

CONTEMPORARY SECURITY STUDIES

# Media Strategy and Military Operations in the 21st Century

*Mediatizing the Israel Defence Forces*

Michal Shavit



# Media Strategy and Military Operations in the 21st Century

This book applies the concept of mediatization to the contemporary dynamic between war, media and society, with a focus on the Israel Defence Forces (IDF).

Since the beginning of the 21st century the IDF has undergone an intensive process of mediatization that has transformed the media into an interpretative grid for many of its military activities and increasingly utilized media to garner public support and construct civilian perceptions of conflict and security through media activity and strategy. This process can be divided into four distinct chronological phases in accordance with the operational challenges confronted by the IDF during this period, from the Al-Aqsa Intifada of 2000, through Israeli unilateral disengagement from Gaza in 2005, and the second Lebanon war of 2006, to the series of Gaza confrontations of 2008–2014. The work shows how the IDF's media policy evolved from a narrow perception of its role, and separation between operational and media actions to a cohesive and coherently articulated media strategy that is increasingly intertwined with military action and operational strategy and a vital component of strategic military aims and objectives. This strategic stance has led the IDF to adopt a global media perspective using the most advanced new media platforms, designed to influence public opinion and improve national narratives, both in Israel and the international community. By applying the concept of mediatization to the Israeli case, this book fills a research lacuna and offers a new prism for the study of media–military relations in contemporary conflicts.

The book will be of much interest to students of civil–military relations, strategic studies, Middle Eastern Studies, media and communication studies, sociology and IR, in general.

**Michal Shavit** is lecturer at the Interdisciplinary Center (IDC) Herzliya, Israel, and has a PhD in Social Science and Public Policy from Kings College London.

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# **Media Strategy and Military Operations in the 21st Century**

## **Mediatizing the Israel Defence Forces**

**Michal Shavit**

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**To my parents, Yael and Shabtai Shavit**

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# Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	viii
<i>List of abbreviations</i>	x
 Introduction	 1
 1 The IDF, Israeli society and the media on the eve of the 21st century	 19
2 Restrictive media policy, 2000–2002	37
3 Strategic communications, 2002–2005	57
4 Mediatized media strategy, 2005	84
5 Spinning a war, 2006	103
6 Glocal media strategy, 2008–2014	135
7 Mediatizing the IDF	173
 <i>Appendix</i>	 182
<i>Bibliography</i>	184
<i>Index</i>	211



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Finally, the responsibility for the views and mistakes of this book are mine alone.

# Abbreviations

AKA	IDF Manpower Division
APC	Armoured Personnel Carrier
BAGATZ	High Court of Justice
BIFV	Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicle (NAGMASH)
CGS (UK)	Chief of the General Staff
CGSC	Command and General Staff College (PUM)
CIS	Communication and Information System
CoGAT	The Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories
CoS	Chief of Staff
DOVER TZAHAL	IDF Spokesperson's Unit/office/division
FIDF	Friends of the Israeli Defense Forces
GOC	General Officer Commanding
GSS	General Security Service of Israel (SHABAK)
HAMAFLAL	Command Center for Documentation and Media
IAF	Israel Air Force
ICJ	International Court of Justice
IDF	Israel Defence Forces
ISA	Israel Security Agency (Shin Bet)
JSCSC	Joint Services Command and Staff College (UK)
LIC	Low-Intensity Conflict
MALTAM	Operational Theory Research Institute
MAMDA	IDF Behavioral Science department
MAYA	Research, Strategies & Initiatives Branch
MFA	Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MITZPE	Forward Command Post
MoD	Minister of Defence
MOOTW	Military Operation other than War
MP	Military Police
NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSC	National Security Council (MALAL)
PA	Palestinian Authority

PAO	Public Affairs Officer
PCC	Perception Campaigns Centre (MALAT)
PIO	Press Information Officer
PIR	Priority Intelligence Requirements (US)
PMO	National Information Directorate
POA	Plan Of Action
POW	Prisoner of War
PSYOP	Psychological Operations
PSYWAR	Psychological Warfare
RAM	Revolution in Military Affairs
RPV	Remotely Piloted Aircraft
SOP	Standing Operating Procedure (PAKAL)
SPG	Strategic Planning Guidance
TK	Target Killing
UNHRC	UN Human Rights Council
UNRWA	The UN refugee agency

