WOMEN SOLDIERS AND CITIZENSHIP IN ISRAEL

Gendered Encounters with the State

Edna Lomsky-Feder
and Orna Sasson-Levy

Women Soldiers and Citizenship in Israel

Women's military service in Israel presents a compelling case study to explore the meaning of gendered citizenship. Lomsky-Feder and Sasson-Levy compellingly argue that women's mandatory military service during an active ongoing violent conflict, occurring at a formative age, becomes an initiation process into gendered citizenship, where the women learn their marginal place in relation to the state. By analyzing the life stories and testimonies of young women from varied social backgrounds, the authors ask: How do young women soldiers manage their expectations vis-à-vis the hyper-masculine military institution? How do women experience their gendered citizenship as daily embodied and emotional practices in different military roles? How do women soldiers understand and cope with daily sexual harassment? And finally, how do women cope with the gendered silencing mechanisms of the violence of war and occupation, and what can women soldiers know about this violence when they choose to speak out?

The book offers a new conceptualization of citizenship as gendered encounters with the state. These encounters can be analyzed through three interrelated concepts: Multi-level contracts; Contrasting gendered experiences; Dis/acknowledging the military's (external and internal) violence. Applying these three thought-provoking concepts, the authors depict the intricate, non-deterministic relationships between citizenship, military service and multiple gendered experiences.

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1 Theorizing women's encounters with the state

Imagine Tali, a 17-year-old Israeli high school student, who loves pop music (especially Beyoncé and Rihanna), chats with friends on Snapchat and on her cellphone, and is busy studying for her final exams. But during her last years of high school, while her American and European peers are preoccupied with college applications, Tali prepares for her mandatory military service. She reports to the IDF (Israel Defense Forces) recruitment center for preliminary assessment exams, completes a series of occupational exams, and, finally, weighs her assignment options. Upon graduating 12th grade, she is conscripted by law. She may be satisfied, having landed a position she aspired to, or she might be deeply disappointed, having been assigned a role which, to her mind, is not prestigious or challenging enough. She might serve in a traditionally feminine role (as secretary or welfare non-commissioned officer [NCO]) and be surrounded mostly by women, or she may serve in a so-called "masculine role" (such as infantry instructor, border patrol soldier, or pilot) and spend her military service mostly with men. Either way, as a soldier, she will be subjected to, or witness, some form of the military's violence. Such experiences are a key part of the normative life narrative of most Jewish women in Israel, where military service is considered a defining life experience, a marker of adulthood, and a major step in negotiating citizenship.

The military is one of the main arenas for civic participation, since it is the institution most closely identified with the state, both in its ideologies and its practices (Enloe 1988). Thus we can conceptualize the military as a "contact zone" (Linke 2006) where the citizen and the state meet. The encounters with the state via the military are especially significant in light of the increasing elusiveness of state apparatuses in late modernity (Eckert 2011). In the current era, we are not always aware of state laws and state institutions and how they regulate our daily life. However, men and women who serve in the military know very well that it is a state institution (unlike schools or hospitals for example, where the state is not present, or its presence is less visible), and they are explicitly aware of the link between military service, constructions of citizenship, and national belonging. The encounters with the state are always shaped by gender ideologies and interests, which are especially pronounced in the military, a hyper-masculine organization. Thus, military service constructs a tight and conspicuous link between

citizenship and gender. For young women such as Tali, military service can be seen as a gendered rite of passage through which they learn to become gendered citizens. Hence, we analyze military service as a citizenship-conferring institution and focus on how women experience "the actual spaces in which citizenship is expressed" (Jones and Gaventa 2002, 19).

Though more and more women serve in Western militaries and their service involves multiple and even contrasting ramifications, most of the literature on the militarization of women's lives focuses on women as victims of the military's violence; as mothers, caretakers and spouses; as refugees; and as victims of rape or sexual assault, as well as on the increase in domestic violence and the trafficking of women in war zones (Kaiser 2016, Rehn and Sirleaf 2002). Other literature highlights the prominent role of women in anti-war and peace movements (Cockburn 2007, Helman 1999a, Rowe 2016). These two bodies of knowledge share a common perception that women are not agents of military violence.

Against this backdrop, our book queries the impact of the militarization of women who serve in state militaries, women who could be viewed both as agents of militarization and its victims at the same time. Only recently have feminist scholars turned their critical gaze upon women who are soldiers, and they focus mainly on women who take part in non-state armed forces as guerrilla warriors, freedom fighters and/or terrorists (Alison 2009, MacKenzie 2012, Parashar 2014, Sjoberg and Gentry 2007, Viterna 2013). These scholars deconstruct the dichotomy between men-victimizers and women-victims, but they hardly analyze women's military participation as agents of the nation state.

Our research joins the scholars who examine the meaning of women's military service in Western state armed forces. The literature in the field concentrates on four subjects. The first is the human power policies regarding women's integration into Western militaries and their consequences (see e.g., Basham 2013, Heinecken 2016, Kümmel 2002a, Kümmel 2002b, Woodward and Winter 2006). Helena Carrieras (2006) and Lana Obradovic (2014) offer a comparative approach to understanding the integration of women in North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) military forces, and consider the national, regional and international factors influencing decisions about women's participation in the military. A second dominant body of research looks at cultural discourses regarding women as agents of organized violence, deconstructing the taken-for-granted connection between women, care, and empathy (Parashar 2012, Penttinen 2011, Sjoberg and Gentry 2007). The third subject that occupies many scholars is the experiences and consequences of sexual harassment in the military as a distinctive experience of women soldiers (Basham 2009, Butler and Schmidtke 2010, Harris and Firestone 2010, Hillman 2009, Jeffreys 2007, Quinn 2002). Sexual harassment is also one of the major issues in the study of women war veterans (e.g., Street, Vogt and Dutra 2009), which brings us to the fourth field of study, which examines how US military women have affected and been affected by the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Eager (Eager 2014) examines the experience of women service personnel in these wars, focusing on the impact of combat experience, such as homelessness and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), on women war veterans (see also, Yuhl

2016). In particular, Eager looks at the new phenomenon of women casualties of war, analyzing their life stories and thus giving voice to the voiceless.

Similarly to some of the above-mentioned works, our research focuses on women's gendered, embodied and emotional military experience. However, we examine these experiences through the prism of encounters with the state and propose to analyze the women's military experiences as an initiation to gendered citizenship.

Hence, the purpose of our book is to explore women's understanding of citizenship via the varied and shifting meanings they ascribe to their military service. It is important to note, at this early stage, that women do not constitute a homogeneous group: Their encounters with the state are always shaped by the intersection of gender, class, and ethnicity, and their specific role in the military. Thus, women offer various and even contrasting narratives describing their pathway into gendered citizenship.

We elicit these narratives by analyzing the life stories and testimonies of over 120 young (27–40) Israeli women of varying social backgrounds who served in various military roles. Based on the women's rich and vivid retrospective stories, we focus on three questions:

1. How do young women of different intersectional groups manage their expectations vis-à-vis the state? In more detail, we will ask what the interpretive schemas are that shape the expectations of women regarding military service, how these expectations are translated into (formal and non-formal) contracts with the military organization, and how the women learn to negotiate with the state over the boundaries of their contracts.
2. How do women experience their citizenship as daily embodied and emotional practices in accordance with their military roles? We will explore the interpretation of these military experiences in contrasting gendered military environments.
3. How do women experience and understand the power of the state through their encounter with the external violence (war and occupation) and the internal violence (sexual harassment) of the military? We will ask whether and when women can recognize military violence, and what options are available to them to cope with it morally and pragmatically.

Thus, in studying the link between citizenship, gender, and military service, we focus on a micro approach, which emerges from the participants' point of view. In other words, we investigate women's encounters with the state through an analysis of their daily experiences during military service.

Gendered citizenship

Nation states carry a masculine emblem, which originates, first and foremost, from their history: the vast majority of nation states emerged out of armed conflicts, whether civil wars or wars of independence against the yoke of colonialist

conquerors (Nagel 1998). The struggle to achieve independence and autonomy was associated with the struggle to acquire masculine stature. As Cynthia Enloe showed, nation states have typically sprung from masculinized memory, masculinized humiliation, and masculinized hope (Enloe 2000a, 45). Indeed, all nationalist movements tend to embrace patriarchal tradition as a legitimating basis for nation-building (Nagel 1998). These traditions, real or invented (Hobsbawm and Ranger 2012), maintain the entrenched nature of masculine privilege and the close connection between nationalism, masculinity, and war (Nagel 1998, Yuval-Davis and Anthias 1989).

Even today, despite the growing challenges of global and transnational trends, the nation state maintains its power (Shachar 2007), its patriarchal regime continues to remain stable, and many states continue to promote militaristic ideologies (Kronsell and Svedberg 2011). Nevertheless, states are not homogenous, and their gender regimes are not static. Neo-liberal globalization processes changed the character of states, restricted their ability to set national boundaries (e.g., for currency, territory, and population), and reshaped their power vis-à-vis their citizens. Under the prevailing power of globalization, the state now serves market powers, which compete with the needs of the nation and its citizens. These processes of change did alter the gender regime in many societies, but at the same time, they did not reduce the gender inequality, particularly in the areas of employment and finance (Yuval-Davis 2011). Thus, state gender regimes go through both processes of change and continuity. Therefore, the state should not be viewed as a monolithic entity directed from above. Rather, contemporary scholars call for an analysis that will "uncover how states are differentiated entities, composed of multiple gender arrangements" (Haney 2000, 641). That being the case, questions about the boundaries of citizenship and, in particular, debates over women's status as citizens continue to be acute in many current states.

Citizenship is the main institution that bonds the individual and the state. Ever since the French revolution, citizenship has been associated with the fight to break down barriers of legal inequality (Shachar 2007, 367). Yet, the two dominant discourses of citizenship—the liberal and the republican discourses—construct gendered hierarchies while shaping gendered subjectivities.

The liberal perception of citizenship has been defined as "a bundle of entitlements and obligations which constitutes individuals as fully-fledged members of a socio-political community, providing them with access to scarce resources" (Turner and Hamilton 1994, 1). This liberal conception of citizenship, which (supposedly) grants equal rights to all those who enjoy full membership in the community (Marshall 1950), is determined according to formal criteria, either according to origin (*jus sanguine*) or place of birth *(jus soli*). The citizen, according to the liberal discourse, is a passive bearer of rights, which he is entitled to regardless of his participation in state institutions, including military service. Thus, this is the most inclusive and egalitarian discourse of citizenship, yet the liberal approach is gender and race blind and constructs civil rights in accordance with a white-man model of citizen. In this, it reproduces gendered hierarchies. Even today, women are denied some of the basic civil rights accorded to men, such as the right to

protection and control of one's body, sexuality, and reproduction (MacKinnon 1979); the right to equal pay and welfare payments that depend on full-time work and income; and the right to equal political representation (Walby 1994).

Against this liberal discourse, the republican perception of citizenship envisages the state as a moral community with a shared purpose that supersedes the individual (Shafir 1998). Accordingly, citizenship is defined by an individual's participation and contribution to the "common good" of the community, as is the level of civil rights that he or she enjoys. More often than not, the individual's participation is valued mostly when he contributes to state security through military service. This is especially true in militaristic societies such as Israel, where military service is seen as the incarnation of citizenship, since it allows the individual (mostly men) to prove his willingness to sacrifice himself for the good of the country (Sasson-Levy 2002). In such societies, military service, which delineates the boundaries of the political collective, is perceived as the fundamental expression of the individual's commitment to the state, and civic virtue is constructed in terms of military virtue (Helman 1997). Hence, the citizen-soldier ideal of the civic republican tradition fuses military service and participatory citizenship (Snyder 1999, 2).

This militarization of citizenship has clear gendered consequences, as it creates a hierarchical gendered structure of belonging to the state (Snyder 1999). The gendered hierarchy of republican citizenship was preserved by banning women from expressing their commitment to the state through "performance on the battlefield" (Pateman 1989, 11). This exclusion was justified, as Carol Pateman has shown, by patriarchal perceptions of women's bodies and sexualities (such as women's monthly period, fear of rape, and physical capabilities). Based on their embodiment and sexuality, women were not perceived as men's partners in the ultimate obligation to the state, and therefore were not entitled to the same rights and privileges.

In this argument, Pateman (1989) revealed the hidden link between the private gendered body and public perceptions of citizenship and deconstructed the ostensibly universal and neutral image of the citizen. Women, she argued, are "incorporated into public life … as 'women,' that is, as beings whose sexual embodiment prevents them from enjoying the same political standing as men" (Pateman 1989, 4). Thus despite citizenship's claim to universalism, it was drawn up according to a quintessentially male template, so that women's exclusion was integral to the theory and the practice of citizenship (Lister 2001).

We learn from Pateman's analysis that the military's gendered ideology and policy constructs unequal citizenship. However, in this book, we wish to go beyond the policy and learn about women's multiple embodied military experiences in order to understand how these experiences shape women's gendered citizenship.

By emphasizing practices and meanings, we follow critical scholars who have argued that citizenship is not merely a legal entity but also comprises political, economic, and cultural practices (Werbner and Yuval-Davis 1999). New approaches call for "a sociologically informed definition of citizenship in which

the emphasis is less on legal rules and more on norms, practices, meanings and identities" (Isin and Turner 2002, 4). Thus, they call for analyzing citizenship as a "lived experience" from the perspective of the embodied citizen (Kabeer 2005). This perspective expands the meaning of the concept of citizenship, as it examines the link between rights and obligations from the point of view of the subject citizen, who acts in various sites of daily life wherein citizenship is defined and redefined again and again (Jones and Gaventa 2002, Lister 2007, Lomsky-Feder and Rapoport 2008, Ong 1996, Plummer 2001, Roseneil 2013). The analysis of citizenship as a "lived experience," which highlights a grounded understanding of citizenship as everyday embodied practices, cannot ignore seeing the citizen as always already gendered (see e.g., Kershaw 2005).

Based on these approaches, we question how women understand and negotiate rights, responsibilities, belonging, and participation (Lister 2007) in everyday life during their military service. By looking at daily gendered practices of women soldiers from various social groups who served in diverse military roles, we examine citizenship as a lived experience that places the agent in the center through the lens of difference and diversity.

The military as an extreme case of a gendered state institution

Militaries are perceived as masculine institutions not only because they are comprised mostly of men but also because they constitute a major arena for the construction of masculine identities, men's domination, and women's exclusion (Higate 2003, Hutchings 2008). Though we agree that militaries are hyper-masculine organizations, we cannot ignore that today's militaries' gender regimes are not as coherent as in the past. Thus, we adopt Joan Acker's (2006) term of "inequality regimes" to analyze the intersection of gender, race, and class in structuring divisions of power in organizations. Militaries' inequality regimes are shaped today by competing models of inclusion and exclusion of women, amounting to processes of re-gendering and de-gendering the military (Sasson-Levy and Amram-Katz 2007). Therefore, women's civic participation in the military is rife with contradictions and carries with it dual meanings and consequences.

For most of the twentieth century, Western militaries maintained strict gender differentiations that upheld identification with and valorization of masculinity (Tallberg 2009). Gendered distinctions and hierarchies were preserved through various segregation mechanisms: men were conscripted, while women served as volunteers and/or in separate women's corps; women's rate of participation in the military was limited; and women were relegated to specific "feminine" roles and excluded from combat roles. Training frameworks (basic training, officers' training, professional courses) were gender segregated. Military promotion depended on combat service, and as long as women were barred from combat roles, their advancement in the military was

formally restricted. Hence, the militaries' ceiling on women's promotion was made of cement, not of glass (Sasson-Levy 2011a).

On a cultural level, dominant definitions of the military often conflate with hegemonic masculine culture, which is based upon the exclusion and sometimes the oppression of women (Carreiras 2006, Connell 1995, Enloe 2000a). Basham (2013) contends that women's bodies are "continually re-inscribed as 'beautiful,' 'sexy,' 'reproductive,' 'weak and leaky'" (Basham 2013, 49). These material-discursive representations "enable men to continue to claim 'legitimate' authority over war-making and war-waging" (ibid.), while regulating women's embodied everyday experiences in military life. This deeply masculinist culture allows men, and sometimes even encourages them, to behave in aggressive and chauvinistic ways that are not acceptable in civilian society (Sasson-Levy 2003b). For example, the language used by soldiers, the pin-up pictures in military offices, and the vulgar songs soldiers sing during marches frequently convey chauvinistic content that denigrates women or portrays them as sexual objects.

Together with the military's gendered division of labor, this culture creates and preserves dichotomous, hierarchical, and essentialist conceptions of femininity and masculinity. Indeed, Morgan's (1994, 165) claim that "despite far-reaching political, social and technological changes, the warrior seems to maintain his status as a key symbol of masculinity" seems to be accurate 20 years on as well. The identification of masculinity with combat service granted men the preferred status of the ultimate citizen and was thus the source of stormy feminist debate regarding women's participation in the military.

The liberal feminist approach, emphasizing gender sameness, believed that women's full and equal participation in the public sphere was the path to gender equality. Women would attain equal rights, this approach argued, only through equal responsibilities and obligations, and thus they must serve in the military and prove their loyalty to the state (Katzenstein 1999, Peach 1996, Stiehm 1989). This approach insisted that it was a woman's right to perform martial service given that the military is the *sine qua non* of full citizenship and thus equality (Feinman 2000).

In contrast, other feminist schools of thought rejected the idea of achieving equality through military service. Cultural feminists have accentuated gender differences, claiming that women have a distinctive approach to ethics based on caring, responsibility, and relationality (Gilligan 1993), and therefore women should not cooperate with a violent institution (Peach 1996). Radical feminists oppose this essentialist perception of women (Parashar 2012, Penttinen 2012). Instead, emphasizing gender power relations and the subjection of women, they see the military as a deeply masculinist organization that relies on the oppression of women as well as other marginalized groups (Cockburn 2011, Enloe 1988, Feinman 2000). For them, women who join the military are merely strengthening a fundamentally immoral and violent institution. Moreover, the struggle to include women in the military might serve to divert attention from the military's immoral purposes and functions (Robbins and Ben-Eliezer 2000).

This feminist debate took place towards the end of the twentieth century, when the nation state and its central institutions were still very dominant. Currently, the role of the military as a signifier of "good citizenship" is gradually changing. The end of the world wars that characterized the twentieth century, and the shift in Western countries from mandatory conscription to "all-volunteer forces" (a euphemism for professional militaries), have undermined the hegemonic status of the citizen-soldier. The shift to professional militaries implied a dramatic increase in women's enlistment rates and the integration of women in roles that were previously considered to be "masculine" (Burk and Espinoza 2012, Carreiras 2006, Haltiner 1998). The increased integration of women into Western forces was hastened by a series of supra-national developments, such as the ruling of the European Court of Justice (2000)[1] that EU countries must implement gender-egalitarian recruitment policies; UN Resolution 1325, which acknowledges the importance of assimilating a gendered approach in peace making and conflict resolution; and NATO's adoption of a gender mainstreaming approach (Sasson-Levy 2011a). The last stage in this process was the declaration by US Defense Secretary Ashton B. Carter on December 2015 that all positions in the US forces, including all combat roles, would be open to women.

In addition, many Western militaries have shifted from traditional warring to mostly peacekeeping missions and the policing of civilian populations. This shift has caused "womanly skills," which were perceived as disruptive in the past, to be seen as necessary and worthwhile for military operations (Kronsell and Svedberg 2011). To conclude, contemporary militaries' gender regimes are no longer homogenous and coherent structures but rather are highly dynamic fields operating under the influence of conflicting pressures and opposing forces.

In light of these significant changes, we seek to discard conspiratorial notions of gendered power relations in our analysis of the military and examine the organization as one comprised of multiple gender arrangements (Amram-Katz forthcoming, Haney 2000). Most feminist analysis of women's military service tends to assume a binary perspective, arguing that military service is either a mechanism for social mobilization and equal citizenship, or a reification of martial citizenship and a form of cooperation with a patriarchal and violent institution. We reject these two schemas of the military as too simplistic. Instead, we argue that the military's "inequality regimes" (Acker 2006) both create varied opportunities and set obstacles for different intersectional groups of women, thereby generating diverse encounters with the state.

Moreover, not only is the military not a binary dichotomous organization, neither is gender a unified binary category. We adopt an intersectionality approach which claims that subjects are always situated at the intersection of several axes of power and simultaneously experience several basic systems of inequality: primarily gender, class, race or ethnicity, and sexuality (Collins 2002, Crenshaw 1991). There is no separate meaning of any facet of these social categories, as they are mutually constitutive in any concrete historical moment (Yuval-Davis 2011). The differential intersection of gender, class, and race/ethnicity creates various groups of women who experience military life in very different ways.

Intersectionality theory requires a change in research questions. Instead of looking at "women" as unified group in the military, the critical questions are "Who serves where?" "What is the subjective experience of each gendered and classed group during military service?" "Who gains from the gender/class structure of the military, who loses, and how is the structure maintained?"

Women as "outsiders within" the military

Alongside the strong emphasis that we give to differences between various groups of women in our analysis, we claim that the experience of all women soldiers, whether they are conscripted into the "people's army" or enlisted in a professional military, is colored by their positioning as "outsiders within" the military organization. Despite the increase in the number of women who enlist in militaries around the world, integrating women in the military is not a simple or harmonious process. The very gradual integration of women into Western militaries in the last 20 years has not altered the masculinist cultural model of military organizations, although at times it has changed its face. Research on the US all-volunteer force (AVF), the British army, and the Scandinavian and Canadian militaries all indicate that women are not fully accepted as equals and often encounter hostility and resistance (Basham 2013, Cohn 2000, Haaland 2011, Kronsell and Svedberg 2011, Sion 2009, Winslow and Dunn 2002). The construction of feminine difference as inherently problematic permeates military culture from one end to the other (Woodward and Winter 2006, 58). Integrating women into the military in general, and into combat roles in particular, seems to pose a threat to the military's collective sense of itself as a masculine institution (Woodward and Winter 2004). Thus, women are often confronted by formal structural barriers and by non-formal exclusion mechanisms that are more difficult to expose and change (Sasson-Levy and Amram-Katz 2007). Therefore, women are perceived as exceptions and as requiring special accommodation, with the masculine always constituting the standard. Military organizations consistently resist change in their gender regimes, and as such they could be considered "extremely gendered" organizations (Sasson-Levy 2011b).

We argue that in this masculinist organizational culture, women are located in the dual position of "outsider within." Patricia Hill Collins (2002) suggested the term *outsiders within* to signify black women who share a sense of a dual identity as they work in a white community while at the same time are being marginalized within it. By definition, this dual position contains a number of inherent contradictions for the individual. In the same vein, women in the military serve in some of the central military roles (for example, in intelligence and in combat) but are often excluded from the inner circles of knowledge and from the camaraderie of men. They feel needed and at the same time they are denigrated. They gain some symbolic capital for their contribution to the collective good, but they do not feel that the service grants them a political voice and the right to demand rewards for their service. This ongoing movement in and out—striving to join the closed men's club, and repeatedly being rejected from it—positions them as "outsiders

within" both inside and outside the military core. This experience is dynamic and fluid—it can change from one role to another, from one intersectional group to another, and from one historical time to another. Yet, it always contains internal contradictions that characterize women's military service. The position of women in the military as "outsiders within" shapes their encounters with the state, which are wrought with ambivalence and contradictions.

Key concepts and outline of the book

From reading and analyzing the retrospective interviews with women soldiers, we extracted three key concepts that give meaning to women's lived experience of citizenship via their military service: *Gendered multi-level contracts*, *contrasting gendered experiences*, and *dis/acknowledging violence*. Together, these key concepts, which mediate between the micro level analyses of individual's experience and macro level examination of state ideology and policy, serve as the basis for the main chapters of the book.

Gendered multi-level contracts

The contract in the sociological sense is a principle that organizes mutual expectations, obligations, and norms of behavior in both formal and informal ways. According to Rubin (2012), the contract derives its meanings from intersectional cultural schemes that link the individual to the larger social structure.

We argue that the citizens' contract for performing mandatory military service is always gendered and consists of three interrelated levels: The *civic contract* defines the link between the citizen's rights and obligations; the *group contract* reflects the specific needs, interests, and privileges of a given intersectional group; and the *individual contract* manifests the concrete negotiation between the individual actor and the military organization based on his/her personal qualities (such as motivation, physical fitness, and intelligence). Together, these three levels of the contract shape the citizen's differential aspirations, hopes, and expectations from the service (Lomsky-Feder and Ben-Ari 2013).

In chapter three, we explore the various meanings that the contracts between the women and the military obtain at the intersection of gender, class, and ethnicity. We show that women's interpretation of their military service is shaped by the nature of the gendered multi-level contract, and equally importantly, by whether this contract is honored or breached. Specifically, we offer a comparison between lower-class women and middle-class women who served as secretaries. Although they served in the same role, in retrospect, the two groups interpreted their experience in vividly opposing ways. Women of the lower class found their military service to be an empowering experience, while for middle-class women it was a difficult and humiliating experience. These opposing interpretations, as we will show, originate from the divergent intersectional cultural schemes that give meaning to their multi-level contracts with the military, and from their perception of whether the contracts were fulfilled or violated.

