GUEST EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

The Convergence of Military Conduct and Policing in Israeli-Controlled Territories

Nir Gazit and Yagil Levy

The murder of George Floyd by a police officer in the United States in May 2020 and the subsequent turmoil, as well as the violence against migrants on the US-Mexican border, have drawn major public and media attention to the phenomenon of police brutality (see, e.g., Levin 2020; Misra 2018; Taub 2020), which is often labeled as 'militarization of police'. At the same time, in recent years military forces have been increasingly involved in policing missions in civilian environments, both domestically (see, e.g., Kanno-Youngs 2020; Schrader 2020; Shinkman 2020) and abroad. The convergence of military conduct and policing raises intriguing questions regarding the impact of these tendencies on the military and the police, as well as on their legitimacy.

The discrepancy between internal and external security is a fundamental principle of the modern nation-state (Dandeker 1990; Lutterbeck 2004). As a result, most Western democracies consider the realms of military and policing as separate: the police are responsible for maintaining domestic law and order inside the state's borders, while the military's core functional imperative is defending the state from external threats. From this perspective, any convergence between the two domains is seen as a dangerous aberration from the desirable democratic order. As the two security forces are subject to separate legal systems and should operate under different rationales, any violent involvement of the military in domestic affairs might put democracy at risk. Likewise, the involvement of the police in martial activities and the employment of military-like measures (i.e., the use of lethal force) against civilians is considered illegitimate and wrong in a functioning democracy.

Although the distinction has never been unequivocal, the split between the two security domains was evident until the end of the Cold War (cf. Brownfield-Stein, this issue). This demarcation has developed two separate scholarly fields in the social sciences, that of military studies (in international relations, psychology, sociology, and, more recently, anthropology) and that of police studies (mainly in criminology and sociology). However, in the last two decades, and particularly since 9/11, the dividing line between the two types of security forces, along with their disparity, has significantly diminished.

In recent years, police forces have been increasingly engaged in security missions that were traditionally designated for the military; they have become more involved in border security, counterinsurgency, and anti-terrorism. Furthermore, civilian tasks such as crime control, the 'war on drugs', and immigration control have been significantly militarized (Correa and Thomas 2019; Jones and Johnson 2016), as police forces more often use paramilitary tactics and equipment. At the same time, military forces have been gradually deployed in civilian environments in expeditionary missions for warfare and peacekeeping purposes, nation-building, and internal security (Edmunds 2006: 1062). The intense interactions between the military and civilians often involve policing and require military forces to adopt new modes of action that are more typical of the police, such as demonstration dispersal methods and population management. Lengthy policing deployments may have negative effects on morale, readiness, and retention rates in the military (Hills 2001). Furthermore, this functional shift has led scholars to tag such deployments as 'militarization of the police' (Delehanty et al. 2017; Lawson 2018; Roziere and Walby 2017) and 'policization of the military' (Ben-Porat 2018).

Less academic attention, however, has been paid to the phenomenon of military policing. While scholars have acknowledged the increasing involvement of military forces in civilian settings during the 'troubles' in Northern Ireland in the 1970s, in the Balkan wars in the early 1990s, and more recently in Afghanistan and Iraq, for example, and the new roles that soldiers must fulfill, the practice of military policing is seldom discussed. It seems that the traditional separation between military conduct and policing still keeps researchers from using the analytical framework of policing when exploring contemporary military conduct. Instead, they prefer using neutral terms, such as 'postmodern warfare' or 'postmodern soldiering' (Battistelli 1997) to conceptualize the involvement of soldiers in non-traditional military missions that include policing.

The magnitude of this phenomenon raises a set of questions. How do policing missions influence military doctrine, and how do military forces maneuver between fighting and policing civilians? What kinds of

organizational adaptations must the military make to fulfill such missions in terms of training, preparedness, and equipment, for example? To what degree does the involvement of the military in policing civilian environments influence the soldiers' professional identity, as well as the public's perception of the military and its legitimacy? And what characterizes military violence during policing assignments? Does the intense interaction with civilians reduce or increase the level of violence, and why?