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# Introduction

Since the onset of the twenty-first century, military establishments, like governments and other organizations, have gradually adapted to dramatic changes and innovations in media technologies and their consequences.<sup>1</sup> Changes in the nature of contemporary conflict and warfare have further transformed the media into a significant theatre, enabling militaries to incorporate it as a strategic component in the application of armed force.<sup>2</sup> The Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) was not immune to this phenomenon. Indeed, the central claim of *Media Strategy and Military Operations in the 21st Century: Mediatizing the Israel Defence Forces*, is that from 2000 to 2014 this force underwent a process of intensive mediatization<sup>3</sup> that transformed the media into an interpretive grid for many of its military activities, and media and media logics<sup>4</sup> became increasingly entwined in its identity formation, organizational structure and the social construction of warfare in Israel. With their broad scope, IDF activities in the media are intertwined with military kinetic actions and increasingly designed to substantiate and maintain legitimacy with its complexities, as portrayed in twenty-first century conflicts.<sup>5</sup> By influencing varied audiences, mostly the domestic Israeli public and, gradually, also the multiple venues of international public opinion, the IDF became extensively engaged in the social construction of warfare in the new media ecology of the twenty-first century.<sup>6</sup>

Adopting the theory of mediatization as a broad theoretical framework,<sup>7</sup> *Media Strategy and Military Operations* explores the evolution of the IDF's media strategies during warfare from 2000 to 2014 in order to provide a broad and integrative perspective on the transformation of the IDF into a mediatized institution, and to shed light on one of the most interesting cases of which media management has become a part, within the practices of warfare. The IDF's media strategy and the concepts on which it is founded are indicative of the processes and consequences of the IDF's mediatization. In sociological–historical fashion, this book analyses these transformations in the social and cultural context of media-saturated Israeli society during warfare of the twenty-first century. Based on the empirical case of the IDF, this book sheds light on the irreversible process of the IDF's mediatization and its historical and sociological roots, and deciphers the ramifications and implications of the integration of contemporary warfare within the media and Israeli civil society.<sup>8</sup>

## 2 Introduction

*Media Strategy and Military Operations* adopts a sociological institutionalist approach<sup>9</sup> to researching the process of mediatization by examining the IDF's media strategy as it evolved through a number of key confrontations during the discussed period.<sup>10</sup> These include the armed conflict between Israel and the Palestinians (the 'al-Aqsa Intifada' of 2000–2005); the IDF's execution of Israel's unilateral disengagement from the Gaza Strip in the summer of 2005; the Second Lebanon War in the summer of 2006; and the three Gaza wars: Operation Cast Lead in 2008–2009, Operation Pillar of Defence in 2012 and Operation Protective Edge in 2014. Focusing on these events, this study identifies, analyses and highlights the sources of change in the IDF's media strategy as it evolved over time, mainly within the IDF's Spokesperson's Division (*Dover Tzahal*), which is the military professional media arm, responsible for media and public relations in Israel and around the world.<sup>11</sup> This analysis indicates four phases in the evolution of the IDF's media strategy: Restrictive Media Policy (2000–2002), Strategic Media Management (2002–2005), Mediatized Media Strategy (2005–2007) and Glocal Media Strategy (2008–2014).

The IDF's media strategy at the beginning of the twenty-first century, which was characterized by a limited perception of the Spokesperson's Office (later Division)'s role as a means of conveying information about military activities and operations to both Israeli and international audiences, is conceptualized here as 'Restrictive Media Policy'. The media's role was seen by the military as a mediator,<sup>12</sup> expected to reflect the 'reality' on the battlefield as conveyed by the military officials. This functionalistic approach resulted in a reactive, ad hoc, defensive and 'denial of access' approach<sup>13</sup> to media management that centred on modes of action designed to control information by creating media blackouts and limiting media access to conflict zones.<sup>14</sup>

In 2002 the IDF adopted a strategic outlook for managing the media, so the next phase is conceptualized here as 'Strategic Communication'.<sup>15</sup> It lasted until 2005 when we can identify the third phase – 'Mediatized Media Strategy'. During this phase the IDF conducted perception management of the media and public opinion. The operational logic became intertwined with media logic and image considerations.<sup>16</sup> Finally, in the fourth phase, the IDF adopted a 'Glocal Media Strategy' based on extensive use of digital and social media platforms.