To highlight the value of the concept of the gendered multi-level contract, we finish this chapter with the story of Jewish orthodox women in the military. For these women, who serve against the edicts of the religious establishment, the contract is to mobilize military service to promote change in their original civilian community. Hence, the concept of multi-level contract enables us to identify the varied encounters between intersectional groups and the state.

Contrasting gendered experiences

The second of the key concepts, *contrasting gendered experiences*, is at the heart of chapters four and five. Despite the fact that the military is a hyper-masculine organization, it actually offers women a wide range of opportunities for gendered performances—at times a broader range than the civilian labor market can offer. The entirety of the experiences of "doing gender" in the various military roles creates "contrasting gendered experiences" in terms of body, sexuality, and emotion management. We demonstrate the divergent military experiences among four groups of women who served in different gendered environments.

Chapter four examines the gendered experience of two groups of women. The first includes women who served in traditional "feminine" roles such as welfare or education NCOs, where they learn to perform "proper femininity" as the man's "helper." The second group consists of women who had the rare opportunity to experience a blurring of gender differences, to some extent, in units such as military intelligence.

Chapter five focuses on the military experience of women who crossed physical, social, and emotional "gendered boundaries": women in so-called "masculine" roles, such as combat or training men for combat; and women who served as junior officers.

Although the military offers women varied gendered experiences, all their experiences are shaped and evaluated against the model of the combat soldier. The masculine combat soldier, who embodies the ultimate citizen, demarcates women's marginality and limits their choices and options in the military. That is, the military opens up opportunities for a variety of gendered positions but at the same time clearly lays down the patriarchal boundaries of citizenship.

Through embodied experiences, the women learn their positionality in the military, the boundaries of the use of their feminine body, which emotions are permitted and which must be concealed, what the right command model is, and how they can or should respond to sexual harassment. These experiences provide concrete meaning to the women's participatory citizenship and teaches them their position vis-à-vis the state. Serving in a hyper-masculine organization contributes to the development of their gendered reflexivity, and they learn that masculine supremacy is arbitrary and the gendered division of labor is not "natural." This reflexivity developed not through an abstract, theoretical discussion about citizenship and gender but rather through lived experiences of active citizenship.

Dis/acknowledging violence

The mandate of militaries is to manage the violence for the nation state—that is, to direct violence toward an external enemy. Yet violence unavoidably penetrates the organization and is often directed toward the women soldiers (and men soldiers) themselves. The external violence (war and occupation) and internal violence (sexual harassment) feed off each other and are always gendered. In chapters six and seven, we examine the ways in which the interviewees reveal and conceal military violence. We claim that the women hold ambivalent perspectives regarding both types of violence, which run the gamut from acknowledgement to dis/acknowledgement.

In chapter six, we discuss how women soldiers talk about sexual harassment. The women referred to a wide range of behaviors that caused them to feel insulted, ashamed, or actually physically threatened, but they often did not know if it constituted actual harassment. This interpretative ambiguity exposes what we term *gray areas* of sexual harassment, which are hard to interpret or address effectively.

We argue that these gray areas are actually a social construct that preserves the perception of women as sexual objects. Thus military service is maintained as an ongoing experience of insecurity and feelings of danger and threat for women.

In chapter seven, we look at women's dis/acknowledgment of the violence of war and occupation. Most women did not talk at all about the violence of the occupation. Only a tiny minority of the women soldiers do indeed see the violence and recognize it, and it is this minority that chapter seven addresses. These are women soldiers who chose to give testimonies to "Breaking the Silence," an anti-occupation non-government organization (NGO), about their military service in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Even in their testimonies, there is conspicuous movement between knowing and not knowing: the women soldiers demonstrated broad military knowledge and, at the same time, spoke of a lack of professional authority to testify. When they do relate to the violence, their testimonies reveal the interweaving of critical gendered consciousness with anti-occupation stances. For them, the encounter with the state's violence undermined the taken-for-granted commitment to the national collective, and they deconstruct the Gordian knot tying citizenship, military service, and masculinity.

Comparative perspective

Throughout the book we argue that these three concepts—the *gendered multi-level contracts: comparative perspectives*, *contrasting gendered experiences*, and *dis/acknowledging violence*—enable us to highlight the multitude of gendered citizenship experiences and to employ a dynamic analysis of individual–state relationships from an intersectional perspective. These concepts force us to critically examine both the beneficial and the oppressive dimensions of the nation-state and prevent us from adopting top-down and deterministic theories regarding women's encounters with the state.

The analytical power of our concepts is demonstrated in the closing chapter, in which we compare women's gendered experiences in the Israeli mandatory military with the experiences of women in professional militaries (AVF). The

analysis shows that, despite the structural differences, the position of "outsiders within" is common to women soldiers in both types of militaries. It is this ambivalent position that teaches women the meaning of gendered citizenship in the modern nation state.

However, the meanings and consequences of military service are significantly different for women in professional militaries in comparison to women in the Israeli military, as their contracts, their gendered experiences, and their exposure to violence differ. In professional militaries, women enlist mostly for social mobility reasons, and their contract with the military is more rigid. Since women constitute a very small minority in these militaries, and they come from lower classes and are mostly older (and many of them married with children), their gendered experiences are more conflicted and harmful in comparison to women in a mandatory military. Indeed, women in professional militaries suffer more sexual assaults, their experience of tokenism is harsher, and the military–family balance is harder to achieve. The shift of Western militaries to peacekeeping missions did not bring about a change in the warring masculine culture of militaries, nor in the status of women. Paradoxically, then, it appears that the gendered experiences of women in professional militaries, to which they enlist out of their own free will, is more arduous than the experience of women who are forced to serve in a mandatory military such as the Israeli military.

Note

1 See the website of the European Court of Justice: http://curia.europea.eu/en/transit-page.htm.

2 Setting the stage

Gender and the military in Israel

Israel provides a unique case study of state, military, and gender relations because of the centrality the military assumes in Israeli society, which has clear militaristic features. The late Israeli sociologist Baruch Kimmerling (1993) argued that, due to the prolonged Israeli–Palestinian conflict, militarism has become a central factor in Israel's society, "when arms and the management of violence came to be perceived as routine, self-evident and integral parts of the Israeli–Jewish culture" (Kimmerling 1993, 199). Kimmerling claimed that "such militarism can be termed civilian militarism," since "the military mind is systematically internalized by most statesmen, politicians and general public to be a self-evident reality whose imperatives transcend partisan party of social allegiances" (Kimmerling 1993, 206).

One of the central institutions of civilian militarism is a strong military based on mandatory conscription of both men and women. The Israeli military (IDF), established in 1948, was founded on the ethos of a "people's army" that serves the universalistic and egalitarian ideology of the modern nation state. Thus, military service signifies the boundaries of the ethno-national collective.

The frequent wars in which Israel is involved have accelerated the militarization processes of Israeli society, which, in turn, encouraged additional wars and military operations. This circular process was intensified following the 1967 war, with the occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The ongoing occupation, which will turn 50 in 2017, and the ruling over a large civilian population, added a component of policing and confronting armed resistance that raises ongoing moral dilemmas challenging the IDF's ethical conduct.

The ongoing occupation of civilian population undermined the social consensus regarding the military. Today, alongside solidarity and identification with the military, there are also critical voices in the public sphere, from both the left wing and the right wing, that question both the morality of the military and its modus of operation.

Alongside the local geo-political processes, global processes have disseminated discourses of human rights that brought about an erosion of the status of militaries in the Western world. These processes have permeated Israeli society

since the 1980s, causing the deconstruction of the taken-for-granted status of military service. Various social groups evaluate military service today in terms of its financial, political, or symbolic rewards and not exclusively in terms of its contribution to the nation (Levy 2007a). These global and geo-political processes had a significant impact on the place of women in the Israeli military.

Mandatory conscription of women is unique to Israel and has no parallel in other democratic nation states. Indeed, even in Israel, it was not a decision that was taken lightly, becoming a focus of debate in 1949 between both religious and secular members of the *Knesset* (Israeli Parliament): Those who represented secular parties demanded that women be conscripted, while representatives of the religious parties were opposed to women being recruited at all and even rejected the proposal that only religious women should be exempted from military service. Berkovitch (1997) shows that the secular leadership supported enlisting women out of their commitment to gender equality, emphasizing that "Women have proved that they 'deserve' the 'right' to become soldiers" (ibid., 609). In addition, the decision to recruit women was justified by instrumental considerations, such as manpower shortages, and by those who claimed that the presence of women would improve both the morals and morale of service personnel. The compromise reached was that married women and mothers would be exempted from the draft, so that military service would not endanger women's "primary role" as mothers.

In August 1949, the *Knesset* passed the "Defense Service Law," which regulates all aspects of the recruitment of various population groups and their military service. Today, 60 percent of each cohort of women enlist, and women comprise 34 percent of the regular military and 20 percent of the permanent service[1] (Amram-Katz 2010). In this book, we study the experience of the women in the regular mandatory military.

Regular mandatory military service is constructed as a key scenario for becoming an adult in Israeli society for women and men alike. The close and institutionalized link between military service and the transition to adulthood is one of the central social mechanisms that normalizes military service within the life course and makes it seem "natural" (Lomsky-Feder and Ben-Ari 2010). However, the meaning of the "key scenario" of becoming an adult through military service attains various expressions in accordance with social positioning (gender, status, religiosity, and/or ethnicity). The military offers different tracks to becoming an adult to men versus women, to lower-class versus middle-class soldiers, to immigrant versus native-born soldiers, and to religious versus secular soldiers. Hence, military service is universalistic in principle, but at the same time, it reproduces ethno-class-gender hierarchies.

The transition to adulthood in Israel is thus nationalized, and its first stages take place within a hyper-masculine, hierarchical, and total institution. Therefore, military service has differential consequences for men and women's identity formation. For men, military service is the major arena for shaping masculinity in the face of the hegemonic model of the combat soldier and for initiating men into "male-stream" citizenship. For women, military service can be seen as an

"initiation rite" into gendered citizenship in a patriarchal society. In the following chapters, we will show that the gendered experiences of women in the military are varied and even conflicting; nevertheless, all of them must learn to cope with patriarchal military perceptions of femininity.

The decision to conscript women did not change the gender power relations in the Israeli military. It remains a masculine organization in which gender is a formal and overt organizing principle. Until 2000, all women served in the Women's Corps, and the majority of them were assigned to traditional "feminine" jobs, at least 30 percent of which are secretarial and administrative. Even today women are easily exempt on the grounds of marriage, pregnancy, or religious beliefs. As a result, 42.7 percent of the women candidates for service (that is, all Jewish non-religious women) do not enlist, compared to 27 percent of the men candidates.[2] Women serve for 24 months, while men serve for 32 months, and both are often assigned to gender-determined military occupations. These structural and organizational differences limit the range of roles to which women may be posted and constitute a definite barrier to women's advancement in the military (Cohen 1997).

The IDF thus encapsulates the dilemma of citizenship in relation to women. On the one hand, women's mandatory military service could signify the construction of a gendered egalitarian citizenship. Moreover, the timing of the service at a formative life stage of young adulthood (ages 18–21) and the prestige that the military still has in Israeli society grant military service importance in shaping later life stages of women in Israel. On the other hand, the military's gendered division of labor, together with its chauvinistic culture, creates and preserves hierarchical and essentialist perceptions of femininity and masculinity (Enloe 1988). As Izraeli (1997) put it, "the military intensifies gender distinctions and then uses them as justifications for both their construction in the first place and for sustaining gender inequality" (ibid., 129). Hence, military service establishes women as citizens—but not as equal citizens.

Indeed, some Israeli feminists argued that women's exclusion from combat roles was one of the main sources of their lower status as citizens, and, like their counterparts in the United States, they called for equal military service, including drafting women for combat. The first significant change took place after the 1973 war, when, due to a shortage in human power and pressures of civilian feminist groups, women entered non-traditional roles such as infantry and tank instructors, basic-training commanders, and aircraft mechanics, but not combat roles.

A second wave of changes in the military gender regime started in 1995, when the Israel Supreme Court ruled in the case of Alice Miller v. the Ministry of Defense that the IDF must open up the prestigious pilots' training course to women.[3] The case of Alice Miller reflects the permeation of global social discourses on human rights and feminism into the Israeli military. This ruling eventually led to the opening of additional combat roles for women, such as border police, anti-aircraft operators, artillery, light infantry, and naval officers. Moreover, the Women's Corps was dismantled in 2000, and many training courses—from basic training to officers' training—have been gender integrated (Sasson-Levy and Amram-Katz

2007). In 2000, the *Karakal* (Hebrew for a desert feline), a semi-infantry mixed battalion, was also founded. The battalion is comprised of 70 percent women, who volunteer to serve in the *Karakal* for three years, similarly to men. *Karakal* men and women secure the border with Egypt from smugglers, infiltrators, and terrorists. The success of the *Karakal* battalion and pressing human power needs brought about the establishment of three additional mixed-gender semi-infantry battalions in 2016.

Gender relations in the Israeli military have also been redefined due to the change in the nature of warfare. Modern warfare is characterized by new combat strategies that emphasize hi-tech intelligent weapons, remote-controlled technological combat, and expanded intelligence gathering. Since occupations involving computers, electronics, and intelligence, which constitute the core of the new warfare, are now no less important than physical combat positions, militaries demand a more educated workforce. Thus, the IDF has become active in recruiting well-educated women for technologically sophisticated roles.

This improvement in women's status in the military over the last 20 years did not affect all women soldiers similarly. The selection and placement process for young Jewish adults in Israel begins with aptitude tests administered in 11th grade. Based on the scores and organizational need, the women receive a list of options of military roles, of which they can rank their top three choices. The military would try to fulfill their wishes; however, assignments to military roles are done according to its human power needs. Moreover, the assignment processes are clearly based on the candidates' high-school academic achievements and the cultural capital that reflects ethno-class position. As a result, middle-class women often serve in select roles such as intelligence, instructional, and educational roles, while lower-class women often serve in less prestigious roles, such as secretaries, military police, and logistics. Whereas the process of gender integration in the IDF has improved the lot of some women, it has worsened the situation of others. We argue that the reforms in women's integration in the military increased the gaps between women from differing social and ethnic backgrounds.

Despite the reforms in women's status in the military, even today only a small minority of 7 percent of women soldiers serve in combat roles,[4] and women are barred from armored, infantry, and reconnaissance elite units, the three specialties that are considered the core of combat. Officially, 92 percent of military occupations are open to women, but in 2008 it was found that half of all military roles are "masculine," meaning that only men or mostly men are assigned to them (Moshe 2013). Hence, women are still excluded from most of the positions that are traditional paths to advancement to the top military ranks.

Indeed, the glass ceiling that blocks women's advancement in the military is five ranks below the top, at the promotion stage from major to lieutenant colonel: women comprise 24.4 percent of all majors in the IDF, but they are only 13.5 percent of the next rank of lieutenant colonels. At the rank of colonel, women are down to 10 percent (32 women), and only four women hold the rank of brigadier-general (IDF Spokesperson 2016). In May 2011, Orna Barbivai was promoted to the rank of major general and appointed head of the IDF Manpower Division, but

she was the only one, and no other woman was appointed to this rank after her retirement (Sasson-Levy 2014).

And yet, the improvements in the military's gender regime, and especially the assignment of women to serve alongside men as instructors or fighters, are quite meaningful, especially on the symbolic level. The backlash against women in combat is evidence of the significance of these changes. Gender integration has encountered vehement opposition, mainly from National-Religious rabbis, who claim that men who serve together with women cannot observe the Jewish modesty laws, which would therefore make it difficult for religious men to serve in field units at all. National-Religious men soldiers currently comprise around a third of all IDF combat soldiers and up to 35 percent of all junior officers (as compared to the 10 percent of the general population in Israel who identify as National Religious). Hence, the military's dependence on them is critical (Levy 2010). To accommodate their needs, an "appropriate integration" committee was set up, which administered the rules for joint service of men and women. These rules, promulgated in 2002, set requirements for gender segregation in mixed units, enabled religious soldiers to serve in exclusively male units, and set rules regarding clothing to protect the modesty of religious men and women soldiers (Lehrer 2010).

However, the religious establishment was not satisfied with these rules and protested that the military enforces secular values (such as serving alongside women or hearing lectures about acceptance of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender [LGBT] soldiers) on religious soldiers. In 2016, the chief of staff issued new orders that apply to joint service by male and female soldiers.[5] According to the new orders, men religious soldiers will be allowed to ask for exemptions from joint activities with women soldiers, including guard duty, navigation, and travelling together in a vehicle. The order reiterates the principle that the service of men and women is subject to the dictates of Jewish law in its most stringent interpretation, which sees women as infringing on modesty, and gives preference to the feelings of religious men soldiers over the right of women to equality.[6] This process of the religionization (Peri et al. 2012) of Israeli society in general and the military in particular has clear ramifications for women in the military (Levy 2014, Levy 2016).

The ramifications for women have intensified since 2010, when the military started drafting ultra-Orthodox (*Haredi*) men in growing numbers. Ultra-Orthodoxy's basic tenet is absolute gender segregation in all walks of life. In their case, the military takes for granted that they would always require service in exclusively male units and agrees to preserve gendered "sterile" environments for them, where they do not have to meet women at all during their day-to-day life on the base.

The religious leadership's struggle against women in the military is constant and obstinate. For example, as we are writing the last pages of this book (December 2016), we witnessed a harsh push back and protest by leading National-Religious rabbis against the Chief of General Staff's initiative to integrate women into the Armored Corps. The outcome of this loud and aggressive debate is still unknown, but there is no doubt that it will influence the military's policies regarding women.

To conclude, As Ze'ev Lehrer (2010) argues, the Israeli military's gender regime is not an integrated, coherent structure but rather a highly dynamic field operating under the influence of conflicting pressures and opposing forces. On the one hand, liberal women's organizations and lobbies and bureaucratic forces (human power needs) are pushing for greater equality for women in the military. On the other hand, religious and chauvinist forces are pressing for the preservation of a clear and distinct gender order based on the dominance of the masculine image of the combat soldier. The dynamic encounter between the various forces acting differentially on the military organization has created a diverse, multi-faceted map of the integration of women and various forms of equality and inequality in different internal settings (Amram-Katz Forthcoming 2018).

Research strategies

In order to study how women interpret their encounter with the state via military service, we analyzed two corpuses of material. The first and the dominant source comprises the life stories of young women who described their military service experience and reflected on its influence on their lives. The second source, which appears in chapter seven, comprises the testimonies of women who served in the Occupied Palestinian Territories in the West Bank and Gaza.

Life stories—a retrospective look at military service

The main empirical basis of the book comprises 109 life stories of young women who reflected about how their military service experience is entwined with their life course 10–15 years after their discharge.

A life narrative is a collection of events and experiences that the individual chooses to present as the course of her life and the rhetorical means she employs to describe them.[7] The story links the narrator's past, present, and future and gives meaning to this succession. When an individual tells her life story, she organizes and arranges her autobiographical and private memories, but the story always incorporates cultural models and group memories. This cultural "tool kit" shapes the means by which personal experiences are encoded, the modes in which they are interpreted, and the ways in which they are represented. The narrative, then, is an interpretive creation of the narrator and, therefore, there is no "real" story but multiple versions created by the individual at different life stages, on various occasions, and for diverse audiences.

The interview as an encounter that occurs in a restricted time and place, the dialogue that develops between interviewer and narrator, combined with the knowledge that the interview is being recorded and transcribed—all of these create a unique situation that draws from the routine life succession and focuses the reflexive gaze of the narrator (Watson 1976).

Indeed, over the course of the interviews we conducted, we saw that requesting the interviewees to describe the meaning of their military service on their life course sharpened their reflexive observations about this time period, and they

made the military experience the object of personal investigation. By examining the military experience in retrospect, the women compared it to other life events and interpreted their experiences as young soldiers in light of their experiences as adult women. This retrospective look enabled them to determine the manner in which military service influenced (or did not influence) various aspects of their lives after their discharge. This examination impels the narrators to deal with processes of change and continuity and encourages them to offer some explanations for their life course.

Such reflexive examination combines personal and social meanings, while the narrator displays her personal memories in light of interpretive schemes and key scenarios that reflect her social positioning as a religious or secular woman, middle or lower class, Israeli-born or immigrant, and so on. In large part, through their narratives, the women redefined for themselves their gender and civil identities in accordance with their ethno-class status.

In summary, life-course narratives are a very effective research strategy to examine the meanings of military service for the individual, while placing the interpretation of the social agent at the center. Through the narratives, we can learn about the daily experiences of military service, the dynamics of perceptions of the military experience over time, and the differences in the interpretation of this experience according to the narrator's gender-ethno-class positions.

The interviews and the interviewees

We heard the life stories through in-depth interviews that we and our research assistants and graduate students conducted with 109 women. Like the interviewees, all the interviewers were also women who had served in the military, some of whom were of the same age cohort as the interviewees themselves.

During the interview, the interviewees were asked to tell the story of their military service and the role it has played in their life story to the present day. In the first part of the interview, the interviewee told her personal life story freely, and in the second part, the interviewer asked more pointed questions in order to focus on three topics: (1) the period preceding military service (educational and social background and expectations regarding military service); (2) the experience of the military service itself (military role, everyday life on a military base, unusual events during their service); and (3) perceptions of the impact of military service on the woman's life course (higher education, occupation, intimate relations, family life, citizenship).

We reached the interviewees through the "snow ball" method. In order to reach a larger and more diverse group of women, we started the "snow ball" via several "central women" who referred us to different social networks. The interviews were held in a variety of venues (private homes, workplaces, coffee shops), ranged from 1 to 3 hours, and were all recorded and transcribed. To protect the women's anonymity, we gave them pseudonyms.

The interviewees were women between the ages of 30 and 40 who had served in the military between the mid-1980s and the mid-1990s. That decade was an interim period for gender relations in the military—after the opening of

some non-traditional roles for women, but before the significant changes in the military's gender regime that occurred at the end of the 1990s and beginning of the 2000s. Hence, at the time they served, the military's gender regime was more rigid than it is today, yet the gender regime itself was already not monolithic and appeared in different forms in various military arenas.

In order to reach women of heterogeneous social backgrounds, as well as to study a wide variety of military experiences, we chose the interviewees according to their military occupations. We divided the military occupations along two organizing principles. The first principle distinguished between traditional, non-traditional, and relatively gender-neutral military roles for women. Traditional roles for women are roles that are perceived as a continuation of women's domestic roles at home, such as teaching, caring for, and serving men. These roles are usually occupied by women only. Non-traditional roles are roles that were previously closed to women officially and were occupied exclusively by men. Women entered these roles, as we have shown in the previous section, following reforms in the military's gender regime. In between, there are roles that are relatively less gendered, and men and women perform them in similar numbers, at least at entry level.

The second principle distinguished between prestigious and non-prestigious roles for women. A role's prestige is determined by its exclusivity, the intensity of its selection process, and the difficulty of the intake exams. In addition, the closer the role is to operational, combat masculine roles, the more prestigious it is considered for women. We were assisted in classifying the roles along these two axes by researchers from the behavioral sciences department of the military. It is important to stress that the gendered nature of the role and its prestige are not static and fluctuate in accordance with the military's human-power policies, changes in civil society's gender ideology, and more. The interface between these two axes generated five groups of women:

1. Women who served in traditional feminine and prestigious roles, such as social welfare non-commissioned officers (NCOs) or education NCOs (27 interviewees, 25 percent of the group).
2. Women who served in traditional feminine and non-prestigious roles, primarily as secretaries (28 interviewees, 25.5 percent of the group).
3. Women who served in prestigious, relatively gender neutral roles such as military intelligence and communications (17 interviewees, 15.5 percent of the group).
4. Women who served in non-traditional and prestigious roles, such as tank and infantry instructors, war room NCOs (22 interviewees, 20 percent of the group).
5. Women who served in non-traditional and non-prestigious roles, which are mostly technical, blue-collar jobs, such as mechanics and drivers (15 interviewees, 14 percent of the group).

The women in all of the above groups held different ranks, and of them 29 served as officers (16.5 percent of the group).

Due to military selection mechanisms, which are based on the enlistee's previous high-school achievements and their cultural capital, the assignment process to military roles often reproduces existing social hierarchies. Prestigious positions, such as white-collar jobs (i.e., in intelligence or computers), are offered to upper-middle-class women who receive high intake scores. This class distinction is especially apparent in comparison to women who serve in blue-collar roles and most women who serve as secretaries.

Most of the interviewees in this study came from the middle class, and only a small minority came from peripheral lower classes. Of course the middle class is a large and heterogeneous category that includes women from big central cities (Tel Aviv, Haifa, and Jerusalem) and from smaller and peripheral ones, from *Kibbutzim* and *Moshavim*,[8] from religious homes and secular ones and more. The research does not include women of the lowest classes, as these women are not enlisted into the military due to financial difficulties and under-achieving on the intake exams.

