A Study on the Influence and Implications of Israel's Military Involvement in Politics

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이스라엘 군부의 정치개입 영향과 함의에 관한 고찰

본 연구의 목적은 이스라엘 군부의 정치 개입에 대한 근거와 정치 개입 메커니즘(Mechanism)을 분석함으로써 이스라엘 군부와 이스라엘 정치 영역과의 상호 관계를 분석하는데 있다. 민군 관계(Civil-Military Relations)에 대한 연구는 제3세계 민주주의와 정치 발전 연구의 중요한 주제중의 하나이다. 특히 1950년대 후반 아시아, 아프리카, 라틴 아메리카의 다수 신생국가들의 정치 발전 과정 중에 발생한 군부의 강제적인 정치 개입은 이들 국가들의 정치발전에 긍정적이던 부정적 이던 큰 영향을 가져왔다. 그러나 이스라엘의 경우, 제3세계 신생 국가들에서 볼 수 있는 군부의 정치개입이 전혀 다른 양상을 띠며 발전하였다. 즉 이스라엘 국가 건설 과정 속에서 팔레스타인인들로 발생한 수백에 없었던 주변 아랍 국가들과의 분쟁은 안보 영역뿐만 아니라 민간 영역에서 군부의 영향력 확대를 초래하였고, 1967년 6월 전쟁과 1980년대 이후 본격적으로 시작된 폐쇄적인 무장단체들과의 저강도 분쟁(Low-Intensity Conflicts)은 군부의 정치적 영향력을 강화하는데 결정적인 역할을 하였다.

특히 “이스라엘 안보주의(Israeli Securtism)”은 다이스포라, 홀로코스트와 같은 유대인들의 역사적 경험과 이스라엘 국가 건설의 양대 이데올로기였던 시온주의와 유대주의와 유기적으로 결합함으로써, 이스라엘 군부는 민간 영역의 복잡적인 동의와 합의를 바탕으로 다른 어떤 사회조직보다 강력한 권위와 권한을 이끌어 내

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Israel's unprecedented successes as a political democracy and its economic development make it an abnormality in the modern world. Compared to other developing states in the Middle East, Asia and other regions, Israel has successfully established a modern state system.

Since this achievement the Israeli military has played a pivotal role in state formation and development by helping to produce a modern state resembling that in the West. Before and after its independence Israel has faced external and internal security threats. These continuous security threats offered the Israeli military authority and a privileged status, not only as a defense establishment taking responsibility over national security, but also as a social integration entity for national unity by being entrusted with civilian tasks such as education, settlement, and the absorption of the hundreds of thousands of Jewish immigrants arriving in
Israel,

Due to the critical role the Israeli military plays in society, voluntarily or involuntarily, the Israeli military has retained the public trust in which the military has exerted and expanded its influence and power. This power goes beyond the overall social and political sectors of Israel into the practical policy making related to security affairs by monopolizing the national security agenda. In particular, the several wars and military confrontations with "hostile" neighboring Arab states, as well as the recent low-intensity conflicts with armed non-state groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah, contributed to the justification of Israeli military involvement in politics and the career transfers of the military officers into the political sector. As a result, these trends have caused controversy over matters of separation of boundaries between politics and the military, civilian supremacy over the military, and Israel's democracy in civil-military relations.

In this respect, it is important to research the role and structure of the military authority formed in Israel for a better understanding of Israeli society and to further understand the civilian-military relations strongly established in Israel. Therefore, based on these arguments, this research will proceed with the following aims, (1) to address the main perspectives of Israel's civil-military relations, (2) to examine the causes and characteristics of military involvement in politics, and (3) to analyze the involvement mechanism of Israel's military authority in politics, and (4) to determine the influence and implications that Israel's military has had in politics and society.
II. Main Perspectives of the Civil-Military Relations of Israel

This section will address the main perspectives of the civil-military relations of Israel and its characteristics, which have different perceptions in approaching the characteristics of the relations between civil society, politics and the military. The academic study of civil-military relations has been one of the key themes for understanding the development and maturity of democracy and civilian control of the military. This approach has been used to analyze the democratization process in non-western states including Latin America, Asia, and the Middle East.

The concept of professionalism, which has been used to ensure the subordination of the military echelon to the political echelon, was developed by the founding fathers of the discipline of civil-military relations, among them, Samuel Huntington is a versed theorist in the civil-military relations theory. Huntington distinguished between two types of civilian control over the military: subjective control achieved through rules and principles that ensure the maximization of civilian power, and objective control achieved through professional officers internalizing that they must operate exclusively in the military domain and that they must be politically neutral (Peri 2006, 5).

A rather different take was presented by Samuel Finer, another founding father, at All Souls College, Oxford University. He wrote of mature democracies in which military men ride on horse-back and are permitted to be involved in, but not to interfere in, politics. They are permitted to exert influence to a certain extent and to even pressure the civilian government. In addition to this, the more aggressive criticism against Finer's perspective argue that any form of military involvement and interference in the civilian sector hampers the development of democracy damaging
one of the democratic principles emphasizing the civilian dominance over the military by guaranteeing the separation of boundaries of politics and the military.