In the course of the period discussed in this book, the IDF's media management strategies were transformed through the adoption of a cohesive and coherently articulated strategy that subsequently became an integral part of operational military activities and a vital component of strategic military aims and objectives.<sup>17</sup> This in turn led to the adoption of a media perspective designed to influence public opinion and improve national narratives, both in Israel and globally.<sup>18</sup> Accelerated development of communications technologies and the expansion of the use of digital and social media, in addition to the IDF's operational strategy, which sought to achieve perceptual goals, led to a merging of the IDF's media management with its operational doctrine. Social media have been integrated into military operations in conflicts across the globe, with platforms such as Twitter, Instagram and YouTube employed for wartime PR.<sup>19</sup> The

historic precedent set by announcing the launch of Operation Pillar of Defence (in mid-November 2012) on Twitter reflected one of the peaks of the IDF's mediatization.<sup>20</sup> Thus the military was essentially transformed into an independent media organization capable of producing and disseminating media content from the battlefield on a variety of internet and social media platforms and PDA apps. In this sense, a media strategy designed to serve operational objectives in the battlefield was realized through exploitation of the most advanced media platforms.

The IDF's media management patterns are analysed in this book against the backdrop of contemporary social and cultural processes the military has been grappling with in the context of social changes during the examined period within Israeli society.<sup>21</sup> These include the crucial importance of gaining and preserving legitimacy for military action;<sup>22</sup> the use of military force in the absence of political consensus; scepticism regarding the IDF's credibility as an information source; accusations of human rights violations committed by the IDF; dilemmas over the use of force in the face of growing public aversion to military casualties; politically-based selective refusal by individuals to participate in military operations; restrictions on freedom of action in combating terrorists operating from within a civilian population; legal and public controversies on operational questions, and so on and so forth.

## **Contemporary warfare, media–military relations and mediatization**

*Media Strategy and Military Operations in the 21st Century* integrates several fields of study that previously have not been applied in tandem to the Israeli case, specifically security studies,<sup>23</sup> war and media studies,<sup>24</sup> and sociological theories of civil–military relations.<sup>25</sup> It is argued that there is a basic link between contemporary warfare and the role of strategic narratives and the media representation of those narratives.<sup>26</sup> By applying the concept of mediatization to the Israeli case, *Media Strategy and Military Operations* makes an empirical and conceptual contribution to understanding the ways in which the military communicates its narratives to its audiences and publics in order to gain and maintain legitimacy in the new media ecology and in the context of contemporary warfare.<sup>27</sup>

In the field of security studies there is a wide scholarly consensus that since the end of the twentieth century, war has been changing.<sup>28</sup> Contemporary warfare is fought to create political or strategic conditions, and the key to war is the struggle for the 'will of the people',<sup>29</sup> or as Freedman importantly argues, wars are being won in the cognitive rather than the physical domain<sup>30</sup> and the media and the public are the central battleground.<sup>31</sup> There is vast support among strategic scholars for Smith's conceptualization of contemporary warfare as 'war amongst the people' and the proposition that the battle is over people's 'hearts and minds'.<sup>32</sup> According to Smith, militaries fight and operate through the media: 'We are conducting operations now as though we were on a stage, in an amphitheatre of a Roman arena.'<sup>33</sup>



#### 4 Introduction

This fundamental conceptual shift among strategic scholars regarding contemporary warfare is well manifested in Lawrence Freedman's phenomenological notion of strategic narratives: compelling storylines, deliberately constructed, which can explain events convincingly.<sup>34</sup> The concept of strategic narratives corresponds with the cultural changes within the media ecology where winning is about narratives. Hoskins and O'Loughlin's concept of diffused war intersects with this framework and emphasizes the paradigmatic change not only in modern warfare but in modern media, where war is immersed in and produced through a new media ecology.<sup>35</sup> These paradigmatic changes regarding the media and contemporary warfare are manifested as well in militaries' media management practices in the new phase, which has been labelled as the 'Information Age' by strategic scholars and as the 'new media ecology' by media scholars.