We made a concerted effort to find interviewees from the lowest classes, and we even sent a research assistant who works in neighborhoods in distress to make contact with potential interviewees. She returned to report that she had heard from many women that they had not served because of religious or traditional gendered beliefs. Moreover, they could not afford to serve, because they would not have received financial support from their parents during their service, and, furthermore, many had to fully participate in supporting the family from a young age. Thus, despite the fact that military service is mandatory for women in Israel, in reality, military service is almost impossible for women from the lowest classes.

Serving in various roles gives rise to diverse military experiences, which transfer differently to civilian society. The division of the women into five groups according to military role was thus the starting point for analyzing the interviews. The interpretative analysis was conducted on four levels. First, we looked at the individual story, ascertaining the central themes and rhetoric in the context of the woman's entire narrative. Second, we considered the group story, collating and interpreting the main themes that characterized each group of women. Third, we performed a comparative analysis of the various groups. Finally, we analyzed the stories within the contexts of military service and the life course in Israeli society.

Testimonies as voice of protest

Alongside the interviews that we conducted, we also analyzed 20 testimonies that had been collected by the organization "Breaking the Silence." Breaking the Silence (BTS) is a protest movement founded to oppose the Israeli presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT). It was established in 2004 by men who had completed their compulsory military service in the OPT. The group focused on documenting cases and publishing testimonies of abuse by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) against the Palestinian population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In the winter of 2010, the organization published testimonies of women soldiers

who served in the OPT (either in combat or support roles) for the first time in a collection entitled *Women Breaking the Silence* (WBS). The motivation to collect testimonies from women soldiers, as one of the male leaders of the movement said in a public lecture, was "to show that nobody can stay clean of the occupation, not even women."

BTS published excerpts from the testimonies, but we were provided with the full, original interviews. Ten testimonies are from women who served in combat roles, including four Border Police combat soldiers, a combat engineer, a combatant in the *Sachlav* Military Police unit, an anti-aircraft fighter, three operations sergeants, and a Border Police officer. Though the women combatants served in various units, during their service in the OPT they conducted similar policing activities in populated areas of the West Bank, including staffing checkpoints and arresting individuals suspected of engaging in terrorist activity. These policing activities targeted Palestinians as well as Jewish settlers. Unlike that of men, women's service in combat roles is voluntary; women choose to serve in these roles, which are considered more prestigious than more traditionally so-called feminine military specialties. The other ten testimonies are from women who served in administrative positions or combat support roles in the OPT on the front lines. These included a (non-commissioned) social welfare officer, two education officers, quartermaster personnel, field intelligence soldiers, company secretaries, security officers, and an IDF Spokesperson photographer.

The women gave their testimonies approximately 5 years after their discharge from the military. All of the testimonies were given to men activists in the movement, who were mostly veteran combat soldiers. In the interviews, they followed a strict protocol of questions originally designed for men combat soldiers. The fact that a man is interviewing a woman on military subject matters shapes the power relations in the interview and affects its content. For example, since the questions focused mostly on operational details, the women witnesses were hardly induced to talk about sexual harassment or gender abuse in the military, which they might have been if the interviewer had been a woman. Hence, both the circumstances of the testimonies' production and the agenda of their publication shape the gendered nature of the testimony.

We received the testimonies as numbered and anonymous written texts, identified only by the interviewee's role in the military and her locale of service.

The transcribed interviews did not include any demographic data; thus, we do not know much about the interviewees' ethno-social and class backgrounds. For our book, we replaced the numbers that had been used to identify each soldier with a pseudonym.

Taken together, the life-story interviews and the testimonies provide a rich picture of the military lives of women in Israel. Through the life-story interviews, we hear the dominant voice of the soldiers who are coping primarily with gendered questions during their service, whereas the *Breaking the Silence* testimonies provide a unique point of view on women who served in the OPT and chose to address, through the testimonies, the moral questions that their service gave rise to. Together, these two bodies of knowledge enable us to analyze the

complex encounter of women with the state, an encounter that features elements of contracts and negotiation, gendered opportunities, and internal and external violence.

A reflexive note

The experiences we study in this book are not unfamiliar to us, since we too, like most of the secular women in Israeli society, were drafted and served in the military. However, our service took place during an entirely different period (during the 1970s) when the military's status was much stronger, and military service in the secular milieu in which we grew up—Orna on a kibbutz and Edna in a central city—was a given and was not open for discussion. Not only were we not given the opportunity whether to enlist or not, the question of where to serve was on the agenda far less. At that time, the gendered division of labor was very conservative, and most women served in clearly traditional feminine roles. This was also our own experience: Orna served as an instructor of teacher-soldiers, and Edna served as a secretary. Despite the fact that our roles were dissimilar in the nature of their activities and their status within the organization, for each of us, the life chapter of military service was a very significant life event in awakening our critical awareness—both political and gendered.

The critical awareness developed in each one of us along different tracks, but for both of us, studying in the Sociology Department at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem was a milestone. It is there that we developed our critical thinking in general and our political and gendered critique of Israeli society in particular. This thinking drew both of us to participate, to one degree or another, in the activities of movements against the occupation in particular and the peace movement in Israel in general.

An inseparable part of our identity as critical Jewish-Israeli women is our involvement in research on the military, war, and gender in Israeli society. During her doctoral research, Edna studied the practices of normalization of the war experiences through the life stories of men who fought in the 1973 Yom Kippur War (Lomsky-Feder 1998). Orna studied the construction of gendered identities in the Israeli military by focusing on various masculine identities shaped by the intersection of ethnicity, class, gender, and military occupation (Sasson-Levy 2006).

Each of our research activities in the field of militarism and gender over the years has been rich and varied, but this is the first time we are cooperating in a joint study. In this study, we are researching the meaning of military service among women who are younger than we are and are much closer in age to our children. Over the last decade, we have accompanied our daughters and sons in their deliberations and support the various decisions each one reached regarding their military service.

That being the case, our encounter with military service is multi-faceted: as soldiers, as activists in anti-war movements, as researchers, and as mothers. Without a doubt, this multiplicity resonates in our reading of the interviews and testimonies, and contributes in coping with the theoretical challenge we took upon

ourselves: to understand the meaning of the gendered encounter with the state as it is realized through military service.

Notes

1 The permanent service is the professional segment of the IDF. It is based on soldiers and officers who remain in the military after their mandatory service, pursuing a military career.
2 IDF Spokesperson, "The service of women in the IDF, June 2016," presentation sent to the authors in August 2016.
3 See court proceedings: Alice Miller v. Minister of Defense. 1995. High Court of Justice 4541/94, 49(4), Supreme Court Reports 94 (Hebrew).
4 See newspaper article: Harel, Amos, "Rate of Female Israeli Soldiers Serving in Combat Roles Doubled in Four Years," *Ha'aretz*, 8 October 2016.
5 See newspaper article: Cohen, Gili, "Religious Israeli Soldiers No Longer Required to Participate in Activities with Opposite Sex," *Haaretz*, 26 September 2016.
6 See newspaper article: Haaretz Editorial, "IDF Order Prioritizes Religious Soldiers' Feelings Over the Right of Women to Equality," *Haaretz*, 27 September 2016.
7 The review of life stories as methodologies in this chapter is based on the following studies: Bruner (1987), Denzin (1989), Linde (1993), Lomsky-Feder (2004), Rosenwald and Ochberg (1992), Samuel and Thompson (1990).
8 *Kibbutzim* and *Moshavim* are small rural communities, primarily located in the geographic periphery of Israel.

3 Serving the army as secretaries

Intersectionality and multi-level contracts

One of the most stigmatized women's encounters with the state is embodied in the position of the military secretary.[1] The woman secretary is the cultural icon of the inferior status of women in the military and is often disparaged in the Israeli culture. Popular songs, movies, and TV series repeatedly show the military secretary as a bimbo, a submissive sexual object whose military service is limited to providing services to her (male) commander. This negative image is also maintained in the military culture, for example, when women commanders on basic training teach their soldiers to sing "One, two, three, four, not a secretary anymore!" Not surprisingly, many of our interviewees, when talking about their hopes and expectation for military service, described their fears of being assigned to secretarial roles, worrying that the image of inferiority will have lasting repercussions.

Prior research based on interviews with women who served as secretaries has reinforced this negative image (Sasson-Levy 2007). Analyzing the women's overwhelmingly negative descriptions of their military service, Sasson-Levy in her early research concluded that three major principles shape the experience of woman secretaries: first, an employment principle of "cheap labor," due to compulsory service that creates a surplus of human power; thus, even highly educated women are employed in mundane menial jobs. Second, a matrimonial principle of the "office wife," meaning that, like the wife in a traditional marriage, the military secretary is expected to provide domestic services (food, drinks, cleaning chores, etc.) to her commander. And third, a hierarchy principle of "status symbol," reflecting that having a secretary symbolizes the commander's position of power, and thus the secretary is an object that is mainly for show. The combination of these three principles constructs a uniquely "over-gendered" military experience, in which the women are called upon to perform traditional femininity. This "over-gendering," which reflects gender discrimination, brings about feelings of waste and depression during their service and creates feelings of alienation from the military and the state.

When we embarked upon the current research, we took it for granted that secretaries have a humiliating military experience, and we wanted to examine how this trying experience is perceived in retrospective look. We were thus very surprised when we heard, alongside the expected harmful narrative, another very different voice from women who were proud and satisfied with their military service as secretaries. Further reading of the women's stories showed that these two

narratives are not distributed randomly. The painful narrative was told mostly by middle-class *Ashkenazi*[2] women who graduated from the better high schools in Israel's big cities or *kibbutzim*,[3] while the story of empowerment was mostly narrated by women of lower socio-economic status, most of whom were *Mizrahi*[4] and had grown up in small peripheral towns. This distinction suggests that military service takes on diverse meanings in different ethnic, class, and gender contexts. Thus, we cannot perceive women soldiers as a homogenous group, as if all women (as well as all men) have similar expectations, needs, and interests vis-à-vis their military service.

We argue that the experience of military service of various intersectional groups is shaped by differential social contracts between the state and the citizen, which reflect both official citizen duties and rights and unofficial expectations and obligations. The aim of this chapter is to explore how these contracts take on various meanings and shape the subjective experience of soldierhood and citizenship.

Women negotiating with the military

Compulsory military service is one of the main mechanisms through which the state constitutes obedient and committed citizens. Yet force of law is not enough to maintain this commitment; the military must respond to the needs, interests, and aspirations of citizens in order to obtain the latter's compliance. Thus, the negotiations between the military and its recruits produce active subjects of citizenship who are occupied with rights and duties (Eckert 2011).

In order to better understand the encounters with the military as a state institution, we adopt the concept of contract. Following Rubin's (2012) work, the contract in the sociological sense is a principle that organizes mutual expectations, obligations, and norms of behavior. The social contract contains both formal and non-formal aspects; appears in various spheres of activity (micro and macro); and appears in various institutional contexts (familial, occupational, civic). It is the organizing principle of non-coercive social relations within the bounds of the law. Thus, the social contract always has a dimension of bargaining and is an outcome of power relations between the parties and their cultural schemata, which give meaning to their mutual relations.

We claim that the contract of individuals with the military consists of three interrelated layers: the civic contract that defines the link between the citizen's rights and obligations and derives its meaning from the liberal and the republican discourses of citizenship; a group contract that reflects the specific needs, interests, and privileges of a given intersectional group; and an individual contract involving actual bargaining and agreements with the organization (Ben-Ari 2013, Lomsky-Feder and Ben-Ari 2013).

The civic contract

Although compulsory conscription is obviously based on a coercive legal structure, the military cannot base its relationship with its recruits exclusively on the legal foundation. Thus, in addition to the restrictions of the law, this relationship

is regulated by contractual elements that establish rights and duties, hopes and disappointments, and norms of behavior. In Israeli society, these contractual elements stem from the republican discourse of citizenship according to which military service delineates the boundaries of the political collective and is perceived as the fundamental expression of the individual's commitment to the state (Helman 1999b, Shafir and Peled 1998).

However, processes of globalization and neo-liberalism that have characterized Israeli society since the mid-1980s have undermined the republican discourse of citizenship. Despite ongoing compulsory conscription, the nature of civil contracts has changed, and military service is increasingly questioned by various social groups (Levy 2007a). Thus, we witness two competing models of civic contracts—the republican model and the liberal one—that regulate the encounters with the state. The salience of each one of these civic contracts varies according to social positioning in the Israeli social landscape. For example, the religious groups adhere to the republican contract, while the dominant secular groups retreat from it and adopt the liberal contract (Levy, Lomsky-Feder and Harel 2007).

The group contract

Civic contracts are often perceived as constituting universal citizenship; however, they are shaping different encounters with the state according to ethno-class and gender lines. When these encounters take place in the military arena, the gender division is especially salient, since militarization processes are gendered in their aims, their means, their language, and their impacts (Sjoberg and Via 2010). Though compulsory conscription applies to women as well as men in Israel, the military is male-dominated territory where masculinity is the norm, and thus military service, and its link to citizenship, is highly gendered (Izraeli 1997). Thus, the second level of contract—the group contract—means that men and women hold different contracts with the military.

The dominance of gender as an organizing principle of the military explains why until the 1990s, most women in the Israeli military served in inferior roles. Since then, the Israeli military has opened new roles, including some combat roles, to women. The opening of new roles for women has changed their basic contract with the military—now they can opt for more diverse military roles. This impacted on the secretaries, the protagonists of this chapter, in two ways: the percentage of women serving as secretaries had declined, but as women could now serve in "good" positions, the status of the secretary role had deteriorated even more. Thus, while the process of gender integration in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) has improved the lot of some women, it has worsened the situation of secretaries and made it more difficult for them to construct a positive military experience.

Moreover, the opening of new roles for women increased the gaps between women from differing class and ethnic backgrounds. Due to military selection mechanisms, women who serve in more prestigious roles are mostly of middle and higher classes, while women of lower classes continue to serve in inferior roles such

as secretaries. This structural change in the military has motivated new expectations among young women, which were the basis of new contracts with the military.

Hence, social groups, shaped at the intersection of gender, race, and class, carry different contracts that reflect their identity projects and their cultural schemata. Rubin (2012) views schemas as the normative expectations that organize individuals' orientations to work, family and community, and as we suggest, the state. These expectations and assumptions about social relations become intense normative and emotional commitments that are widely shared as well as internalized and do not shift rapidly (ibid). The schemas are therefore the "mechanisms that enliven social contracts and put them into motion" (ibid, 331). Hence, the power of the notion of contract is that it is "a conceptual vehicle that links the individual and her/his schemata to the larger social structure" (ibid, 328).

We argue that gendered ethno-class cultural schemas shape women's contracts with the state. More particularly, we show that the cultural schema that shapes the contract of lower-class women is motivated by their efforts "to achieve respectability," while the cultural schema of middle-class young women is their "sense of entitlement for self-fulfillment."

The civic and group contracts delineate the contours of the individual contract, which expresses the concrete negotiation between the individual actor and the military organization based on her personal qualities (such as motivation, physical fitness, and intelligence).

The individual contract

In Israel, compulsory military service became a key scenario (Ortner 1973) for transition into adulthood. The tight link between transition into adulthood and military service grants major significance to military's selection mechanisms, which track Israeli young adults into various military roles. Military assignment is important because it directly and indirectly influences possible future life courses in civilian society. Thus, individuals do their best to negotiate with the army in order to achieve their desired role. The bargaining power of the individual has grown as the liberal civic contract, which emphasizes individual rights and challenges the commitment to military service, became more dominant in Israel. Thus, the military organization must be more attentive to individuals' priorities.

The non-formal contract is that, in return for the recruit's commitment, the military will try to place her in a role that meets her expectations. This means that the role's prestige, content, and conversion power in civilian life should accord with the recruit's social status and personal resources.

For women who were inducted in the mid-1990s, who are the subjects of this book, the process of role assignment began with aptitude tests administered in 11th grade. Based on her scores and organizational need, the woman would receive a list of options of military roles, of which she could rank her top three choices. The military would make an effort to satisfy recruits' expectations, yet it clearly cannot meet them all. Moreover, alongside the effort to fulfill the woman's requests,

there is an institutional inertia that assigns women to traditional gender roles. Therefore, there are always those who are deeply disappointed in their assignments. At this stage, some women who did not receive their preferred placement (in particular women of the dominant groups) negotiate with the military to be transferred to other roles using social networks, parents' pressure, and bureaucratic manipulations (such as postponement of induction date).

The negotiations over role assignment are critical for women, as there are not enough "good" military positions for them in comparison to men. Therefore, a substantial number of women, from both the middle and lower classes, still serve as secretaries. It is their stories that are the focus of this chapter.

Achieving respectability: Women of marginalized groups

The perception of military service as enriching and empowering was explicitly conveyed in the stories told by women who came from peripheral communities and had grown up in lower-middle-class families. For instance:

Limor: My military service was the best period of my life.
Roni: It was like a dream come true.
Zahavit: It built me up … when I left the army I was a different person. I was a different Zahavit.

Most of these women are from second-generation immigrant Mizrahi families, and others (three) are immigrants from Ethiopia who had come to Israel as young girls. The majority grew up in traditional households, and some had attended religious schools, where they were explicitly told not to join the military. Usually their families did not encourage military service, and often their mothers had not served. In light of this familial context, the fact that they served at all cannot be taken for granted, as explained by Sarit, whose family is part of the traditional Georgian community:

> I signed up because I wanted to face things, because I came from a background where it wasn't obvious that I'd go to the army. … When my sister joined, it was really frowned upon in the community. She was a real trailblazer, my uncles called her a whore, all sorts of stuff like that. … At the age of 17 you were meant to get married and have children. … [You should stay] under your parents' watchful eyes, so that you won't go crazy with all sorts of boys, God forbid.

In such families, girls and young women are more profoundly subjected to a surveilling gaze than are those of higher classes. In some cases, the families limit their daughters' freedom of movement, monitor their social relationships, and give them housekeeping responsibilities during their teen years. While described as restrictive and controlling, the family is also perceived as warm, loving, and cradling—which again makes it hard to leave.

The military, then, meets these women's expectations of enabling them to leave their close and provincial communities. Roni, who grew up on a *moshav*, a small agricultural community populated mostly by traditional Mizrahi families, said:

> For me, it was a chance to get out of my closed framework. After growing up on a *moshav* where you always meet the same people … I had expectations of something new, a good experience, to leave home, to finally separate from my parents.

Yamit, who grew up in a town in the periphery, spoke in similar terms: "Leaving home, leaving home, leaving home, um … just getting to know more people, basically, I was so looking forward to it …"

The informal contract between women from the lower classes and the military that emerges from their stories is military service in exchange for the opportunity to leave home, under the auspices of the state and by virtue of the law. For them, therefore, their military service itself is the main goal, while their military role is a secondary issue. Limor, who grew up in a small town in the south of Israel, stated: "Joining was something I owed to myself. It didn't matter what role they gave me; it didn't matter, and I did it."

Although being a secretary was not what they had dreamed of, this group did not attempt to be assigned to a different job; rather they conducted "local" negotiations over the nature of the secretarial role. Some of them found ways to enrich their military position, and even make it enjoyable, by broadening their authorities or taking on extra duties. Limor, for example, described the result of a successful negotiation that she engaged in with her commander: "It was more than just seeing me as his secretary; he [the commander] gave me instructional jobs, and managerial jobs … So I did things that were meaningful to me, so here, it's a place where I could express myself."

Even if there were elements of boredom or of humiliation and harassment, this group chose to paint their military experience in bright colors as they constructed their narratives some years afterwards. As Ilana, who grew up in a town in the north, put it:

> When it comes up, I talk about my positive experience of serving in the IDF. I say that, for me, my service was a turning point. Because they gave me so much responsibility and independence, to someone so young, I had a job I had no training for … and I could really flourish there. … It was a turning point in terms of my self-confidence. And in terms of my ability to talk to people, my ability to express myself, even my ability to get around by myself …. All of a sudden you have to find the bus, to know how to get to Safed [a northern town], or to know how … it was part of my growing up and it was a very positive experience. So it's something I get to talk about sometimes.

Ilana and the other interviewees in this group adopt the key Israeli scenario that links military service to personal maturation. Moreover, military service is

sometimes represented as a "corrective experience" to their high school days, as described by Limor: "[The army] empowered me … It really gave me an opportunity to express myself in places that I couldn't in high school, and I didn't even know I had them in me." These women interpreted their service as an enriching experience that gave them a sense of visibility and heightened self-worth. In part, this positive experience was credited to their direct commanders, who were often portrayed as caring and encouraging. Deganit said: "I remember I had a really nice commander. And I didn't have to make coffee for anyone [smiles]. That I remember." Here, Deganit deconstructs the popular negative image of the military secretary as providing personal services for her boss (Sasson-Levy 2007). Limor adds: "There, I met one of my commanders who showed me how things work. Like, someone I could really ask advice of, someone who could show me." Later on in her narrative, Limor related that this commander encouraged her to pursue higher education. While the stories in this group also contained descriptions of intimidating and harassing commanders, this was not the dominant voice.

In addition to the opportunity for personal development, these women also emphasized the importance of meeting new people, which broadened their social understanding and enriched their experiences. Moreover, they interpreted social life at the base in terms of solidarity that transcended social differences and gaps. Avigayil said: "In the army, I felt they really tried to bring everyone together. That's how it was for us, at least. I don't know about other bases. In our base we were really united; it was like a family."

As demonstrated by Avigayil, most of the women accepted the image of the army as a melting pot, while military service gave them a strong sense of belonging to the state and a feeling that they contributed to the national enterprise. Hence, through military service, lower-class women aspired to achieve respectability (Skeggs 1997), which connects the private and the public and links personal and national identity.

In her research on working-class women, Skeggs (1997) argued that respectability has always been a marker and a burden of class, a standard to which to aspire. As "a key character of what it meant to belong, to be worthy and to be an individual" (ibid., 3), respectability links individual empowerment with public recognition. Further, Skeggs argues that the working-class woman's experience of her own and others' perceptions of her is shaped in three distinct circles: the family, the community, and the workplace. Alongside these social arenas (Benjamin, Bernstein and Motzafi-Haller 2010), the Israeli context offers lower-class women an additional arena for achieving respectability: military service. Through serving in the military, Israeli lower-class women gain visibility and acquire recognition in the national public sphere.

This sense of respectability is conveyed in how the women described their uniforms. Sarit says:

> Early on Sunday mornings I'd go back [to the base, after her weekend off duty], and the bus would stop for me at the end of my road, and I'd always walk down the street in my uniform and it was really important that they see

> me, I mean, people on the street, all the … all the people who like to talk. I really felt proud.

Wearing the uniform in public, in view of the labeling and disciplining gaze of "all the people who like to talk," endowed Sarit with social power. When in uniform, the body is no longer the weak and vulnerable feminine body, nor a sexual and tempting body. Rather, it is the proud body that receives its power from the state.

Hence, the contract between lower-class women and the military is an opportunity to achieve respectability as autonomous individuals, under the auspices of the state, away from home. For them, this contract fulfilled its promise—at least for the duration of the service.

At the time of the interviews, over a decade later, most of these women had remained on the periphery. However, the social differences between them were huge: some had acquired an academic education (mostly at community colleges) and were working in relatively prestigious jobs (such as vice president at an academic grant foundation, or director of a professional placement project); others had some higher education and were working in semi-professional positions (such as bookkeeper or teacher); and still others had no higher education and worked in blue-collar jobs (supermarket cashier, secretary) or were householders.

The military experience was integrated into these women's life stories in various ways. For Limor, it was "the best thing that ever happened to me" and took on the meaning of a transformative experience. This motif of change and progress resonates in other stories as well, though not as vividly. Other interviewees talked about converting their military service into advantages in the labor market, maintaining social ties, and handing down a legacy of military service to their children. On the other hand, there were stories in which the military chapter was presented as meaningful yet isolated within the life course. These narrators failed to convert the resources they had acquired during military service into post-discharge capital. Some felt as though they had missed an opportunity for personal change and social mobility and tended to blame themselves for this failure.

In contrast, Avigayil voiced an alternative interpretation. When interviewed, Avigayil was living in a southern development town, unemployed and raising four children, relying on the state welfare system. She told a story of deteriorating economic conditions since her discharge from the military: "When I was discharged from the army, I didn't have anyone to guide me, no one to help me settle into a job, no … Nothing. It's as if I'd done nothing for the state."

Avigayil clearly blamed the state for neglecting her. Her sense of desperation, anger, and injustice in the present contradicted her feelings of having had a protective home characterized by fair play and empowerment during her military service: "In the army, there's no double standard. Every soldier gets what he's entitled to, and not a thing more. In the army, everyone is the same. There's no discrimination. In civilian life it's different. You can see the discrimination with your own eyes."

