Article

Breaking the Order:

The Intended and Unintended Consequences of Countersurveillance on the West Bank

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Abstract

Countersurveillance has been acknowledged as an empowering act of civil society that can keep the government in check. With its increasing popularity in academic and popular circles comes a need to better understand when countersurveillance brings a positive outcome and when it backfires. This question is particularly important when countersurveillance is used to bring about a change in policy implementation. Using data from interviews, peace organizations' reports, and open sources, this paper examines peace movements' countersurveillance of West Bank checkpoints, exploring the intended and unintended consequences of countersurveillance in this setting. This paper argues that when countersurveillance breaks powerholders' understanding of social order, it can trigger a harsh response that can render it counterproductive. Contrarily, when countersurveillance operates within the boundaries of this understanding of order, the likelihood of a successful outcome increases.

Introduction

When does video-activists' countersurveillance work and when does it backfire? Countersurveillance can uncover misconduct (Bayerl and Stoykov 2016) and mobilize people to action (Hermida and Hernández-Santaolalla 2018) or, alternatively, it can backfire and lead to a spiral of surveillance and violence against activists (Wall and Linnemann 2014; Wilson and Serisier 2010). Scholarship regularly explores the types of countersurveillance outcomes, yet the conditions that lead to positive or negative outcomes remain unclear. The term countersurveillance encompasses multiple tactics and usages aimed at achieving different outcomes. This paper focuses on one—activists' use of countersurveillance to bring about a policy change by influencing the policy implementation process. Scholars regularly conceptualize countersurveillance in the context of avoiding and disrupting surveillance (Marx 2003; Monahan 2006) or increasing the visibility of police misconduct (Bradshaw 2013; Huey, Walby, and Doyle 2006; Toch 2012). Here, I examine the outcome of activists using this tactic as a tool to change the surveillers' behavior and the policy that these surveillers are entrusted in implementing as a result. Understanding when this tactic presses the surveillers to alter their behavior and when it provokes them toward confrontation is at the center of this paper.

To explore this question, this paper examines, as a case study, security forces' responses to peace activists' countersurveillance in checkpoint missions across the West Bank. Particularly, it focuses on the intended and unintended consequences of countersurveillance in this context, illustrating when it leads to compliance and when it backfires. This study argues that when activists work with the organization they try to affect, their chances of getting an accommodating response and a positive outcome increase. An example would be working with internal affairs on a case that ends in the discharge of a rogue police officer. Similarly,

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when activists work against the organization in a fashion that breaks how the surveillers' understand order, the likelihood that their actions will bring an adversarial reaction and ultimately backfire increases. An example of this would be public shaming of a rogue police officer that ends in the arrests of the activists and criminal charges. I hypothesize that due to security forces' emphasis on order, their response to the activists' countersurveillance is contingent on its impact on this order. Disruption of order will elicit a negative response while cooperative activism (Marx 2003) will yield a position response. Understanding which response is triggered is the main focus of this paper. To make this argument, I use data that represent both the countersurveillants (activists) and the subjects (soldiers) from three sources: (1) interviews with thirty-three Israeli soldiers with checkpoint mission experience, (2) over 12,000 daily reports of a peace organization, and (3) open sources.

Thus far studies on countersurveillance have focused on cases of policing the police (Bayerl and Stoykov 2016; Bradshaw 2013; Huey, Walby, and Doyle 2006; Toch 2012), not paying much attention to soldiers as subjects of observation. Soldiers, however, are an important group to study in the context of countersurveillance and policing because in many situations across the globe they are *de facto* and *de jure* the local police, responsible for law and order (Easton et al. 2010; Kraska 2007; López-Montiel 2000). The parallels between police and military are numerous (Balko 2013; Hills 2001), especially if we focus on checkpoint missions that can be handled by either. By examining soldiers' responses to countersurveillance, this study expands our understanding of countersurveillance and security forces in general.

Countersurveillance

Monahan (2006: 515) defines countersurveillance as "intentional, tactical uses, or disruptions of surveillance technologies to challenge institutional power asymmetries." It follows a rationale of surveilling those doing the surveillance (Marx 2003), fostering accountability, and rendering transparent instances of state agents' brutality and misconduct (Wilson and Serisier 2010). Scholarship identifies countersurveillance with resistance aimed at disturbing surveillance technologies. Following the notion of countersurveillance as political intervention (Monahan 2006), this paper focuses on a particular type of countersurveillance. Namely, countersurveillance as an instrument to push toward a change in policy implementation, bringing closer surveillance studies and social movements' scholarship. In this context, countersurveillance is part of social movements' repertoire of contention (Alimi 2015), aimed at influencing policy implementation (Liévanos 2012). Countersurveillance as video activism has become a commonplace tactic utilized by activists to go beyond resisting/disturbing and to push for a policy change (Harding 1998; Huey, Walby, and Doyle 2006; Lyon 2007; Wilson and Serisier 2010). The goal of this countersurveillance is to bring a change of behavior and/or policy. For example, activists' monitoring of police conduct during protests pushes police officers to restrain their behavior.

