandate in Palestine, the armies of several Arab states, mainly Egypt, Transjordan, Syria and Iraq, intervened. Consequently, a host of foreign volunteers came to fight alongside the two belligerents (see, e.g., Malet 2010: 101–2). In 1949, the conflict was terminated not by formal Israeli–Arab peace treaties, as some Israeli leaders expected, but by armistice agreements signed between Israel and each of Egypt, Lebanon, Transjordan, and Syria, but not with Iraq or the Palestinians, under the auspices of the United Nations (Bialer 1990: 202).

In the next decades, Israel was involved in several wars with the neighboring Arab states (in 1956, 1967, 1969–1970, 1973, and 1982), and launched military operations against Palestinian and Lebanese nonstate armed factions (in 1978, 1982, 1993, 1996, 2006, and 2008–2009). Eventually, Israel did manage to reach formal arrangements with some of its Arab neighbors, including two peace treaties signed with Egypt in 1979 and with Jordan in 1994. However, two agreements, signed between Israel and Lebanon in 1983 and between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1993, were not so successful. On a more informal level, Israel established a working relationship with Jordan and reached certain tacit understandings with Syria concerning Lebanon in 1976. It also reached informal understandings with a Lebanese nonstate armed faction, Hizbullah, in the 1990s, and with Palestinian nonstate armed factions such as the PLO in the early 1980s and Hamas since 2003. But

these did not prevent occasional outbreaks of violence in Israel, Lebanon, and the Palestinian Territories.

Following the First Israeli–Arab War (1947–1949), Israel's leaders decided that in view of the state's volatile security situation, all Jewish citizens, both male and female, should be drafted to the IDF at the age of 18, and that men would serve there for 30 months and women for 24 months.² In practice, men have served for 36 months since 1967.³ It was also decided that most members of Israel's Palestinian Arab community would be exempted from military service, though small groups within this sector, such as the Druze, the Circassians, and some Bedouins, were later drafted (Peled 1998; Krebs 2006; Kanaaneh 2009).⁴ Those exempted from military service also included ultrareligious Jewish men and women and all married Jewish women.

In addition to these conscripts, the IDF was to have a reserve force comprising men and women who had completed their mandatory military service. The reservists, who were to undergo periodic military training, could be fully mobilized during national emergencies. The most important part of the IDF, however, was its standing force of career officers and noncommissioned officers (NCOs), who were not drafted separately but rather recruited from among its conscripts (Horowitz and Lissak 1989: 195–230; Van Creveld 1998: 113–5). As we shall see, many serving and retired members of this third group, particularly from among its highest echelons, can be regarded as the “core” of Israel's security network.

The missions and tasks of the IDF in 1949 were, first and foremost, military: to defend the long and meandering borders of the new state and protect Israeli citizens from any Arab attack, and to prepare for a possible, and according to some Israeli leaders, inevitable, “second round” with the Arab states that refused to recognize Israel. In order to achieve these ends, Israel's military and political leaders decided in the early 1950s to adopt an offensive–defensive military strategy that stipulated the launching of preemptive strikes against imminent threats to the state's security. This new military strategy led to the development of a powerful air force with long-range strike capabilities; an armored corps and infantry capable of penetrating the enemy's lines; and a large intelligence community, with the IDF's Intelligence Branch as its most important part, entrusted with determining whether Israel is under threat and if so by whom (Handel 1994; Oren 2002; Oren, Barak, and Shapira, 2013). Later, Israel also developed a nuclear capability, though it never acknowledged this officially, and eventually also antimissile systems (Cohen 1998).

However, from the outset the IDF was also entrusted with civilian tasks such as education, settlement, and the absorption of the hundreds of thousands of Jewish immigrants arriving in Israel in its early years. In conceptual terms, the

² Religious Jewish women can serve within the framework of the National Service, which, in recent years, has expanded to include some Palestinian Arab citizens.