Avigayil distinguished between the army—"the good home"—and the state—"the abusive home." While the army gave her a sense of respectability, the state does not, and it is directly responsible for her lower-class situation:

> When I was discharged, it wasn't there. It didn't happen. You did your part, goodbye. And this is where the disappointments started. Serious disappointments, because you say, 'I was born here, I grew up here, I served my country, gave of myself, and now it's the state's turn to help me a bit, to pick me up.'

As far as Avigayil was concerned, the state did not honor the terms of its civil contract: it did not reward her contribution. Avigayil's critique of the state was rooted in the republican discourse of citizenship, and she demanded social benefits in return for her military service as a secretary. This voice, which directly links women's military service to social benefits, is extremely rare in Israeli discourse, where civil rewards are usually only linked to men's combat service. Non-combatants—men and women alike—usually lack the legitimacy to demand benefits from the state based on their military service.

Avigayil's exceptional voice of protest is at odds with the voices of the other interviewees in this group. For most of the women, achieving respectability and an association with proper Israeliness through their service was perceived as the fulfillment of their contract with the military. For them, the contract had been honored, as military service was a way of joining the national enterprise and the imagined, united Israeliness:

Roni: I know I was only a secretary, but I was somewhere where I saw how other soldiers, our soldiers, actually, are doing the work. … Today, now that I've got children, I'm proud of that, telling my children that I served in the army, and that I was a soldier …

Zahavit: I think that the fact that I contributed to the army gives me a sense of satisfaction. It doesn't matter what I did. … There's not a single woman who'll tell you I wasn't in the army and I'm not sorry … sorry not to be a part of it, a part, a part of the state.

Sarit: I love the country, yes. … I'm not sure if the state really gained anything from me sitting in the observation post and stapling paper, you know … but it's part of those conversations [you have] post-army, and part of the whole experience, and it's part of us, it's part of our culture. And apart from the fact that it's our obligation as citizens.

While all three women were aware of their marginal position in the army as secretaries, they felt that their service was important, as it granted them knowledge of "military things" (Roni), included them in the national community through their contribution to the state (Zahavit), and created national sentiments (Sarit). For them, military service was not a reason to make demands upon the state but rather a way of establishing their identification with the state and being worthy citizens.

They considered the contract between themselves and the state to have been honored. This is not the case, however, with interviewees from the second group.

Entitlement to self-fulfillment: Women from dominant groups

Alongside the narrative that portrays military service in the role of secretary as empowering, we uncovered another narrative that portrays it in mostly negative terms, describing humiliation, depression, shame, suffering, and boredom. Here are some examples:

Maya: There [on the base] I had nine months where I basically cried and suffered and it was terrible, really.

Lilach: I couldn't stand it, it was so boring. I felt that it was so meaningless that it didn't matter if I was there or not .... I just felt like there was no point in going to the office. I'd show up, do the minimum, and leave as quickly as I could ...

The women who told this narrative are mostly of Ashkenazi origin and middle-class background. Prior to their enlistment, they lived in the urban center of Israel or in middle-class rural communities (*kibbutzim* and *moshavim*). In all cases, both their parents had served in the Israeli army, and thus their enlistment can be perceived as part of a family tradition and taken for granted in their social milieu. Moreover, leaving home to enlist was not a dramatic event for them, as most of the women from this class traveled before joining the army, including overseas. Unlike the lower-middle-class women, the deliberations of this group were not about whether to serve but rather how and where to serve.

As part of the dominant groups, these young women grew up with a clear sense of entitlement (Lareau 2003), manifested in their expectation of a "good assignment" that would reflect their privileged social position, their independence and autonomy, their egalitarian gender perceptions, their intellectual or scholastic achievements, and their social skills. It is against this backdrop that we should understand the depth of their disappointment when they were assigned to the role of secretary.

This disappointment was so powerful that when talking about their military service over a decade later, they were still preoccupied with explaining and justifying how they ended up as secretaries ("I was out of the country and didn't make it to the exams;" "I didn't do the pre-military course the army offered me"). The role of secretary is perceived as a violation of the class–gender sense of entitlement to a "good role." Therefore, some of these women did not accept the army's "verdict" and fought for a better position.

Ruthie's story illustrated this struggle. Ruthie grew up in an affluent suburb in the center of Israel and focused on the arts in high school. She had hoped to serve in the military as a film producer, and while she tried hard to obtain such a position, her wishes were ignored and she was assigned a secretarial role. She felt that she had been under-evaluated and thus "wrongly assigned" to a position beneath her that detached her from the privileges that she was used to. This was manifested

in how she described her interaction with the enlistment officer: “Look, you’re talking to a super-talented 18-year-old who could do anything. She’s intelligent, well-intentioned, motivated—you’ve got an excellent piece of personnel here. Use it, and if you don’t have anything to use it for, release it and send it home.”

From Ruthie’s quote, it is clear that she saw only two options: transfer to a good position or an early discharge. At last she managed, after a 9-month battle, to transfer to a producer job, as she had wanted. Others also succeeded in being reassigned, having used all of their middle-class social and cultural capital in an uncompromising struggle with the military authorities: Ella and Yahli became officers, and Netta became an education non-commissioned officer (NCO). Ella described her escape route from her role as a secretary in a logistics [quartermaster’s store] base:

> and then, very quickly, I received a notice inviting me to apply for officer training, which I very much wanted, to just get out of there. I was like fleeing from being a secretary, as I was sort of looked down upon by my friends who were taking courses and were doing jobs considered important. It seems ridiculous to me now, the fact that I had to go through all that. But at the time it was critical.

Although Ella thought in retrospect that her preoccupation with her military job was “ridiculous,” her military story, which was dominated by this experience, was not an exceptional one: This across-the-board story told by these women is one of survival, specifically how they survived military service as a secretary.

Performing what to them seemed like a mundane, trivial, job made them feel that their accumulated social and scholastic capital was not respected and that military service was a waste of their time and skills. Moreover, providing services to a male commander as a secretary was seen as a violation of the gender contract of middle-class women, who see themselves as equal to men and as deserving of self-realization.

In contrast to lower-class women, middle-class women are not looking for respectability in the military; rather, their contract is shaped by their sense of entitlement, which is characteristic of their class. As Annette Larreau described middle-class behavior: “They acted as though they had a right to pursue their own individual preferences and to actively manage interaction in institutional settings” (Lareau 2003, 6). Middle-class sense of entitlement focuses on the right to self-fulfillment, mobilizing social resources and interactions for one’s own identity project. Thus, Israeli middle-class young women evaluate their military service through the criterion of self-fulfillment.

Therefore, all the women in this group viewed their military service as a “ruined experience,” which they conveyed through various narrative means. Ella, from Jerusalem, said: “[I had] a feeling [that they were two years] of prison. I don’t understand how I got through it, and I wouldn’t do it again. No. It traumatized me; even if at the time I wasn’t suffering so much, there were moments when I was suffering. I was a bit in shock, you know.”

Ella used the metaphor of "prison," described her feelings as "shock," and interpreted the effect of her service as "a trauma." "I still have dreams about it today," she said. "Since my discharge, I haven't stopped having this nightmare where they put me in military prison, or re-induct me." Ruthie also described harsh long-term effects of her military service: "It was only when I was about 30 [years old] that I felt that the wound had begun to heal … Until then it was really traumatic, emotionally." The scope of images used by interviewees to portray their experiences (wound, prison, shock, trauma) not only demonstrates how difficult they perceive their experiences to have been but also paints their military service as an aberration that turned the usual order on its head and ruptured their expected life course.

As part of this negative experience, some of the women reported harassment and humiliation by their commanders.[5] The antagonism toward the military that disappointed these women was also manifested in their attitudes toward their uniforms. Ruthie explained: "I hated the uniform, I hated the army, to the extent that I'd keep [civilian] clothes in the car. The moment I left the base, I'd change clothes in the car. … I couldn't [stand to] stay in my uniform for [even] 30 seconds more."

Unlike the lower-class women, who were proud of their uniforms and saw them as a symbol of their connection to the state and as a signifier of solidarity and parity, the women from the dominant groups perceived the uniform as representing their loathing of the military. The violation of their sense of entitlement impeded not only their personal self-realization but also their commitment to the people's army.

The alienation from the people's army was intensified when they talked about social relations on the military base. As we saw among the women of the non-dominant groups, compulsory military service is portrayed in Israel as a mechanism for social cohesion. However, among women of the dominant groups, military service did nothing to establish a sense of social solidarity. On the contrary, their stories testify that they were constantly busy drawing class boundaries (Lamont and Molnár 2002) to maintain their social status. Netta, from a well-to-do family in Jerusalem, expressed this when describing the women with whom she served:

> Difficult girls. I'd never met people like that. A really shallow population from Ramle and Lod [underprivileged towns]. There were hardly any other people like me. I was with one friend who I knew from my social group, and that was it. Really difficult people. Girls with stories from the slums about boyfriends and boys. Shocking.[6]

In a similar vein, Ella marked clear ethnic and class boundaries between herself and the other women soldiers in the base: "There I was with my Ashkenaziness [my whiteness], facing [these] other girls my age who were from a class … like, Mizrahim, a class way lower, and they really couldn't stand me. The whole time. It was the only time in my life that I ran into this, meaning, so intensely."

Demarcating social boundaries enabled Netta and Ella to balance out the humiliation of being assigned to serve as a secretary. Like other interviewees in their group, they clearly rejected the notion of the military as an integrative mechanism, shaping unified Israeli citizenship.

Perceiving military service in the role of secretary as having damaged their social status, and as a deviation from their class key scenario, the middle-class women detached the military chapter from their overall life story. In retrospect, most of them tended to minimize the impact of the army on their lives. For instance, Gili, from a kibbutz in the north, has tried to erase the time she spent in the army from her life story: "The army is totally insignificant in my life. I don't even recall what it feels like to wear a uniform. … I don't think my husband even knows what I did in the army."

While others were less dramatic, they also portrayed their service as a socially and occupationally irrelevant chapter in their lives. Only those interviewees who completed their service as officers have used their military past in the labor market, but even they concealed the earlier chapter of their service as secretaries.

The process of self-distancing from the military affected the way they perceive the link between military service and citizenship. They questioned military service as a universal imperative, and some of them regretted ever having enlisted. Gili said: "I'd never go back to the army today (.…) It's an experience I would never repeat. … If they told me I had to join the army now, there's no way I'd do it."

Ruthie, as is her wont, puts it in somewhat more extreme terms: "I tell everyone I know not to enlist … . I'm very, very strongly recommending to my daughter that she doesn't sign up. I'm already talking about it with her … . My son too: I'll be very, very pleased if he doesn't go into the army."

Even those who believe that their daughters should serve in the army, as they did, emphasize that their daughters' military service should be gender-egalitarian, unlike their own experiences. Galia says:

> There should be parity not only in … it shouldn't just stop with them joining the army. If they want to be combat soldiers, let them be. If they want to be pilots, let them be pilots. Don't … don't block them … and—don't sexually harass them.

The primary voice in this group is that they were sorted by the state in a way that failed to conform to their expectations: they were placed in too low a category or they were pushed out of the center. From their gender–class perspective, they believed that military service should not only have enabled them an experience of self-realization, it should also have maintained their middle-class privileges. Their sense of humiliation from their assignment as secretaries led them to oppose military service and to withdraw from the republican ethos.

These feelings of alienation and disappointment are still alive years later, despite these women having "corrected" the disruption of their class key scenario. Ten to fifteen years later, all of these women have graduated from universities or

colleges and are working at the lower levels of academia as teachers, in administrative positions, or in the free professions. Their current social and professional status is higher than had been their military status in every possible way.

Differing contracts, divergent experiences: Gender, class, and cultural schemas

Reading these stories, we found two contrasting interpretations of military service as secretaries. According to these stories, one can imagine two women of different socio-economic background, working in their military office side by side. One is satisfied with her day-to-day military experience, while the second one is upset, depressed, and frustrated. The first one feels that her contract with the military has been honored and fulfilled, while the second one believes that her contract has been violated and thus carries grudges against the military.

What do we learn from this description about women's encounters with the state? We assert that the conceptualization of multi-dimensional contract brings to light three major insights that can explain this contradictory picture: the importance of the gendered ethno-class cultural schema in shaping the contract with the state; the power of the state to empower or to negatively label the citizen subject by honoring or violating the contract; and, finally, the soldier's agency in her struggle to uphold the contract and/or to resist state's labeling.

First, let's look at the cultural schema. Analyzing the women's stories, we saw that the basic contract of the state with the recruits is that in return for their mobilization, the military would post them to an "appropriate role." However, the interpretation of an "appropriate role" changes according to gendered ethno-class schemas. The cultural schema—achieving respectability or satisfying a sense of entitlement to self-realization—shaped women's contract with the state. Hence, women's interpretation of their military experience was shaped by the nature of the multi-dimensional contract, and equally importantly, by whether this contract was honored or breached.

For women from the lower classes, the cultural schema that constructs their contract was that of achieving respectability. Leaving the family home for military service created anxiety about being negatively labeled by their communities and fears of supposed moral deterioration, and was thus met with their parents' ambivalent feelings and in some cases objection to their enlistment. Nonetheless, compulsory enlistment made it legitimate to leave home and thus to construct a more independent and autonomous femininity than that offered in their traditional families. They saw the military organization as honoring its part of the bargain by personally enriching them and granting them respectability, and thus it successfully connected them to the state and defined them as worthy citizens.

Achieving respectability is not something that concerned middle-class women, who took it for granted. As women from the dominant groups, they did not need military service to prove their national belonging or their proper womanhood. Rather, the cultural schema that organized their contract with the military is a sense of entitlement to serve in a role that corresponds to their class's claims to

self-realization, individualism, and gender equality. Serving as a secretary violated their sense of entitlement to a "good position," and they believed that the army failed to uphold the contract. For them, military service did not link their personal self with their national self, nor was their affinity to the state and military service perceived as self-evident any longer.

This is not necessarily the typical military experience of middle-class women. Military selection mechanisms track most young middle-class women to relatively prestigious roles such as training, combat, intelligence, or education. The women who serve in these positions usually feel that they can continue their class identity project while at the same time contribute to the state project.

Thus, while for the lower-class women, the multi-level contract was about inclusion in a respectable way inside the boundaries of the national collective, for the dominant groups, this contract was about assuring their socially privileged position within national boundaries.

Though the stories of women from the middle class and women of the lower class were different, most of them described military service as a significant chapter in their life story. The salience of this life event over time highlights the power of the military to track individuals and label them. We heard from the women that the impact of role assignment is so powerful that it continues to be relevant long after their discharge. When they talked retrospectively about their military service, they carried on an imagined negotiation with the military, either in order to maintain the respectable image or to resist the inferiority label of "just a secretary."

When the military respects its part of the contract, the service can empower women and grant them symbolic and concrete (occupational) resources, though these resources are defined in patriarchal terms. Indeed, critical analysis would argue that all the women who serve as secretaries are negatively labeled, and thus the military always reproduces gender hierarchies (Sasson-Levy 2007). Conversely, the current analysis, which reflects the women's interpretations, shows that for some women, serving as a secretary was an enriching experience and was definitely not perceived as negative labeling. If we take these women's voices seriously, we understand that the military is not only reproducing power relations; it can also provide women with meaningful social resources, and for some of them it can even act as a positive turning point in their life course.

The situation is clearly different when the state does not honor its contract with the soldier and assigns her to an inappropriate role according to her expectations. Assigning women to menial roles defines them as non-worthy and damages their social and personal capital. Not only they do not gain convertible capital during their service, some of them indeed "come out with a deficit," which they have to work hard in order to recover. In these cases, the violation of the contract is perceived by the soldier as humiliating and the military service as a harmful experience. In other words, she suffers the labeling power of the state. This harmful experience can happen to women of all classes and ethnic groups.

Counterbalancing the strong power of the state to label subjects, the contract's perspective highlights also the role of the individual's agency, since it assumes

some level of reciprocity between the state and its subjects. Paradoxically, the agency of the soldier becomes evident when the state does not deliver and the woman lands in an "inappropriate" position. In this case, some women accuse the military of dishonoring its basic contract with them, and thus they put the blame on military selection mechanisms and not on themselves. In this way they deconstruct the link between their military role and their self-worth, they restore their self-image, and they regain their agency, which was damaged in the harmful encounter with the state. At times, this interpretation can motivate struggle for change, for example, to be transferred to a different role. In other cases, the violation of the contract can result in feelings of injustice, and the subject develops alienation from the military or expresses harsh criticism of the military. Interestingly, in our research, these protesting voices came mostly from middle-class women who felt that the state had blatantly violated the promise to satisfy their sense of entitlement to a good position.

To conclude, the perspective of the multi-dimensional contract enables us to portray a more nuanced picture of the power relations between state and social groups. Though the state tends to maintain class and gender hierarchies, our research demonstrates the situations in which women of the dominant groups are hurt in their encounter with the state, while lower-class women can at times gain some power from this encounter. Reading the way women interpret their military service, we can identify the cracks in the close association between the state and its dominant groups; such cracks are the spaces from which resistance, protest, and social changes can emerge.

To highlight the possibility for change and resistance through military service, we finish this chapter with the story of Jewish orthodox women in the military. In the case of the secretaries, we saw that resistance developed mostly when the soldiers perceived a violation of their contract with the military. The story of the religious women teaches us that some social groups' contract is to mobilize military service to promote change in their original civilian community.

Exploring alternative contract: Religious women's resistance through military service

A unique military experience emerges from the accounts of Jewish religious women in the military.[7] Analyzing this group exemplifies how its distinctive contract creates gendered experiences that can only be understood through the link between gender, religion, and the military, which, in Israel, is extremely complex. While ultra-Orthodox (*Haredi*) men and women receive an exemption from military service, national religious men not only serve in the military but also see it as a holy mission, part of their commitment to the "Land of Israel."

In modern religious society, the religious-man soldier is an esteemed figure, a realization of the nationalist–religious vision of assimilation into Israeli society, while preserving the observance of Jewish Law. Therefore, military service has become a constitutive element in the life course of young national religious men, and they are overrepresented in combat units, in elite units, and in the senior command.

National religious women, on the other hand, are told by their rabbis and teachers not to enlist, for fear that they will compromise their modesty or abandon the religious way of life altogether during their military service. From a religious perspective, a woman is supposed to be under the supervision of her father until her marriage and then under the supervision of her husband, whereas in the military, she reports to a strange man, which contradicts her existence as a religious woman. The injunction not to serve, therefore, originates from gendered religious regulations.

Indeed, the state grants any religious woman an exemption from military service on grounds of religiosity. But, surprisingly, over the past 10 years, more and more middle-class national religious women have opted for enlistment, despite the edicts of their rabbis and teachers (yet with the support of their parents). To demonstrate, between 2010 and 2015, the number of religious young women putting on a uniform skyrocketed from 935 to 2159 in 2015 (Yohalam 2016). Their goal was to prove that their commitment to the state was equivalent to that of men. For many national religious women, military service is a personal expression of their objection to the religious establishment and identification with the robust and prolonged wave of religious feminism in Israel (Hartman 2007, Ross 2004).

Their contract with the military is formulated in light of the religious ban on military service, and it emphasizes that women can serve in the military like men and continue to adhere to a modest religious lifestyle (Fridel-Inbar 2015). In order to realize their contract with the military, most preferred to serve in traditionally feminine roles such as education, and frequently they did indeed succeed in getting the role they asked for. They experienced personal and professional empowerment during their military service, and were recognized for their competency, which continued to hold significance over time. However, this sense of satisfaction was not the dominant theme in their narrative, as it was, for example, among secular women in the same roles.

The challenges to fulfill the contract that integrates religiosity and military life colors their gendered military experiences. Four main aspects of their gendered experiences emerged from the interviews: religious visibility, denying sexuality, developing religious autonomy, and emphasizing “feminine” command and leadership styles.

Upon enlistment, a religious woman leaves a closed protective environment in which there are relatively limited encounters with secular people. Encountering the secular military world is a culture shock, comprised of curiosity, fear, and excitement. The religious woman can find herself serving with a mixed-gender secular population without any religious authority to guide her in coping with the daily encounters with secular soldiers. Often, they feel alone and isolated, which is very contrary to the communal nature of religious society. In this situation, they must shape strategies to cope with the secular environment.

In order to differentiate themselves from the secular, they are careful to shape a religious visibility: many insist on wearing a long skirt during their daily work, most insist on dressing modestly during their free time, they are rigorous in adhering to prayer times, and some observe a Jewish custom of not coming

into physical contact with men at all.[8] This visibility work is intended to show the secular military environment, as well as the religious society at home, that they are succeeding in maintain a religious lifestyle. They are therefore busy with ongoing cultural boundary work through the gendered body, which is intended for military and civilian eyes alike.

Military service exposes them, for almost the first time, to sexual talk and behaviors of young secular women. They are surprised, for example, that unmarried women take birth-control pills and, in general, by the sexual behaviors of the secular soldiers. In response, most conform to the religious discourse that stresses silencing feminine sexuality until marriage. As part of this silencing of sexuality, they do not discuss sexual harassment in the interviews, apparently so as not to give an opening to those who slander women's military service as a hothouse of sexual promiscuity. Thus, the sexual and embodied experiences are also shaped by the contract that strives to prove that a woman can be modest, even while crossing the boundaries of religious society and rebelling against the edict of her rabbis and teachers.

In religious society, young women turn to their rabbis to seek advice on every topic (when to get married, what to study, what is permissible to wear). In the military, for the first time in their lives, they must make their own decisions regarding Jewish Law: Should they eat a slice of pizza that secular friends ordered and paid for on the *Sabbath*? Should they sit with secular friends who are listening to music on Friday night after the Sabbath comes in (or go back to her room alone)? Should she wear pants to gym class or while doing physical labor? The necessity of dealing with these questions and others pushes them to develop religious autonomy. When the women rely on their own judgment in constituting their religiosity, they undermine the basic principle of obedience to the Orthodox example. These perceptions of religious autonomy continued into adulthood, where they continued to make room for their own judgment in shaping their religiosity.

Finally, their commitment to their religious–gender contract is also reflected in their relationship to military power. They serve as commanders and officers and thereby subvert the masculine rabbinic discourse that unequivocally rules to distance women from positions of power and authority. However, as commanders and officers, they exhibited conformity to a religious outlook that insists upon binary distinctions between the sexes. They undermine the masculine leadership style most prevalent in the military and refuse to take part in the common performance of imitating combat masculinity. In contrast, they highlighted practices of femininity and displayed softer leadership styles.

Thus, the religious women's contract embodies the tension between obedience to religious commandments and the objection to the subjugation and exclusion of women by the religious establishment. This contract shapes their military experience as tense and rife with contradictions: as religious women in a secular world, modest women in a permissive world, women who negate sexuality in a world of young people, and women in a masculine environment. It is an experience in which religiosity and gender inseparably intersect and shape each other and separate them from the rest of the women and men soldiers.

To conclude, the concept of contract allows us to highlight the differences in the military experience of various intersectional groups according to their cultural tool-kit, to understand the social meaning of fulfilled or violated contracts, and to look at women's agency even when they serve in the military organization.

Notes

1 This section is partially based on Noa Dotan-Mann's (2013) Master thesis.
2 *Ashkenazim* are Jews of (mainly Eastern) European origin and represent, for the most part, the middle and upper classes of Israeli society.
3 *Kibbutzim* are small collective agricultural communities, often identified with Ashkenazi middle-class population.
4 *Mizrahim* are Jews, or descendants of Jews, from Muslim and Arab countries and primarily occupy the lower echelons of Israeli Jewish society.
5 We elaborate on sexual harassment in the military in chapter six.
6 In the quotes, we cite the non-politically correct term *girls*, as this was the language used by the interviewee.
7 This section is based on Sarah Fridel-Inbar's (2015) Master thesis.
8 It is a religious custom among some, stemming from concerns about women's modesty, not to have any physical contact with men, not even a handshake.

4 Contrasting gendered experiences

Redoing and undoing gender

Nitzan, a young soldier, served as a tank instructor, where she taught large groups of men soldiers how to load a tank and drive it. Mor, a 19-year-old soldier from Tel Aviv, was a commander of 300 women soldiers during their three-week basic training, socializing them into military life. Sigal, an education non-commissioned officer (NCO), served in a traditional "feminine role," mostly teaching basic skills to disadvantaged men soldiers. These women served in vastly different gendered environments and roles.

Indeed, despite the military organization being hyper-masculine, it actually offers women a broader range of gendered experiences in comparison to the civilian labor market. Military service pushes some of the women into traditionally feminine roles (as secretaries), while to others it offers "worthy femininity" in roles as the man's "helper" (like education or welfare officers). For a select group, it offers them opportunities to cross gender boundaries as instructors or combatants; and finally, a large group of women receive the rare opportunity to experience a blurring of gender differences to some extent, in units such as Intelligence.

These military roles shape very different gendered experiences in terms of body, sexuality, and emotion management. Through embodied experiences, the women learn the boundaries of their feminine body; they learn which emotions are permitted and which must be concealed. They learn about women's positionality in the militarized gendered hierarchy.