Studies of this aspect of countersurveillance have focused primarily on activists using video recording to monitor police actions. Huey, Walby, and Doyle (2006) stress the prevalence of cop-watching groups across the US. Through monitoring on-duty police officers, these groups attempt to influence police officers' behavior, reducing police misconduct. The monitoring is a check on the police backed by activists' capacity to share and post their videos online to communities of resistance and to ignite a public debate (Bayerl and Stoykov 2016; Fernback 2013). Monitoring police officers also takes place during protests when activists document and disseminate online photos, videos, and accounts of the police's actions (Bradshaw 2013; Earl et al. 2013; Hermida and Hernández-Santaolalla 2018). The prevalence of cop-watching activities is part of what was defined as the new police visibility (Goldsmith 2010; Newell 2014). It is a new reality where policing occurs in a setting that is saturated with recording devices. This means that potentially every trivial police activity can be recorded and displayed in the public sphere, attracting attention that is not always positive.

This new police visibility has brought with it a rise in negative perceptions of police work and police officers (Parry 2017; Toch 2012). Policing has changed in response to this extended exposure and scrutiny. Law enforcement officers have developed new tactics and strategies to deal with countersurveillance (Sandhu

and Haggerty 2017; Toch 2012). One such approach is adversarial, where police officers actively try to neutralize countersurveillance. As Marx (2003) noted, neutralization of surveillance is not limited to one side; it can be applied by the police as well. This police reaction has the potential of starting a spiral of surveillance and countersurveillance (Wilson and Serisier 2010; Ullrich and Knopp 2018) and can result in “war on cameras” (Simon 2012; Wall and Linnemann 2014; Wilson and Serisier 2010). Another approach is accommodating, where police officers accept the surveillance and work with or around it (Sandhu 2016). This approach includes avoidance, meaning leaving the scene if cameras are present, or camera-friendly policing, meaning attempting to control how the police are perceived by photographers and viewers (Farmer 2016; Sandhu 2016).

Surveillance and Countersurveillance in the West Bank

To understand when security forces may react in an adversarial or accommodating manner to countersurveillance, I examine a case study of peace activists’ countersurveillance against security forces in checkpoints across the West Bank. Since 1967, the West Bank has been under Israeli military rule. What started as a temporary solution grew to become a permanent situation with growth in settlements and a complex security apparatus. This unstable status fell apart in the 1980s with the First Intifada (Hunter 1993). The 1990s peace-talks alleviated the violence and led to the Oslo Accord. The assassination of Rabin, the Israeli prime minister and architect of the peace-roadmap, crippled the negotiation’s momentum and rekindled violence in this territory (Greenberg 2001; Qurie 2008). Incapable of detaching from the West Bank and suffering from insurrections and terror, the Israeli solution was a broad pacification campaign. A cornerstone of this campaign was a restriction of movement policy based on checkpoints (Handel and Dayan 2017; Harel and Isacharoff 2005; Zureik 2011).

The number of checkpoints across the West Bank has fluctuated in line with the security situation and political agreements (Nanes 2017). According to B’Tselem, an Israeli human rights organization dedicated to ending the occupation, as of January 2017, there are ninety-eight checkpoints in the West Bank, with fifty-nine permanent ones located within the West Bank. These numbers do not include the ad-hoc “flying” checkpoints that, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) 2017 figures, stood at 2,941 (B’Tselem 2017). Checkpoints differ in size, purpose, and procedure. Some are international borders regulating the movement in and out of the West Bank. These types of checkpoints have terminals and accommodate the movement of thousands of people per day. Other checkpoints police vital areas across the West Bank. These inspection points are the main points of contact of the Israeli security forces with the Palestinian population. Finally, the aforementioned ad-hoc flying checkpoints are placed in response to security assessments.

As constant sites of friction, the checkpoints have attracted many critiques both domestically and abroad. They became an emblem of state repression (Longo, Canetti, and Hite-Rubin 2014) and as such became the target of civil society protest. The checkpoints’ widespread presence made them impossible to avoid on any journey throughout the West Bank, encouraging several social movements and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to address the issue.