Therefore, based on these existing theories of the civil-military relations, this research will approach the nature and characteristics of the civil-military relations in Israel, tracing the main arguments over it.

1. The Perspective of Traditional Professionalism

The perspective of Traditional Professionalism is based on the belief that Israel has a long tradition of democracy, before and after state-building, established on the principles of western democracy recognizing the civilian dominance over the military. According to this perspective, and in contrast to the other states in Middle East and most of the post-colonial states, the Israeli civilian culture has been long established. The persistence of the civilian dominance over the military has successfully been maintained even in pre-independence eras mainly due to the various civil groups. Moreover, despite the six major wars and subsequent security threats from the neighboring Arab states, Israel has sustained its institutionally democratic political system ruled by Israel's constitution, the Basic Laws, and the democratic social structure of recognizing and valuing social diversity (Perlmutter 1969, 124).

In particular, compared to the developing and newly developed states, the high level of political institutionalization and sustained support of political structure and procedure in Israel has demonstrated Israel's democracy mainly due to this long democratic tradition, the civilian supremacy over the military has been strengthened through Israel's modern history.

It is also true that the necessity and expansion of the army's role in Palestine, under the British mandate for defending the Jewish communities from the British
control and Palestinians, had existed in pre-independence. The Jewish militant groups including Hagana, Palmach, and Irgun had played a critical role in establishing the nation-building of Israel in spite of influencing the nature and formation of the then Jewish community. However, the roles and influences of these quasi-army organizations over the Jewish community, after its nation-building, has rapidly shrunk and converged at Israel’s official military establishment, the Israel Defence Forces (IDF). The subordination of the military to the political leadership in Israel has naturally processed and developed in accordance with the strong adherence to the principle of democracy, creating the western-style professionalism in the civil-military relations and de-politicization of the military (Seo 2006, 85-102).

This strong tradition of the civilian supremacy over the military has successfully restrained the Israeli army and its officers corps from becoming a vehicle for political power, and an ally of one political faction or another, as occurred in Egypt, Syria, Iraq and other states in the region. The fact that Israel doesn’t have a history of military coups demonstrates Israel’s healthy ethos of democracy and firm democratic institution (Barak and Cohen 2007, 3).

The only disputable matter in relations between the political and military sectors can be confined to the sphere of Israel’s national security. In this case, according to the adherents of the traditional professionalism, even though Israel’s security authorities such as the IDF, Mossad (the Institute for Intelligence and Special Operation), and Shin Bet (the General Secret Service or SHABAK), have intervened in planning and implementing the security policy decision-making by retaining a de facto monopoly over most matters pertaining to Israel’s national security, they have generally abided by the civilian norms of democratic politics (Horowitz 1982, 77-106).

Hence, the traditionalists argue that Israeli democracy has been fundamentally sound to a great extent because of the predominant position of the civilian political
system. The traditional professionalism approach has dominated Israeli social sciences from the late 1950s until today focusing on the formal structural and functional features, and has insisted on the presence of very clearly distinctive civilian and military subsystems of the Israeli state (Sheffer 2007, 710).

2. The Perspective of Critical-Revisionism

The perspective of critical-revisionism has a different viewpoint from that of the traditional professionalism, critical-revisionism argues that Israel completed the process of state formation and social integration, including the differentiation of its civil and military realms, and the imposition of effective control of the latter by the former. This perspective has fundamental questions about Israel's democracy as well as Israeli civilian control over the military. It criticizes that the traditional professionalism approach by arguing that it has ignored and overlooked many features of the Israeli case, especially after the 1967 War, since and as a result of which the position of the military sector has been strengthened by expanding its political and social influence in Israel.

In general terms of professionalism, the function of the military is demanded to concentrate on the only external security. The purpose of military skills requires only highly specialized skills incompatible with political skills, the scope of military professional action is restricted to military affairs, the impact of professional socialization renders the military politically neutral, which contributes to an apolitical military and civilian control.

In contrast to this, in the case of the new professionalism the function of the military focuses on internal security. The scope of military professional actions is unrestricted and the impact of professional socialization politicizes the military by contributing to military-political managerialism and role expansion, As mentioned
earlier, while the perspective of the traditionalism of Israel follows the general professionalism in the civil-military relations, the critical-revisionism of Israel is not fully identified with the new professionalism, which has been developed in this academic area.

This perspective was proposed and advanced particularly by the emergence of a new generation of scholars, the so-called 'new historians', after the release of the Israeli classified governmental official documents in the 1980s by Israel's Public Information Act. These documents contained sensitive information about security issues, including the Israel Defense Forces illegitimacy and violations of domestic and international laws in implementing military campaigns and actions during the conflicts and wars with Arabs and Palestinians. These revelations resulted in a serious feeling of doubt among the young generation of new historians towards Israel's democracy and its justification of Israel's state-building.

The new historians, influenced by these new findings, tried to approach the civil-military relations of the traditionalism with a critically revisionist world view, and interpret them through a revisionist perspective. According to the logic of the critical revisionist perspective, in the post-independence period, the military has gradually expanded its influence into areas not explicitly connected to security affairs, coming to play a major role in strategic-planning, but also to political, social and economic aspects in Israel. In particular, the role of expansion of the Israeli military accelerated following the IDF's victory in the 1956 War. At that point, the military obligated the politicians to come up with clear casus belli for any Israeli-initiated war (Levy 1997, 119).