We posit that those experiences, which take place at such a formative life stage, were constitutive in their socialization as women citizens. Their "doing gender" and their "learning citizenship" were anchored in the role in which they served. Hence, these experiences provide actual meaning to the women's participatory citizenship and teach them their position vis-à-vis the state. We will examine, in the following two chapters, how women's service in various gendered environments teaches them, through their bodily and emotional experiences, the meaning of "proper women's citizenship."

The military's gendered role opportunities

Although the military is an "extreme case of a gendered organization" (Sasson-Levy 2011a), it's "inequality regime" (Acker 2006) offers women a range of roles

that differ from one another on many levels—their content, their organizational environment, and their gendered construction.

The military is not an egalitarian institution in any way, but it does offer women gendered role opportunities that are unlikely to be found in the civilian labor market. Thus, militaries constitute opposing gender regimes: On the one hand, militaries' gendered division of labor is more rigid and hierarchal in comparison to civilian labor markets. On the other hand, their gender regimes are highly dynamic, influenced by conflicting pressures to de-gender and re-gender the military organization (Sasson-Levy and Amram-Katz 2007). The military is simultaneously subjected to forces pressing for the preservation of a clear and distinct gender order, while the military's manpower needs and the liberal drive for gender equality work to disrupt this gender order. Because the military is such a powerful, central, and coercive institution, it has more potential to carry out reforms in its gender regime than civilian state organizations and thus to offer women a diverse set of gendered roles and opportunities. This is especially true for conscripted militaries, where the women are very young and do not have families yet, and where, by definition, their service is temporary. But the power to promote gender reforms also applies to professional militaries, as the history of the gender reforms of the US Armed Forces (Eager 2014, Iskra *et al*. 2002) demonstrates.

The US military's gender regime has undergone several gendered reforms in the last four decades. In 2014, Secretary of the Army John M. McHugh signed a directive authorizing more opportunities for women to serve in a wider range of roles within the army, which resulted in the opening of about 33,000 positions in units that were once closed to women. The last stage in this process was US Defense Secretary Ashton B. Carter's declaration in December 2015 that all jobs in the US forces, including all combat roles, will be open to women.

The German military provides another interesting example. In the German armed forces, major changes in women's integration occurred in the 2000s, following the European Court of Justice (Case C-285/98) decision that forced all European Union (EU) countries to implement gender-egalitarian recruitment policies and grant women access to all military positions (Carreiras 2006, Kümmel 2002a).

In contrast, the civilian labor market offers fewer opportunites for women, who often find it difficult to be hired for so-called "masculine jobs." In Israel, despite the fact that the participation rate in the workforce is nearly equal between (Jewish) women and men (Harari Kamar 2013), the labor market is characterized by a sharp division between "feminine" and "masculine" professions, and by a clear gendered hierarchy in the workplace. This hierarchal gendered division is accompanied by significant salary gaps, which undermine working women's economic independence (Rimalt 2008). Conversely, in the Israeli military, women can serve in either traditional or non-traditional roles for women. Even more significantly, compared to the slow promotion tracks for women in the civilian labor market, the military allows women relatively rapid promotion to the junior command ranks. Thus, in 2015, among all junior officers in the regular forces (up to the rank of captain), 44 percent were women and 56 percent were men

(Yohalam 2016). At the same time, only 6 percent of the officers at the rank of colonel are women, and the number of women at the rank of brigadier general can be counted on the fingers of one hand (ibid). The glass ceiling for women in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) is between major and colonel, such that the rapid promotion is only to the lower ranks.

To conclude, although the military is an "extremely gendered organization," it does not maintain a uniform gender order. Gender reforms in Western militaries over the last 15 years have created a diverse map of women's integration into the military. As a result, women may occupy highly varied positions in the organizational gender regimes, which, in turn, produce and reproduce different gendered experiences.

Gendered experiences, gendered interpretations

Against the backdrop of the dual gender regime of the military, we ask how the women interpret their experiences through the prism of their roles. Women soldiers enter the military with interpretive models of gender relations that have been formed throughout their young lives, and the gendering of their military roles forces them to reinterpret their gendered experiences. They must reshape their gendered perceptions in order to understand women's place in the military and in state institutions in general.

Thus, as women soldiers, they learn the essence of gendered citizenship, not as an abstract legal concept but through their daily practices. Through their embodied experiences, their sexuality, and their emotions, they learn the limits their bodies offer in answer to the military's demands, which behaviors to be ashamed of and which to take pride in, what their boundaries of power and negotiation are, and what the appropriate relationship is with men in the military. That is, they learn the gendered power relationships of state institutions. They learn who loses out after trying to make a place for herself in the face of the state's authority and who can benefit from it. It seems, therefore, that embodied experiences, sexuality, and emotions create gendered reflexivity, as well as insights into the place of women in a patriarchal state.

Young middle-class women, who are the protagonists of these two chapters, enlist for the most part with liberal egalitarian gender models. However, their military experiences are always shaped and interpreted in light of the image of the combat soldier, who stands at the top of the military hierarchy and embodies the ultimate citizen. This image demarcates the women's marginality and limits them. Thus, for example, we will see that women soldiers in roles such as education NCOs interpreted their gendered experiences in the military in terms of "his helper," while women combat soldiers often saw the male combat soldier as a model worthy of imitation.

Their gendered experience in the military could be a continuation of the interpretive toolbox they arrived with, but could also completely challenge their previous gendered perceptions. When they are assigned to a role that tallies with the interpretive schemes with which they enlisted, their military experience does

not undermine their taken-for-granted gender beliefs. However, when they are assigned to a role that causes them to cross gender lines as combat soldiers or officers, the hegemonic gender perceptions are challenged. These women, who experience gendered inconsistencies, question and doubt familiar bodily and discursive practices and reread gender relations, not only during their service but also as an ongoing interpretative process that continues throughout their lives. In phenomenological terms (Schutz and Luckmann 1974), these women's military service may unsettle social givens and lead to a reflexive and critical perspective on gender relations.

Based on this perspective, we analyze the stories of four groups of women who served in different positions in the military. This chapter (chapter four) looks at the experience of women who served in traditional feminine roles of welfare and education, and that of women in Military Intelligence. The following chapter (chapter five) will examine the experience of women who served in traditionally masculine roles, and that of women who served as officers.

Most of the women described in these two chapters come from the middle class. In contrast to their peers from the middle class who served as secretaries, whom we met in the previous chapter, the women soldiers in these chapters succeeded in fulfilling their multi-level contract with the military and served in prestigious roles for women. As young women of the dominant socio-economic groups, they graduated from prominent high schools, and enlisted in the military with expectations of being assigned to a "significant role" that would meet their expectations of entitlement to self-fulfillment. A central question they ask themselves prior to their enlistment is what type of service they wish to experience. Some of the women want to serve in so-called "masculine" roles out of a desire to be challenged, to prove they are equal to men, and to be close to the military core and enjoy the privileges it confers. Others prefer to serve in traditional "feminine" roles that they believe fit them better personally and might also provide them with resources that can be converted into a profession in the civilian labor market. Whether the women preferred a "masculine" or a "feminine" role, they were all aware of the wide scope of gendered opportunities the military offers and negotiated with the military over the role they selected. At same time, they expected to contribute to the state, thus enhancing their sense of belonging to the nation.

Women in traditional feminine roles committed to "proper femininity"

Prestigious traditional "feminine roles" like education NCO or welfare NCO are perceived in Israel as ideal military roles for women. These roles are gender typed as feminine not only in the sense that women carry them out but also because they are deeply rooted in feminine capital[1] and in the assumption that women can do them better than men.

Therefore, most of the women who serve in these roles chose to do so. Orit, a welfare NCO, put this very clearly: "I wanted, and I want, to look after, to give, to

nurture." She explicitly expressed the "ethic of care" (Gilligan 1993) that is perceived as a woman's quality. Orit and her friends considered these positions an expression of their feminine capital, which most of them had already developed prior to their military service during their youth movement and community service activities. Due to the continuity between society's heteronormative gender perceptions and the feminine nature of their military role, they do not experience dissonance regarding their self-image as women, nor does their service affect their interpretations of gender relations. The prestigious feminine role does not offend them as women. Even the women who wished to serve in "combat" roles very quickly reconcile themselves to the traditional assignment and do not feel frustrated and angry for very long, as opposed to the middle-class secretaries we observed in the previous chapter. Service in feminine and prestigious roles largely anesthetizes the soldiers' gender awareness and, at the same time, strengthens their commitment to the military organization.

Commitment to the "People's Army"

The women who served as welfare and education NCOs usually worked closely with their units' commanders and defined themselves as mediators between the commanders and the soldiers. Their role was to ensure that the smooth functioning of the unit was not impeded by domestic social problems (social welfare) or by a lack of motivation to serve (education).

To do so, a welfare NCO effectively acts as the unit's social worker, where she is responsible for dealing with personal problems that arise (such as family issues or financial difficulties). As part of her role, she conducts home visits, holds personal conversations, and helps the soldiers fill out the requisite paperwork. She is the one who decides how much compensation the soldier receives under the formal regulations and frequently searches for other solutions to help a soldier in emotional, social, or material distress. An education NCO is more responsible for educational and cultural activities, and her purpose is to strengthen the soldiers' motivation and morale, to reinforce their sense of social solidarity, and to disseminate the ideology behind the military's actions. Whether they are navigating the bureaucracy to allocate resources or giving educational seminars, they draw their authority from the organization and act as its representative vis-à-vis soldiers who are usually from a lower socio-economic background.

In their role as intermediaries, there are times when they fight for the soldiers and times when they must curb them. Chani (a welfare NCO) nicely demonstrated both sides of her role:

> There was one commander who really abused the soldiers. And I cannot see those kinds of things [and not act]. He used to abuse them … and they came to me for my help in writing a petition. That's forbidden. It's considered a rebellion. [But] I helped them. And then there was, like, there was really a sort of uproar about it, I and my officer went to the chief officer of the base … and in the end, the officer said to me "Good for you. You succeed in making

> your point, admittedly in a slightly crazy way but you succeed in doing good. Like, there is justification for what you do.

In this instance, Chani came to the assistance of the soldiers even at the price of a direct confrontation with the commander, but at the end of the day she won his appreciation. In other instances, she had to rein in the soldiers:

> They came to tell me that someone was playing with their weapon … it turns out he was playing all sorts of games with his weapon, cocking it and taking it out, they told me about it, "But don't tell anyone!" […] It took me four days of deliberations, and then I said [to myself]: "If one of them dies then I die with him, what then is the question?!" And I reported him for playing with his weapon. The Military Police came to investigate, he was sent to prison, the soldiers who were with me really didn't like that. And that's an understatement. "You're a rat …" it was hard, it was a hard period.

Chani paid a social price for reporting the soldier, but she was committed first and foremost to her role and the organization, and she acted out of a sense of identification with the military. In their loyalty to the military, these women soldiers upheld the dominant discourse of equal opportunities, which is an integral component of the ideology of the "people's army." They perceived the army as a "melting pot" arena for social mobility and saw themselves as the agents who help, guide, and direct the "needy" subjects. Amit, for example, who served as an education officer, presented her conception of her role when she described the speech she gave at the end of the officers' training course:

> When I was an officer, I was the one with the highest grades and the best performance and I gave the speech at the end of the course, I talked about soul, and that we as the Education Corp give to people, give to the soul. I also said our work tools were not rifles and weapons but spirit, I gave that speech, it was crazy. I was totally a proud Zionist. It was crazy, simply crazy.

Although looking back, Amit reflected cynically ("I can't believe those words came out of my mouth"), her narrative expressed the deep identification she felt during her service. Ofek, an education officer, was even more dramatic in her description of the emotions inherent in her role, when she divided her life to "before" and "after" the service: "It really moved me to join this group of those serving in the army. From the moment I alighted upon the enlisted bus, I feel like there, from that moment, my memories begin."

Their deep commitment to the military organization was expanded to encompass identification with the state, Orit explained:

> I felt that I was really appreciated … Yes, I got a lot out of being in the army, I felt that I … I felt proud to wear the uniform, to iron it … I was proud to sing *HaTikva* [the Israeli national anthem], it wasn't like singing it in high school.

> Taking part in the ceremonies wasn't like the ceremonies in high school ... I was happy to be a part of it. I wanted to be a part of it. It was a good place.

These women's dedicated voices reflect their social standing as the members of the dominant group who mostly take care of soldiers from lower ethno-class backgrounds. However, even years later, most of them were unaware of the power relations between them, as middle-class *Ashkenazi* women, and the lower-class men. Reut, who served at a transport base that is known for its marginalized population, demonstrated this point when she described the relationships she developed with the soldiers on the base:

> They were friends, not friends I took home. I didn't make any friends of the kind you take home. Day to day, at that level of friendship, a few outings, yes. They are not friends I took home with me. I didn't make friends with anyone there who has remained my friend to this day. No.

Reut clearly differentiated between true friends, which were suitable for her social circle outside the military, and the situational friendships with the soldiers on the base, with whom she had nothing in common outside of military life. Reut's account demonstrates how she drew ethno-class boundaries that preserved her power as a middle-class woman, without being aware of the gap between her daily behavior and the military's melting-pot ideology.

A different voice, one that reveals an awareness of the gender–class structuring of their roles, emerged from Shira's interview.[2] Shira also served as a welfare NCO but, in contrast to most of her colleagues, she came from a lower-class Mizrahi background. From her ethno-class position she observed the women who served with her and saw the selection process for her role and the ethno-class power relations inherent within it:

> When I look at that group of welfare NCOs who were in the course—lily white women who were born with a silver spoon in their mouths. And opposite them [me] a girl who blossomed in the *Katamonim* [a lower-class neighborhood in Jerusalem], comes with a lot of [critical] social consciousness. Coming from a school that let her say what she thought, allowed her to express herself and what she believes in, she enters into a military framework with 100 girls who have no idea what you are talking about … I was portrayed as one who fights for the blacks—"The Black Panther" they called me.

Shira's critical voice highlighted the uncritical dedication of most of the women in this role to the declared ideology of the organization.

Gender blindness and smooth reintegration into society

The women's identification with the organization made it harder for them to develop any critical perspective and thus also produced gender blindness. They

perceived the link between feminine capital and traditional feminine roles as "natural" and therefore did not wonder why there were almost no men fulfilling roles similar to theirs. They took the existent gender regime for granted, and their stories about their military experience were not colored by gendered power relations.

It is hard to pinpoint and demonstrate gender blindness amongst the interviewees, since it is invisible (women do not talk about what they do not see). However, these women rarely pointed to gendered power relations in the military, did not deal with gender practices, and did not discuss feeling gender discrimination. The few who did talk about gender in the interviews sought to preserve the current order. Thus Reut:

> I remember exactly what happened with Alice Miller[3] and that whole story …What luck that I wasn't born during that period. I would not have wanted them to open up all those roles. It doesn't do it for me, not in my choices ... I didn't feel like I was discriminated against, that they weren't giving me this or that, and why aren't they giving that to me, that they weren't offering equal opportunities and so on. I'm not that kind of person, you know, [I am] feminine and I don't think everything needs to be equal.

It appears that the women deeply internalized the military's gendered division of labor—the male fighter and the woman as his companion and helpmate. Thus Ofek answered the question whether women should serve in combat roles: "That issue worries me personally a little bit. I feel safer when I know that a man is protecting me as compared to a woman." Accordingly, they hardly talked about sexual harassment by men, and women's bodies and sexualities were almost entirely absent from their stories. When they did address the topic of sexuality, it was generally not part of a spontaneous description but rather a reaction to the interviewer's direct question. Moreover, the descriptions were heavily tilted toward a trivialization of sexual harassment. This approach is another way in which the women soldiers preserved a positive memory of their military service experience.

This kind of narrative promotes a positive portrayal of the commanders, who represent the people's army in the eyes of the interviewees, and as such embody the model of the protector. According to Young (2003), the protector represents the man as a heroic knight who is prepared to sacrifice himself for the sake of women and children. The women soldiers in this group often saw themselves as women subjugated to the protective man, not, however, because they had surrendered to his power but rather out of gratitude and appreciation for the security he offered them. Their role was to ensure that he would be able to carry out his mission by refraining from disagreement or criticism.

Their compliance with normative gendered roles enabled them to interpret their military service in positive terms, as an enriching experience. They described the military mainly as an arena in which they discovered their abilities, improved their social and personal skills, and developed their desires and ambitions regarding their future employment. Amit, who now works with disaffected youth, expressed this very directly: "The military strengthened my conviction that

I want to be with people, work in education, and contribute as much as I can to society." Sigal (an education NCO) depicted how her military service had guided her professional choices:

> It was a path that more or less determined that I would go into the field of education in a more meaningful way. I could have been a saleswoman, or gone into HR, other things. If I'd had experience in those things relatively early in life then maybe my path would have been different. I think that somewhere the army was a kind of channel, because your experience in the army is converted into a kind of capital later on in civilian life.

Indeed, after their discharge from the army, these women successfully converted the professional experience they had gained during their military service and the symbolic capital attached to their high-status positions into educational and employment opportunities. In their higher education and careers, most of them continued on to fields of employment that are perceived as both feminine and prestigious: educational management, social work, and psychology. Of course, choosing these professions to begin with was, first and foremost, an expression of the gendered ethno-class labor market in Israel that channels middle-class women into educational roles and therapy professions (Harari Kamar 2013, Rimalt 2008). But, from the perspective of the interviewees, military service was understood as an important stage in the gendered tracking mechanisms.

During the course of their studies in civilian life, some of these women were exposed to critical thinking that aroused a gendered reflexivity that was "dormant" during their military service. Through this lens, some of them reexamined the meaning of their military service, as Chani's story demonstrates. Chani, who we heard from at the beginning of the chapter, was a welfare NCO. She left the military very dedicated to the organization, completely accepting of its gendered division of labor. However, after her discharge, she studied education and sociology to continue what she did in the military (today she works in a hostel for adolescent girls at risk). During the course of her degree, she was exposed to social and gendered critical thinking: "I got there [university] and it blew my mind, wow, [I understood that] not everyone who wants to will succeed, the fact that I am a woman and Mizrahi is apparently not in my favor." At the very end of her interview, she reexamined the military service through the gendered lens and said cynically: "The good men will be pilots, and the good [women] are for the pilots … the men will do the work, the women will do the dirty work for the men." Chani was the exception in this group, and most of the women who served in prestigious traditional feminine roles did not develop a gender consciousness during their military service nor afterward.

Despite the fact that their role was traditionally gendered, the women in this group did not feel as though the military's gendered hierarchy harmed them. Not only did the masculine military organization conscript them as women in order to make use of their feminine capital (Huppatz 2009), but it also reinforced their traditional feminine sense of self and their loyalty to the state's gender regime. The

continuation of this understanding combined with their deep dedication to their military role engendered a conformist world view lacking in critical perspective both gender-wise and politically.

Reducing gender in white-collar positions

The gendered experience of women who served in Military Intelligence (henceforth: Intelligence) units is completely different from that of women who served in traditional feminine roles. They were not recruited for their feminine capital in order to be a helpmate to the men in caring roles. The opposite is true. Women, just like men, are accepted into intelligence roles largely on the basis of their academic record in high school, their mastery of foreign languages, and their sophisticated knowledge of computers. The Intelligence work of both men and women is done for the most part in the office, facing computer screens and using mostly cognitive skills.

Intelligence units are organized in what Sasson-Levy (2006) has termed the "white collar" model of masculinity. This masculine model competes with the hegemonic combat masculinity and promotes qualities that are anchored in the mind and not the body: control over knowledge, management abilities, and responsibility. These principles create "elite knowledge communities" that center on human capital and cognitive excellence and soften gender-based differentiations (Lomsky-Feder and Ben-Ari 2013).

Reducing the importance of the masculine warrior body as a hierarchical criterion creates conditions for blurring gender differences, which allow for what Deutsch (2007) terms "undoing gender." Deutsch argues that in order to restore the dynamics and contextual quality of the concept of "doing gender" (West and Zimmerman 1987), one must search for social conditions in which gender differences are blurred or lose their relevance. In these cases, the power of gender as a principle of inequality is restricted, and doing gender receives new meaning.

Indeed, women who served in Intelligence described a relatively egalitarian experience and a safer environment for women. Thus Alma said:

> I always thought of myself as a human being, and among other things I am also a girl or a woman. … I always thought of myself as myself, I have X capabilities … I am of the first rank. … There is no significance, or almost no significance, to your gender.

Alma interpreted her service experience through the discourse of liberal feminism, which stresses gender similarity, wherein human capital ("I have X capabilities") is the standard for status and not gender. Ayelet, on the other hand, perceived women as a differentiated category, and it is specifically through this stance that she interpreted her service experience in Intelligence as equal:

> I think the Intelligence world is a wonderful world for women in the military. To grow there and blossom there and make a worthy contribution. You know,

> in contrast to roles as secretaries, or other roles for women that waste the two years that they are supposed to give of themselves.

The women in Intelligence considered their service equal to the men's in terms of dedication, investment, and hard work. And Ayelet continued:

> I got there through hard work, not charity, and not because I have any sort of connections, but because I sat on my behind and I worked and I studied [in the training courses]. I didn't really have a personal life during the military period. I mean, I worked hard for it, and therefore I also feel good about myself.

As part of constructing their military service as an egalitarian experience, their stories were almost devoid of references to the body or sexuality and they almost did not talk about sexual harassment at all. Thus they preserve the basic liberal ideology, according to which humans are abstract individuals, a pure reason unaffected by race, gender, or sexual differences (see Jaggar 1983). This liberal approach serves, of course, their egalitarian self-perception.

They considered themselves part of an elite privileged group, whose power is based on personal excellence that crosses gender lines. Zohar said: "We were this sort of cool organic unit. Everyone was very, very, very, very talented." The women are eligible to belong to this group by right of mastery of knowledge that is not clearly military knowledge (such as mastery of languages, computers, or sciences). They do not draw their power from the militarized gendered power relations, which bestow superiority upon the combat soldier. In their narratives, they constructed this eligibility through presenting their life stories as being one long track of excellence.

Alma said "I was, and still am … a perfectionist, a striver. … it was important to me not just to be the best student in the class but in the whole grade;" Leah attested she was a student "who didn't need to study for the test to get 100 … excellence was always a part of my life."

The interviewees emphasized the difficulty of the selection process for their prestigious roles, thus underscoring the exclusivity of their service. As a result of the military's selection mechanisms, it is no wonder that their stories depicted a homogenous social environment comprised mostly of middle to upper-middle-class men and women—"my type of people" (Alma), "People of the same type" (Ayelet). This environment creates strong social networks, which are significant after discharge as well. Thus, in their accounts, they emphasized the common ethno-class denominator and suppressed (even if unconsciously) the gender differences (Lomsky-Feder and Ben-Ari 2013).

Another factor that mitigates gendered power relations in their units is the high visibility of homosexual soldiers in Intelligence.[4] The Israeli military does not provide quantitative data regarding the rate of homosexuals in military units, but the actual percentage of homosexuals in Intelligence is not as important—what matters is that there is a dominant image of Intelligence as a gay-friendly unit. This image undercuts the ethos of the heterosexual combat soldier, which

embodies hegemonic masculinity, and it allows for a more flexible gendered-identities regime. As a result, the women soldiers who served in Intelligence described an organizational culture that was more equal and safer for women.

Gendered interruptions

Although at the professional level, gender differences were somewhat blurred, they were clearly visible in other aspects of military life, such as duties, principles of hierarchy, and promotions. Duties in Intelligence are divided, like the rest of the military, according to traditional gender perceptions: while men perform guard duty, the women do kitchen duty. In dividing "household" chores according to gender, the military constitutes a "gender factory" (Berk 1985) in that it teaches women the "appropriate" domestic division of labor.

A noticeable hierarchy issue is the difficulty in promoting women in Intelligence to leadership roles. The lack of women in the elite units and the officer ranks are facts known to all, but some of the women testified that they only realized this some years later, for example, Leah:

> It is only now, when looking back, that I realized how few women there were [in the unit]. But then, I didn't pay attention to these things.… It happened often that I was the only girl in the forum, I was always a kind of tomboy (…) I didn't pay attention to the lack [of women].

Some of the interviewees explained the differences in promotion in terms of organizational and financial obstacles, mainly the shorter duration of service for women, which reduces the financial worthiness of investing in them. Hence, obstacles that prevent women from advancing were not interpreted as discrimination so long as they could be explained in a rational way in terms of return on investment. Naomi, an Intelligence officer, said:

> I think the formal reason that they used was that the training period is very, very long. Then it was about half a year long. And they said it wasn't worth it to recruit a woman since by the time she completed her training, she would already be discharged. So then the division was made up of boys.

Only a few of the women we talked to were less forgiving of the seemingly "rational considerations" for promotion and perceived the organizational barriers in terms of gender discrimination. Ayelet:

> No one would have thought to launch a career for a woman in the same way that they thought about launching a career for a man—finding the opportunities to send him to become an officer. Inarguably because I am a woman, no one from within the system would encourage me or help me of his own accord. If I hadn't pushed myself I would have finished my service without becoming an officer.