Human rights and peace organizations operating in the West Bank occasionally organize protests or other activities targeted at the checkpoints. Military Court Watch issues reports on the harsh treatment of children during inspections; Ta’ayush, a Palestinian-Israeli grassroots organization, organizes protests; Shovrim Shtika records testimonies of soldiers; and B’Tselem issues annual reports on the checkpoints. Christ at the Checkpoint Conference (CATC) organizes bi-annual conferences that address the topic, and the Temporary International Presence in Hebron (TIPH) focuses on checkpoint violations in Hebron. Other small international anarchist organizations target some checkpoints as part of their campaigns and agenda. Finally, MACHSOM Watch, an Israeli all-women peace movement, sends observation teams to monitor activity at the checkpoints and engage with the soldiers and the local population, trying to solve problems or to address what they see as injustices (Braverman 2012; Kotef 2011; Kotef and Amir 2007).

Soldiers at Checkpoints

Checkpoints are a political tool designed for the implementation of security policies; in this case, Israeli soldiers implement these policies. Consequently, countersurveillance aimed at the soldiers in this setting has the potential to effectively alter or redefine policy implementation. Change in soldiers' behavior means a change in policy implementation.

Therefore, to understand why countersurveillance works or not within this setting, we need to explore the soldiers' experience and point of view. Operating a checkpoint is a complicated and demanding task. A small group of soldiers, sometimes only four, need to maintain crowd control and manually inspect vehicles and people crossing, while navigating a complicated bureaucracy. This must be done in accordance with regulations and authorizations that the local population have (or do not have) while also treating local emergencies, such as a pregnant woman or an ill child who wishes to cross. The shifts are eight to twelve hours long and often twice a day. Throughout the process, the soldiers' principal concern is security. The proximity to a crowd that usually outnumbers the soldiers exposes them to numerous potential security threats. Between September 2015 and September 2016, twenty-two terrorist attacks took place at West Bank checkpoints. Those included knife attacks and bombs hidden in cars or on people. The soldiers attempt to achieve security by stressing order and discipline in the line and throughout the inspection process. A breach in the order, as the soldiers perceive it, would drive the soldiers to try to regain control and balance.

Given the soldiers' emphasis on order, I hypothesize that their response to the activists' countersurveillance depends on its effect on this order. When the activists' actions disrupt the order, the soldiers will attempt to neutralize the countersurveillance. This can increase the likelihood of the countersurveillance backfiring, as is typical with the "war on cameras" reaction (Simon 2012; Wall and Linnemann 2014; Wilson and Serisier 2010). Inversely, if the activists' countersurveillance is followed by more cooperative measures (Marx 2003), the likelihood the soldiers will accommodate the protestors' demands increases.

Data and Methods

This study uses data from three sources: interviews, reports, and open sources. The first includes thirty-three interviews with Israeli soldiers who manned checkpoints and mounted patrols in the West Bank during the period of 1996–2016. Most respondents are active reservists with multiple deployments and have an average of seven years' experience. Reservists are veterans who deployed for a short period during the year while maintaining a civilian career. Reservists bring to the interviews both the compulsory service and reservist experience. I build on their experience to provide a broad outlook on checkpoint activity, its challenges, and its transformation. Mounted patrol was included since one of its main tasks is the immediate response to checkpoints' problems, including protest. The interviews were carried out in person, by phone, or online between 2014–2016. Each interview was conducted in a semi-structured form (Drever 1995). I used data thematic analysis based on interview questions to identify the trends.

Recruiting respondents proved difficult due to the population's size. Only a segment of veterans is made up of former infantry responsible for checkpoint missions. Furthermore, a fraction of those were deployed in the West Bank, and an even smaller portion manned checkpoints and patrol missions. For most respondents in the sample, this mission was temporary, lasting only for a few months. Finally, the political climate where these data were collected was very delicate, as veterans' accounts of the military's morality during the Second Gaza War (see *Breaking the Silence* 2015) that were released to the public received much negative attention in the Israeli media. Consequently, many potential respondents declined to participate, fearing association with a contested political agenda. To overcome these barriers, snowball sampling was used, building on professional and social networks, as well as locating interviewees during the fieldwork.

