

1 Democracies in Wars and Severe National-Security Crises: Theoretical and Comparative Aspects

Political Dilemmas Surrounding the Use of Armed Force

To understand political processes, we must examine the phenomena of national consensus and dissent regarding armed force, and especially wars. Consensus and dissent affect, and are affected by, relations between society and ruling apparatuses, and they have a resounding impact on the foundations of political regimes. Consensus and dissent have highlighted the importance of social rifts, the divisiveness of political power foci, the political behavior patterns of the state—its apparatuses and populations, and the degree of legitimacy accorded political regimes and administrations. Thus, for example, the Algerian War (1954–62) brought about some very basic changes in the structure of France's political regime. Similarly, the Vietnam War (1964–73) was a factor leading to a profound rethinking of U.S. foreign and defense policies, and the narrowing of the president's constitutional war powers.¹

Many studies have focused on an analysis of how wars were launched and how they were conducted (and ended). Only a few studies have asked what effect wars have, and how other possible variables affected politics in democracies during and subsequent to

wars. Even these few studies have produced only partial findings.² We need but turn to history to learn the extent of the impact of wars. Wars have helped forge consensus, but they have also caused bitter conflicts in domestic politics. In analyzing these influences, I shall first discuss how consensus is formed.

Since World War I, the outbreak of war has generally brought political consensus to democratic regimes. I have researched thirteen such instances, starting with World War I ("instance" refers to a democracy participating as a belligerent in a given war)³ and in twelve of these instances no overt political opposition arose in response to the war engagement. At most, these instances furnish evidence of only a weak protest by small opposition groups. Also, wars have displaced controversial topics to the bottom of the national agenda. On occasion, as for example in Britain in 1915, such consensus is accompanied by public enthusiasm that heightens political awareness, in contrast to the political apathy of most of the population of any given democracy in peacetime.

Keen interest in the use of armed force is also evidenced by mass volunteering for the military and for support jobs on the home front. Here, consensus in using armed force is of utmost importance, much like conferring a seal of legitimacy on the regime's decision to go to war. And even more important, consensus, no matter how engendered, is helpful for the mobilization of resources that may enable a military victory, at the same time prodding the civilian hinterland to adapt to a state of war. And when both fighting forces and home front stand united, there is less danger that their common motivation for shouldering the burden of war effort will be eroded.

In these political and administrative pursuits of war preparations and management, an ability to forge consensus is a critical component of state power. Social consensus in total or protracted wars, which, in the face of the potential erosion of the population's steadfastness and motivation, particularly when involving a fair measure of solidarity, enables the defense burden to be borne more easily. Thus, for example, Britain's success in the war against Nazi Germany was greatly helped by the prevailing national consensus. It saw Britons through massive air raids and very heavy losses, keeping national morale at a high level. Consensus also fueled an unprecedented nationwide economic and military mobilization, greater than that of Britain during World War I.⁴ But consensus also has authoritarian and antidemocratic aspects; it legitimizes massive state inter-

ference in social and political life during security crises. The political establishment imposes compulsory recruitment of people and economic resources by controlling information and by curtailing individual freedoms, that is, freedom of expression, association, and demonstration. The state's broadening reach promotes the emergence of exacting sociopolitical norms endorsing severe sanctions against the opponents of the war.

Hence, my contention is that, in essence, wars and the liberal principles of democracy are mutually incompatible. Yet we still lack sufficient explanation as to the how and why of the transition, in democracies, from pluralism in peacetime to consensus during war.

Dissent can also accompany the use of military force. There are several instances of wars producing consensus only for a limited time. As hostilities have worn on, even agreed wars have aroused dissent. Of the twelve wars launched since World War I, six came to be disputed in the course of time.⁵ Extensive public opposition took place in France and Britain during World War I, especially during and after 1916. European statesmen and generals had predicted an end to the war in six months, yet there was no sign of any abatement of the hostilities. Then again, both France and Britain numbered their losses in the hundreds of thousands. Another, albeit less influential, factor was the severe rationing instituted in both countries, giving rise to widespread and vociferous demand to end the fighting.

Similar, even more clamorous instances of dissent occurred after World War II.⁶ The evolution of the electronic media as a means of political criticism; the increasing potency of war weapons; the greater awareness of the deadliness of war, paralleled by more insistent objection to the use of military force; and the burgeoning of political protest in Western political culture all operated to render war the subject of open opposition. Public dissent thus developed in Britain in the course of the Suez Campaign (1956); in France during the Indochina War (1946–54) and the Algerian War (1954–62); and in the United States during the Korean War (1950–53) and most notably during the Vietnam War (1964–73).