This special issue aims to fill this gap in the literature by focusing on the patterns and trends of military policing in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) and along the border with the Gaza Strip. The articles were among the papers presented at the conference "Military and Policing" that was held at the Open University of Israel in 2018, and organized by the Israeli Sociology Society and the Institute for Policy Analysis of the Open University of Israel. During the past two decades, the Israeli case has served as a major site in the development of macro and micro approaches to the study of the military and military affairs (Ben-Ari et al. 2001; Gazit and Maoz-Shai 2010; Rosenhek et al. 2003). While Israel has not figured in the formulation of a general social theory regarding civil-military relations (but see Levy 2007, 2019), its experience in continuous armed struggle and the centrality of its armed forces have been used by social scientists to make substantial contributions to disciplines that center on military issues (Ben-Ari et al. 2001). In this vein, Israel's prolonged military stalemate over the OPT has served as an important field for exploring the activity of militaries in 'situations other than war' and their organizational adaptation (see, e.g., Ben-Ari et al. 2010; Ben-Shalom et al. 2005; Gazit 2009; Grassiani 2013).

The general lacunae regarding the consequences of military policing has also characterized the study of the Israeli military. While there are abundant studies that explore the activities and doctrine of the Israeli military in the OPT, and also investigate its friction with the local Palestinian civilians, the issue of policing is commonly neglected (but see Gazit 2015).

Although anchored in unique historical and political circumstances, the Israeli occupation offers an exceptional analytical opportunity for examining military policing for the following reasons. First, the Occupation is conducted in a diversity of sites (i.e., military checkpoints, Jewish settlements, Palestinian villages and cities, roads, and the Seam Zone). These sites entail countless interactions between soldiers and civilians that often involve practices of policing by military forces. This produces a plethora of opportunities to shed light on the traits of military policing as it unfolds in different venues and under different operational circumstances. Second, the dual interaction of the military with the two civilian populations in the Occupied Territories—the Palestinians and the Jewish settlers—enables exploration of the political and social coordinates of military policing,

both in the field and with regard to the political and ideological forces that shape military activities in the OPT. Third, the length of the Israeli occupation and its changing facets (due to peace agreements and violent upheavals) enable scholars to trace the evolution and development of military policing in the Israeli military's doctrine and practice.

This Special Issue

Analytically, the articles in this special issue contribute to two clusters of scholarly work: the sociology of the military and the study of Israel's military occupation in the OPT. Each article highlights a different facet of Israeli military policing in the West Bank and along the border with the Gaza Strip.

The first contribution, by Ofra Ben-Ishai, explores the attitude of the Israeli military's higher echelon regarding the discourse of policing and, more specifically, its absence from the Israel Defense Forces's (IDF) doctrinal writing. Through longitudinal analysis of the IDF's two professional journals, *Ma'arakhot* and *Bein HaKtavim*, she suggests that the concept of policing is intertwined with the socio-political conflict between neo-nationalists and neo-liberals with regard to military control of the Occupied Territories and the resulting controversies over control of the civilian population. To avoid loss of legitimacy, the IDF's doctrine is manipulated by avoiding and euphemizing the explicit term 'policing' in a way that appeals to the interests and values of both dominant groups. Through avoidance of 'policing', new terms such as 'the war between the wars' promote broad public acceptance of the intractable nature of the conflict and the legitimization of the need to use violence.

The second contribution, by Eyal Ben-Ari and Uzi Ben-Shalom, investigates the adaptation of IDF soldiers, who are trained for high-intensity wars, to policing missions in the OPT. They show how militarized policing in fact encompasses distinct ideal types of 'logics of action' (institutional logics) that together comprise the role of the armed forces in Israel's control system over the OPT. Their analysis suggests that transformations in the social and political environment in which the soldiers operate, and their increased exposure to scrutiny by external actors such as the media and judicial agencies, have encouraged the IDF to develop organizational mechanisms to control soldiers' behavior. As a result, the soldiers are subjected to greater control and adherence to legal restrictions than in the past. Senior commanders' growing awareness of the legal and media constraints governing the military's activities results in soldiers behaving less violently toward Palestinian civilians than they previously did.

The question of external and internal controls over military policing is further discussed in Yagil Levy's contribution. Levy posits that since the outbreak of the Second Intifada in 2000, a fundamental structural change has led to the gradual creation of two armies within the IDF. Thus, alongside the 'official' army, a 'policing' force has emerged in the West Bank. Levy depicts this 'policing army' as a quasi-militia force that is comprised of a mix of military, police, and civilian components. This hybrid policing army may deviate from the military's official line. While the 'official army' maintains its hierarchical structure, the 'policing army' is controlled by a matrix of different forces and mechanisms, mostly extra-military. Its embeddedness within the civilian communities of the Jewish settlers and the multiplicity of control agencies, including numerous social and political pressure groups, repoliticize this policing force, which is only partly controlled by the official echelon of command.