The second source is MachsomWatch's daily reports, available on their website and containing over 12,000 daily reports covering the period of 2005–2016. The reports depict MachsomWatch's observation teams' account of events and conditions at the checkpoints visited. The number of observation teams and thus the

number of checkpoints visited varies, corresponding to each observations team's discretion. Accordingly, some days include multiple reports while others include none. The reports are unstructured, informal, and recorded by multiple writers. Mainly, the reports describe the checkpoints' routines; the interactions between the activists, the checkpoints' operators, and local populations; and the outcomes of those interactions.

To measure the impact of activists' intervention on outcomes, I conducted a quantitative textual analysis on a random sub-sample of events from the first six months of MachsomWatch's reports in 2010. I use analysis of verbal behavior (Weintraub 1981; Skinner 2014), focusing on particular verbs to assess dynamics represented in the text. The variables examined are verbs that are associated with the activists' agency: "called," "phoned," "spoke," and "asked." These verbs represent most attempts to influence events or conditions at the checkpoints. To make sure that the verbs are associated with the teams and not with other actors, they were paired with the pronouns "we" and "I."

This sub-sample isolates each word combination and examines three elements. First, it examines if the activist attempted to generate a change that is related to the checkpoint's flow in the described event (e.g., opening a new gate in the checkpoint). To confirm that the action verbs address activists' attempts to influence the checkpoint and not something else, I control for relevancy (see Table 1, column 3). Second, I recorded whether there was a successful change (e.g., the gate was opened, a new lane was opened, the line moved faster). And finally, I recorded the person with whom the members interacted in the event (i.e., soldiers, Palestinians, or a third party).

	# of Events	Relevancy	Successful Change	Actor Addressed by MW Members*	
"We called/I called"	54	50	23	Soldiers/Police/Security Guards	4
				Palestinians	0
				Third Party	50
"We phoned/I phoned"	22	21	14	Soldiers/Police/Security Guards	0
				Palestinians	0
				Third Party	22
"We asked/I asked"	34	8	0	Soldiers/Police/Security Guards	7
				Palestinians	18
				Third Party	5
"We spoke/I spoke"	95	20	4	Soldiers/Police/Security Guards	29
				Palestinians	50
				Third Party	8

*The column excludes options that are not Soldiers/Palestinians/Third Party.

Table 1: Events, their relevancy, and their correlation with change, 2010.

The third type of source examined here is open sources—looking at news articles from the Israeli media, NGOs' publications, media clips and documentaries on the topic, and official government documents. The news articles come from leading Israeli news outlets (i.e., *Haaretz*, *Ynet*, *NRG*, *Walla*, and *Nana10*). The NGOs' publications include *ACRI*, *B'tzelem*, *BWHR*, *MachsomWatch*, and *Taayush*. Online media includes material released by NGOs and reported in the news or in documentaries on the topic that captures the interaction between the activists and the soldiers. Official government documents include the Knesset Committee's protocols and military announcements and letters.

Using these data, I triangulate a comprehensive picture of the countersurveillance's intended and unintended consequences. This presentation is composed of three sections. First, I describe what the activists'

countersurveillance looks like. Next, I examine countersurveillance's intended consequences, focusing on the soldiers' change in behavior. Finally, I examine the soldiers' neutralization tactics, focusing on how they manifest and what triggers them: are they adversarial or are they accommodating?

Checkpoint under Countersurveillance

The West Bank's liminal state, neither independent nor an integral part of Israel, increases the checkpoints' controversy, identifying them as either security measures or as a means of oppression. The checkpoints highlight both one of the Israelis' main concerns, security, and one of the Palestinians' main concerns, discrimination. Accordingly, events at the checkpoints attract attention in traditional and online media and are immediately politicized, placing the soldiers at the eye of the storm and branding them as either heroes or villains.

Peace organizations have regularly protested and monitored the soldiers during their checkpoint routines. Besides making a broader claim regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, activists try to bring about a change in the soldiers' behavior in a way that helps the Palestinians. This trend received much media attention and was quickly politicized, framed as human rights activists helping people in a difficult situation or as anti-Zionist anarchists making the work of the soldiers harder than it already is (Foyer 2013; Kotef 2011; Ravid 2013). An examination of MachsomWatch's reports and open sources shows that activists frequently engage with the soldiers, requesting to open a closed gate, hurry a checkpoint examination, allow someone to pass, or pay attention to people in dire need. By doing so the activists signal to the soldiers that they are watching their actions and are aware of the checkpoint routine.