³ Some conscripts serve in the Border Guard, which is part of the Israeli police.

⁴ Military service became mandatory for the Druze and Circassians in 1956.

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IDF played a pivotal role in Israel's process of state formation and development. By this last term, we mean three interrelated and often-overlapping sub-processes that, together, helped produce the modern state in the West and later in other regions: first, state-building, which consists of measures that produce "territorial consolidation, centralization, differentiation of the instruments of government, and monopolization of the means of coercion" (Tilly 1975: 42); second, "statecraft," or state-construction, defined as the "processes or mechanisms whereby a state enhances its power and authority," using its formal agencies but significantly also an array of informal, including cultural, means (Davis 1991: 12; see also Foucault 1979; Mitchell 1991; Steinmetz 1999); and third, national integration, which involves centrally based efforts to inculcate the state's entire populace with a common identity (Gellner 1983; Smith 1986; Hobsbawm 1990; Anderson 1991). This role has accorded the IDF a senior position in the politics, economy, society, and public culture of the new state.

In the decades after the establishment of the state, the boundaries between its civilian and security spheres have remained, by and large, extremely porous and almost nonexistent, and this important factor has enabled the IDF, as well as Israel's informal security network, to wield considerable influence on all areas of public and private life. This factor, in turn, contributed to the continued lack of differentiating boundaries between these spheres. These processes are discussed in the text that follows.

In conceptual terms, which we elaborate upon in Chapter 1, Israel can thus be defined as a "small state" that has faced real or imagined, but in any case perceived "continuous existential threats" since its independence.

Concerning the question of whether Israel is a unique case in this regard or does it have parallels in other countries, we wish to emphasize that we do not view the Israeli case as being essentially *sui generis* and hence as incomparable to other relevant cases. While the view that Israel is "unique" is held by some Israeli politicians, who have sometimes used it to justify special arrangements, positions and actions for Israel (e.g., in the nuclear realm; see Cohen 1998: 160), as well as by some students of the Israeli case, we suggest that scholars, particularly from the social sciences, who make comparisons as part of their research, should treat such claims with caution (see the discussion in Barnett 1996). The question is, therefore, to *which* other cases should one compare Israel, and what insights can be gleaned from such an approach. In the following chapters, we elaborate on our position on this important issue first by presenting a critical appraisal of previous studies on Israel's civil–security relationship, including the comparative dimension, and then by placing this case in the most appropriate reference group as per our research.

RATIONALE AND STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

This book sheds light on Israel's security network by examining its emergence and scope in connection with the development of the Israeli political system, demonstrating its impact on the domestic sphere and on Israel's foreign

relations, and situating this phenomenon in a broad theoretical and comparative perspective.

Chapter 1 presents the theoretical and comparative tools that we use to analyze Israel's security network. These include theories that explain, and at times also prescribe, the relationship between the state's civilian and security spheres, as well as studies that focus on small states that have faced real or imagined, but in any case perceived, continuous existential threats. It demonstrates that general studies on civil–security relations, as well as those that deal with small states, tend to overlook the more informal aspects of this relationship, and especially the role of security networks in shaping policymaking, concrete policies, and actions. The chapter addresses this notable gap by discussing studies on policy networks and other relevant theories and asking how they can be applied to the realm of national security.

The goals of Chapter 2 are twofold: First, we aim to demonstrate how our concept of the security network relates to, and informs, the ongoing debate concerning the relationship between Israel's civilian and security sectors. Second, we explain the emergence, persistence, and strength of Israel's security network and its connection to Israel's political culture and political system. We show how it has developed through the years and identify the major milestones in this process. Although we especially focus on Arab–Israeli confrontations (in particular the 1967 War) and peacemaking efforts, we also consider important domestic developments, such as the formation of successive National Unity Governments in Israel, and other changes in its political, social, economic, and cultural spheres.