The events of those years indicate that wars can produce societalwide political and social rifts that are divisive to the point that the legitimacy of the administration and the regime are called into question. France experienced this during the Algerian War and the United States during the Korean War, all at the hands of right-wing radicalist groups. Left-wingers lambasted the U.S. administration

and its values during the Vietnam War. Thus, dissented wars have dealt severe blows to political stability.⁷

Disputes over the use of armed force have been far more intense than others in democracies. This is because a broad spectrum of groups have clearly understood how strongly the issue ultimately affects public and individual security. Costly victories or losses have sometimes resulted in the ouster of the incumbent administration and a rethinking of the regime's ideological bent. This happened in Britain following the Suez Campaign and in France during the Algerian War. And even where controversial wars have not resulted in the replacement of regimes or ruling elites, debates have often arisen over the use of armed force.

Western democracies, with their attributes of cooperation between political elites, willingness to compromise, and the political apathy of their publics, have sustained profound changes both during and after wars. They have known social rifts (France and the United States), political violence (France, Britain, and the United States), and processes of delegitimization of the administration (France, Britain, and the United States) and of the regime (France and the United States). They have experienced increasing difficulties in maintaining effective government (the United States, France). All of these situations have stemmed mainly from the public controversies conducted by numerous political groups during the wars of Korea, Suez, Indochina, Algeria, and Vietnam.⁸

The causes of such sociopolitical changes have not been researched well enough. To assert, as research literature does, that "unenforced" and "unjust" wars tend to be controversial is simply begging the question why? The issue of when wars may be deemed unenforced and unjust must be examined in its own right, in the context of a given state, with a given political, social, and cultural infrastructure. Before the arguments of this book are presented more fully, however, critical analysis of the literature is required.

Research Studies on the Issue of Democracies in War: Explanation of the Pre-Paradigm⁹

The study of this subject has been largely distorted by the (erroneous) premise that war leads directly to consensus in democracies and that it is not connected to values, images, attitudes, political concepts, or structures. This error derives from three postulates.

First, war generates among civilians images of common fate and the impression that defeat in war will wreak havoc on their lives. They are therefore prepared to take part in the war effort and cooperate with one another until the common goal of victory is achieved. Second, in addition to this expedient solidarity with the state, they may come to identify with the political establishment by reason of political and ideological support for its war aims. Third, people aspire to assimilate into society and externalize aggression, thereby lending definition to their personal identity that is essential to their sanity. War allows aggression to be externalized and provides the individual with a social mechanism for assimilation. The authorities exact obedience, and a pervasive atmosphere of national excitement is generated by the war, enabling the individual to submerge into the collective and to express aggression in the guise of the discharge of a national obligation.¹⁰

Based on this premise, the social sciences have evolved a cause and effect approach. Studies in social psychology, criminology, communications, political sociology, and political science have determined that war, as an exogenous factor, produces unity in endogenous politics (outstanding researchers of this school include G. Simmel and L. A. Coser).¹¹

I show the "cause and effect" approach to be too simplistic, based on faulty reasoning, and therefore fails to adequately explain the important effects of wars and protracted emergency situations on democracies.

A broadly encompassing study that represents something of a departure from that approach is that of P. A. Sorokin. Having scrutinized political events up to and including the third year of World War II, he concluded that the effect of wars on public behavior in democracies is contingent on four factors: (1) the extent of popular support for the goals of the war; (2) the degree to which the lives and safety of the population are threatened during hostilities; (3) the damage liable to be caused (Sorokin does not specify to whom) by defeat in war; and (4) the potency of the "sense of allegiance, patriotism and morale of the population." Sorokin alludes to the existence of other possible factors but without specifying what they are, except in one instance, namely, government interference in the life of the individual. His argument is that in total wars, those whose undertaking demands an especially wide-ranging mobilization of resources, and that seek the enemy's ignominious defeat, the public refrains from opposition. In such times, governments habitually step up their

interference: in social life (restrictions on freedom of association); the economy (higher than normal rates of taxation); culture (censorship); and the political setting (by using propaganda, searches, and arrests). The result, says Sorokin, is a curtailment of individual freedoms, which hinders any effective opposition.¹²

Michael Stohl, a sociologist who focused on the research of war, elaborates on this conclusion. He claims that since the American-Spanish War (1898) until the midst of the Vietnam War (1970) the U.S. federal administration made extensive use of "governmental violence," meaning that it manipulated information and even resorted to physical violence against the opponents of war. Stohl's conclusion was innovative mainly in that it offered evidence that the state uses undemocratic means to ensure "free" support.¹³ This is in line with the elitist view of political phenomena, in general, and wars, in particular, whereby wars are taken advantage of or initiated by political regimes in order to realize the vested interests of the ruling elite and to secure obedience and sociopolitical order. Importance is here ascribed to the military elite and their relationship with defense industries and to the civilian elite.

The elitist school emphasizes two main issues. The first topic is the importance of armies, security organizations, and experts on violence for the emergence of military juntas or democratic regimes intent on war. Militarism is explained by the weight of armies as bureaucratic organizations controlling information sources and highly skilled in the use of violence. It is these organizational features that enable armies to exert so decisive an influence on the architects of policy, whether in formal or informal frameworks. The army is particularly influential in times when the policymakers are, or claim to be, confronted with security threats.