One of the activists' most effective tools in forcing a change in behavior is their access to supervisory institutions and individuals. The activists learn that soldiers have limited discretion and generally prefer not to decide on many issues, leaving situations unresolved. The activists' solution is to contact the individuals and organizations that can force a change in behavior. This includes the local military headquarters and civilian organizations that are part of the Israeli Civil Administration—the governing body of the West Bank (i.e., District Coordination Liaison Offices, District Coordination Offices, and the Humanitarian Center). I identify those actions as countersurveillance joined with cooperative moves (Marx 2003). As one interviewee, Zamir, explained, “[the activists] have a direct line to the Battalion Commander and the General Officer Commander, people that you don't even dream of talking with, they are second only to God Almighty ... next thing you know, you receive a direct command from above.”

The direct line to supervisors is not secretive, and the security personnel acknowledge that it is one of the activists' countersurveillance tools. The activists enjoy an open line with people in those institutions, asking for or providing information and pressing their agendas. Some of these organizations and activists are associated with government and Knesset officials and are often invited to sit in committee discussions on humanitarian issues (Knesset 2014).

Interviewees described their astonishment at the fact that these activists could converse with their commanders over the phone. From the soldiers' perspective, which places much emphasis on hierarchy and rank, commanders are highly revered and there is a distance, both physical and mental, between the simple soldier and their superiors. The activists' line of communication with the commanders is confusing and frightening since it breaks the ranks and order and invokes the commanders' rage and disapproval. By utilizing this line of communication, the activists signal to the soldiers that they are being surveilled and their mistakes and misconduct are being reported. The soldiers feel the pressure of countersurveillance both through the activists' intervention and via the phone calls from supervisors that demand a solution or require an explanation.

Intended Consequences

Open source data show that, though not always successful, countersurveillance can lead to a positive change in behavior. The activists' pressure and monitoring force the soldiers to comply with freedom of movement issues, such as opening additional gates, allowing individuals or vehicles to pass through checkpoints, or manning more inspection stations. A MachsomWatch report from 2010 shows how pressure leads to change at the checkpoint in a way that improves the local population's experience:

A line of some 30-40 persons winding as far as the edge of the corridor above.... A wait of 20-30 minutes for inhabitants of a small village only a fraction of whose residents have the "right" to cross. Meticulous checks are conducted also for small children who are required to present documents.... Sh. entered to speak to the person checking in. He said: "I check according to orders. We don't mess around. This is how we have to work." But it seems he let people through more quickly thereafter. We called humanitarian headquarters to complain. After a few minutes, we heard the phone in the booth ringing and heard the answer: "I can't work faster, I'm on my own." At the same time, a soldier materialized out of the checkpoint area and started to help with the checking. The harassment of the children stopped, and most crossed quickly without checks. The line grew shorter even though after 7:00 the stream of children grew. (MachsomWatch 2010)

The activists applied pressure on the soldiers twice: first, by engaging them personally over the slow inspection process and, second, by informing the humanitarian headquarters of the checkpoint's status. I identify this tactic as countersurveillance followed by cooperation. It utilizes the military structure to achieve a goal. This pressure drives the soldiers to alter their behavior. The soldiers reorganized and prioritized the checking process allowing the line to move faster.

This is not an isolated incident but rather a systematic pattern of behavior. Activists press the soldiers on particular questions or issues and solve them using the combination of countersurveillance and cooperation. A quantitative textual analysis conducted on agency verbs in MachsomWatch's 2010 daily reports shows that when intervening with or without cooperation, the activists enjoy a success rate of 41% (see Table 1). It means that in about 40% of the cases of intervention, soldiers change their behavior in a way that would accommodate the activists' demands. Further examination shows that most of the successful interventions occur when the combined tactic is used, namely talking with supervisors (a third party at the table).

Unintended Consequences

Being watched and pressed by the activists can also provoke unintended consequences and adversarial reaction. Based on the interviews, generally, security forces hold unfavorable views of the activists. While some see them as a nuisance or people with good intentions that are detached from reality on the ground, others believe they are a threat or a "type of traitor." Accordingly, soldiers frequently try to remove or deter activists, as this account describes:

A soldier from the passage unit regarded us as her enemies. She told the BP officer to take our IDs for inspection and then demanded that we park our car by the side of the road: "You know who they are? - they are watch women!", she yelled at the BP officer and the tone of her voice was full of disgust. She immediately started with a display of power in front of her friends and at our expense. It was no accident that the inspection of our IDs lingered on and on, a fact that made the armed men around us glad. (MachsomWatch 2010)

All sources corroborate that soldiers' responses can include different levels of the use of force to prevent the activists' monitoring. Activists are yelled at and asked to leave, with soldiers stating that it is a closed military zone and that civilians are not allowed inside, regardless of whether that is the truth. Occasionally, the soldiers elevate their level of aggression—arresting, detaining, or inspecting the activists and their

vehicles. On rare occasions, soldiers may even resort to physical violence, arresting or beating the activists (Banai and Shamir 2008; Sharon and Inbari 2007; Walla Editorial Board 2005).