Nir Gazit's article also highlights the political dimension of military policing and the extent to which ground forces are influenced by their social and political surroundings. It explores the development of a differential logic of policing among soldiers vis-à-vis the two civilian populations in the OPT—Jewish settlers and Palestinians—and their reciprocal relations. The article identifies three clusters of factors that shape these interrelations: the complex relationships between soldiers and settlers, the blurred boundaries between 'security' and 'civilian' operations, and situational variables, including the geographical settings of the events and their timing. Each of these factors, and more importantly their combination, encourages the soldiers to employ a biased policing policy—one that inclines toward over-policing of Palestinians and under-policing Jewish settlers. While this tendency might seem obvious, given the structural power relations between Israel and the Palestinians, the analysis emphasizes that the practices of military policing toward one community are continuously shaped by its behavior toward the other.

Chava Brownfield-Stein's article brings us to the border between Israel and the Gaza Strip. In her piece, Brownfield-Stein examines the roles of high-tech weaponry and gender in the convergence of military conduct and policing along contemporary borders. The analysis describes how Israel has developed an exceptional border-control strategy to meet the unique security threats at the border with Gaza, which are simultaneously interpreted as 'civilian' and 'military'. This strategy combines traditional combat deployment alongside the use of advanced tactical and monitoring technologies. These measures, together with a reliance on women soldiers, indicate a new phase in the military-police fusion that is dominant in what is often framed as the 'New Wars'. It represents a shift in the paradigm of warfare in which conceptual and operative approaches

constantly combine aspects of policing and combat and do not consider them to be exclusive.

The closing article for this special issue, a review essay by Yoram Peri, analyzes the literature written in Hebrew during the last decade about the social and cultural aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Common to this literature is viewing the war as the primary force shaping Israel's character and presenting how Israeli culture has normalized the endless war as a given. As Peri concludes from this writing, "We are no longer forbidden to utter the word 'militarism,'" thus indicating that he recognizes the elephant in the room. He provides an answer, at least in part, to the disturbing question of how the Occupation, with its aggressive policing components and the sacrifices it entails, has been largely legitimized since 1967 to the extent that it has become a reality that is taken for granted.

But Peri's analysis also invites us to look further into this situation. Across the different perspectives and themes presented in this special issue, it is clear that although the task of policing in the OPT presents a host of dilemmas, the most critical are the moral ones, faced by both the military's senior echelon and the deployed soldiers, and by Israeli society in general. The social significance of the exploration offered here extends beyond the framework of military sociology. The convergence of military behavior and the policing of subordinated civilians for over five decades represents not only a professional challenge for the military, which has to differentiate between distinct operational doctrines. It is also a phenomenon that shapes civil-military relations in Israeli society more generally and influences the legitimacy of the Israeli military, both domestically and internationally, as well as the practices it employs. At the same time, it is also our hope that the analysis of military policing in the Israeli-Palestinian context will serve as a stepping-stone for investigating military policing beyond the Israeli case.

NIR GAZIT is a Senior Lecturer in Sociology and Anthropology in the Department of Behavioral Sciences at the Ruppin Academic Center. His research interests include governance and sovereignty, political violence, civil-military relations, and border zones. E-mail: nirgazit2@gmail.com

YAGIL LEVY is a Professor of Political Sociology and Public Policy at the Open University of Israel. His research focuses on the theoretical and empirical aspects of relations between society and the military. He has published eight books, the most recent of which is *Whose Life Is Worth More? Hierarchies of Risk and Death in Contemporary Wars* (2019). E-mail: yagil.levy@gmail.com