Harold D. Lasswell has illuminated the cultural aspects of such military-civilian relations. He particularly stressed the mutual influence exerted by uncertainty, expertise, and processes of militarism. Uncertain crisis situations cause civilian elites to collate information deemed crucial in order to reduce the insecurity generated by uncertainty. Since the army has control of what is believed to be relevant information, military personnel gradually come to control the regime's power foci. This process gradually changes the whole fabric of society into a military society.¹⁴

The second issue, notably pioneered by Wright C. Mills, concerns the military-industrial complex. Mills determined that both political elites and military industries are guided by economic inter-

ests. Both types of organization aspire to initiate wars and security crises in order to justify their mass production of weapons and forestall opposition to territorial expansion. The aspiration to financial and political power is what guides the state to authorize the deployment of armed force and incite an arms race. This leads to a dovetailing of interests between civilians and the military. The general public, mistakenly viewing the use of armed force as dictated by objective considerations of national defense, unknowingly supports needless acts of violence.¹⁵

The importance of socioeconomic factors in explaining the nature of military force has been strongly emphasized by Marxists and neo-Marxists. The Marxists' main contention is that war is a result of basic tensions between socioeconomic classes. War is meant to serve the bourgeoisie, since it diverts the attention of the proletariat from its true problems while enabling the bourgeoisie to conquer new markets (always excepting proletarian wars whose purpose is the destruction of the bourgeoisie). While the Marxist school confined itself mainly to shedding light on the causes of war, the neo-Marxist approach shifts the focus of attention to war's repercussions. The ability to deploy and the actual deployment of armed force are considered the means whereby political and military elites control the masses. Armed force is exerted against "external" enemies with a view to convince the public that support for the state is vital to its security, whereas, in fact, armed force can be of service to none but the ruling elite.

Common to both these approaches is the essential argument that warfare is intended to gloss over the bitter realities of the class stratification of society. Both also hold that to the extent that wars do produce consensus, it is due to the intervention of the state into society. Moreover, both deny the possibility that wars can be consented to by the public.¹⁶

Both approaches are defective mainly in that they fail to appreciate international affairs and the mutuality between international relations and domestic politics. Another serious deficiency is their neglect of various political factors that may be relevant to an analysis of the phenomena of consensus and dissent. Thus, they deal only very slightly with the dispersal of political powers and the dynamic change in political power foci. They moreover concentrate so narrowly on the structural aspects of, primarily, state control of the mechanisms of oppression (army and bureaucracy, for example) as to exclude historical analysis of the evolution of ideologies and political

attitudes. Any light they are able to shed on the world of politics is thus somewhat one-sided.¹⁷

This deficiency has been partially corrected by Theda T. Skocpol's study. She has endeavored to apply some tenets of the Marxist thinking to an understanding of the causes of revolutions. In her book *States and Social Revolutions*, she starts out by stressing that the mutual influences exerted by international relations and domestic politics must be studied if we are to understand how the autonomous state behaves toward society. Skocpol zeroes in on the French Revolution of 1789, the Russian-Bolshevik revolution of 1917, the Russian-Stalinist revolution of the twenties and thirties, and the Sino-Maoist revolution of the forties. Her conclusions, however, are difficult to apply to modern reality in Western democracies and in other, more formal democracies like Israel.

Skocpol claims that interstate rivalries have been exploited by revolutionaries to mobilize mass support for their cause. In principle she maintains that the state has absolute autonomy in matters of security and that the ruling elites are utterly indifferent to the public and are primarily engaged in recruiting mass support for their aims. Subjected to the test of Israeli realities, however, some of her conclusions must be refuted. Michael N. Barnett examined Israeli policy in the mobilization of resources and preparation for war from 1967 to 1977. In a study scrutinizing mainly the economic aspects of the issue, he found, contrary to Skocpol, that the state did not enjoy absolute autonomy in matters of national security but that Israel's political elites and its military had to reckon with serious social and public constraints.¹⁸ Some of Skocpol's assertions are true of Israel, insofar as they concern the harnessing of the international environment to the needs of the deployment of armed force with a view to attaining international and domestic political goals.

By contrast, other pluralist-liberal researchers have focused on the structure of public opinion and attitudes. Mainly they contend that the level of sociopolitical order in time of war depends on the breadth of the basic consensus regarding the fundamental prewar goals of the political community. They particularly underline that consensus will be generated in relation to two key issues: that the oncoming danger is a threat to the survival of the entire population and that the use of military force will, at reasonable cost, attain the goal of social preservation. Thus, according to these studies, modes of response to war have been determined by the cohesiveness of the political communities.