The interviewees saw the gendered "glass ceiling" but according to different levels of gender awareness. Interestingly, the women who passed through the organizational barriers and achieved leadership positions found themselves even more exposed to the gendered power relations, which, in turn, sharpened their critical gendered perspective. Naomi talked about her role as an officer:

> In your first role, when you are very young, it turns out that your professional colleagues are actually much more senior, much more veteran, more masculine. It's a very very isolating environment … I am doing what I do for two months, and the person sitting across from you has been doing it for 10 years, 15 years (…) I can make do in a very masculine environment. It is just not fun for me.

The experience of being an officer is mainly one of loneliness and awkwardness in working in a masculine environment. Gender relations were even more conspicuous when as part of their role they were assigned to field units. Zohar:

> The military division is a masculine system (…) everything under the Command, is a system managed by men. Always. The division commander is a man. 90 percent of the staff officers are men. Intelligence officers, Operations Branch at General HQ, also men. (…) In terms of women officers on the base there was me, the welfare officer, the education officer, a few Intelligence officers. But all the rest were men. I felt my femininity there in … I come into a meeting—all of them are men. And they talk about stuff that happens in the field, of which they understand more than I do. They also look at me as those who understand more than me. It is something that is very, very, very below the surface.

Like the women soldiers in "masculine" roles, Zohar experienced the significance of service in a distinctly masculine environment. The running of field units is organized mainly on the basis of operational experience and seniority—all of which maintain gendered power relations in the military. In this context, it is harder for the women to apply authority that derives its power from non-operational knowledge. Hence, it is exactly when they are promoted that they are exposed more to gendered power relations.

To sum up so far, analyzing the interviews reveals that although these women soberly observed the gendered interruptions, their dominant opinion was that for them the service was a unique opportunity to experience relative gender equality.

How should this interpretation be analyzed? Does the military context actually reduce gender differences? Can the women's experiences be defined according to Frances Deutsch's (2007) term "undoing gender?" Deutsch suggested the concept of "undoing gender" to signify "social interactions that reduce gender differences" (ibid., 122). A critical and skeptical reading would claim that, rather than "undoing gender," the women in Intelligence are primarily "doing masculinity,"

and it is merely that their masculinity is based on the white-collar model, which prizes knowledge, management, and responsibility (Sasson-Levy 2006). They act like the white-collar men in order to win prestige and recognition on the basis of professional capabilities and thus strengthen and reaffirm this masculine model.

An alternative and more optimistic reading would interpret the women's conduct as "undoing gender" because, in their own eyes, they participated in interactions that reduced gender differentiations and served in a relatively egalitarian environment compared to others (even in comparison to civilian arenas). This question, whether they participated in "undoing gender" or in "redoing white-collar masculinity," remains largely open. But the way in which the women themselves talked about how military service influenced their functioning upon their return to civilian life perhaps hints at the direction in which an answer lies.

A different model of womanhood: Equality through excellence

Looking at their life stories in retrospect, the women in this group felt that they had managed to successfully convert the experience, the symbolic capital, and the knowledge they acquired in the military to the civilian labor market. In many cases, serving in an Intelligence unit becomes a shortcut to a job in the hi-tech industry even without any formal computer science studies. In addition, they talked about the military's wider influence on their personal abilities. Let us consider Ayelet, who is in a managerial position in industry today, as she told the interviewer what she took away from her service:

> It is an [assertiveness] that I think I adopted from the army, where I was in discussion forums which were only men and [they said] "this young woman soldier, what does she know?" (…) and it made me become much more matter-of-fact, much more assertive, to always know the facts behind what I was talking about—because there was no room for mistakes. Because you were there on your own merit, but you also needed to prove to everyone that you were worth it.

The military experience taught Ayelet how to manage in civilian life as well:

> When you get somewhere and it's mostly men and mostly managers, then you as a woman feel like you need to prove yourself more and to show that you deserve roles and you deserve the position and that there is a basis for what you say. You need to be more serious and more assertive. That's what it created in me. Not in every woman. It's what it created in me. The need to be more assertive and businesslike and more correct in discussions and forums.

What is interesting is that Ayelet did not assign these attributes—assertiveness, businesslike, and seriousness—to masculinity. She insisted in the interview upon presenting herself as a woman with management abilities and not as a woman who manages like a man:

> I always arrived very sure of myself, and sure of my ability wherever I was, and sure of my ability to handle the role like anyone else. So I never felt any sense of inferiority because I am a woman or something like that.

Naomi, a physics graduate who works in the security industry, was less unequivocal in her approach:

> I remember that mainly in large forums (…) I always made sure to preserve some sort of facade. (…) So it wouldn't be perceived as weakness. Today I try very hard not to do it. I insist on not losing parts of myself for something else. (…) I don't know, it could be that it's possible to do it another way. But you need to go over a little bit to the men's side to belong.

Naomi flirted with the need to behave "like a man" but tried not to go too far with this option in order to stay "true to herself." She and her friends searched for the correct behavior in their own eyes as women who were active in a man's world. In this process, there are those who differentiate themselves from other women who more aptly fit the traditional image of a woman, like Leah, for instance:

> I am aware that I am more critical of women. I expect more of them … because it's me, it's us. So they don't tarnish my name. [They say] "spoiled women," "women don't know how to drive" (…) so we are really not like that. But sometimes I meet a woman who is like that. And then I just want to die.

Leah constructed a positive self-image of a strong woman by negating traditional femininity. However, in contrast to the combat women soldiers (whom we will meet in the next chapter), she did not attempt to imitate the men but rather created a different type of contemporary femininity that is strong and independent. In this respect, she represents a new negotiation over what it means to be a woman in the military, and a woman in a men's world.

Similarly, Leora also offered a non-traditional model of femininity. After her discharge, Leora chose to study physics, a clearly "masculine" profession and to work as a karate instructor. But she refused to see this behavior as an expression of masculine behavior:

> I want to be successful—as a woman (…) I don't want to play their game. It's clear to me that I'll lose, they jump farther. That is, there are physical data that causes it. I am not in that game. I want to be good, and to be a woman (…) I want my differences to be recognized. I don't want to be equal and identical. I want to be equal and different. With the advantages and disadvantages that go along with it. I have no problem with it.

Leora wanted to be a woman in her own way. In this context, she presented her choice not to go into all-encompassing, demanding positions in hi-tech but rather

to give space to her role in the family as a conscious decision. She linked this gender consciousness directly to her military service:

> I think that because of these tools [that I received in the military], my choices were more intelligent, braver. And no, not fearful or hesitant. That's how I feel. Because it gave me some sort of sense of confidence. … Through some sort of confidence that you are an officer, which is connected to some sort of professionalism and investment, you can go far. It's a tool that I think I got in the army.

In conclusion, the women in Intelligence described themselves acting in ways defined by society as "masculine," but they refused to define it that way themselves. Their perception is of talented and privileged women, who succeeded in the masculine world but not according to the stereotypical "proper" femininity. The egalitarian experiences during their military service freed them, to a certain extent, from "doing gender" like men or the "doing gender" of the traditional woman. In performing a new type of femininity, one that emphasizes confidence and assertiveness without being masculine, they blur gender hierarchies.

The possibility to undo gender in itself creates gendered reflexivity. Indeed, they perceived the military service as a constitutive formative experience in shaping their gender consciousness. They interpreted the reality of their lives through the gendered lens and chose breakthrough life practices. However, most of them did not develop a critical feminist consciousness that calls for social change. Most of them believed in a meritocratic ideology of personal capital and self-fulfillment, which dictated their contract with the military. In their case, their multi-level contract was fulfilled, and military service enabled them to successfully compete with men without being drawn into behaving "like men."

Examining these two groups of women together, we see that each group went through different initiation processes into gendered citizenship. While the women in traditional "feminine" roles learned and internalized the position/role of a woman citizen as a helpmate for men, who are the ultimate citizens, the women in Intelligence learned that they can function equally to men without mimicking a masculine model.

In contrast, the women who served in so-called "masculine" roles or as junior officers had a very different military experience from both groups. As we will show in the next chapter, crossing imaginary and real gender lines forced them to constantly evaluate their own gender practices, and to grapple with the dictate to "behave like a military man."

Notes

1 Huppatz (2009) defines "feminine capital" as the advantage that derives from the possession of skills and characteristics that accord with the cultural definition of femininity.

2 Shira was interviewed for a dissertation by Yosepha Tabib-Calif (2015), which explored ethnic and gender identity construction processes among young Israelis.
3 As mentioned, in 1995, the Israeli Supreme Court ruled in the case of Alice Miller vs. The Ministry of Defense that the IDF must open the pilots' training course to women.
4 The Israeli Army abolished any prohibitions on service by homosexuals in 1993, and they are formally permitted to serve in every military role. This policy neutralizes any suspicion of extortion of soldiers, and thus paradoxically there is a high concentration of homosexual soldiers in the Military Intelligence units.

5 Contrasting gendered experiences

Crossing boundaries

In the current chapter, we turn our attention to women who cross gender boundaries during their service, either through serving in so-called "masculine" roles, or by occupying command roles and exercising power over people. For the first group, crossing gender lines is explicit, defined as a breakthrough in the military gender regime. For the second group, however, coping with gendered models of power is more implicit, and is a source of ongoing deliberations throughout the women officers' future life course.

Reexamining gender models in non-traditional roles

Hadas, an infantry instructor, explained: "We didn't come to make coffee … in my mind there was a direct link between doing something meaningful and not being a secretary, which is very, very feminine. Which is very submissive, simply to follow orders, it's being so obsequious."

Hadas positioned her role as the direct opposite of the role of secretary, which is the iconic representation of women's inferiority in the army. Unlike the secretaries, Hadas served in one of the so-called "masculine roles." These roles, including tank and infantry instructors, physical training instructors for men, border patrol, war room officers, off-road vehicle operators, and a minority of combat soldiers (serving in patrols on peaceful borders), have been gradually opening up to women since the beginning of the 1990s.[1]

Women's entry into so-called masculine positions disrupts the "natural" gendered division of labor and breaches gender boundaries. Following Gerson and Peiss's (1985) conceptualization, we argue that gender boundaries are crossed here on several interrelated levels: employment boundaries are crossed because the women took up positions that had previously been masculine enclaves; spatial boundaries are crossed as women gain visibility in sites where they were not visible before; and, finally, ideological boundaries are crossed when roles that had been based on masculine capital take on new meanings, and the hegemony of military masculinity is challenged and threatened.

All of the women who served in such roles were well aware that they had crossed gender boundaries, a fact that they considered positive and empowering. Serving

in such a role was perceived as a unique opportunity to do something important and to contribute to the nation. Moreover, they all interpreted the military experience as a powerful and maturing one. For instance, when Hadar, who served as the commander of a headquarters company, was asked about her old picture albums from her military service, she responded: “I am proud, I am happy. Overall, they’re pleasant memories.” Inbar also nostalgically recalled her time serving as a naval radar operator: “Somehow I always return to the white uniform, I remember that time period as white. It was white, it was fine, it was heroic, it was dramatic, it was romantic.” For Liron, an artillery corps instructor, the non-traditional role serves as a reflective anchor for her abilities throughout the rest of her life:

> I think that somewhere in the back of my mind, it always sat there, even after I traveled or when I chose to study at the *Technion* [a science and technology university], somehow it always accompanied me that I said, ‘I was an artillery corps instructor.’ In other words, it was one of the things I was proud of, to see, hey look, you succeeded in doing it. When you are at difficult points sometimes, you look back and say, ok, but you have proven yourself a number of times already, like, not to break. So this is one of the things that sat in the back of my head, and that’s important.

Michal, who served as an operations non-commissioned officer (NCO), described her experience more ambivalently: “In retrospect, I really enjoyed myself there. It was a lot of fun for me; I was the first woman operations NCO there. Before me there were men operations NCOs. I felt like I was like the men, I felt very good about it.” Over the course of the interview, however, she also remembered the more difficult and painful things: “It matured me, I saw things there, you know people being killed, my friends were killed, people were wounded on my watch, which was my responsibility. It matured me very very much.”

Crossing gender boundaries sometimes meant being brought face to face with the military’s violence. Michal’s mention of death is unusual—most of the interviewees did not bring up this aspect (we will expand upon this in Chapter 7). The military service period remains mainly a source of pride and empowerment for the women because they overcame the most difficult challenges posed by entering arenas that were traditionally considered masculine.

As Ridgeway (2001) would argue, women’s entry into masculine roles violates hegemonic gender beliefs, and therefore they often face opposition, resentment, and resistance (see Winslow and Dunn 2002). Therefore, serving in “masculine” roles is not only empowering. These women soldiers are forced to deal with the cultural models of femininity and masculinity at their disposal on a daily basis. The practices of crossing gender boundaries, the emotional and embodied consequences, the moments of coping with hostility and exclusion, and the gendered journey back to civilian life—all these factors shape their military experiences and contribute to their emergent gender reflexivity.

Exclusion, resistance, and doing gender

Although assigning women to so-called “masculine” roles was carried out as part of an ordered organizational process, the actual day-to-day reality was not a simple or harmonious process. The women’s stories emphasize the complexities of everyday life while serving in these roles as women and coping with men’s (latent and overt) resistance and sometimes even institutional exclusion. For example, Michal, a war-room NCO, said that she was not allowed to participate in a parachuting course that all her men peers went through during their service. Nitzan, an artillery corps instructor, was excluded from guard duty and was not allowed to sleep in the field with the men soldiers. But the main difference that emerged between the women’s and the men’s service was the exclusion of the women from combat operations.[2]

Some of them were angry about it, while others enjoyed it, as they could benefit from the prestige of their so-called “masculine” role without having to get as “dirty” as the men. Moreover, some were also happy that they did not have to deal with the moral dilemmas associated with serving in the Occupied Territories. Nitzan:

> I said to myself, how lucky … how lucky I am that I’m not, that I’m not a man. Those are dilemmas that I wouldn’t want to have to deal with at all … I was very happy that they didn’t give me that option. … I’m happy that I didn’t have to serve in the [Occupied] Territories.

The women soldiers who participated in the masculine arenas of combat or combat training roles had to struggle with opposition and hostility from men soldiers. For instance, Hadas, infantry instructor: “If I say something in class, and their commander says: ‘Sure guys, but in the field you don’t do it that way,’ well, obviously I don’t even have a way to argue with him because I don’t know what happens in the field.”

The trainees’ direct commanders undermined the instructor’s authority when he showed off his field knowledge and pitted it against her theoretical knowledge. Hadar, a headquarters company commander, described the lack of trust she encountered when she took up her command position: “I began in the position with all eyes upon me, a lot of skepticism surrounding me. The maintenance officer of the brigade told me he didn’t believe I’d succeed ‘but good luck.’”

The commanders in these stories justify their objection to women’s equal participation in the military by challenging the women on professional grounds. Other men’s objections to women in their roles assume a sexual overtone. In fact, the women’s lives in a masculine environment are often characterized as constant sexual harassment (we will expand upon this in the next chapter).

The women soldiers had to contend with their “unsuitability” for a masculine organization that measures men and women against the norm of hegemonic models that link power and knowledge with masculinity. In the absence of clear cultural scripts for how women should act in a masculine military organization,

they had to find pragmatic answers of their own and negotiate their own gender practices.

The gender practices of women soldiers have been discussed by many scholars (Baaz and Stern 2013, Herbert 1998, Levin 2011, Sasson-Levy 2003b, Sasson-Levy 2007, Silva 2008, Sion 2008), who have analyzed how "women use a variety of tactics and strategies to define and redefine what it means to be a woman in the military" (Furia 2010, 112). Most scholars emphasize that women soldiers tend to mimic the practices of "armed masculinity," accepting this model as the norm for soldiering (Mitchell 1996, Sasson-Levy 2003b, Snyder 1999). Yet others see more fluid gender strategies and argue that while some women soldiers do indeed embrace masculinity, other women strategize their gender practices toward femininity (Herbert 1998). Finally, a third gender strategy is mentioned by Furia (2010), who claims that there are women soldiers who choose to keep a low profile, neither appearing nor behaving in obvious feminine or masculine ways.

By analyzing the stories that emerged from the interviews we conducted with women in combat roles, we discovered that indeed they "do gender" in the military in a variety of ways. Their gender practices shift and change based on the situation, context, and audience. While the practice of imitating men combat soldiers is dominant, nevertheless, some women choose other gender practices, as the literature cited above noted.

Nitzan, a tank instructor, used the unique characteristics of the female body as a resource to negotiate her position:

> I asked for permission to go to the bathroom, and he [her commander] said, "You've got 90 seconds," and I said to him, "Sir, I can't do it in 90 seconds." So he said, "I'm not asking you to do anything that I wouldn't ask of myself." So I took advantage of that and I said, "Sir, you haven't changed a tampon in 90 seconds," and that shut him up.

In this specific situation, Nitzan made the feminine "leaky body" (Basham 2013) present, and used it to embarrass the male commander and thus achieve more private time. Others use their feminine bodies to achieve cooperation with the soldiers; thus Ilanit, a sports officer, consciously and intentionally used her sexuality: "You can build on it, like, you know, to externalize your feminine presence and use it as feminine power. I've always said that it was in the army that I learnt to use my femininity manipulatively …"

In contrast to Ilanit, Hadas wanted to differentiate herself from traditional femininity. Hadas described the impression that she strived to manage in the performative moment of entering the fully occupied mess hall:

> When you come to the mess hall and the whole base is there, there are the commanders' secretaries, but you aren't them! … Not that I didn't want them [the man soldiers] to like me, I simply wanted them to like me in other ways, that the commanders would say "wow, she's a real babe and she knows how to fire a heavy machine gun."

Hadas hoped to integrate the feminine "babe" with the masculine soldier, but for her to be both a combat soldier and a feminine soldier was too hard a mission, as she continued to describe: "I didn't manage to play that game of the … desirable character that I told you I wanted to be. Because I didn't feel pretty in the military and I was, like, neither here nor there."

Most of the women soldiers did not succeed, or were not interested, in the mission of becoming a "desirable feminine" character (see also Levin 2011). Rather, they mostly chose to play with their gender performances to obscure a normative feminine appearance. For example, Michal (an operations NCO) described how she changed her past "feminine" appearance and passed as a young man: "My hair was even shorter than it is now. You don't wear earrings in the army, no jewelry, just uniform. I used to get on a bus and they'd think I was a boy, that happened lots."

Not only did Michal shape her body to mimic masculinity, but also her emotions:

> I didn't have a boyfriend, I didn't have a partner, I wasn't thinking about having children, I didn't want children and I couldn't see any difference between me and the men. I mean, there is a difference in physical strength. Apart from that, I couldn't see any difference. I said, anything he can do, I can do. I didn't really give much thought to being a woman at that time.

Michal's attempt to "be like a man" entailed rejecting the normative script for women in Israeli society, which emphasizes heterosexuality and motherhood as the fulfillment of femininity. Alongside the denial of normative femininity, some of the women adopted and imitated the practices of armed masculinity (Snyder 1999). Hadar said:

> A lot of times I was much more direct and masculine than them [the men]. … I used to say to them, Guys, it can't be big and wide and not hurt. You know, today that seems really unladylike to me, not a feminine thing to say. And it would embarrass them and that gave me a lot of power. I mean, they didn't try me. In a way, I was more macho than they were.

Hadar took masculine performance to its limits—in her words "she was more macho" than the men. Clearly, mimicking armed masculinity was most prevalent in situations of commanding and instructing men soldiers.

Adopting masculinity was also expressed physically by carrying heavy loads, but these practices also aroused discontent and anxiety amongst some of the women, as Hadas said:

> That's what caught our attention, on the one hand, we are dealing with wanting to be in the field and we are like the boys and we don't eat apples and all that, we are not girly girls. But on the other hand, what, we will come out sterile?[3] [Carrying] all this weight we will come out sterile and I think it's also what's written on the end of course T-shirt we made for ourselves. Something

> like, we won't have children, something like that. That was the joke. A joke but not a joke, because I remember, that, sometimes when I thought about it and said "wait, is what everyone is laughing about really true? If we carry heavy things then I won't have children?"

Hadas's and her friends' preoccupation with their potential fertility is a reminder for them that they are women whose main destiny, according to Israeli societal dictates, is to give birth. They know that they are crossing gender boundaries only temporarily, and thus see "acting like men" as a performativity game and not a fixed transition. Aviva (a radar operator in the navy) explicitly conveyed the perception that imitating masculinity is a temporary game: "From the start I understood that it was a game and I enjoyed playing it, I won't tell you I didn't enjoy it, … I mean, when they stood to attention for me, but I always said that it's a game, it's not for real."

The image of the masculine role as a performative act, a game, which recurs and repeats often in these stories, highlights the women's reflexive position: They perform masculinity and are very aware that this is a performance that is limited in time and space to their military service. The implication is that when they are discharged from the army, the game is over. Aviva continued:

> [In the army] I managed to reach a position of relative authority, and yes, to do something meaningful without anyone putting me down. So I said: great, it's over, good, OK, let's put it in the attic, I had a great time in the army, it was OK in the army, and that's that.

Aviva put her military experience "in the attic" as a metaphor for its irrelevance for "real life." This reflexive interpretation of their gender performance as a game shows the opportunities these women had to serve in roles that push them into, or allow them, varied gender performances. These can be playful and at times subversive, but at the same time they knew that the opportunity for such varied gender performances were temporary and situational.

Return to civilian society: The journey back to "proper" femininity

These women's return to civilian life is neither easy nor harmonious. The women soldiers are aware that they are returning to a rigid gendered opportunity structure in civilian life. While they had the option to play with various gender models in the military, the return to civilian life is described in their stories as a (more or less reflexive) journey back to "proper femininity." Hadas demonstrated how the model of traditional femininity directed her choices upon her discharge: "When I was discharged, I wanted to work as a made-up flirty waitress … I was preoccupied with this corporeality, I wanted to be the, like the one [serving] with the tray. It was very important for me."

As a former heavy-weapons instructor, Hadas consciously chose to move away from performing armed masculinity to the "polar opposite" and perform

"emphasized femininity" (see Connell 1987). Like Hadas, some of these soldiers felt their military service had damaged their "feminine capital" (Huppatz 2009), and they needed to recover it in order to integrate back into civilian society. Hadar (a commander of a headquarters company), who was very reflexive about this process, illustrated it in this passage:

> I assume that in some way I had a bit too much self-confidence, actually I think that then, when I was discharged, I put a lot of people off, because, again, I was conveying a lot of power and a lot of strength and a lot of confidence, which was maybe right for the position I had had, but suddenly you're a civilian and you go to all sorts of places … It made people act unpleasantly towards me because they thought I was bad and impulsive and all sorts of other things that I'm really not […]. It looked like over-confidence and stubbornness, maybe, that I had to have everyone listen to me, everyone must agree with me ... and I decided to tone that down, very quickly.

And indeed, Hadar changed her behavior in accordance with the normative model of Israeli femininity:

> When I left [the army] I was a little militant, in both my views and my behavior, I chose to tone it down very quickly. That is, I immediately went on a diet, I played sports, I was drawn to that place. And today, I'm more, maybe more delicate.

According to Hadar, being a strong woman is perceived as awkward not only in the public sphere but also in the sphere of intimacy: "An assertive and strong woman is something that puts most men off … And I remember a few dates when I really tried not to talk about the army." As part of her return to "proper femininity," Hadar chose a markedly feminine career as a ballet teacher. Adopting masculine practices, which was an advantage in the military, is perceived as a disadvantage in civilian life. Hadar and her friends were pushed to return to and exhibit normative feminine practices.

When they return to civilian life, they also understand that it is quite difficult to convert the resources they accumulated in the military into the civilian labor market. This is true especially in comparison to the conversion opportunities open to women who served in traditional feminine roles or Intelligence. While many of the interviewees used their military service after their discharge to secure temporary employment, they primarily used the prestige of their "masculine" military service as symbolic capital and always mentioned it on their resumes, during employment interviews, and in university admissions. But as a general rule, they do not succeed in converting their military knowledge into civilian resources, as Ravit, a tank instructor, explained: "You know everything, and then you are discharged and no one is interested that you know so much about tanks, and what will you do with all this knowledge? This knowledge doesn't help you with anything in civilian life."

Ravit painfully recognized that the military knowledge at her disposal was irrelevant. As opposed to "pure" military knowledge, the training skills that women gained were more easily converted to civilian life. Nofit, for example, made a clearer distinction between what she could take from her military service and what she could not:

> It's true that I have technical knowledge … [but]… I don't use it in my daily life. It's a type of more general knowledge that I have. But in terms of the training tools I really got a ton. In terms of speaking in front of a class of 30 reserve soldiers and training them, I think that those are things I take with me to this day.