There is a large body of literature dealing with the relationship between war and media,<sup>36</sup> therefore, the analysis of media practices and the impact of military strategies on these practices have also become a core issue in the field. More complex approaches have emerged where, in some respects, the media is identified as a strategic platform and vehicle for influencing both the enemy's perceptions and public opinion locally and globally. The turning point of 9/11 and the global war on terrorism have inspired different paradigmatic schools regarding political and military propaganda strategies and media coverage of war.<sup>37</sup> Additionally, militaries have become more sophisticated and manipulative in their media management practices by implementing methods such as, embedding, which increases the military's capability to set the media agenda and deflect public attention away from the broader political and moral context of the war.<sup>38</sup> Consequently, theoretical questions regarding military media strategies and their implications for the conduct of war and, on the other hand, for society have tended to become more dominant.<sup>39</sup>

Recent research demonstrates a refreshing theoretical shift from analysing military media strategies through to concepts of control and/or cooperation between the military and the media, in a manner similar to the literature dealing with the Israeli case,<sup>40</sup> to more sophisticated and empirically-based approaches regarding military media practices and strategies. Such models are not applicable to the increasingly complex context of twenty-first century warfare, which demands more complex conceptualization.<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, scholars are increasingly acknowledging the crucial role of the media in sustaining legitimacy and thereby contributing to the success or failure of contemporary warfare.<sup>42</sup> We should not confuse between the notions of 'propaganda' and military media strategies. The difference lies at the core of legitimacy, thus, the notion of military media strategies is aimed at sustaining legitimacy.<sup>43</sup>

This book, however, intends to contribute to the scholarly research that is engaged with the processes whereby media are becoming part of the practices of contemporary warfare and military media strategies. Based on theoretical analysis and the framework of scholars such as Cottle, Hjarvard, Hoskins and O'Loughlin,<sup>44</sup> this book's aim is to decipher the evolution of the IDF's media strategies in contemporary warfare and the mediatization processes it underwent from the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Mediatization has become a way to theorize the transformative role of the media within the social life of this contemporary period.<sup>45</sup> The application of the concept and theory of mediatization, as this book offers, makes it possible to conceptualize military–media relations in a manner which is appropriate to the twenty-first century: as a compound social phenomenon, in which the military and the media cannot be seen as two distinct institutions, but rather as integral to each other.<sup>46</sup> That is to claim that the mediatization of the military is no different from the mediatization of society and culture at large. The mediatization of the military and war is a growing field of interest for research.<sup>47</sup>

Researchers have observed that mediatization is expressed among armies in the way that the media have become increasingly entwined in military strategy and the conduct of battle. In addition, mediatization has impacted on determining military objectives, inasmuch as the military has attempted to dominate the media's own channels, to utilize them for the army's benefit.<sup>48</sup> Mediatization in the conduct of war is expressed, for example, in the operation of small forces, designed to influence the perceptions of the public, the government and the army itself.<sup>49</sup> Therefore, researchers have questioned whether armies are cognisant that war increasingly is being shaped and adapted by the media, and whether militaries accommodate themselves to media management practices. This also raises issues that have not been sufficiently researched,<sup>50</sup> relating to the target audiences towards whom militaries direct their influence through the media, to gain legitimacy and political support. By thoroughly analysing the Israeli case, this book aims to contribute to clarifying these questions.

## **The IDF and the media**

Scholars' growing awareness of civil–military relations in Israel as elsewhere in the late 1990s, and of the media's central role in contemporary conflicts and the attendant rise in the importance of media considerations in the strategies of various players,<sup>51</sup> has prompted some of them to show interest in the way the media interacts with the military, war and the realm of national security.<sup>52</sup>

Adopting sociological terminology to describe the relations between the military and the media in Israel, some of these scholars have noted the shifts in the relationship and viewed them as part of the general decline in the status of the Israeli state and its autonomy, expressed *inter alia* by the increasing public demand for greater influence in the security realm.<sup>53</sup> Others have noted the growing surveillance of contemporary armies by various players – domestic and global political actors, legal entities and international organizations, as well as media entities.<sup>54</sup> Still others have focused on the mode whereby the IDF modified and adapted to the changed environment and changes in warfare.<sup>55</sup> Different schools of thought have examined the changes in security–media relations in Israel, viewing the military as part of the state apparatus and therefore attending to the ways in which the state and the military attempt to control the media and the news.<sup>56</sup> Scholars who adopt the theory of public diplomacy, as a framework for elaborating on the Israeli case, highlight the IDF's role in conducting public