Decisively, following the 1967 War, the military began to take on a wider range of responsibilities including implementing a social institution for national integration, unifying divergent social mosaic characters, serving as an education institution for teaching Hebrew and social norms to immigrants, and establishing an economic
unit for producing and selling arms to foreign countries. The occupation of the territories in the 1967 War critically contributed to the role of expansion of the military by offering absolute status to the military going beyond the administrative authority of controlling the territories. Given the occupied territories, the military imposed its plans for military installations, agricultural settlements, and infrastructure improvements. It was at this point that the military began to take its social privileged status (Heper 2005, 233).

Along with the social consensus for the military’s role expansion, the public recognition of the military as a quasi-political unit blurred the boundaries between the political sector and the military sector. To some degree, the sustained tradition of the civilian supremacy over the military weakened and the boundaries between these two social subsystems came to be fragmented (Horowitz 1982, 77-106). This fragmentation, as a result, strengthened the interactions between the two sectors, which allowed the military to engage in determining security agendas of security policy-making and its implementation, increased their political involvement, and participated in civilian tasks such as settlement and education (Barak and Cohen 2007, 4).

3. The Perspective of New Critical–Cultural Approach

Unlike the two previous perspectives, which have focused more on the political aspects of the role and influence of the military, the perspective of the new critical-cultural approach has more interest in the social and cultural influences of the military in Israel. Recognizing the military intervention in the civil sector and the military relative dominance over the civil-military relations in Israel, this perspective traces how the impact and implications of the military has changed Israeli society and culture. This perspective has been influenced by post-modernism, which
percolated into the Israeli social sciences beginning in the 1990s, emphasizing Israel's "militaristic" tendencies. The adherents of this perspective criticize the almost non-existence of a vigorous civil society in Israel, a situation that allows the military to play a major role in integration (Sheffer 2007, 710).

According to this perspective, the critical factor transforming Israeli society to the militaristic one is the compulsory military service, which has played a key role in integrating the people with diverse origins, cultures, and immigrant backgrounds into the single national entity. Therefore, the compulsory military service creates a hierarchy of perceived patriotism and contribution to society, and as such it functions as a central organizing principle for different groups and individuals' access to societal resources (Livio 2011, 18).

Even though there are some debates regarding whether the conscription system was originally meant to serve primarily as a socially integrative tool, rather than simply as an instrument of national security regardless of the original motivations, the military quickly became a central means for the promotion of social cohesion and the manufacturing of collective identity (Cohen 2008, 31). The IDF was constructed as a 'bonding institution' that would enable Israel's fissiparous society to be homogenized and welded into a single whole on the basis of Israel's militarism (Livio 2011, 14). Therefore, the IDF's mission has extensively expanded ranging from its original task of national security to a social mechanism which integrates the people into a single consolidation through a military-dominated education system in the armies.

In its role as a social integration ideology, the Israeli militarism combined with the Judaism also strongly bridges the individuals with the collective integration for national security. In many cases, cultural texts and institutional ceremonies made explicit connections between the military and various religious symbols and metaphors, thus infusing the IDF with a sacred aura and linking present day
military leaders to Biblical heroes and warriors (Shapira, 1997). The link between religion and militarism became increasingly evident after Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in the 1967 War, where, with the help of the military, religious institutions have taken the leading role in the construction of the settlements.

Therefore, the IDF's centrality in the social and personal life of Israelis has instilled a military-oriented framework on civil society, with the discourse of security having become the pivotal prism through which most Israelis view their lives, making the relationship between the military and society a 'symbiotic' one. The centrality of the military in the individual, and the collective levels of Israeli society, has crucially served in establishing a social integration mechanism which has painted Israel more militaristic.

III. The Causes and Characteristics of Military Involvement in Politics

As addressed in the previous chapter, the perspectives towards the civil-military relations of Israel has been developed respectively based on their viewpoints and approaches to Israeli society. However, the common point they share is that Israel's military has contributed to establishing the state of Israel, impacting on all of the social sectors whether intentionally or not. There is also strong debate over whether the role of the military has hampered Israeli democracy or not.

In spite of the strong controversy regarding the civilian supremacy regarding the military in Israel, in this chapter, the research for military involvement in politics will be implemented by employing the respective perspectives. These three
perspectives have their own ways in interpreting Israel's military role. In addition, for a better understanding of Israel's military role in Israel, the multi-faceted factors will be examined in approaching the matter of the relations between politics and the military. With these points in mind, this chapter will proceed with the examination aimed at analyzing the main causes of military involvement in politics and its characteristics and implications in Israeli society.

1. The External Security Threats and the Low-Intensity Conflicts

Since its independence, Israel has faced domestic and external existential threats. These threats, in turn, have helped foster Israel's self-image as a small state that is surrounded by 'hostile' enemies bent on destroying it and, at the same time, facing existential threats from its Arab and Palestinian community (Sheffer and Barak 2013, 71).