In Chapter 3, we focus on Israel's security network itself and ask who its members are and where they are situated in Israel's broadly defined political system, economy, and civil society. We then inquire about the formal and informal mechanisms and institutions that have facilitated the operation of Israel's security network and helped its members promote their individual and collective interests and goals, and discuss some of their shared values and conceptions, particularly with regard to Israel's national security, and how they relate to general cultural values of the Jewish community in Israel. One of the issues that we mention in this chapter and demonstrate later is the appearance in recent years of competing and even clashing subnetworks within Israel's security network.

Chapter 4 discusses the impact of Israel's security network and, in certain cases, of subnetworks operating within it, on the domestic arena. This is done by highlighting some of the manifold influences members of the security network, or the subnetworks, can have on major decisions and actions in various civilian spheres in Israel, particularly the political system and the economy. Ultimately, the chapter asks whether the persistence and strength of the security network can help explain why and to what extent Israel is a “formal democracy” and not an “effective democracy.”

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Chapter 5 discusses the long-term effects of Israel's security network on the state's foreign relations and defense. After providing additional evidence for the hegemonic position acquired by Israel's security network in war and peace-making, particularly in comparison with other relevant actors, we present two concrete cases that highlight the role of the security network in shaping Israel's policymaking and concrete policies in the external realm.

The goal of Chapter 6 is to situate our discussion of Israel's security network and its impact in a broad perspective by comparing the Israeli case to some other small states that have faced continuous existential threats. In particular, we inquire about the type of relationship that emerged between these states' civilian and security sectors and its impact on the domestic sphere, including their regimes, and on their foreign relations.

Finally, in the Conclusion, we present our main analytical and theoretical findings concerning Israel and the additional cases that we have examined. We also call attention to the implications for future research on security networks generally and in other states and suggest how they can be better comprehended and studied.

I

Security Networks

A Theoretical and Comparative Perspective

In the introduction to this book we posited that Israel is a small state that has confronted continuous existential threats, real or imagined, since its establishment as an independent state in 1948. We also suggested that the best way to comprehend the relationship between Israel's civilian and security sectors is in terms of a highly informal but very influential security network that comprises acting and former security personnel and their partners in the state's various civilian spheres. This chapter provides the necessary "tool-kit" that will allow us to analyze Israel's security network and kindred phenomena in other relevant states. First, we discuss several major approaches to the relationship between the civilian and security sectors. We then focus on the category of states that best approximates Israel, that is, small states that have faced real or imagined continuous existential threats, and discuss the relationship that developed between their civilian and security sectors. Finally, we present several additional tools that can help analyze security networks in Israel and elsewhere.

Before proceeding with the actual discussion, we will briefly explain the main concept used in this chapter. Since the term "civil-military relations" refers to the military but not to states' other security services, we prefer to speak of the relationship between states' civilian and security sectors. "Civilian sector" as used here not only refers to cultural aspects but also encompasses the political system, the economy, and civil society, broadly defined, including civil society groups, the media, and the educational system. The "security sector," in its turn, includes the military but also other law-enforcement agencies, such as the police, the paramilitary forces, the border guards, and, if relevant, the coast guard, the intelligence and internal security services, as well as the military industries and the nuclear authority. The professional, that is, the nonpolitical, components of the Ministry of Defense can also be considered part of the security sector. Although this book is concerned mainly with the military, which in

Israel and in many other states, including continuously threatened small states, is the most powerful security service in terms of its size, missions, and role in the process of state formation and development, we do mention other security services when they are relevant to the discussion.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE STATE'S CIVILIAN AND SECURITY SECTORS