## 6 Introduction

diplomacy practices as part of the government apparatus.<sup>57</sup> Media and political communications scholars who have discussed the Israeli context have scarcely examined empirically the way the IDF has operated in this realm.<sup>58</sup> Instead, these studies have focused primarily on the nature of media coverage in the past two decades, the performance of the media in times of national crisis, and attempts by the state and the military to control the media and the news.<sup>59</sup> Indeed, viewing the military, media and society as separate social institutions has led to continued concentration on the degree of the IDF's openness or closure to the media and the extent to which it is criticized or supported by the media.<sup>60</sup>

The changed nature of the military confrontations that Israel has encountered since 2000 and throughout the decade has led to innovative attempts by scholars to examine the relations between the civilian and security sectors in Israel.<sup>61</sup> The central aspect of their research has been to analyse the impact of contemporary warfare on society and the internal politics of Israel. At the outset of the twenty-first century, then, Israeli scholars studying the media and warfare were indeed aware of changes within the information dimension of warfare and that media considerations were becoming central to the strategy of various players. Scholars have not ignored the way the IDF has operated,<sup>62</sup> but this has not led to empirical research in this field, despite a greater understanding of the increasing necessity of the media in the military domain and an awareness that the 'struggle over the news was no less important than the struggle on the battlefield'.<sup>63</sup> Although it is claimed that this subject requires an interdisciplinary approach,<sup>64</sup> studies in the fields of military affairs, sociology and media studies that focus on the Israeli case rarely reflect such an interdisciplinary perspective. It is indeed through the application of the concept of mediatization to the Israeli case that *Media Strategy and Military Operations* seeks to fill this lacuna and contribute to the study of media-military relations in the twenty-first century.<sup>65</sup>

*Media Strategy and Military Operations* maintains that mediatization transcends the boundaries between media, military and society in a way that has not only changed the volume and scope of the IDF's media activity, but has also transformed its organizational culture and identity and the structural relationship between the military, the media and society.<sup>66</sup> *Media Strategy and Military Operations* offers an analysis, from the military point of view, of evolution within the military during historical periods and in a particular social context. In this sense, we are following Hjarvard's theorization and adopting mediatization as a middle-range theory<sup>67</sup> in order to focus on the meso level of social institutions – the military within the historical context of the first decades of the twenty-first century.

From an analytical perspective, in this book the mediatization processes are examined through a characterization of the developmental stages of media strategies in military conflicts, with reference to four analytical parameters of orientation towards the media:<sup>68</sup> (1) public opinion – what importance was ascribed to Israeli and international public opinion, and through which concepts was public opinion mediated (Legitimacy? Trust? Support? Critique? Resilience?);

(2) public image – orientation of the strategy towards influencing the image of the IDF and its commanders; (3) public legitimation for military action as a major component in contemporary military campaigns; and (4) the connection between the media logics and military-operational logic. These parameters will constitute the axis of discussion in each of the book's chapters, with reference to the military events that occurred in each period and the media strategy characterizing that stage.

## Research strategy

Many scholars have commented on the restrictive cultural mentality of the security establishment in Israel: its maintenance of an insular quality; its difficulty sharing primary documentation; and its reluctance to allow open interviews with commanders on active duty.<sup>69</sup> Yet as a result of major changes in the IDF's outlook on society and the media in recent years, there has been a significant relaxation of its information policy – both in allowing its own researchers greater freedom to have their research published in scholarly venues, and by declassifying an ever-growing volume of primary source material to independent scholars.<sup>70</sup>

The present study has greatly benefited from this growing openness by being able to tap a wealth of newly declassified documents, mostly from the Spokesperson's Division, which has not been previously used by other scholars. Ranging from internal memoranda, through protocols of meetings and discussions, working and policy papers, to internal evaluations of incidents and events, this documentation proved invaluable for delineating and analysing the evolution of the IDF's media strategy and management. Many of these documents were specifically declassified for the purpose of this study.

The author also benefited from 40 in-depth qualitative interviews with former military personnel of various rank who were central figures in the processes that took place during the timeframe of the research and the incidents and events it covers. These included former IDF spokespersons, journalists and members of academia engaged in research of topics tied to the IDF.