The continuous existential threats facing Israel have become inexorably tied to socio-cultural factors, especially to the collective historical traumas of its dominant Jewish community (Bar-Tal, Magal, and Halperin 2009). This basic feeling over the security threats are strongly connected to the cultural-historical background of the Jewish people and the immense history of attacks on Jewish individuals and communities, such as the Holocaust, the enemy of the Arab states and the Palestinians, the wars between Israel and the Arab states, the endless clashes with the Palestinians, and more recently the Iranian nuclear project (Chang 2013, 5 & Seo 2009, 2).

These security threats created "securitism", namely a situation in which a nation locates security as its major concern and master goal. As a result, considerations about security became a major determinant of policies and decisions in many spheres of collective life; society members view security as a central issue in
societal life and security forces have a major determinative power in society (Bar-Tal, Halperin, and Magal 2009, 241). Although the military suggest different ways to promote Israel's national security, they generally do not question the central place of national security in Israel (Sheffer and Barak 2013, 70).

The precedence of the national security over all other issues and considerations has been based on the predominant role of Israel's military. Many Israelis, including civilian leaders and the general public, consider the civilian spheres - that is the political system, society, the economy, and the public discourse - not as an end in itself, but rather in terms of their considerations to Israel's national security (Sheffer and Barak 2013, 70). Furthermore, the Israeli public acknowledges that those who deal with matters of national security in Israel have a built-in advantage over civilians, and Israel's security sector, especially the IDF, stands over the criticism.

Interconnected with the precedence of national security and the continuous existential threats facing Israel, the securitization of the civilian spheres has made the boundaries between the state's security sector and its various civilian spheres extremely porous. The security sector, particularly the IDF, receive the necessary resources for defense purposes. At the same time, security issues within the state and in its foreign relations that were seen by Israeli leaders as meaningful for national security, were effectively securitized and ultimately became the exclusive realms of the security sector (Sheffer and Barak 2013, 72). This endless string of troubles and conflicts with the Arab states has demanded the military to play a key role in assuming the security responsibility against external military threats. The role of the military establishment in Israel has extended not only to the security sector, but also to the civilian sector including politics, the economy and society.

Along with these traditional threats, since the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the other factor strengthening securitism and the civilization of the civil
sector is the low-intensity conflicts with the non-state militant groups including the two Intifadas. While Israel has not had a major war since the 1982 Lebanon War (except the 2006 Lebanon War), its security problem has not ended. Since then, there have been small wars, but the public’s involvement in them has been greater than in the past. The two Intifadas which broke out in 1987 and in 2001, were guerrilla wars that mainly involved acts of terror against civilians (Choe 2002, 26; 2003, 5 & Hwang 2001, 53-57).

The signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993 had a very temporary influence in terms of reducing the security threats to civilians. However the subsequent wave of terrorist activities during the Oslo Process, and after its failure in 2000, was perceived to the Israeli public as the new era of the low-intensity war (Jung 2013, 169-194 & Choi 2001, 2-5). The eight years of the Oslo Process initiated by the civilian sector called for the expansive role of the military from the direct policy involvement of planning and implementing the Oslo Process to the quasi-military campaign for repressing the terror attacks (Goldberg 2006, 391).

Such prolonged low-intensity wars appeared as a new security threat to Israel. The change of these conflicts led to the main cause of the expansion of the influence and role of the military in politics, and served to draw the military establishment further into the domestic political arena as their roles shifted from the domain of operational tactics to that of strategic and defense policy (Peri, 2006). The protracted low-intensity conflict required a decision making process which is continuously reliant on the expanding roles of the IDF. The political civilian control has thus been weakened vis-à-vis the military, which gained a significant advantage in generating the required military skills for managing the violent confrontation (Michael 2007, 28).
2. The Weakness of the Political Party System and the Inter-Party Competitiveness

Institutionally, Israel's political system has been exposed to the systemic weakness mainly due to the instability of the party system. Historically this system has experienced a vicious cycle of establishing a coalition government followed by its subsequent collapse after every general election. This political pattern stems from Israel's unique multi-party system in which any single party has never controlled the majority of the Knesset seats, therefore, leaving minority political parties to form a government. If the coalition government faces a political split over significant policy decisions and fails to make political convergence among the participating parties in the government, the coalition cabinet always experiences the danger of the collapse of the government.

Along with the instability of the party system, the change of the political leadership caused the transfer of military officers into politics. The competition between the main two parties, the Labor party and the Likud, is a good example for explaining the internal cause of the military involvement in politics. Up until 1973 there was a multi-party system with a dominant party. Such a party system is characterized by low competitiveness. The transition to a multi-party system without a dominant party, which began in 1973, caused an enormous increase in competitiveness. This was expressed in the first change in government from the left-wing Labor Party to the right-wing Likud Party in the history of Israel (1977) and in the creation of the two-block structure in 1981 (Goldberg 2006, 389).

There is much competition between the two largest parties to gain the centre votes as these votes decide the fate of the elections. For instance, the right tries to push the Labor Party to the left, and the left attempts to return to the centre by cultivating a centrist image. One way of creating this image is by promoting retired
officers into senior political posts (Goldberg 2006, 389). Their experiences help them to create an authoritative, tough and uncompromising image. This is the main reason that the number of retired officers on the left is larger than on the right. After the left-placed retired officers in political positions, the right responded by courting retired officers and integrating them into the government and the Knesset (Goldberg, 2006, 389).