The weakness of this argument is that it provides no clear definition of mutual relations between organizations, attitudes, culture, attributes of the use of armed force, and modifications of the solidarity that becomes an essential precondition of national consensus.¹⁹ These studies, moreover, ignore the importance of the state as the architect of sociopolitical order. Another major drawback lies in their liberal premise, adopted without empirical proof, that human societies incline to form consent, deriving from free dialogue between groups and individuals consciously formulating a clear-cut understanding regarding given goals.

Affinities of intellectual influences have existed among the different schools of thought. Marxists and neo-Marxists have also dealt slightly more with the premises of a cause-and-effect approach and of the pluralist paradigm that posits that war, as an exogenous cause, exerts great influence on domestic politics. The pluralist school on the other hand has begun to focus increasingly on factors of intrasocial tension as affecting mutual relations between military force and consensus and dissent. A corollary of this idea has been the diversionary theory, according to which in Western democracies the chief executive tends to boost popularity and forge consensus in the domestic front through the deployment of military force against external enemies.²⁰

These various studies could not suggest an all-encompassing conclusion as to the effects of war on democracies. They do not suggest a comprehensive analysis of societies and politics during war. They do not consider consensus and dissent but only examine certain of their aspects. Also, they do not distinguish between the effect of different types of wars on domestic politics or the differences between interethnic disputes and interstate wars.

Other possible explanations regarding the origins of political order during war can be found in schools of thought that concentrate on political order in Western democracies.

The Consensus Concept and the Dissent Concept

In light of accelerated industrialization, economic development, and the accruing of national wealth in the wake of World War II, especially in the United States, there evolved a consensus concept, whereby Western democracies tend to have political stability. It has been explained as deriving from the impression that (1) politics in

Western democracies are based on compromise and pragmatic decisions; (2) despite rivalry with communist regimes, Western democracies are at a postwar and postindustrial stage; they sustain affluent societies, which derogate the value of ideology; and, (3) social groups succeed in realizing their interests, thus ideological polarity narrows. Stability, then, was conceived as a natural product of liberal, democratic society. Of itself, war was not deemed capable of causing significant changes in the general stability-seeking nature of society.²¹

But the Vietnam War, the black riots, and the student riots of the sixties and the seventies combined to produce a concept of dissent, whereby widespread public controversy became a most conspicuous feature. The consensus regarding the war in its first four years (1964–68) began weakening in March 1968, when the peace movements began rallying extensive support. Later, after 1970, the demonstrations grew in size and frequency. The outbreak of (partly violent) riots against the political establishment during a time of economic affluence led scholars to a number of conclusions.

Redeemed from their former status as expressions of violence, demonstrations came to be defined as manifestations of distinctly sociopolitical protest. Extra-parliamentary struggle was perceived as taking part in the decision-making processes. Studies gradually began being published, such as those of Daniel Yankelovich and Amitai Etzioni, asserting that in the democratic West, a politics-of-conflict was evolving, characterized by attempts on the part of broad strata of the public to intervene in decision-making processes, including its desire to be consulted in shaping the nation's foreign and defense policies.²²

The explanation of the new political culture featuring both struggle between elites and nonruling groups and social strife involved three primary factors: (1) the effect of the electronic media, especially television, on enabling extra-parliamentary groups to influence decision-making processes; (2) claims of mismanagement and other psychosocial grievances, including the sense of relative deprivation and dissatisfaction with and alienation from the political establishment; (3) wars whose aggressive goals engendered ideological and moral dilemmas that have created and accommodated the expression of severe rivalries, primarily between competing economic and political elites, or between them and weak social groups. Yankelovich and Jerome H. Skolnick examined the political behavior of students and radical left-wing political groups in America.

They saw the Vietnam War as a catalyst in the processes of protest and even alienation. They stressed, however, that the main source of dissent was hostility toward and alienation from the U.S. political establishment.²³

These and other studies fail to deal comprehensively with problems of sociopolitical order in democracies in the context of wars and national security crises. They disregard certain fundamental problems, such as whether the fragmentation of political power also significantly affected consensus and dissent. But more important, the studies are deficient in their inability to show mutual affinities between the various factors of domestic politics or indicate whether mutual interaction can be discerned between domestic political variables and characteristics of wars.

Attempts to interpret the complexities of issues of national security and sociopolitical order have revealed conceptual differences regarding national consensus and dissent. One school asserts that these notions have no social reality since individuals make no volitional, conscious choice between alternative values and principles; rather, their behavior is molded by the state or its central political organizations (the neo-Marxist and elitist approach).

Another version declares consensus and dissent to be a product of the free exchange of views between individuals and groups in a given political community, free from massive political intervention in its affairs by the state (the pluralistic approach). A third claim is that consensus will form to the extent that a political regime can adapt itself to the values of a given population. Where the values of the regime do not match those of the population, conflicts will arise (the system concept). Yet another view sees consensus as the product of the propertied bourgeois class interested in creating a false show of national brotherhood, thereby forestalling any change in the infrastructure of relations that enables it to exploit the proletariat (the Marxist theory). Finally, another approach, by contrast, defines consensus as a reflex to extraneous states of war (the cause-and-effect approach).²⁴

All approaches view consensus and dissent as independent variables in explaining the foundations of the nation-state. Their main question was how do consensus and dissent affect the state? Whereas the general and main question in this book is how are consensus and dissent affected by wars? Formulated in reverse, the question assumes vital importance for the proponents of all intellectual approaches.