Other official sources of information used by this study include:

- Hundreds of press releases on a variety of topics disseminated by the Spokesperson's Division. These are official communiqués disseminated to media channels and contain informative data and other content or messages the IDF chose to distribute. As such, they constitute a rich and diverse source of information on the IDF's communications strategy and the messages it sought to inculcate regarding various incidents or events that took place during these years. Most of these press releases have been uploaded to the Division's website while some remain in the IDF Archive but open to public scrutiny.
- Reports of investigative commissions established during the period under study,<sup>71</sup> as well as reports of the State Comptroller, and of ad hoc commissions

## 8 Introduction

established to examine various incidents and events. These commissions served as a reliable source for understanding processes taking place within the IDF. Their reports contain broad references (direct quotes and paraphrased material) from military documents as well as transcriptions of the testimonies of many highly placed officials who appeared before them, including ministers, members of the Knesset and senior officers.

- IDF professional journals, first and foremost its flagship journal *Maarachot*, which publishes research articles and theoretical/doctrinal essays by former and serving personnel. The professional journal of the Behavioural Science Department, *Among the Arenas (Beyn HaZirot)*, the professional journal of military psychologists in field units, *Military Psychology*, and the periodical of the IDF Leadership Development School, *Revelations of Leadership (Mar'ot shel Manhigut)* added further insights into the IDF outlook.
- Studies conducted by members of the IDF's Behavioural Science Department and the Spokesperson's Division that were published in civilian academic journals or presented at academic gatherings were also used as additional source material for this book. Supplementary material was gathered from studies conducted by various governmental and nongovernmental organizations. The websites of the Spokesperson's Division and the general IDF news weekly *In the Camp (Bemachane)* constituted a rich source of information on the IDF's media operations.
- The Israeli media (print, electronic and digital) constituted a core source of material as well. Internet writings on military and security issues in Israel presented a broad spectrum of informative input and interpretation of incidents and events on the battlefield that took place during the period under discussion. In the course of the research, hundreds of articles and other news items in the Hebrew press that analysed events on the battlefield were gathered and applied to the research. In addition, books written by leading Israeli military correspondents offered further input and key insights.<sup>72</sup> A clear distinction was made between analysing texts and basing findings on journalistic material as an empirical source.
- Memoirs by senior IDF officers who were key players in the events studied throughout each chapter also contributed to knowledge of how these events were formulated from a subjective military perspective.<sup>73</sup>

Furthermore, the author's personal experience while serving as a researcher on the staff of the IDF's Behavioural Science Department contributed greatly to this book. Over the course of a decade, this author witnessed, studied and observed the IDF's struggle with shifts in Israeli society and changes in the nature of media coverage of the army as viewed internally. Needless to say, familiarity with one's society is hardly objective; rather, insights gained and experiences gathered are an interpretive process which entails different degrees of social construction.<sup>74</sup> Hence, this work does not seek to uncover 'hidden truths' about the IDF, but rather to make an original contribution to a highly important, albeit surprisingly neglected, aspect of its historiography.

## The book

Having laid the groundwork and theoretical framework for the discussion, the book opens with a historical background to the discussed period, focusing on developments in three key realms: military–media relations in Israel, including military spokespersonship and the changes in the media arena; changes in civil–military relations and the media in Israel during this period; and changes in the operational outlook of the IDF at the close of the 1990s. The following chapters deal with the evolutionary stages in the IDF’s media strategy, based chronologically on the military events that occurred in the years 2000–2014. Each chapter depicts another phase in the development (Chapters 4 and 5 deal with different events but refer to the same stage in media strategy). From a theoretical standpoint, each phase in the development of the IDF’s media strategy also demonstrates the deepening and widening of the IDF’s media-tization process at that stage.

Chapter 2 examines the development of IDF media policy at the onset of the twenty-first century, beginning with its handling of the ‘al-Aqsa Intifada’ that erupted in late September 2000. During this phase, which lasted till 2002, the military spokespersonship operated without any structured media strategy, acting upon vague political directives that reflected the lack of clarity at the time with regard to the political–security situation. This resulted in a reactive and apologetic spokespersonship, largely focused on tactical rather than strategic issues, and used traditional military patterns of media restraint in times of war.