A good example of the Labor Party's acute need for a leadership composed of retired officers is the four primary campaigns that were held in the 1990s and the early 2000s. In 1992 Rabin beat three civilian candidates: Shimon Peres, Israel Kesar and Ora Namir, In 1997 Barak defeated Sneh and a couple of civilian candidates - Yossi Beilin and Shlomo Ben-Ami, In 2001 Ben-Eliezer defeated the civilian candidate - Abraham Burg. In 2003 two retired officers competed (Ben-Eliezer and Mitzna) and a civilian candidate - Hai Ramon. For the fourth time the Labor Party members preferred a retired officer, this time Mitzna, as the party leader and candidate for prime minister. The electoral victories of Rabin in 1992 and Barak in 1999 strengthened the trend of electing retired officers in order to take control of the government. The main argument for this preference is the electoral appeal of the retired officers amongst the general public. While Rabin, Barak, and Ben-Eliezer had a powerful image and were not considered as being clearly on the left, Mitzna, who is left wing, defeated the centrist Ben-Eliezer. The conclusion could be that the expansion of retired generals in the Labor Party has been institutionalized to such a degree that even the electoral need of electing a centrist candidate has been weakened (Goldberg 2006, 389).

Therefore, the integration of retired military officials in Israel's political system has continued and expanded since 1967. In particular, before and after 1977, there was a close proximity between the political parties and the state's senior military officers, who saw a political role on their part as the continuation of their service
in security agencies. In later decades, military officers offered their services to, or were approached by, several parties before or upon their retirement or formed parties and political factions themselves (Sheffer and Barak 2013, 75).

3. The Materialistic Militarism and Group–Interests

After the inception of the state of Israel, most of the retired military officers have had a privileged status even in the economic sector by being recruited as board members of the public and private companies. These companies are mostly related directly or indirectly to the military-industrial complex, whose recruitments help the companies to expand their business sectors and obtain business orders from the security community, particularly the IDF. Members of the military community, with previous and present military careers in the security establishments, take advantage of their high military ranking for their second careers through their strong professional connections. The second high ranking career is viewed as a materialistic reward for their long-term military service.

These trends stemmed from Israel's victory in the 1967 war and the creation of the myth of the military's infallibility. This resulted in an increased demand for the services of its retired personnel in civil market. Subsequently, the numbers of retired military officers working as senior managers of, and advisers to, public and private economic enterprises grew further. Following the 1973 Yom Kippur War, there was a considerable increase in the economic role of the defense establishment. There was a significant growth of Israel's military-industry complex, which includes public as well as private firms that produce defense-related equipment. Such role expansion gave the military added influence on a number of levels (Singh 2005, 122).

For explaining how the military-industrial complex has influenced the
decision-making, it is necessary to examine the movement of high-ranking military officers after retirement. After military officers retire, usually in their forties, (Gordon, 2006), it is rare to see a high ranking officer go back to normal civilian life.

It is common, however, for retired officers to occupy key positions in the military-industrial complex. They can take positions in security organizations, the Ministry of Defense, military industries, or in running banks and other public and private establishments. Retired officers represent around a quarter of the executives in the various economic activities in Israel. This has created a situation where certain positions became exclusive to those within the military-industrial complex, leading to possible conflicts of interests between the officers' jobs at the military and their potential future jobs in the military-industrial complex (El-Gendy 2010, 81). Apart from the high military ranking positions, other key positions are occupied by retired military officers in the Mossad, the Borders Policy, the Civil Guard, the civil administration in the occupied territory, the airports and ports administrations.

Therefore, these patterns have appeared in public and private corporations which are deemed fundamental to security, such as electricity, water, oil refineries and Israel's national airline, El-al airline. These individuals began to play an important role, for example, in Israel’s emerging high-tech industry (Sheffer and Barak, 2013). Their purported and actual qualifications are considered to be applicable and, hence, attractive to both public and private firms (El-Gendy 2010, 81).
IV. The Involvement Mechanism of Israel's Military Authority in Politics

1. Direct Involvement

The Chief of General Staff (henceforth CGS) is the highest military position in the IDF and heads the Israeli General Staff which is the highest authority in the military establishment. The significance of this post goes beyond a military position to a political one. It is a symbolic position representing the government's security policy as well as a political direction towards a comprehensive security strategy. A CGS's personality and political orientation is close to the dovish policy in security affairs, which the national security policy tends to follow, and in the opposite case, the security policy is likely to take an offensive approach.

If the CGS has a different perception to the external security environment from the prime minister, it is likely that public concerns over security will be raised. These cases are often witnessed due to the unique relations in Israel and its political culture. As the post of the CGS has been considered a relatively independent position from politics, the CGS's political influence on foreign and security policy, which is traditionally determined by the political echelon, demonstrates how retired

1) The Israeli General Staff is responsible for planning, organizing, training and supervising the military operation of the Army, the Navy and the Air Force which are collectively known as the Israel Defense Forces. Together with the CGS, the General Staff is also composed of the CGS duty, the commanders of the Ground Forces, the Navy, and the Air Forces, the Heads of the regional commands (namely the Northern Command, the Central Command, the Southern Command and the Home Front Command), and the heads of the Operations Directorate, the Director of Military Intelligence (this influential directorate is also known as the Military Intelligence or Agaf Hamodi'in [AMAN]), the Planning and Policy Directorate, the Human Resources Directorate, the Computer Service Directorate, and the Technological and Logistics Directorate. These directorates are all branches of the General Staff, whose staff comprised of the Israeli military echelon (El-Gendy 2010, 71).
military officers play a key role in politics.