I do not focus on the state or its direct power apparatuses as such (bureaucracy, courts, army, mass media, police, educational systems, and economic organizations). This book will, however, try to clarify processes in the political setting, including the involvement therein of institutional power apparatuses. For example, I do not ask what is central to the experience of the modern state: the gaining of legitimacy or the mechanisms of compulsion operated by autonomous states. Instead, the book will determine how a diverse range of public dispositions toward its ruling bodies' legitimacy and policy gives shape to consensus and dissent.

Two different types of definitions shall be applied in this book to the terms consensus and dissent. The first is an operative-instrumental definition, which enables the accumulation of findings and analyses of phenomena, and the second is substantive-contextual, which is based on the research. A substantive-contextual label will be proposed in the conclusion of this book, following an analysis of the sociopolitical aspects of Israel's wars. I shall now, however, define the notions of consensus and dissent in operative-instrumental terms.

Political Order: A Framework for Debate

Consensus is not necessarily a corollary of a situation in which the public knows of, correctly understands, and accepts a governmental policy. The definition is that consensus is a condition in which the public does not reject a certain sociopolitical situation. Thus, I am treating passivity as consensus. My use of the term "consensus," therefore, does not suggest that in the political world true debate or negotiation necessarily occurs among the public or between the public and the political elites. In my view, such debate or negotiation can neither be presupposed nor automatically excluded.

Dissent, on the other hand, is any situation in which conflict between different positions finds political-behaviorist expression. This book focuses on controversies on the parliamentary plane and on the extra-parliamentary plane. The analysis of public opinion trends, by contrast, takes second place, as having only a limited effect on the features and import of deliberations regarding military power. Underlying this book are a number of fundamental claims that let us hurdle value-oriented judgments.

A. Consensus and dissent are neither "negative" nor "positive" since each has diverse, even contradictory, meanings for society and

politics. Conflict is neither a "deviation" nor a "depravity" but, on the contrary, a phenomenon that can lead social and political developments in a more useful and equitable direction. Consensus is also neither natural nor necessarily desirable in politics, as it sometimes precludes the probing discussion of social and political options that are vital to better public policy-making.

B. Sociopolitical order is not one dimensional. Consensus and dissent will usually intertwine, and they will find various forms of expression among groups and organizations. Accordingly, an analysis of the foundations of consensus and dissent calls for a systematic study that traces processes of interaction between organizations and cultural political components.

C. There are various levels of sociopolitical order. One is basic consensus. In this, a certain society can exist as a political system maintaining mutual relations that are identifiably closer than those outside the political system. Basic consensus is a sum achieved by combining organizations with political values and attitudes. Ardent value-derived dissent, organizational factionalism, class divisiveness, and too many conflicting attitudes will hamper a society's maintenance of its qualities as a political system.

D. War both affects and derives from a given political system. Accordingly, any analysis of sociopolitical order mindful of the effects of wars and security crises entails historical scrutiny of the processes and trends in domestic and international politics. Only in this way is it possible to discover how, and indeed whether, a state of war has affected the society and its politics, while admitting the repercussions of other processes not necessarily connected with states of war.

E. The various effects of wars and national security crises are often neither direct nor immediate. They depend on basic properties of society and domestic politics. Emphasis in research must not be placed on war as a stimulus and sociopolitical order as a response. What should be underlined, however, is the importance of the constant interaction between domestic and international politics, and between politics and military power, assuming that all these are indiscreet, not overlapped by frequent, multidirectional influences.

The Field of Research

Israel is well suited to the elucidation and analysis of features of sociopolitical order in democracies in national security crises and

wars. The ongoing state of emergency has complicated the evolution of her political regime and the emergence of patterns of consensus and dissent. From 1920 to 1921, the Yishuv was embroiled in an ongoing military struggle. The founding of the state (May 15, 1948) merely aggravated the Arab-Palestinian-Israeli dispute. Up to the present, Israel has engaged in six interstate wars (including the War of 1948 and the Lebanese War, which also took on an interethnic face). In addition, she was passively involved in the Gulf War (1991). Since 1987, moreover, she has been immersed in a protracted and violent interethnic warlike struggle, the Palestinian Intifada. This conflict has not been completely resolved by the Israeli-PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization) interim agreement (September 1993). Yet, that agreement has, at least for a while, reduced the level of strife.

This book deals primarily with interstate wars and dilemmas. To analyze Israeli attitudes toward Israeli Arabs, Palestinians, and the Intifada we must grapple with theories other than those presented here. My relatively limited analysis of the Intifada also stems from another reasons. This book is based on extensive historical documentation, including inside information on political organizations. As of 1996, documentation of Israeli politics during the Intifada were incomplete.