In the last decades of the twentieth century, the study of the relationship between states' civilian and security sectors was neglected by political scientists and students of International Relations (IR), though not always by sociologists and anthropologists (see, e.g., Bland 2001: 527; Bruneau 2006: 2). However, since the turn of the twenty-first century, and particularly since the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and the launching of the wars in Afghanistan and in Iraq by the United States and its allies, there has been a renewed interest in this field. Whereas political scientists, especially from the subfield of comparative politics, either revisit the "traditional approach" (Nielsen and Snider 2009; Croissant, Kuehn, Chambers, and Wolf 2010) or raise new questions (such as how to build "democratic armies" as part of the efforts to export democracy to non-Western regions and/or restore a legitimate political order in the aftermath of civil wars: see, e.g., Barany 2009: 178–9), IR specialists express interest in civilian control of the military, which, they posit, "is not merely a means to promote democracy, but it is also a force in favor of peace" (Sechser 2004: 771; see also Choi and James 2008: 37).

Among the many approaches to the study of the relationship between the state's civilian and security sectors, we choose to focus on four major ones. The first is the "traditional approach" with its two major strands, the "political approach" and the "sociological approach," which dominated the field until the end of the Cold War and is still very influential today. Second, we refer to several "critical" perspectives, which, though less popular than the traditional approaches, have nonetheless stimulated the academic and public debate on these issues, and, we must add, have also inspired this book. Third, we consider studies that have focused on the relationship between the civilian and security sectors in non-Western states. Finally, we discuss more recent works that address the changing relationship between the civilian and security sectors since the end of the Cold War. Rather than presenting an exhaustive account of these approaches, which would exceed the scope of this book, we focus on the major questions that each addresses.

Traditional Approaches

The main question that the "traditional approach" posed with regard to the relationship between states' civilian and security sectors, namely, how states guarantee civilian control of the military, was not new. What authors who

adopted this approach did offer, however, was the first systematic attempt to analyze this relationship based on empirical evidence and the formulation of a set of theoretical and normative assumptions that had a clear prescriptive dimension.

The major strands within the traditional approach – the “political” and “sociological” approaches – were developed in established states in the West, particularly in the United States, in the period of the Cold War. This fact has considerable bearing not only on these theories themselves but also on their applicability to other periods and to other regions of the world. Indeed, these theories were soon complemented by works that sought to explain the relationship between civilian and security sectors in the socialist and communist countries in Eastern Europe and elsewhere (for an overview, see Segal 1994), in Latin America (see, especially, Stepan 1988) and in the “new states” in the Third World, which are sometimes referred to as the “postcolonial” or the “developing” states.

The first of these traditional approaches – the political approach – is associated with the works of Samuel Huntington (see, especially, Huntington 1957), who posited that the best way to guarantee that the military remains answerable to the state’s civilian leaders is to establish “objective civilian control” over it. This, Huntington later explained, stipulated “1) a high level of military professionalism and recognition by military officers of the limits of their professional competence; 2) the effective subordination of the military to the civilian political leaders who make the basic decisions on foreign and military policy; 3) the recognition and acceptance by that leadership of an area of professional competence and autonomy for the military; and 4) as a result, the minimalization of military intervention in politics and of political intervention in the military” (Huntington 1996: 3–4). The state’s civilian and military spheres, in other words, were to be fully separated from one another: A civilian leader was to be the commander in chief in all respects, a separate civilian body was to be entrusted with approving the military’s budget, and the military itself was to be a professional institution that enjoyed autonomy in military affairs in return for its total obedience to the civilian leaders. Many observers have noted that the political approach has been dominant in the United States and in other Western states for many decades (Segal 1994; Burk 2002; Nielsen and Snider 2009).

The second traditional approach – the sociological approach – is identified with the works of Morris Janowitz (see, especially, Janowitz 1960). In contrast to Huntington’s political approach, Janowitz posited that effective civilian control over the military would not be achieved by removing it from society and professionalizing it, but rather by integrating it into society. To this end, the boundaries between the military and society were to be permeable, and the military itself composed not of specialists in military affairs but rather of “civilian-soldiers” whose values and perceptions were to be greatly influenced by those of their fellow citizens (Segal 1994; Burk 2002). Although less