Israel's CGS and the military echelon's\(^2\) influence over the national security policy mainly stems from its intelligence capacity. In the case of Israel, because the urgent or unexpected security threats and challenges directly relate to a national security crisis, the management of the fluid security threats always calls for a broad intelligence collection and exact information assessment. Moreover, because the decision-making process of the foreign and security policy determined by the political echelon is based on the military's intelligence assessment, the CGS who controls the IDF and its intelligence agency, has exerted his political influence over the security policy decision-making by attending the security cabinet, and even enforcing his policy perspectives to be adopted in specific security policy making.

AMAN (the Director of Military Intelligence, Agaf Ha Modiin in Hebrew and the Hebrew acronym), with the two other intelligence services of Mossad (the Institute for Intelligence and Special Operation), and Shin Bet (the General Secret Service or SHABAK) is by far the largest and best-funded intelligence agency, AMAN deals not only with military affairs and with the Arab world; it consistently furnishes assessments of political and diplomatic affairs concerning the international system as a whole. It assess on a regular basis U.S. policy and positions on both Middle Eastern and global affairs, AMAN reports to the CGS and, through him, to the minister of defense. Its tasks include collection, analysis and assessment of intelligence from all over the world, but its principal focus is on the Arab world and the non-Arab Middle East.

AMAN also deals with long term and large-scale regional processes such as the

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\(^2\) The military used in this research refers to Israel's top military leadership in a specific term among the IDF's high-ranking officers, who determine the military organization's position with respect to the defense and political affairs. First and foremost among this military echelon is the Chief of General Staff (hereafter the CGS), whose status in Israel is much greater than that of the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the US.
effect of fundamentalist movements on the stability of Middle Eastern regimes, as well as with economic issues such as oil prices. The head of AMAN and the head of the research department are regular participants in cabinet meetings; they appear before the cabinet much more than the director general of the Foreign Ministry, even if other issues are being discussed (Maoz 2009, 511). AMAN preserves its position of primacy vis-à-vis the other intelligence services with respect to virtually all matters of intelligence. The domination of AMAN is established in government decisions and regulations are supported by a favorably disproportionate allocation of resources based on massive IDF budgets.

Hence, owing to the external security threats facing Israel, and the intelligence capacity of the IDF's intelligence, the military has joined the decision-making process in critical foreign and security policy. The political echelon has come to acknowledge the military's involvement in the foreign and security policy-making process.

2. Indirect Involvement

The second way the military is involved in politics is through career transfers of the IDF's high ranking officers from the military sector to the political sector. As addressed earlier, due to the CGS' expanded political status in the political sector and his absolute influence over the important foreign and security policy-making, Israel's political parties have favored the CGS and the IDF's high ranking officers' career transfers from the security sphere to the political sphere. In other words, the more the political party scouts such competent military officers, the more support it can get in elections. In particular, the party retaining the retired military generals can get political credibility from the public by elections.

This indirect involvement of the military in politics has a stronger influence and
broader implication in Israeli politics and its society than direct involvement. Despite some critical arguments of the traditionally general democratic principle stressing the strong separation of boundaries between the political sector and the military sector, the transfer of Israel's military officers to the political sector has been welcomed from the Israeli public as well as the political sphere. Among the acting military officers, as addressed above, the Chiefs of General Staff have done very well politically as retired generals turned politicians, and the list includes Yigal Yadin, Moshe Dayan, Yitzhak Rabin, Chaim Bar-Lev, Mota Gur, Ehud Barak, and Shaul Mofaz. Among them, Rabin and Barak also became prime ministers. In addition, almost all of Israel's governments to date possessed defense, military or political experience even if key posts were not necessarily manned by former generals (El-Gendy 2010, 82).

The Israeli military has played a key role in establishing state-building, protecting its statehood from the outside 'hostile' neighboring states, and sustaining the Jewish national identity and ideology. Such commitments to the state of Israel has given the military echelon a kind of political privilege capable of joining political activities after their official retirement from the IDF. The political causes of their participation in the political sector is due not only to their intentional transfer into politics, as mentioned earlier, but also to external factors, such as the constant wars and conflicts with its neighboring states and non-state organizations (PLO, Hamas, and Hezbollah).

Therefore, the causes of the military echelon's career transfers to the political sphere can be summarized as follows: After independence in 1948, Israel has been involved in full-scale wars as well as in low-intensity conflicts and warfare. As a result, Israel has suffered from real and imagined existential threats and, therefore, the IDF was regarded as essential for the protection, indeed for the very survival, of Israel. Although to what degree of autonomy the IDF had in making strategic
and tactical policies and decisions prior to, during, and between wars and low-intensity conflicts remains an open question, the IDF has been placed in a special social status and assessed as a privileged social institution. This privileged status of the military establishment has blurred civil-military relations and has confused the relationship between the political system and the IDF (Richards and Waterbury 2009, 360).