In the following chapters I examine the emergence of consensus and dissent in wars of various types, preventative wars (the Six-Day War, the War of Attrition, the Yom Kippur War); a partly offensive war (the Sinai Campaign); and an aggressive war (the Lebanese War). The distinctions among Israel's wars enable us to analyze how those wars have affected the development of the political regime. From such a study can come much information on the basic features of democracies and on diverse types of national security crises. All, of course, while bearing in mind the features particular to Israel.

The Israeli Society at War: Relevant Research Literature

Not until after the Yom Kippur War (1973) did scientific literature begin to focus on the possible effects of war on Israeli democracy and internal politics. A broad consensus during the War of Independence (1948), the gratification afforded many Israelis by Israel's military and diplomatic cooperation with France and Britain over the Sinai Campaign (1956), and the public's show of solidarity during the Six-

Day War (1967) produced the erroneous impression that wars necessarily bring about national unity. Accordingly, consensus was considered to be a foregone conclusion in relation to national security issues and especially in the deployment of military force. One of the components of the consensus cited to support this conclusion is the need to defend the existence and security of the state.²⁵ The Sinai Campaign, to be sure, was questioned (mainly by the left-wing Mapam), the controversy aired publicly once the fighting had ended and during the debate over the withdrawal from Sinai and the Gaza Strip. But these important issues remain unilluminated by research. The broad consent during the Six-Day War merely reinforced the rejection of the need to investigate controversies over Israeli use of force.

Attitudes and political events during the 1956 and 1967 wars did not reflect opposition from the political center to Israel's security policy, but only latent controversy over the use of military power. A major reason was the structure of the political system, which in those years was extremely centralist and characterized by the rule of the then-dominant and ruling party, Mapai. As a result, researchers focused on Mapai and its salient features and viewed the analysis of its opposition as unimportant.²⁶ This research trend persisted throughout and beyond the termination of the War of Attrition (1969–70).

The only major political resistance to the security policy during that war came from the periphery of the political system, and the war was therefore conceived, on the whole, as having the consent of the general public. The fact that during the war a gradual erosion occurred in the public's fighting spirit was not apparent in the early seventies and was not verified until later.

The Yom Kippur War (1973) led to a change in political and social research about Israel. Protest groups formed, and their public expressions of lack of faith in the security-military establishment and the political leadership attested to the onset of changes to come in the political culture. The vigorous endeavors of extra-parliamentary mass movements ("Gush Emunim," 1974, and of "Peace Now," 1978) and the violent resistance to the evacuation of Yamit in April 1982 illustrate some of the shifts in Israeli politics. National security matters were ideologized, political power foci were dispersed more than in the past (due to the loss of dominance of the Labor Party) and the public increasingly participated in national decision-making processes.

During the Lebanese War (1982–85) there was significant public contention to political goals, military targets, and war moves. It generated scientific interest in that conflict's impact on Israeli society and politics. Researchers claimed that the national debate following the Lebanese War over the use of military force was one of the highest costs of the war. As a result, those researchers determined that basic national solidarity was undermined. Academic discussions were conducted on the most poignant questions, asking what is a just war? Under what circumstances, if any, is military disobedience permissible in the course of war from a moral, political, and legal point of view?

In the course of the military struggle against the Intifada (1987–93), academic circles widely expanded their study of the possible mutual relations between democratic regimes and states of national emergency. Due to the difficult political and security realities of this dispute, attention was drawn to the risk to valuational, social, military, and political features liable to come about as a result of an internal, political interethnic conflict.²⁷

At the same time, research literature made no attempt at methodically singling out features of Israel's wars and the long-standing conflict to explain significant changes in Israel's democratic regime. Attention was directed mainly at the hawk-dove alignment and aspects of the extra-parliamentary opposition. No research focused on the creation of sociopolitical order, the structure of the party setting and political communications, or the differences in attitude between the various elites and the nonruling groups on topics of military force. And almost no attention was paid to the way democratic values, such as freedom of expression, interacted with national security requirements.²⁸ Subsequent chapters deal with these matters. I shall now outline my principal arguments regarding Israel:

A. Since 1949, there has existed a constant, alternately latent, and undisguised pattern of controversy over how military force is to be conceived and deployed. Differing perceptions drive this controversy as a political phenomenon, in general, and in the context of the Arab-Palestinian-Israeli conflict, in particular. Beyond modifications of style, secondary political changes, or historical events (such as the Egypto-Israeli peace agreement of 1979), no intrinsic alterations took place until the beginning of the nineties in the ingredients of the controversy.

B. Israeli society stands divided on the subject of military force. Although all of Israel's wars have been controversial, that fact is not

always mirrored in political behavior. A deep gap exists between the infrastructure of any dispute and the externals of political behavior and consensus. This assertion should not detract from the distinctiveness of some events, for example, the Lebanese War, as events of traumatic impact on Israel's sociopolitical order.