As a countersurveillance neutralization tactic, soldiers can abuse their authority to detain and inspect the activists. The report above demonstrates that kind of dynamic. The report shows that though the soldiers do not identify the activists as threats, they decide to detain and inspect the activists anyway. In the interviews, soldiers mentioned that they would sometimes act out of spite when the activists harassed them to show the activists that they are the boss. In other cases, soldiers use regulations to prevent activists from entering the West Bank, not allowing them to pass the checkpoint (The Association for Civil Rights in Israel 2014; Hass 2013; Taayush 2014).

Occasionally, the unintended consequences can extend beyond the interplay between soldiers and activists, leading to real harm for the local populations that the activists attempt to speak and fight for. The soldiers described how the countersurveillance repeatedly harms the Palestinians. They argue that dealing with the activists distracts them and can lead to slower inspections, creating longer lines for the Palestinians and making the checkpoint experience harder. As interviewee Nir explains: “These guys are disturbing the Palestinians as well. Everything is going OK until these guys [peace activists] arrive. There are more arguments, everything turns complex. The presence of these guys brings the Palestinian an element of support, as if there is someone that speaks for them. However, it is counterproductive since it blocks the checkpoint flow, making everything stand still.”

This describes how the activists’ intervention unintentionally leads to greater obstacles for the Palestinians. The soldiers feel that they need to alter their focus and deal with the activists rather than with checkpoint management. In turn, the soldiers have less time to focus on the inspection process, and consequently the lines become longer. This is one of the most consistent narratives across the interviews and is, at least in part, confirmed by other sources. This effect is most clear when the soldiers neutralize countersurveillance by leveraging their control over the Palestinians to influence the activists. For example, interviewee Dan tells the following story: “there was this case when a vehicle arrived to the checkpoint when MachsomWatch were there. They [the activists] started asking us questions saying it is wrong and asking us not to examine the family at the car. The soldiers told the activists ‘OK, until you guys walk away we won’t let anyone get through the checkpoint.’ Eventually even the Palestinians asked them to leave.” The soldiers tell the activists that their interference will result in harm to the Palestinians. The checkpoint will be closed and no one will be able to pass. All of the people that need to go to work, school, hospitals, or visits to friends won’t be able to get there. The scenario described above, which is also repeated in activists’ reports and documented in news videos, always ends the same way: the activists concede and comply with the soldiers’ requests (Buchbut 2008; Levine 2008; Kaniuk 2007). This response counters the activists’ goals since it results in a situation in which their countersurveillance causes harm to the people they are attempting to help.

In summary, in the case of monitoring soldiers at West Bank’s checkpoints, countersurveillance has unintended consequences. The soldiers use neutralization tactics to regain control and order. Their actions are an attempt to discipline the activists, demarcating the boundaries of order and hierarchy at the checkpoint. This manifests as either pressing or mistreating the activists or, alternatively, as collective punishment that hurts the Palestinians and forces the activists to concede.

Thus far, the analysis has shown that countersurveillance works but that it can also produce counterproductive results. Those results are potentially so problematic that activists may question the relevance of countersurveillance in some cases. After all, if intervening causes more harm than good, it may not be the right tactic. Therefore, the principal question these results raise is: what triggers the nature of these soldiers’ responses? Understanding that may help shed light on how activists can avoid counterproductive countersurveillance.

Breaking the Order

From the soldiers' perspective, the activists are problematic elements that make the already complex and tedious checkpoint routine more complicated and even more dangerous. The moment activists intervene, the soldiers feel less in control because a rogue element in their domain breaks rank and disturbs the "sacred" order. Forced to deal with the activists instead of the crowd, the soldiers feel that they are exposed to security threats. Those feelings are exacerbated when the levels of disruption increase. For example, interviewee Nir describes the experience saying:

The checkpoint's flow can be smooth; you just inspect and let people pass to work and occasionally there are those [that] require an exhaustive inspection. But most of the time when these guys arrive the flow stops. It is as if everything switches to an agitated mode. If 5 minutes ago everything is businesslike, in a second everything becomes annoying. Imagine a situation where someone wants to go to work and you discuss it with him and come with a solution both sides can agree on. Now imagine that in the same dynamic you have an activist standing right in your face, in your personal space eye-to-eye, yelling at you "why won't you let him pass? Why do you do that? Why won't you do this? Look at what you are doing"... looking back at that situation I genuinely don't know how I tolerated it.