As seen in the table below, the career transfers of the military echelon from the military sector into the political sector has occurred in succession since the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948. This table, based on the research conducted in 2006 by Giora Goldberg, demonstrates a sustained flow of military personnel into political positions including ministers, prime ministers, defense ministers, party leaders and city heads (Goldberg 2006, 380).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positions</th>
<th>1950s</th>
<th>1960s</th>
<th>1970s</th>
<th>1980s</th>
<th>1990s~02</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ministers (Average % of the Government)</td>
<td>Total: 2 (2.4%)</td>
<td>Total: 4 (10.8%)</td>
<td>Total: 8 (15.9%)</td>
<td>Total: 7 (15.3%)</td>
<td>Total: 13 (15.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prime Minister</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defense Ministers</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heads of 3 Main Cities (Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Haifa)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index/100</td>
<td>0.5/100</td>
<td>7.2/100</td>
<td>30.8/100</td>
<td>26/100</td>
<td>45.7/100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3) The term "retired high ranking officers" refers to those who reached one of the three highest ranks in Israel's military service: Brigadier General, Major General, and Lieutenant General.
4) The city heads refers to local politics, when retired officers serve as the mayors of the three large cities-Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Haifa. The importance of local government stems from its having a clear civil character. Namely, the intention is to examine the expansion of retired officers not only in obvious security positions such as the ministers of defense and the prime minister, but in less...
1) Prime Ministers

Until June 1974 no retired officer had served as prime minister. Israel's fifth prime minister, Yitzhak Rabin, was the first retired officer to reach the position. He served in this post for three years between 1974 and 1977. In 1992 he again returned to the post and served until his assassination in November 1995. The second retired officer to become prime minister was Barak. He served in the position until he lost the elections in 2001 to Ariel Sharon - the third retired officer to serve as prime minister. In the 2003 elections, both candidates, Labor's Aram Mitzna and Likud's Ariel Sharon, for prime minister were retired officers. The latter won the election and became prime minister (Goldberg 2007, 383-384).

There is no doubt that there is a clear increase during this period in the level of penetration of retired officers into the top government positions during this period. In addition to the three retired officers who were prime ministers, another nine presented their candidacy for the position (Such as Mordechai and Ben Elizer) or were considered as candidates (such as Dayan and Weizman) (Goldberg 2007, 383-384).

2) Defense Ministers

Until June 1967 no retired officer had served in the position of defense minister. Moshe Dayan was the first of the military to take this post. He served in the position for seven years (until 1974). Three years later Ezer Weizman was appointed defense minister and held this position for three years. The next in line was Ariel Sharon who served as defense minister from 1981 to 1983. The fourth retired officer to serve as defense minister was Rabin, who was defense minister for obvious civil positions (Goldberg 2006, 380).
the entire six years of the National Unity Government between 1984 and 1990. From 1992 until his death in 1995 he held the two main posts - prime minister and defense minister. This combination was Ben-Gurion's creation and Eshkol carried it on from 1963 to 1967 (Goldberg 2007, 383-384).

Yitzhak Mordechai was the next retired officer who served as defense minister (1996-1999). Barak was the sixth retired officer who held the position (between 1999 and 2001), serving as prime minister at the same time. After the 2001 elections Ben-Eliezer began to serve in the position of defense minister and was the seventh retired officer who reached this position. He was appointed after defeating two other retired officers - Vilnai and Sneh - in a vote that took place in the central committee of the Labor Party. After Ben-Eliezer's resignation in October 2002 Mofaz from the Likud was appointed defense minister. Mofaz recorded the shortest time period (four months) between completing his service as chief of staff and being appointed as defense minister (Goldberg 2007, 383-384).

3) Party Leaders

The penetration of the military generals into civilian sectors, especially into politics, has deepened further since 1967 when many retired officers transferred their military careers into civilian careers occupying influential social positions. The most noticeable phenomenon was the transfer of military generals into politics, which increased following the 1948, 1967, and 1973 wars. Until the June 1967 War, the great majority of reservist or retired officers joined Labor's ranks. In the 1950s, the first generation of such officers included Moshe Dayan, Yogal Allon, Yigal Yadin, Israeli Galilee, and Chaim Herzog. After 1967, the number of such officers co-opted into the political elite rose sharply, with many for the first time joining the center-right party, the Likud, such as Ezer Weisman and Ariel Sharon, Modecha

4) The Knesset

All of the parliamentary elections in Israel have featured a sizeable number of retired officers trickling into Knesset, with affiliations across the political spectrum. Since 1960 an average of 10 percent of Israel’s Knesset members have been high ranking retired officers. In the 2006 general elections, for example, 15 Israeli generals along with six secret service agents were elected into the Knesset. In addition, about 20 percent of cabinet ministers are high ranking reserve officers. Of the three most important offices, the Prime Minister, the Defense Minister, and the Foreign Minister, at least one position (usually two) has been occupied by a former career officer as in the government of Ehud Barak and Ariel Sharon (Peri, 2006).