Apparently, skills that are culturally connected to femininity and to women's jobs are more valuable to women when they enter the gendered labor market. Clearly one of the difficulties in returning to civilian life is the loss of status and power that they previously achieved by mastering "masculine" military knowledge. In order to preserve their link to military knowledge, some of them develop informal practices that allow them to enjoy the aura that comes with it. As civilians, they nostalgically reminisce about the military chapter of their life through photo albums and mementos of their service time, and they visit (usually right after their discharge) the base at which they served. They continue to demonstrate their military knowledge in family conversations (mainly with their father and brothers), at friends' get-togethers, and at "conversations over coffee" with men at their workplace. They also strengthen their knowledge during annual meetings with friends who served with them. During these encounters, they spend a lot of time reminiscing and playing social games (memory games, card games) that they invented around the military knowledge they acquired (Yaakov 2013). These nostalgic practices express their efforts to preserve their membership in the military's men's club, which grants them not only prestige but also the satisfaction of belonging.

Fondly remembering military knowledge fades with the years. When they reflected on their military service in the interviews (10–15 years later), they did not romanticize this chapter in their lives but instead viewed it soberly. The experience of crossing gendered boundaries in the military, the deliberations regarding the appropriate gendered practices, and the return to the traditional feminine roles in civilian life all led them to examine the world from a critical gendered perspective.

Gendered reflexivity and political critique

Hadas demonstrated how gender awareness begins in basic training, when the women soldiers are preoccupied with the question of where they will be assigned and quickly learn that their feminine body is an important source of military status:

> I wanted to be a sniper instructor … it was considered very prestigious. Very few become sniper instructors, ahh … it was considered very professional

> and also where the pretty girls went … I wanted to belong to the pretty girls camp … It [appearance] seemed to me to be meaningful. If you were to show me someone from the infantry instructors course, I could tell you, just from looking at her, where they would assign her.

The women soldiers learn very quickly that they are measured by their physical appearance (see also Levin 2011). Gendered reflexivity, then, already begins at the first stage of their military path and strengthens as a result of embodied experiences they face in the field.

Indeed, as we showed in the quotes above, the women in so-called masculine roles described their military experience, their daily life and interactions on the military base, and the military hierarchy through the prism of gender. The need to conceal "their femininity" or to use it provocatively, to cope with hostility and sexual harassment, and to constantly negotiate their status within the military all made it impossible for them to remain gender blind. They could not ignore their body, their sexuality, or the power with which they had been entrusted, because these largely challenged the (explicit and latent) dominant cultural assumptions regarding proper feminine behavior and destabilized its "naturalness" (Ridgeway and Correll 2004).

Though crossing gender boundaries was accomplished as part of an ordered organizational process, in day-to-day reality, the women were forced to grapple with its challenges without clear role models to emulate. These fuzzy situations enabled the subjects to reevaluate and redefine their cultural models, as crossing gender boundaries always opens up new spaces for changing consciousness (Gerson and Peiss 1985).

Thus, experiencing so-called "masculine" roles teaches the women that gender boundaries are largely arbitrary. They learn to sever the link between sex and gender and distance themselves from essentialist gendered perceptions. This gendered consciousness gets stronger because of their belief that they themselves fulfilled the task and acted appropriately in a role that was formerly defined as "masculine."

While, for the women in traditional roles, feminine capital was unquestioned, for the women who had served in so-called "masculine" roles, this capital was subject to reexamination. During their service, they had to recalibrate the meaning of their gender identity and "restore" that capital after their release, when they returned, at least partially, to the hegemonic model of "proper femininity."

However, although in their practices they return to "proper femininity," they do not maintain a perception of essentialist and hierarchal gender roles, nor do they sustain the "female consciousness" of women who "behave in accordance with normative expectations and act to further support those expectations" (Gerson and Peiss 1985, 324). Rather, they acquired gendered reflexivity and understand gender as a fluid category through which they interpret social reality in general and their military service in particular. Moreover, some of them developed not only gendered reflexivity but a feminist consciousness as well, and they eventually directed their critical gaze at the power relations in the military organization.

One topic that they critiqued retrospectively was the macho organizational culture and the culture of sexual harassment, which we will discuss in depth in

chapter six. Another topic that drew their ire was the gendered division of labor, as Nofit said: "You're just playing dumb if you say that men and women are the same ... I don't have any problem with those differences. I've got a problem with the fact that they won't let me do what I, what I am capable of doing."

Zoe, a sports instructor, leveled much sharper criticism at the gender regime of the military:

> I don't see the military as a good place for women, I think that women need to vote with their legs, not because they aren't good, the opposite … I think that they are much better than what they are given … I think the military is a chauvinist institution … Most of the women in my military were either clerks or secretaries or bring coffee, there's no equal treatment and it is also not nice treatment … From my perspective, it's humiliation–why must a woman make coffee for a man, what kind of a thing is that?

Gendered reflexivity develops into a feminist awareness only infrequently during the course of military service itself—for most of the women, it appears after their discharge. Interestingly, one of the areas that intensifies their critical thinking is reserve duty.[4]

Doing reserve duty, the women once again encounter men's objections to women in command roles. As a result, reserve duty sharpens their critical gaze in general (Lomsky-Feder, Gazit and Ben-Ari 2008) and, in this context, their critical feminist viewpoint.

A second meaningful arena that sharpens their feminist thinking is university studies, and in particular studying in critical disciplines (such as sociology, gender studies, and culture studies). Following the exposure to critical paradigms, they reread their military service; they question the military gender regime and oppose its masculine chauvinistic culture.

Serving in a "masculine" role, and especially crossing gender boundaries, which aroused their gendered criticism, also leads to political criticism. The women soldiers rely on their masculine role as a source of legitimacy to express political criticism. Here are a few examples:

Ilanit: I saw the [Occupied] Territories, and on the contrary, it's actually … I know the Territories really well. I've been all over the Territories. No one can say that I'm one of those left-wingers who sit in Tel Aviv and don't know what's going on in the Territories.

Aviva: I did defend, I contributed. I mean, I did defend the country's borders, yes, it's important to me, even when I'm criticizing this place and the militarism and all that, yes, I'm criticizing from a place of, "I was there so don't tell me I wasn't there," I know what the army is.

Nofit: Because of the time I spent serving in the Territories I feel that I can be more forthright in saying why I'm against what we have in the Territories and why I'm against the settlements and why I'm closer to my pacifist side.

These women used their "combat" past in order to amplify their political voice (see also Zaccai 2013). The use of military service in the Occupied Territories for voicing political protest is well established in Israel, as exemplified by the case of the testimonies given to "Breaking the Silence" (see chapter seven). In this regard, the women reproduce the link between military service and citizenship, which is one of the foundations of gender power relations in Israel. Indeed, when they mobilize their military service as their legitimacy to voice political criticism, they cooperate with the reproduction of the gendered hierarchy of citizenship without being conscious of it.

We see that the gendered experiences of women in "masculine" roles are myriad and are characterized by a relatively broad range of gendered practices. And yet, the most prominent practice is adopting and imitating combat masculinity. The military gendered experience grants these women power and prestige and enables varied gender performances. However, playing with changing gender performances, blurring so called "feminine" behaviors, and adopting masculine practices, which were an advantage in the military, turn out to be a disadvantage in civilian life. With their return to civilian life, they learn that these gender performances are temporary and contingent upon the men's approval, and thus they understand their place as women in a masculine hierarchy. Their proximity to the combat soldier is a source of symbolic capital and at the same time highlights the boundaries of their options not just in the military, but in the civilian gendered hierarchy as well. The experience of crossing gendered boundaries in so-called "masculine" roles grants the women soldiers status, power, and prestige.

Yet, some women are assigned to so-called "masculine" blue-collar, low-status technical roles, which are much less rewarding. In the next section, we briefly present the experience of women in technical roles. Comparing them to the women in combat roles, we show that crossing gender boundaries carries with it divergent gendered experiences.

Women in technical roles

Women who serve in technical roles such as communications technician, airplane technician, or quartermaster NCOs generally come from lower ethno-class groups, in comparison to women who served in "combat" roles. Most of them did not choose their technical role, and only a minority wound up in the role as a continuation of technical training in high school. Most of them were disappointed with their military placement.

Similar to women in "combat" roles, women who served in technical roles also crossed gender boundaries and served in roles that had previously been prohibited for women. In both groups, the women were well aware that they served in a masculine arena and were proud of being trailblazers. They perceived their service as a personally empowering one, and formed the basis of their civic belonging. In both groups, their feminine appearance in a masculine work environment and the organizational definition of their roles as gender trailblazers colored their military experience, and they could not help but be aware of gender power relations. This

awareness was exemplified by the strong presence of the feminine body in their narratives and by their descriptions of the masculine environment as a hostile and harassing one.

However, alongside the similarities, we found significant differences in the gendered experiences of the women in the two groups. For example, while the women in "combat" positions who strongly identified with their role tended to adopt a masculine behavioral model and shaped their body and emotions accordingly, the women in technical positions did not adopt masculine-seeming patterns but rather the opposite. The majority recoiled from the physical difficulty, the dirtiness, the lack of adjustment of the work environment to a woman's body, and the hard daily conditions. Despite (and perhaps because of) their "masculine" role, these women tended to assume the role of the "little woman" whom the man "spoils," "instructs," and "helps." They relied on the men to help with hard technical tasks, and they abstained from strenuous physical tasks. Moreover, they received lenient guard duties and furlough restrictions. Often they were channeled (or chose) to perform less professional duties and sometimes were even assigned to what amounted to *de facto* clerking positions (see also Czerniak 2006).

There is not even one description of an overturning of power relationships in their interviews. They did not describe themselves as having vast military-professional knowledge that could give them power over the men (common descriptions among the "combat" women), and they did not even describe symmetrical work relationships with the men soldiers. Hence, they acted in a masculine environment by accepting almost completely the gendered power relations and the masculine gaze upon them.

They also dealt with sexual harassment, an inescapable part of their daily lives, differently than the woman combat soldiers. While women in "combat" roles tend to trivialize sexual harassment, the women in technical roles described other coping practices. Mostly, they found local individual coping methods. Some adopted a man as a protector to shield them from other harassing men. Others described how they disguised feminine characteristics (for example, by gaining weight or spreading rumors about being lesbians). Salient in their descriptions was their attempt to understand the motivations of the harassing man, which caused some of them to blame the harassed woman for being "seductive."

We believe that the differences in gendered experiences of the women who crossed gender boundaries can be understood through an analysis of the interaction between the contract the women brought to their service and their military's gendered environment. The majority of the women in technical roles came from, as we said above, a lower socio-economic background compared to the women who served in combat roles. While the combat women sought a way to fulfill themselves and be equal to men, the expectations of the women who served in technical roles were to achieve social respectability. However, serving in technical roles, their contract of respectability was only achieved in part. On the one hand, they are aware of being trailblazers and are proud of it and of their contribution to the organization. But on the other hand, the service did not conform to the gender models they brought with them and therefore created gender uneasiness.

Gender equality is not a major part of their cultural toolbox and was not part of their expectations of their service. Moreover, they understand full well that their technical role is of low status in the military hierarchy. Therefore, they realize that to adopt the masculine identity of the "blue collar soldier" (Sasson-Levy 2003a), will not grant them the advantages that women in combat roles acquire. Most of them were isolated women in the masculine space and were perceived as "invaders" of a space not their own and as a threat to their men colleagues. These men were especially vulnerable to the women's presence, as their position on the military masculinity scale is marginal. Therefore, in the case of women in technical jobs, getting dirty, schlepping, and working hard like the men in these roles does not bestow benefits as it does to the "combat women."

This analysis teaches that crossing gendered boundaries in the military does not necessarily create identification with masculinity or lead to the adoption of masculine behaviors. Paradoxically, in the case of lower-class women in technical roles, crossing gender boundaries led to the preservation of traditional behavioral models and power structures. It seems that their gendered experiences preserves binary patterns of femininity and masculinity, even when they themselves are engaged in manual labor that is perceived as masculine. Their gendered experience and the ways in which they choose to cope with sexual harassment cannot be understood without understanding the nature of their gendered ethno-status contract with the military. Their contract emphasizes feminine respectability, and to their way of thinking, a physical, technical role is antithetical to the model of proper femininity. Therefore, imitating masculinity does not serve to fulfill the contract, and by performing traditional and recognized "feminine" patterns, they attempt to preserve their respectability as women in a masculine environment.

Similar to the women in non-traditional (either combat or technical) roles, women who served as officers (notwithstanding their different assignments) also had to cope with the image of proper femininity, but this time from the perspective of exercising power over other people.

Power and shame in the narratives of women officers

Listening to the accounts of women who served as officers, we were stunned by their intensive focus on the command power they exercised.[5] We were surprised not just by how much the officers talked about their experiences with power but also that they raised dual and even contradictory feelings regarding the experience. These dual senses derive from the gendered experience of command power in the military and the cultural perceptions of the women exercising that power.

In military organizations, power is mostly associated with men and masculinity. Therefore, when men exercise power over their soldiers, it is perceived as legitimate and in accordance with cultural scripts and the military order. However, when women exercise power over other people, it is often perceived as illegitimate, and therefore they are seen as aggressive, violent, or not appropriately feminine (Sjoberg and Gentry 2007). Thus, women in command positions

find themselves challenging and challenged by traditional gendered models of power and trapped between contradictory expectations as officers.

In the Israeli military, women officers grapple with these dual expectations at a very young age, as they graduate from officers' course at the ages of 19–21, much younger than women who achieved power and status in the civilian labor market. As junior officers, they serve in a wide variety of roles. Most of the training and education roles in the Israeli military are carried out by women, who at times command dozens of young soldiers on basic training bases; others command women soldiers in a surveillance outpost or command women and men in professional courses. Women can also serve as officers in roles such as intelligence, medical corps, communication, computers, light infantry, and more.

As we will see in this section, the command role empowers them and grants them authority, but at the same time, having that power creates deeply uncomfortable feelings and, primarily, shame.

Pleasure from power

Mor, who served as a platoon commander in basic training, said:

> Look, it's a crazy ego trip! You are barely 19 and are responsible for 300 young women … and I kick the door and no one approaches me because I'm throwing a tantrum … and the ego trip is insane. You are king of the world, king of the balls and king of the world! And whoever passes in front of you trembles with fear and shudders to attention.

Mor described the young officers' intoxication with power, her pleasure at her right to act violently ("to kick the door") and arbitrarily ("because I'm throwing a tantrum"), and her enjoyment of the fear the soldiers under her command had of her. Similarly, Yona, a commander of a course for education NCOs, took pleasure in the power:

> I loved it a lot, I enjoyed the element of command, I won't deny it. I had other officers and 96 soldiers under me, that's power! You know, to go on a final training run where this whole gang is following you, it gives you a feeling that you are important and significant and influential and a leader, that all eyes are fastened upon you.

In retrospect, some of the officers were surprised how much power they had. Hadar, the headquarters company commander that we met in the last section, said:

> I was responsible for so many people who were older than me. Today it amazes me. Then it seemed really natural and I did it and I didn't think about it at all, I just kept looking forward. Today I look back, and I say, Wow!

When Hadar reflected, she understood the unique opportunity that she had in the military, which she basically cannot replicate in civilian life. So too Ofek, an education officer, understands that the service gave her an extraordinary opportunity:

> I'm sitting in an officers' briefing and I'm trying as a young officer to persuade them to give some military history lesson and two men officers are arguing with me, why it's not worth it … Where on earth did I get the courage to sit there, a 19-year-old girl? All those men, all that hierarchy and I'm sitting and arguing and … I stood up for myself and eventually I made them do it, where did I have the balls to do that?

The women quoted above convey very vividly their emotions of pleasure and enjoyment in exercising power. In retrospect, they express amazement at their own courage to enact the power at such a young age and to confront the masculine hierarchy. Moreover, the interviewees interpreted their experiences not just as personally empowering but also as contributing to the military. Yona recalled:

> I felt like I was doing something very significant, that I am training young women, I felt like I was doing it well too. … It was a very good experience for me personally. I feel that, in this regard, command gave me a lot. It's a feeling that cannot be explained in words. It strengthened my self-confidence a lot, gave me a feeling of competence, it was a feeling that I could do anything …

Yona's choice of phrases links military service to both self-empowerment and a contribution to the state, thus echoing the classic republican perception of citizenship. Ofek, also an education officer, was even more dramatic and described exercising power as a transformative experience:

> Fundamentally, I feel like the army was the stage in my life where I came out to the world. From my birth until then I have no memories of myself. I can't tell you who Ofek was before this period. I start to remember myself from the moment I enlisted … I simply blossomed there. I learned a tremendous amount about myself both socially and professionally.

Ofek chose to describe her military experience using the images of "birth" and "blossoming," which show the significance and intensity of this chapter in her life.

In general, these women officers' stories are redolent with feelings of competence, enjoyment of the power, and attributing a very strong sense of meaning to their actions. Similarly to women in so-called "masculine roles," the junior officers crossed imagined gender lines during their service and gained self-fulfillment and status in doing so. It is specifically because of these positive emotions that they encountered difficulties following their discharge back to civilian life. Thus, for example, Darya, an education officer, explained to the interviewer the immense decrease in status she experienced when she was discharged:

> I remember after I was discharged that I worked as a waitress and a guy from headquarters came in and he was shocked. He said, tell me, do they know that you're an officer, do they? He was, like, I saw the shock on his face … I told him, do you think anyone here cares about me? … It was horrible, it [the discharge] was really traumatic. I didn't stop crying after my military service, it

> was really, really hard for me. … Because I did something that I really, really loved and I wasn't sure I could recreate it in civilian life.

Indeed, the transition to civilian life was stressful for most of them, as they lost the sense of their own significance and importance in participating in the most crucial of state endeavors. Noa, an operations officer, said: "Everything seems simple, small, compared to what I had to deal with during my service." Similarly, Goni, an operations officer, nostalgically described the power she had in the military and mourned the loss of it:

> It's being the commander of 150 people, 120 women soldiers and 30 or so staff. And to manage it, it's like, that's management, that's leadership, that's command, that's training, that's instruction, it's like everything. Things that I miss doing and want to do again now.

Their sense of the significance of their military role and the opportunities it presented only strengthen over time as they begin to understand how hard it is to replicate in civilian life; Hadar:

> There is no [higher] logistic and managerial level than what I did in the military, no matter what you say. Even if I manage a company or a business or I don't know what, it's nothing compared to managing a battalion. Nothing.

We can hear Hadar's frustration that she cannot regain the power she had in the military in civilian life. Like Hadar, Mor also desired to recreate those feelings of satisfaction and effectiveness in her civilian life:

> It is such a formative experience that every time the topic of my service comes up I get nostalgic … in general my inner company commander is my strong woman, it's the place that I rely upon because it's like … it propels me back into the game when I feel like I'm being sidelined … when I need to face some big challenge I'll come and say to myself: "you were a company commander in the IDF, dammit! You commanded 300 young women!"

In times of personal crisis, Mor returns to her experience as an officer to draw strength from it. Noa, who was an operations officer in the air force, returns to this experience during personal low points, for example, as a new teacher who cannot manage to control the kids in class:

> And then I remember that I left the class, and got into my car with tears in my eyes. I said to myself: Tell me, what, are you normal? This is what kids in seventh grade bring you to do, cry in the car? No way. Tell me, what, you weren't an operations officer in the military? Get ahold of yourself!

The imaginary return to the military experience in order to draw confidence shows us the empowering strength of the command experience. It is their feeling of competence that they acquired over the course of their service as officers that propelled them to achieve positions of power in civilian life as well. As Goni said:

> This experience of success [as an officer], accompanies me to many places. Today when I enter systems, I know that it takes me time and I know that it is something that is a process, but I know that in the end I also generally end up heading the system. … I was a coordinator on very central projects and I was a student union council member, and I coordinated the social justice forum in our department. The choice to work from within the system and change it from within and the belief that that is possible is very connected to the military.

Goni longed for the power she had in the army ("Things [training and command] that I miss and very much yearn to do again"), and she succeeded little by little, in recreating it in civilian life. The successful model and the sense of competence that she acquired in the service colored her future dreams as well, as she declared that her goal was to become welfare minister.

However, though the sense of pleasure from power and empowerment were very strong, the interviewees also spoke about loaded and difficult experiences with the power they had as army officers.

Ashamed of the power

Alongside the empowering experiences, the women voiced difficult feelings regarding their service as officers. Let us hear Ella, an events officer in the air force:

> I am so so ashamed when I think of how I was when I was in the military. It was very hard for me to have people who were under my command, it was just terrible. Since then, I've never been in such a position … On the one hand it really strengthened me, and I think, on the other hand, I had such "*sagemet*" [a slang word for intoxication with military power] at that time, and it causes me even more embarrassment, even in retrospect when I remember it. I think it is perhaps one of the things that was terrible in the military, that when I was there I was really into it, the whole thing, and as soon as I was discharged I understood how terrible it was, how disgusting it is, really.

The slang word *sagemet* signifies a well-known "syndrome"—a junior officer who enjoys the power of his or her military rank too much. The morphological template of the word is used exclusively in Hebrew when referring to diseases. Thus this term symbolizes "sick" enjoyment of leadership, that is, celebrations of power that have an exaggerated and pathological element. Meital (a war-room

officer on the Lebanese border) expressed the difficulties young women encounter when they must wield authority in a hierarchal masculine organization during very intense situations. These difficulties and stresses caused Meital to explode in anger at her soldiers:

> And I remember the shock, the consternation, hearing myself … and I knew it was me! I can still hear myself yelling like that but not being so ashamed of it as I am today … I remember that after I was discharged from the army, after many many years, when I met women who served under me, we wouldn't exchange a word. Not a word! Why didn't anyone see that I was suffering, that it was so hard for me, that I was causing others to suffer, that something was very wrong. How could no one have seen it, for God's sake?

Meital's narrative is so strong, it hardly needs any interpretation. Clearly, the shame that she felt about her behavior as a commander intensified in retrospect and continues to haunt her to this day.

One could claim that young men also have trouble being officers and that they would also interpret the experience of power not just as empowering but as damaging and embarrassing as well. But even if we accept this claim, we contend that the men's interpretations of the difficulty would be different from the women's. We assume that military men are embarrassed when they fail to exercise power, whereas women officers are embarrassed primarily when they succeed in exercising it. In other words, the meaning of the power experience is gendered—based on cultural perceptions of masculinity and femininity.

Women who exercise the power of command over other soldiers (both men and women), violate what Cecilia Ridgeway (2001) calls the "genetic code" of the power structure of gender. Ridgeway explains that widely shared gender stereotypes are the "genetic code" of the gender system, since they constitute the cultural rules or schemas by which people perceive and enact gender difference and inequality. Gender is deeply intertwined with social hierarchy and leadership because the rules for the gender system contain status beliefs at their core. Gender status beliefs shape men's and women's assertiveness, the evaluation of their performances, the influence they achieve, and the likelihood that they emerge as leaders. Moreover, gender status beliefs create legitimacy reactions that penalize assertive women leaders for violating the expected status order and reduce their ability to gain compliance with directives (Ridgeway 2001).

Daniella critiques the application of the "genetic code" of gender in the military:

> As an officer I frequently encountered masculine authority, such appalling aggression, it was one of the hardest things I had to cope with and I continue to hate it to this day. I'm talking about belligerent masculine authority, in power. When men are given power, and the way in which they use it against women in the military. I think it is mainly against those women in the military—who undermine their confidence in their place. There were continuous attempts to belittle me.

As the "genetic code" of gender does not link women to power, women in command roles find themselves with no appropriate leadership models to follow. As a result, they internalize the belief that military power is first and foremost associated with masculinity. Thus Shani (an officer who commanded 90 soldiers) identified with the military masculinist ideology when she claimed that power and leadership "come more naturally" to men: "A lot of the women who were officers tried to be a bit masculine. Aggressive … The men officers had something more, more confidence in themselves. Less of a need to prove themselves … There's a kind of clearer leadership with men."

The fact that command power is not perceived as "natural" for women creates distress and confusion. In retrospect, many of the women talked about feelings of helplessness, lack of confidence, and uncertainty regarding command models, as emerged from Lihi's (an officer at a base for pre-army youth training) account:

> It was very difficult with my soldiers, we didn't have a good relationship … I was just young and had no life experience, I couldn't lead them into doing things the right way. … I was scared to delegate power because I was inexperienced and afraid, I really needed control, I guess, there was a lot of anger directed at me … I think they spotted a certain weakness in me.

In an uncertain and confused situation, the officers oscillated between "feminine" and "masculine" command styles and strived to shape new models for military power and command of which they would be comfortable and unashamed.

Some of the officers adopted the command models of the men, but in retrospect they regretted this method of using power. Thus, for example, Daniella (an infantry instruction officer) said: "I understood it in the military, that if a woman is assertive then she's considered a nudge. It was a realization that developed in the army," and she continued and expressed her difficulty in adopting "masculine" conduct as an officer: "In order to be successful in your role as an officer you should, and maybe even must, be masculine. [You have] to adopt masculine characteristics. That was very hard for me because I am very feminine and very connected to my femininity."