More disruptive countersurveillance that breaks the order, such as the case above, is likely to lead to harsher responses. The interviews and reports indicate that countersurveillance that increases pressure also increases the likelihood of backlash. The soldiers were mostly upset about direct intervention—when activists get inside the checkpoint or soldiers' personal space to intervene as moderators or on behalf of the local population. In a MachsomWatch video clip released to the media, an activist presses the soldiers by taking their pictures, entering their private space, entering places soldiers maintain she is not allowed to enter, and generally arguing with the soldier. The film shows the soldiers becoming increasingly agitated and eventually calling military police to arrest her (Banai and Shamir 2008).

In contrast, an indirect intervention, such as talking with a superior in the command chain or simply observing from a safe distance, did not raise the same level of animosity. In his interview, Avner said that "It is important to mention that if they (the activists) were there but did not disturb us... [if] they came with their car and talked with the Palestinians, giving them water bottles or standing far [away] I did not mind it.... but when they shove the camera in your face, argue with you and getting inside the checkpoint it is than you don't do your work properly." Avner mentioned that if the activists were merely observing and taking pictures from a distance, he did not mind them. According to him, animosity began when activists broke the order of the checkpoint—violating personal space, arguing, or entering the checkpoint. An examination of the activists' reports and news media support this assumption. It shows that in many interactions, the soldiers insist that the activists maintain a safe distance from the checkpoint and the soldiers. It seems that, for the soldiers, as long the activists are in their controlled location at the checkpoint, they can be tolerated. At some checkpoints there is also a line marked on the ground signifying to the activists where to stand, and the soldiers constantly insist that the activists do not cross it (Banai and Shamir 2008; Levine 2008).

Activists working with individuals within the chain of command is something the soldiers may not like but can understand. It is an operation within their order. The activists enjoy a success rate of roughly 41% when intervening in a checkpoint's dynamics, helping the local population with solving immediate problems. However, an examination of those cases shows that the successful outcome occurred mostly when they operated within the checkpoints' regulations. The data shows that 71% of interventions were directed at the supervisor rather than the soldiers. Addressing supervisors also accounted for over 90% of the cases labeled as successful. The tactic of applying direct pressure on the soldiers was responsible for less than 10% of the successful episodes. These results indicate that countersurveillance followed by cooperation with the soldiers' social order is more effective since it reduces the level of animosity of the security forces involved (see Table 1).

The desire to break the order comes not only from the activists but also from the local population. The soldiers described how the activists' countersurveillance provokes the Palestinians to engage more with the soldiers. The soldiers report that the Palestinians act out for the cameras, that they feel "empowered," "more daring," or "become argumentative or aggressive." They feel that there is a crowd to witness their unfair situation and therefore an opportunity for them to express their grievances more explicitly. Richard described this type of occurrence in his interview:

[When the activists are there] the Palestinians are trying to exploit the decline in our alertness to smuggle things... They exploit the fact that you are busy with the peace organizations to pass without permission or to smuggle things in their belongings.... it gives the Palestinians more options if they don't get what they want, so they can turn to an additional element in order to get a better deal... there is the DCL that is in charge of treating special cases and answering allegations and requests in a very professional manner, and instead the Palestinians turn to the organizations.

Beyond becoming more aggressive and argumentative, the Palestinians reexamine and try to redefine the checkpoints' rules and norms. News and activists' video clips illustrate this behavior, showing that some people act out after noticing cameras—talking to them and whatever potential audience there may be (Efroni 2013; Kerman 2004; Shuv and Amir 2009). From the soldiers' perspective, their own preoccupation with the activists allows the Palestinians to challenge their authority. Likewise, the activists' intervention gives the Palestinians an informal option to promote their requests and, in the process, invites more pressure and breakdown of the checkpoint order. Pressed by the activists and, later, by the local population, the soldiers feel they are losing control of the situation causing them to adopt an adversarial approach and respond with harsher measures.

In summary, the checkpoints' countersurveillance spurs soldiers' neutralization tactics when the countersurveillance is too disruptive to the operational order from the soldiers' perspective. Regardless of whether the pressure comes from the activists or the local population, it prompts the soldiers' feelings of losing control. In response, the soldiers react, pushing back on the activists and the local population by acting in an adversarial manner (Wilson and Serisier 2010; Wall and Linnemann 2014). Inversely, when the checkpoints' countersurveillance is accompanied by cooperation, meaning it takes place within the operational order, it is more likely to lead to the soldiers' compliance and an accommodating approach (Sandhu and Haggerty 2017; Toch 2012).