5) Large Cities

In 1973 a retired officer, Shlomo Lahat from the Likud, was elected as head of one of the large cities for the first time - Tel Aviv. He served in the position until his voluntary resignation on the eve of the 1993 elections. During this election a politician who was not a retired officer, Ronnie Milo, beat the retired officer that Labor Party placed opposite him - Kahalani. Five years later, in 1998, the job returned to another retired senior officer, Ron Huldadi from the left beat the right-wing candidate Doron Rubin, who was also a retired officer. In Haifa, Mitzna took over as mayor in 1993 and was re-elected in 1998. The range of control of retired officers over the three largest cities was zero in the first two periods, it grew to 20 percent in the 1970s, climbed to 33 percent in the 1980s and reached a peak of 44 percent in the 1990s (Goldberg 2007, 383-384).
V. Conclusion and Implication

Without doubt, Israel is a democratic country despite some arguments over the nature of the Jewish state and its discriminate policy towards the Palestinians, Israel is also one of a few countries which has achieved both economic development and democracy in the Middle East, compared to other Middle Eastern states, which have suffered from economic and social difficulties such as the inequality of wealth between the oil-rich and poor states, social disruption, and religious and ethnic conflicts.

In spite of Israel's achievements, its democracy has been doubted and questioned from both outside and inside Israel mainly due to the military involvement in politics and the civilian sector. The ongoing controversy over the role and character of Israel's military in the public and civilian sector was argued first by Israel's new generation of the so-called 'new historians' in the 1980s. This issue has become one of the most controversial topics in academia. Whether this argument is true or not, it is undeniable that the Israeli military has exerted and expanded its influence and power into not only the overall social and political sectors of Israel, but also the practical policy making related to security affairs.

The key factor justifying such military involvement in the social and political sectors can be found in Israel's geo-strategic security environment and threats such as the several wars and military confrontations with neighboring Arab states. The recent low-intensity conflicts with the armed non-state groups like Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Islamic Jihad contributed to the justification of Israel's military involvement in politics. As a result, these external and internal security threats authorize the military the exclusive monopoly of leading and deciding the national security agenda as well as critical social issues with a higher status than any other
social institution, In addition to this, Israel's chronic instability and weak political system, including a fluid government coalition system, has weakened the civilian regime's control over the military, and caused the massive inflows of the high ranking military officers into the political sphere, not by public consensus, but by political and partisan necessities.

This public consensus of Israel has naturally been given to the military-dominated security community, in which the military has made Israel's national security issues more important than all other issues and considerations. They are constantly striving to securitize additional issues and spheres and present themselves as experts who are best equipped to preside over security matters and deal with the threats facing the state.

As a result the military officers have been indispensable in all matters related to war and peace in Israel, not only because of their professional expertise, but also because they were the only ones who could accord them legitimacy. After their retirement, the military officers turned politicians have been required to play a critical role in occupying the Israeli political leadership and determining and implementing specific policies. This trend has hence made the foreign and security policy towards the Palestinian issue and regional issues, including the Iranian nuclear matter, more offensive and aggressive. Although it cannot be ignored that Israel has a firm democratic political system demonstrated through its healthy social norms, democratic values and traditions, the unbalanced relationship between the military sector and the political sector is expected to persist.

[Key Words: Israeli Politics, Israeli Military, the Civil-Military Relations of Israel, Israeli Democracy, Israeli Security Policy]
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Abstract

Israel's unprecedented successes as a political democracy and its economic development make it an abnormality in the modern world. Compared to other developing states in the Middle East, Asia and other regions, Israel has successfully established a modern state system.

Since this achievement the Israeli military has played a pivotal role in state formation and development by helping to produce a modern state resembling that in the West. Before and after its independence Israel has faced external and internal security threats. These continuous security threats offered the Israeli military authority and a privileged status, not only as a defense establishment taking responsibility over national security, but also as a social integration entity for national unity by being entrusted with civilian tasks such as education, settlement, and the absorption of the hundreds of thousands of Jewish immigrants arriving in Israel.

Due to the critical role the Israeli military plays in society, voluntarily or involuntarily, the Israeli military has retained the public trust in which the military has exerted and expanded its influence and power. This power goes beyond the overall social and political sectors of Israel into the practical policy making related to security affairs by monopolizing the national security agenda. In particular, the several wars and military confrontations with "hostile" neighboring Arab states, as well as the recent low-intensity conflicts with armed non-state groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah, contributed to the justification of Israeli military involvement in politics and the career transfers of the military officers into the political sector. As a result, these trends have caused controversy over matters of separation of boundaries between politics and the military, civilian supremacy over the military, and Israel’s democracy in civil-military relations.

In this respect, it is important to research the role and structure of the military authority formed in Israel for a better understanding of Israeli society and to further understand the civilian-military relations strongly established in Israel. Therefore, based on these arguments, this research will proceed with the
following aims, (1) to address the main perspectives of Israel's civil-military relations, (2) to examine the causes and characteristics of military involvement in politics, and (3) to analyze the involvement mechanism of Israel's military authority in politics, and (4) to determine the influence and implications that Israel's military has had in politics and society.