

# Conceptualizing Extra-Institutional Control of the Military: Israel As a Case Study

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## Introduction

Civilian control refers to the joint institutional arrangements aimed at restraining the military's capacity for autonomous action in areas that have political implications, such as military operations and strategic planning, budgeting, the selection of weapons systems, modes of organization, modes of recruitment, the promotion of officers, and internal cultural arrangements. Civilian control is effective when civilian State institutions can set limits on the military's freedom of action in a way that corresponds to political objectives autonomously shaped by politicians, and when the military abides by these civilian directives (see mainly Feaver, 1999; Michael, 2007). In short, this kind of civilian control is *institutional control*.

The literature on civilian control has focused mainly on political and institutional structures and the dialogue between officers and politicians (this approach typifies, for example, Feaver, 2003; Feaver & Gelpi, 2003). Less attention has been paid to the power relations that form the context for the encounter between the sides and, as Mills (1956, p.21) explained, is more crucial than the black box in which decision-making occurs. When the balance of power between the sides is dealt with (as in Desch, 2001), the focus is on the reflection of this balance in a bilateral civil-military dialogue, rather than on the social-cultural processes that construct the power relations.

Followers of Janowitz (1971) have highlighted the political culture and its impact on civil-military relations, noting the importance of shared norms and symbols among the parties involved. Schiff's theory of concordance (2009) emphasizes agreement among political elites, the military and the citizenry on the core values pertaining to the military. Mutual accommodation and shared values between the military and civilians are thus the key to reducing the probability of domestic military intervention or of the military's functioning in defiance of dominant civilian values (Burk, 2002). These arguments provide a better tool for understanding the power balance between soldiers and civilians than theories that focus mainly on the dialogue between the sides. Nonetheless, shared or disputed values are perceived as a point of departure rather than as an outcome, that deserves an explanation. Such an explanation may include the role of collective actors in shaping shared values or, alternately, creating gaps between civilians and the military.

Collective action, which focuses on issues of war and peace and the human and material resources needed to support policies in these areas, affects the state's ability to administer its military policies autonomously (see, for example, Everts, 2002; Giugni, 2004; Kier, 1997; Krebs, 2006; Meyer, 1993). Collective action can play a role in dividing