REFERENCES

- Battistelli, Fabrizio. 1997. "Peacekeeping and the Postmodern Soldier." *Armed Forces & Society* 23 (3): 467–484.
- Ben-Ari, Eyal, Zeev Lerer, Uzi Ben-Shalom, and Ariel Vainer. 2010. *Rethinking Contemporary Warfare: A Sociological View of the Al-Aqsa Intifada*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Ben-Ari, Eyal, Zeev Rosenhek, and Daniel Maman. 2001. "Military State and Society in Israel: An Introductory Essay." In *Military, State, and Society in Israel: Theoretical and Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Daniel Maman, Zeev Rosenhek, and Eyal Ben-Ari, 1–39. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.
- Ben-Porat, Guy. 2018. "The Military Police." Paper presented at the "Military and Policing" conference, Open University of Israel, 24 October.
- Ben-Shalom, Uzi, Zeev Lehrer, and Eyal Ben-Ari. 2005. "Cohesion during Military Operations: A Field Study on Combat Units in the Al-Aqsa Intifada." *Armed Forces & Society* 32 (1): 63–79.
- Correa, Jennifer G., and James M. Thomas. 2019. "From the Border to the Core: A Thickening Military-Police Assemblage." *Critical Sociology* 45 (7–8): 1133–1147.
- Dandeker, Christopher. 1990. *Surveillance, Power and Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Delehanty, Casey, Jack Mewhirter, Ryan Welch, and Jason Wilks. 2017. "Militarization and Police Violence: The Case of the 1033 Program." *Research & Politics* 4 (2): 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2053168017712885>.
- Edmunds, Timothy. 2006. "What Are Armed Forces For? The Changing Nature of Military Roles in Europe." *International Affairs* 82 (6): 1059–1075. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2346.2006.00588.x>.
- Gazit, Nir. 2009. "Social Agency, Spatial Practices, and Power: The Micro-foundations of Fragmented Sovereignty in the Occupied Territories." *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 22 (1): 83–103.
- Gazit, Nir. 2015. "State-Sponsored Vigilantism: Jewish Settlers' Violence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories." *Sociology* 49 (3): 438–454.
- Gazit, Nir, and Yael Maoz-Shai. 2010. "Studying-Up and Studying-Across: At-Home Research of Governmental Violence Organizations." *Qualitative Sociology* 33 (3): 275–295.
- Grassiani, Erella. 2013. *Soldiering under Occupation: Processes of Numbing among Israeli Soldiers in the Al-Aqsa Intifada*. New York: Berghahn Books.
- Hills, Alice. 2001. "The Inherent Limits of Military Forces in Policing Peace Operations." *International Peacekeeping* 8 (3): 79–98.
- Jones, Reece, and Corey Johnson. 2016. "Border Militarisation and the Re-articulation of Sovereignty." *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 41 (2): 187–200.
- Kanno-Youngs, Zolan. 2020. "U.S. Watched George Floyd Protests in 15 Cities Using Aerial Surveillance." *New York Times*, 19 June. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/19/us/politics/george-floyd-protests-surveillance.html>.

- Lawson, Edward, Jr. 2018. "TRENDS: Police Militarization and the Use of Lethal Force." *Political Research Quarterly* 72 (1): 177–189. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1065912918784209>.
- Levin, Sam. 2020. "19 Dead in a Decade: The Small American City Where Violent Police Thrive." *Guardian*, 13 June. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/jun/13/vallejo-california-police-violence-sean-monterrosa>.
- Levy, Yagil. 2007. *Israel's Materialist Militarism*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Levy, Yagil. 2019. *Whose Life Is Worth More? Hierarchies of Risk and Death in Contemporary Wars*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Lutterbeck, Derek. 2004. "Between Police and Military: The New Security Agenda and the Rise of Gendarmeries." *Cooperation and Conflict* 39 (1): 45–68.
- Misra, Tanvi. 2018. "What Border Security and Police Violence Have in Common." *Bloomberg CityLab*, 29 November. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-11-29/the-link-between-border-security-and-urban-policing>.
- Rosenhek, Zeev, Daniel Maman, and Eyal Ben-Ari. 2003. "The Study of War and the Military in Israel: An Empirical Investigation and a Reflective Critique." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 35 (3): 461–484.
- Roziere, Brendan, and Kevin Walby. 2017. "The Expansion and Normalization of Police Militarization in Canada." *Critical Criminology* 26 (1): 29–48.
- Schrader, Stuart. 2020. "Yes, American Police Act Like Occupying Armies. They Literally Studied Their Tactics." *Guardian*, 8 June. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/jun/08/yes-american-police-act-like-occupying-armies-they-literally-studied-their-tactics>.
- Shinkman, Paul D. 2020. "Military Begins Staging to Quell George Floyd Protests." *U.S. News*, 2 June. <https://www.usnews.com/news/national-news/articles/2020-06-02/military-begins-staging-around-washington-to-quell-george-floyd-protests>.
- Taub, Amanda. 2020. "Police the Public, or Protect It? For A U.S. in Crisis, Hard Lessons from Other Countries." *New York Times*, 11 June. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/11/world/police-brutality-protests.html>.