Chapter 3 examines the development of the IDF media approach in 2002–2005, the next evolutionary – Strategic Communication. In this phase the media was seen as both mediator and mediated. Reality was mediated by the media and the military could control the images by affecting the media’s mediated role. This phase was marked by the growing recognition that the media constituted a ‘fighting zone’, which impacted the outcome on the battlefield itself. An unparalleled media strategy was formulated as part of a broader media scheme. This was gradually integrated into operational planning itself. The old spokespersonship practices were replaced by an attempt to influence the public’s perceptions of reality. Military spokespersonship at this stage adopted a strategic view of media management, characterized by an expansion of media engagement to incorporate additional divisions within the IDF, including the Intelligence Division, the Planning Division and the Human Resources Division. Military spokespersonship thus joined in the central military effort in conflict and war.

Chapters 4 and 5 examine the next evolutionary phase of the IDF’s media strategy – the ‘Mediatized Media Strategy’. It will be analysed with reference to the 2005 Gaza disengagement and the 2006 Second Lebanon War. The central argument in Chapter 4 is that the implementation of the disengagement plan by the IDF in essence conducted a perceptual campaign, which achieved its goal of preserving the IDF’s status and public image in Israel and worldwide.

Chapter 5 provides an analysis of the IDF media strategy as it played out in the Gaza disengagement, but in the context of mediatized warfare – the 2006



Second Lebanon War. At this stage, the spokespersonship approach increasingly regarded the IDF as a brand name whose image needed to be managed to establish public trust and to maintain legitimacy of its activities. It was this approach that underlay the IDF Spokesperson's Division's use of marketing and public relations (PR) perspectives and practices, proactive media management patterns and its initiation of media events.

Chapter 6 discusses the current phase of development of IDF media strategy as expressed in the conduct of the three Gaza wars of 2008–2009, 2012 and 2014.<sup>75</sup> Central to this stage was a new structure of social notions that ushered in a new era of fusion of the media, the military and society. This stage was characterized by the IDF's accelerated use of the developing technologies of new media as part of its media strategy in fighting, besides extensive activity in traditional media as well. The central question that arose in this phase, which is conceptualized here as 'Glocal Media Strategy', concerned legitimating the means of exerting military force with regard to various audiences and expanding occupation with public diplomacy.<sup>76</sup>

The emergence of social and digital media opened a new realm for the IDF Spokesperson's Division where a new and innovative form of communications operations has been employed by the IDF to reach various audiences.<sup>77</sup> In this regard, the IDF's mediatization has reached its peak. As such, the social media campaigns conducted by the IDF represent a clear culmination of the mediatization process begun with the al-Aqsa Intifada, which has transformed its limited role in spokespersonship on matters of military activity into a comprehensive strategy at the national level.

The book's concluding chapter, 'Mediatizing the IDF', will point to the ramifications of the mediatization process, as adumbrated by the analysis of the developmental stages in the media strategy, for the relations between the military, society and contemporary warfare.

## Notes

- 1 Andrew Hoskins and Ben O'Loughlin, *War and Media* (Cambridge: Polity, 2010); Thomas Rid and Marc Hecker, *War 2.0*. (Westport: Praeger, 2009).
- 2 There is much scholarly research on the changing nature of contemporary conflicts within the broad spectrum of post-Cold War feuds, including asymmetrical warfare, postmodern warfare, limited conflict, hybrid wars, defused war, etc. See, for example, Charles C. Moskos, John A. Williams and David. R. Segal (eds), *The Postmodern Military* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Martin Van Creveld, *The Transformation of War* (New York: Free Press, 1991); Mary Kaldor, 'Old Wars, Cold Wars, New Wars, and the War on Terror', *International Politics*, 42 (2005): 491–8; Lawrence Freedman, *The Transformation of Strategic Affairs* (USA and Canada: Routledge, 2013); Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World* (USA: Vintage Books, 2008).
- 3 Using Stig Hjarvard's approach, this book views mediatization as a theoretical concept and adopts an institutional approach to analysing the ways in which mediatization has come to influence the military and Israeli society. Stig Hjarvard, *The Mediatization of Culture and Society* (London & New York: Routledge, 2013), pp. 8–40. Stig Hjarvard defines 'mediatization' as 'the process whereby society to an increasing