Discussion and Conclusion

As an empowering civic engagement act, countersurveillance has gained popularity among activists and the media. It represents the people's voice and demand for accountability and transparency from authorities. Yet, despite its increasing popularity and democratic importance, our understanding of its implications is still lacking. Building on earlier work (Marx 2003; Monahan 2006; Sandhu 2016; Wilson and Serisier 2010), this paper addresses some core issues related to the outcome of countersurveillance, examining how it influences soldiers' policing at checkpoints and outlining when it works and when it backfires. By triangulating data from interviews with security personnel, reports from activists, and open sources, this paper illustrates the complexities of how countersurveillance operates in shaping security operations. It also explores what shapes the likelihood of achieving the goals commonly associated with countersurveillance, namely if it induces compliance with the activists' demands. It also examines the unintended consequences of countersurveillance, looking at cases where soldiers' responses caused harm to the activists or the people they tried to help. Lastly, the paper clarifies the conditions that lead to the intended or unintended consequences of countersurveillance. The results suggest three general themes for discussion.

First, this study clarifies when countersurveillance that is aimed at policy implementation change works effectively and when it is counterproductive. Essentially, success depends on how the activists' actions fall within the powerholders' sense of order. If the activists' actions are aimed at breaking or challenging the

powerholders' sense of order, the likelihood of a harsh response, in the line of "war on cameras" (Wilson and Serisier 2010; Simon 2012; Wall and Linnemann 2014), and counterproductive outcome increases. In the case examined here, this occurs when activists break the order at the checkpoints by physically intervening in the inspection process or demanding soldiers disregard regulations. Likewise, when the countersurveillance includes cooperative measures (Marx 2003), which maintain the sense of order, the likelihood of positive outcome increases. This was demonstrated through the activists' communication with the soldiers' supervisory institutions and individuals.

Second, paradoxically, when operating within the powerholders' sense of order, this type of countersurveillance can potentially reinforce the injustices the activists are protesting against. While effective in dealing with specific issues of injustice, which is very important, the cooperative countersurveillance (Marx 2003) fails to challenge the system that produces the injustice. In the case examined, the activists' cooperation with the supervisory institutions does not eliminate the checkpoints or the Israeli surveillance mechanism. Instead, it helps with making it more "humane" and attentive. Given that confrontational approaches do not work and are often counterproductive, the dilemma activists face is difficult and can explain this system of control's endurance.

Third, the findings of this study expand on a broader discussion about whether countersurveillance can discipline the police (Brown 2015; Sandhu 2016). The paper shows that there is a change in behavior contingent on the method of countersurveillance and its relations to the soldiers' sense of order. However, similar to Sandhu's (2016) argument, it seems the change is in the soldiers' behavior and doesn't necessarily represent a disciplining effect. There is no indication that the soldiers internalize the surveillance. The change is forced on them from above when activists use the system against itself and the soldiers respond to the order.

This research addresses countersurveillance's outcomes. Nonetheless, the setting and countersurveillance type represent a limited sample and require further investigation and development. In contrast to most examples for countersurveillance, this case draws upon the digital, yet still primarily takes place in the physical sphere. It examines soldiers as a case for security forces and not the usual topic of police forces. Furthermore, the sample of interviewed soldiers presents its own limitations as it covers a period of time beginning in 1996 and spanning over twenty years. Much has changed during this period in the setting and technologies available and the soldiers' training. Finally, in a complicated interaction that includes soldiers, activists, supervisors, and the local populations, this study accounts for only two (the soldiers and activists), raising questions of how locals view surveillance and their contribution to these dynamics. These limitations invite further research that should test the theory presented and examine its generalizability.

Countersurveillance is more than an academic term. It is a description of the civic engagement we regularly witness performed by individuals, investigative journalists, and social movements. It has become an important part of the dialogue between citizens and governments. Therefore, it is critical for us to better understand when it succeeds and when it fails. This study highlights the theoretical and policy-related aspects of countersurveillance. Its most significant contribution is demonstrating a pattern for when and why countersurveillance aimed at changing policy implementation succeeds and fails. Understanding what triggers a harsh response by powerholders is important for theoretical reasons, as it fills the gap in our understanding of countersurveillance outcomes. It is also important for policy reasons, for law enforcement personnel and activists alike, as understanding the dynamics of the interaction makes it easier for the parties involved to avoid violence and loss of control.

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