C. Through wars and their attendant political crises, Israel's consensus/dissent balance has been molded by the changing and continuous, multidirectional influences exerted by organizations, political values, attitudes, and behavior. Particular importance attaches to the political dilemmas over armed force, organizational interests to preserve national stability or to challenge it, the state's control and use of information, the divisiveness of political power centers, cognitive reactions and fears, and social sanctions and norms.

D. The mutuality alleged in this book is not the result of one time historical developments. Instead, it is a regularly recurring pattern that shaped Israel through to the early 1990s, producing a fighting society so disunited and polarized as to be in imminent danger of utter breakdown.

E. By juxtaposing the findings here with theories and experiences of other political regimes, I am able to determine what conditions are essential and sufficient in order for Israel to become a civilian society.

Jewish Democracy in Israel

This book focuses on the Jewish political system in Israel (within the pre-1967 borders). I shall not deal with minority populations, since they have their own politically distinguishing features. The Jewish public itself, constantly preoccupied with the legitimacy of a Jewish state, lends itself to no single, common, clear definition of its affinity to the state and its territory.

Three fundamental concepts prevail among the Jewish public on this subject: one declines to recognize Israel as a lawful state. This concept belongs to certain peripheral, usually extra-parliamentary groups found in the "left wing" (that is, the most moderate regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict) of the system. Many of these groups (such as Matzpen) maintain a socialist-communist ethos. Making common cause with them are outer, ultraorthodox-religious groups (preeminent among which is Naturei Karta). Israeli journalists

define the proponents of this concept as "anti-Zionist" or "non-Zionist." Another concept casts doubt on the legitimacy of Israel's Jewish foundations, based as they are on nonseparation of state and religion. However, that concept does recognize, in practice, the legitimacy of the state of Israel. Here, on the one hand, the demand is voiced that Israel base itself on secular nationality, without preconditions of Jewishness or religious affiliation. This concept, found among "left wing" groups (Mapam, Ratz, Siah, or groups supporting the Progressive List, for example), also prevails in the "right wing" of the political system (where the "Canaanites" are its sole outstanding adherents). But this concept gives rise, on the other hand, to the demand that Israel be governed as a Jewish-Halakhic state through, primarily, the very considerable bolstering of the national status of orthodox Judaism. This concept is championed by both the Ashkenazi and the Sephardi camps of Jewish orthodoxy, and especially by Agudath Israel. In terms of the third concept, that of the vast majority (some 94 percent of the Jewish population), the Jewish state, from the fifties to the late eighties, is seen as legitimate.²⁹

Another important attribute of the Jewish public is its only partial identification with certain elements of democracy. The eighties and the early nineties recorded some increasing support for the replacement of the democratic regime by an authoritarian one. The trend encompassed various age brackets. Accordingly, Israel may be said to lack any comprehensive awareness of the supreme importance of individual and minority rights. The majority, however, still favors free elections, as well as preservation of the principle of majority rule.³⁰

Israeli democracy, then, is more a matter of form than substance. Constantly bubbling up in this wartime society are political dilemmas relating to the use of armed force, some of them traceable to the Jewish Yishuv era. The contributions of controversies during the thirties and forties to Israeli politics will be analyzed in the following section.

Ethics and Violence: Toward Realization of the Vision of Independence

Political dilemmas over armed force first found expression in the Yishuv of Eretz Israel/Palestine in the twenties. In 1929, the main worry of the Yishuv was whether to rely on its own strength for

defense against Arab rioters or whether, in view of its meager resources, to call for the protection of the Mandatory-British regime. But massive, violent Arab riots broke out in 1929 and were followed by the Great Arab Uprising of 1936–39. During and after these troubles the British authorities did little to protect the Jews. Hence, Jewish political elites unanimously concluded that the Yishuv must defend itself. This basic outlook was shared by both the Mapai and Revisionist camps.

But the political dilemma centered around the deployment of armed force. A dispute evolved between the Revisionist Party and the radical military underground movements, Etzel and Lehi, and the leadership of the Mapai "organized Yishuv" and its military organization, the Haganah. It focused on three issues. First, was it morally right to initiate military actions against Arab population centers to prevent attacks against Jews? Second, how effective was the policy of "restraint," the defense strategy consisting exclusively of military operations in retaliation to attacks on Jews? Conversely, to what extent would "response," the offensive strategy of Jewish actions against Arabs, prevent attacks on Jews? And third, how damaging would using armed force be to the Yishuv's relations with the Mandatory regime and its chances of gaining political independence. These debates thus exposed a pivotal political dilemma: in the absence of sovereignty, how was an interethnic dispute to be conducted?³¹

The concerted assault of the Arab states on May 15, 1948, quelled arguments between those for "restraint" and the advocates of "response." Fear of annihilation and the desire to establish the minimal geostrategic conditions for its preservation, produced a consensus, in principle, for the vital necessity of deploying armed force. A consensus likewise emerged on the principal aims of the War of 1948, which the Jewish Yishuv designated the War of Independence: to secure the existence of the Jewish state and to join western Galilee, Jerusalem, and the whole of the Negev to its territory.³² Toward the end of the war, as politicians deliberated on the possibility that Israel might agree to an armistice with Jordan (April 1949), the old debate resurfaced of whether to exercise military force or not? But whereas in the past the issue was what military action to take against attacks by Arab rioters, it now transformed into how, for future prospects of peace, to bring hostilities to an end.

The deliberations of the Provisional State Council and the Knesset reflected two basic approaches. The first, held by dominant

Mapai, viewed armed force only as an adjunct to diplomatic efforts, with no, or very limited, strategic value.

Armed force, they said, was essential for beating off military attacks, to found the state, and to establish boundaries to meet the minimal requirements of survival. But it was not a means for resolving the Israeli-Arab conflict. Peace was the diplomatic goal, but imposing a "peace" by military means was undesirable. On three counts, diplomacy was held preferable to armed force. First, coexistence could not be achieved militarily. Thus not even the enemy's defeat would help implement a real peace. Second, its inherent destructiveness rendered the use of armed force immoral, unless responding in self-defense only. Third, using armed force solely to wring a peace agreement would trigger military intervention by the superpowers (Britain, the Soviet Union, the United States) against Israel. The then-Premier and Defense Minister Ben-Gurion, reviewing the security situation before the Provisional State Council (June 17, 1948), pointed out that Israel must remain aware of its small size:

I know there are limits to our strength, and we must be aware of this . . . which is why we have taken care, this past six months, not to become embroiled in a military clash with England. . . . We have enough on our hands with the military campaign against the kings of the Arab world. We were not eager for this military campaign either—the Arab rulers imposed it on us.³³

During debates (April 21, 1949) on the armistice agreement with Jordan, Ben-Gurion explained to the Knesset why, despite limited military achievements, Israel must end the war and not inflict final defeat on the enemy. He argued that peace would produce certain crucial political objectives that expressed the core of the Zionist vision (such as, the founding of a haven for the Jewish people and the absorption of immigration):

In our view, peace, even if only for half a year, is better than non-peace for half a year, because it will enable us to bring more Jews to Israel. . . . No one in this world will look out for our interests. . . . No state anywhere in the world is concerned about us. The world can live without us even if the entire Jewish race is eliminated from earth. . . . Thus, we measure, and

will continue to measure, every political step by a single yardstick: does it widen Israel's options and absorption capability, does it strengthen her security, does it increase the population's living standards, does it bring closer the fulfillment of the vision that pulsates in the heart of the Jewish people, . . . and we say: we do not want to fight them if they do not fight us.³⁴

In contrast, the Revisionist Party, which articulated Zeev Jabotinsky's vision, opposed the idea that armed force was meant to be used for survival purposes only. War was also a means of achieving a maximal political, ideological, and security goal—"the liberation of all the territories of Eretz Israel."³⁵ Consequently, those politicians (most prominent of whom were Arie' Altman, Menachem Begin, Uri Zvi Greenberg) acted to promote this ideology, hoping to gain control of at least the West Bank, which they deemed a part of Eretz Israel and a security-military stronghold. Without that territorial minimum, they believed, there was no use pretending to national objectives, since the state would then face the graver threat of extinction. Thus Altman, addressing the Provisional State Council on September 27, 1948, attacked Mapai's position on the issue of war:

And if a minimum, and by minimum I mean that which we cannot forgo and for which we are prepared to fight—then it must be the whole of western Eretz Israel . . . without which we have nowhere to settle the millions, . . . and because after the past year's war experience we shall not, in terms of our defense, be able to tolerate that any part of western Eretz Israel shall serve, whether in the shape of the Mufti's state or in the shape of annexation to Abdallah, as a springboard for assaults on us, . . . because for the Arab part, in no matter what combination, whether attached to Transjordan or camouflaged as an independent state, the purpose is one and the same: to embitter our lives, rather than to create any possibility of life for the Arab public resident there.³⁶

Hence, the basic controversy over using armed force found expression with the transition from the Yishuv era to the sovereign state era. The 1949 armistice agreements that terminated the War of Independence did not establish peace between Israel and the Arab states. The dual features of this neither-peace-nor-war situation of

the fifties were fedayeen operations, and the ever-present threat of an outbreak of war. Israel's political system reviewed possible options in response to the perception of a constant menace to her existence along with acts of terror against the population. The Revisionist Party's successor Herut, for example, wanted to go to war so that a peace agreement could subsequently be enforced but not before the West Bank was "liberated"; meanwhile, Mapam and Maki (the Israeli Communist Party) proposed a strategy of political initiatives and military passivity. The issue of military force thus evoked diametrically opposing views in the political system.