Emily also felt pressured to command like a man when she assumed the role of operations officer and had to deal with the command model of her predecessor:

> The woman I replaced was totally like a man. She was a man, she had stopped showering. She was a man, they also considered her one and so she was very dominant. Her appearance was also very masculine. Now I was very much not a man, and it put pressure on me. I didn't want them to think that, here this wimp had arrived. It took me time to find my place.

Emily uses body images in order to portray gender identities: the woman that preceded her "looks like a man" and is dirty, just like combat soldiers. The only model that Emily sees opposed to this masculine model is that of the (feminine)

wimp (see Sjoberg and Gentry 2007). Rejecting these two images, Emily struggles to find her own way as a commander.

It is not just officers in "masculine" roles, like Daniella and Emily, who are pushed toward adopting "masculine" practices, but also education officers, as Lihi described: "There are commanders who purposely talk not feminine, put their hands in their belts, think that that is how a commander is supposed to look."

The military organization actually considered this mimicry a problem, which it attempted to solve through professional intervention. Lihi continued: "I am happy that they had conversations with us about it … There was awareness. Here I can say to their credit that they did talk to us about it." One interpretation of this intervention is that the organization is trying to preserve the "gentle femininity" of the education officers. But, at the same time, the unintended consequences of this intervention are the undermining of the exclusive connection between power and masculinity and the possible construction of a feminine power model, a model that Lihi attempted to adopt: "I think that I was assertive and I think that I was a leader and continued to be feminine, I insisted upon it. Maybe there were those who saw it as a contradiction."

Lihi's solution was to command without adopting "masculine" behavioral models. Similarly, other officers grappled with the masculine command model and gradually developed a less hierarchical style—inasmuch as such a thing is possible in the military. For example, Mor, who commanded basic trainees, was very successful in her role and enjoyed the power. But Mor claimed that, over time, she succeeded in overcoming her intoxication with power and shaped a less forceful command style, which is often attributed to women:

> Gradually, I learned to free myself from it. I think that I got to a point where I remembered how empty the ego trip is … In the end I was also the most lenient platoon commander in the world, I really didn't feel like I needed to be strict and bad anymore.

Although Mor eventually distanced herself from so-called masculine models of command, she nevertheless "learned" that she should be ashamed of the power through her boyfriend's view of her as an officer. Mor told us about the confrontation she had with him toward the end of her service:

> He came to sleep over at the base and in the morning I accompanied him to the guard post and I saw two of my privates trying to avoid morning roll call and I yelled at them and they both cried … he was very disturbed! Afterwards he asked me, "Do I know you? Who are you? What was that?" I didn't know what he was talking about, they were avoiding roll call! I am their company commander, of course I would tell them off, that's my job. Today, I think that was the beginning of the end of our relationship because he saw me like that, in that situation, in a position of power … Since then, I don't let Micha [the current boyfriend] see me when I am being strong, loud, present, and knowledgeable, in my authority … I didn't invite him [the ex-boyfriend] to sleep

> over at the base anymore after that. I understood … I never came over [to his base] in uniform again. I always went home first, and changed into sexy clothes and came in the role of the blonde girlfriend of the pilot who hangs on his arm and doesn't speak up.

Clearly, Mor is ashamed of the way she behaved in front of her boyfriend. Shott (1979) describes shame as a role-taking emotion that cannot occur without putting oneself in another's position and internalizing that person's perspective. Mor's shame occurred when she was forced, by taking her boyfriend's perspective, to see that she did not meet the socially constructed idealized image of a woman. In retrospect, Mor conceptualized the incident as one that indicated exaggerated, maybe even excessive, use of power on her part. Moreover, she learned a lesson about what could happen when women "enjoy" the power too much.

This experience clearly emphasizes the gendered nature of the interpersonal power in general and in the military in particular: the expectation was that Mor would return and fulfill the culturally acceptable "accessory" role generally ascribed to women. She must be the "woman of" and she in fact returned to play this role after her boyfriend saw her in her role as commander.

At the basis of the interaction between Mor and her boyfriend are heteronormative perceptions that Mor violated because of her role as a basic-training commander. According to these perceptions, a proper woman is not one with power and definitely not one who displays power in the public sphere (Sjoberg and Gentry 2007). The women officers themselves internalize these heteronormative perceptions and criticize other women in the military who violate them. For example, Lihi: "I found myself in all sorts of unpleasant situations, with aggressive people, mainly aggressive women. It happens to me today too, when I meet aggressive women, it is as if they want to trample all over you."

Here, Lihi reflected a misogynistic viewpoint, which shames women who behave in ways that are not associated with femininity and, in particular, women who have power and authority.

Emotions such as guilt, embarrassment, and, mainly, shame check and punish deviant behavior and as such are "significant motivators of normative and moral conduct and, hence, facilitate social control" (Shott 1979, 1324). Shame is the mechanism by which social discipline is maintained and obedience to heteronormative hegemonic gendered norms is preserved (Ahmed 2004, Scheff 2000). Shame emerges in the women's relationship to the normative gendered standards, and thus it is both indicative of the hegemony and a mechanism of control at the same time (Ziv 2008). The interviewees experienced shame about having power because, according to accepted gender beliefs, they crossed gender boundaries: they should be ashamed because they exercised the power reserved for men in a military organization.

Hence, shame is the experience through which subjects learn to submit to and abide by the hegemonic gender arrangements and definitions. Shaming is an effective way to inform the subject that she is violating the "genetic code" of gender, which includes, among other things, preserving binary gender expressions (Ziv 2008). Thus, shame and shaming have the power to warn and discipline

women officers who challenge the exclusive connection between masculinity and military power.

The women officers' gendered experiences are thus emotionally loaded and expressed in terms of intense emotions like satisfaction, empowerment, and the opportunity to exercise power on the one hand; and strong feelings of being uncomfortable and ashamed on the other. The strong emotions accompanying their power experience (and its loss) along with the reactions they receive from their social surroundings (in the military and civilian life) push them to ask questions about gendered power relations and stop taking them for granted. Their experience with power disrupts the gendered power relations, constituting a source of internal strength and inspiration, and, at the same time, this experience teaches them the boundaries of women's power.

Women's military experiences as pathways to gendered citizenship

In the last two chapters, we met Israeli women who did their mandatory service in a variety of roles and ranks. Most of them came from the middle class, and, in their eyes, they fulfilled their contract with the state, a contract that emphasizes their entitlement to self-fulfillment through serving in a prestigious and meaningful role. Indeed, most of them found their mandatory military service satisfying and saw it as an opportunity for promoting their "self-project." Yet, at the same time, they served in various gendered environments that produced very different experiences of one's body, sexuality, and emotion management.

Women who served in high-prestige feminine roles as welfare or education NCOs learn to accept and even to enjoy the traditional role of "helpmate" to the combat soldier, and they integrate easily into the existing gender order. Serving in a traditional feminine role did not violate their model of gender relations. This interpretative continuity did not force them to confront their gendered perceptions or to challenge them. Therefore, it seems that certain roles anesthetize women soldiers' gender consciousness, while simultaneously strengthening their deep dedication to the military organization and commitment to the traditional gender regime.

In contrast, women in so called "masculine roles" get a unique opportunity to cross gender boundaries, physically and spatially. Training infantry soldiers, patrolling the borders, flying helicopters, or commanding artillery unit, the women learn that gender boundaries are largely arbitrary. They learn to undo the link between sex and gender, to distance themselves from essentialist gendered perceptions, and to question traditional gendered structures. However, they are constantly aware that crossing boundaries is temporary and contingent upon the men's approval. Moreover, playing with changing gender performances, blurring so-called "feminine" behaviors and adopting masculine practices, which were an advantage in the military, turn out to be a disadvantage in civilian life. Upon their discharge, they are subjected to pressures to perform "proper femininity." The experiences of crossing gender boundaries and the return journey to normative femininity develop and sharpen their gendered lens. They acquire gendered

reflexivity and understand gender as a fluid category through which they interpret social reality in general and their military service in particular.

Similarly, women who served as officers have an opportunity to cross gender boundaries, but their motivations differ. They are offered powerful and responsible roles, feel empowered by those roles, and enjoy the power they exercise. However, in comparison to women soldiers in "masculine" roles, the women officers' enjoyment is marred by difficult feelings of shame and uneasiness. The difference between the two groups derives from the perception that women in positions of power in the military are considered more threatening to the patriarchal order than women serving in "masculine" roles. Women serving in masculine roles only serve for a predetermined and limited time, and they cannot convert their military knowledge into power in civilian life. However, command power is considered (in Israel) a convertible resource to civilian life, and therefore it is considered dangerous and a threat to the existing gender regime. Therefore, shame is deployed as an effective social mechanism meant to return them to the pattern of "proper women," who do not hold power and are unthreatening. As a result, the duality that characterized their emotional world during their military service continues into their civilian life—they are ashamed of their behavior in the military as power holders, but, at the same time, they attempt to recreate that power in civilian life, although they do not succeed in doing so. The shame mechanism becomes a cooptation mechanism into gendered citizenship.

Finally, women in Intelligence experience a unique opportunity to blur gender differences. Women, just like men, are accepted into Intelligence primarily on the basis of their academic achievements in high school, and their work is mostly done in the office, in front of a computer screen. The hierarchy in these units is based on mastery of the knowledge and less on the masculine combat soldier's body. Indeed, the women described their time in the military as an experience in which the gender differentiations and gendered power relations were pushed to the background, and the organizational culture was described as safer for women.

In light of this experience of relative equality they return to civilian life with an independent gender perception, that of successful women who are equal to men and who did not attempt to imitate masculinity. In comparison to other groups, they succeeded in the neo-liberal corporations, to advance in the free professions, and they are the ones who challenge the dominance of masculinity in the labor market.

Looking at these four groups of women soldiers, we see that the military offers women highly varied gendered experiences. However, although the military offers women a variety of, and even contrasting, gendered experiences, these experiences are always shaped and interpreted in light of the image of the combat soldier, who stands at the top of the military hierarchy and embodies the ultimate citizen. This image of the combat soldier demarcates the women's marginality and limits their possibilities in the military. That is, the military opens up opportunities for a variety of gendered experiences, but at the same time it clearly lays down the patriarchal boundaries.

Therefore, military service constitutes an arena in which they learn about their place in the structure of citizenship. From the different military positions and locations, they learn that there are a number of ways to be a proper woman citizen but that that number is not infinite. Rather, there is a limited range of proper role models for a woman citizen from the middle class, and they are all shaped opposing or alongside the hegemonic man citizen. Thus, the women learn the boundaries of power, learn how to cope when faced with the hegemonic masculinity, and learn how to manage body and emotion in the masculine world. It is specifically through their participation as citizens in a hyper-masculine organization like the military that they learn that masculine supremacy is arbitrary and the gendered division of labor is not "natural."

What is the significance of learning citizenship as a lived experience during their military service? In the last two chapters, we heard the voices of middle-class women whose contract with the military, which stresses the entitlement to self-fulfillment, was fulfilled and who served in prestigious military roles. At first glance, it is important to note that most of them felt that their military role empowered them personally and professionally, contributed to their personal development, and strengthened their sense of identification and belonging to the state. Moreover, serving in a hyper-masculine organization contributed to the development of their gendered reflexivity. They see the gendered power relations, do not consider them "natural" or necessary, and recognize the arbitrariness of the current gendered power structure. In retrospect, some see the oppressive structure of the military with regard to women and develop a critical awareness. This reflexivity developed not through an abstract, theoretical discussion about citizenship and gender but rather through lived experiences of active citizenship that forced them to test those experiences again and again against their interpretive toolboxes.

However, at second glance, as a result of their military service, most of the women adopted the "proper femininity" citizenship model, which recognizes the boundaries of the patriarchal regime, while they learn to manage within those boundaries. This glance will focus on the coopting power of military service, which molds them on the cusp of maturity. They gravitate to and are tempted by military service, not just because it allows them to participate and feel a sense of belonging to the central state project but also because it allows some of them to experience the blurring of gender boundaries and others to cross gender boundaries. These gendered opportunities obscure the fact that women do not enter the military core and their marginality is still apparent and unchanging. With their return to civilian life, they learn that the power they exercised was temporary and dependent on the men's approval, and the military discharges them into society as committed and obedient citizens. Indeed, most of the women soldiers mentioned the return to civilian life as a critical transition period wherein they readjusted to the dominant gender norms of society.

Throughout the book, we have taken the approach that the military is not just an oppressive institution or an empowering one for women. Therefore, it is impossible (and also unnecessary) to choose between these two interpretations that we proposed here. Rather, both options exist simultaneously in the molding of the

gendered experience of women in the military and its social significance. This pendulum, which swings between two possibilities for understanding women's military service, tends toward a more critical direction when examining women's encounter with state violence, a topic that we will address extensively in the next two chapters.

Notes

1 This section is based on Michal Yaakov's (2013) Master thesis.
2 Women, including combat soldiers, were barred from crossing national borders and participating in frontline combat. However, since Operation Protective Edge in the Gaza Strip in 2014, women can cross national borders without special permission, especially as paramedics and doctors.
3 Hadas addressed a common claim espoused by those who oppose integrating women into combat roles, that these women soldiers suffered a prolapsed uterus and therefore could not give birth after their military combat service.
4 Reserve duty is mandatory for all soldiers in the Israel military, but women are not generally called up for reserve duty if they are married or if they are beyond age 24. In 2015, women represented 7.6 percent of reserve soldiers, most of whom had served during their regular service in combat roles and/or as officers (Yohalam 2016).
5 This section is based on Tair Karazi-Presler's (2011) Master thesis.

6 Dis/acknowledging sexual harassment

Gray areas of violence

Military's external and internal violence

As the military is the institution whose purpose is to manage the violence on behalf of the state, violence is inherent in every military organization. The military violence is intentionally directed at an external enemy, yet it unavoidably penetrates into the organization itself and is often directed toward the women soldiers (and men soldiers) themselves. The external violence and internal violence feed off each other and are always gendered.

Women in the Israeli military participate in warfare and the occupation, either directly as combat soldiers or indirectly by fulfilling supportive roles. At the same time, they are often victims of the military's internal violence, exposed to sexual harassment and abuse. However, both forms of the military's inherent violence are often silenced by patriarchal and state mechanisms.

In the following two chapters, we will explore how women experience and interpret the military's violence through their encounters with sexual harassment and their exposure to the violence of war and occupation. We will ask whether and when women can recognize military violence and what options are available to them to cope with it morally and pragmatically. Before we delve into these questions, we discuss in brief our understanding of the concept of violence.

The most common definition of violence is the employing of physical force on someone else (Giddens 1987). Invading the personal physical boundaries (including a slap) is very meaningful since it does not cease with the body of the victim; a violent physical assault irreversibly affects the self who no longer trusts one's fellow man or the world. Physical violence leads to loss of trust in reality as it was understood before the violent act.

However, in accordance with other researchers, we argue that this definition of violence is too narrow, since it does not include many other types of violence. What about verbal violence, for instance? What about collective violence or the threat of violence, which, in and of itself, can restrict the victim's freedom of choice?

Thus Felson (2009) claims that the harm caused by violence "is not necessarily physical ... It could be a social harm or a deprivation of resources." Elizabeth Stanko (2001) offers an even wider and oft-cited definition, according to which violence is "any form of behavior by an individual that intentionally threatens to

or does cause physical, sexual, or psychological harm to others or themselves" (ibid., 316). Similarly, Ray (2011, 9) argues that violence as "Anything avoidable that impedes human realization, violates the rights or integrity of the person and is often judged in terms of outcomes rather than intentions."

We adopt these wider definitions of violence, which assess it mainly from the perspective of its consequences to the victim. These consequences have been well researched and include helplessness, loss of faith in the world, shame and inability to describe the experience verbally and thus share it with others (Handel 2011). In order to cope with the damage that violence creates, the individual must be willing to raise up her hand, to defend, to flee, or to hit back, and thus declare "I am still the master of my body." But the more common reaction is to distance and silence it. The silencing does not allow for coping with the damage the violence incurred, and therefore the silencing and dis-acknowledgment should be understood as part of the ongoing violence (Handel 2011).

Such damage to one's rights and freedom of choice is not necessarily caused by specific individuals; rather, it can be embedded in institutional systems. Galtung (1969), suggested the term *structural violence* to analyze institutional violence, such as that of the military. More particularly, structural violence occurs when "physical and psychological harm results from exploitive and unjust social, political and economic systems" (Ray 2011, 9). A violent situation could result, therefore, from a governmental policy, like the ongoing Occupation of the West Bank, which restricts and limits the Palestinians' freedom of choice, movement, and speech on a daily basis.

Consequently, by virtue of its definition, men and women soldiers in the military are agents of violence wholly without regard as to their intentions. The structural violence in the military is not just external, against those defined as enemies, but it is also directed internally toward the men and women soldiers themselves. Since violence is intimately connected with power, it is an instantiation of domination, especially of men over women. This has triggered research into the violence of everyday life in the military as a hyper-masculine organization and especially into the sexual harassment of men and women soldiers.

Militarized sexual harassment—The Israeli context

Roni, an aircraft electrician, said:

> I think there isn't a single woman who isn't harassed, really, because of the way people talk, of being exposed to words, to comments. There was once a reserve soldier who kissed me during basic training and that is really sexual harassment … I wanted to complain, I thought it over. No, I remember that I didn't want to talk about it, like, it really shocked me.

Roni perceives sexual harassment as an integral part of every woman's military experience. She highlights different forms of harassment ranging from verbal harassment "talking" to "really harassment," and shows us that the reaction

to harassment is often comprised of confusion, weighing options, and no clear knowledge of how to proceed.

The purpose of this chapter is to deepen our understanding of the experience of sexual harassment in the Israeli military and to discuss its various expressions, the circumstances that affect the severity of the harassment, and the varying reactions of women to this offensive behavior. In their accounts, the women soldiers described a wide range of behaviors that caused them to feel insulted, ashamed, or actually physically uneasy, but they did not know if it constituted actual harassment, and, therefore, they found it difficult to oppose. These are, therefore, "gray areas" of sexual harassment which are hard to interpret or address. We claim that these indistinct spaces, in which women are unsure if they have been harassed or not, actually represent a social construct that preserves the perception of women as sexual objects in the military.

To develop our argument, we will first contextualize the phenomenon of sexual harassment in the Israeli military. The *Sexual Harassment Prevention Law* was enacted in the State of Israel in 1998. The Israeli military adopted this legislation and published by-laws against sexual harassment in 2000.[1] The legislation, which includes the obligation to explain, enforce, punish, and act to prevent sexual harassment, had tangible consequences. This legislation led to a number of harsh indictments that caused the termination or delay of officers' careers and were of great influence in the public discourse. The most prominent of these was the trial of Major General Yitzhak Mordechai, who was convicted in 2000 after his discharge from a distinguished military career, when he was a minister in the government and a candidate for prime minister. Mordechai was convicted of an indecent forcible assault on a woman soldier serving in his office in 1992, when he was the commanding officer of the Northern Command. He had to resign from the *Knesset* (Israeli Parliament) in 2001, a short while after his conviction, and he was removed from all political and public activity.

The case of Yitzhak Mordechai, alongside additional trials of officers, echoed widely and had a substantive effect on the phenomenon of sexual harassment in the military. The periodic army survey (2014) indicate that since 2002 the number of women soldiers who reported experiencing harassment dropped from 21 percent to 14 percent, while the number of women who reported acting in response to sexual harassment has increased. These statistics testify to a certain change in the military climate with regard to women, but at the same time, the official statistics from February 2014 still show that one in eight women soldiers experience sexual harassment during their military service.[2]

It is important to note that these are official statistics from an internal military survey that asks "Have you been sexually assaulted during your mandatory service?" In the current study, we found that the rate of women who talked about being sexually harassed is higher than the rate that the army publicized. The difference between the military's data and our data can be explained by the nature of the research methodology. Our research employed in-depth interviews that enable the development of closeness and trust between the interviewer and interviewees, and thus the interviewees could talk about incidents where they were

uncomfortable but they did not know how to interpret what had happened. The difference between our data and the army's data is another expression, therefore, of the gray areas of sexual harassment, which make it difficult for women to answer the questions forthrightly in the army's survey.

Moreover, some of the women only recognized the incidents as sexual harassment a number of years after their discharge. It is clear, therefore, that the rate of harassment in the military is much greater than one in eight, and that the experience of harassment is widespread and constitutes a significant part of many women's service experience.

Serving and surviving in a culture of harassment

Even if most women in the Israeli military do not experience severe sexual assaults, they are subjected to daily harassment as part of a chauvinistic organizational culture that invades the private life of the woman soldier in various ways. Reading the women's stories, we identified a number of experiences that most of the women recalled as offensive but had a hard time defining unequivocally as sexual harassment: being a sexual object under an objectifying gaze; the confusion between intimacy, sexual attraction, and harassment; and the vigilance and fear when they were isolated in a masculine space. Each of these experiences is embedded in the experience of women who acted in a man's world and is especially noticeable in specific military roles.

Subjected to an objectifying gaze

The basic experience of women in the military, reflecting their status as "outsiders within," is to be subjected to the continuous male gaze, which evaluates them first and foremost as sexual objects. The discomfort of being objectified came up again and again in the women's stories. For instance, Ruti, who began her service as a secretary, said:

> There were several boys that I remember I really felt uncomfortable with them which derived from the hierarchy of roles, because I was below them then, I was also a woman, a young girl and I was beneath him. So you can't say … he [the Sgt.-Major] is making comments, it's not exactly harassment, it's not really … it's not that, but you go around all day with the feeling that you are trying to hide.

Ruti's remarks indicate that the daily experience of some women in the military was a constant embarrassment regarding their physical being just because they are women. The female body, which has traditionally been perceived as exceptional in "masculine" work environments and certainly in the military, undergoes stigmatization, suspicion, and ongoing exclusion (Acker 1990).

Beth Quinn (2002) refers to the act of men's sexual evaluation of women, often in the company of other men, as "girl watching," which may take the form of

a verbal or gestural message of "check it out," boasts of sexual prowess, or explicit comments about a woman's body or imagined sexual acts (*ibid.*). The gaze demonstrates the men's right, as men, to sexually evaluate women (*ibid.*). Through the gaze, the targeted woman is reduced to a sexual object, contradicting her other identities, such as that of competent soldier. In its most serious form, girl watching operates as a targeted tactic of power. However, Quinn argues that more than just harassing women, girl watching works as a dramatic performance played to other men, a means by which a certain type of masculinity is produced and heterosexual desire is displayed. It is a means by which men assert a masculine identity to other men in an "ironic homo-sexual practice of heterosexuality" (*ibid.*, 394).

The objectifying gaze is bolstered when the female body's appearance is defined as part of the prerequisites of the military role, secretaries being the most visible example. The secretary's body and appearance are considered part of the status symbols of the commander (Sasson-Levy 2007). Meital said:

> I was a very attractive soldier in a world of men—when I got to *YAKAL* [Lebanon Liaison Unit] they said: "These women look good, make sure I get them … you look good, you will be the commander's secretaries …" It's being talked about all the time; sexuality was the main topic all the time, among the commanders and even among their subordinates.

Choosing women for a role on the basis of their appearance is a well-known practice in the military despite, of course, not being based on any formal procedure. The woman's body is not just the commander's status symbol but is part of the power relationship embodied in the role of secretary. The harassment is another way for the commander, the older man, to demonstrate power over a young woman who gives him services. Liron, a secretary on a northern base, said:

> It began with the commander always pressing the intercom and yelling for someone to make him grapefruit juice and coffee, but only Liron should bring it to him. That only I should bring the drinks into his office. It got to the point that … except for touching me, like … actually physically, everything in essence. Questions [like]… "Aren't you a kibbutznik? You start having sex at age 12 already"… Really inappropriate comments … "You are full in the right places, you look feminine, you are very sexy, you could get a man for the night, no problem"… I was in shock, I had just arrived from basic training, I couldn't believe something like this was happening to me. As if … I wanted to contribute so much, and … I used to just sit and cry for days on end. I would cross streets without looking left and right.

Liron's story expressed, in an extreme manner, the humiliating power relations between the commander and the secretary. Butler and Schmidtke (2010, 197) show that "sexual harassment is often the result of traditional differences in power between men and women and harassment exists to maintain this power differential."

Galia, in the next story, described the transition from objectifying gaze to actual sexual assault, when the woman's body is perceived as part of the commander's privilege. When she was asked by the interviewer: "What do you remember of your experiences during your service?" She immediately answered, "The harassing men" and continued:

> The Sgt.-Major on our base attempted to pimp all sorts of girls, all sorts of soldiers to the commanding officer of the corp—and I was one of them. One day we were on some trip or other, and we all sat down together in the same room, and then the Sgt.-Major and several other people just got up and left so I could be left alone with this officer. And he tried something, tried what he tried, I did what I did, and I left, like … I objected, some kicks, some threats to scream and I left. That trip is just an example. There was one time that I somehow got to the Sgt.-Major's office, and the officer was there too, and he again left me alone with him.

Galia was not just subjected to a male gaze but was also the victim of premeditated sexual assault. In this case, there were no longer any gray areas, and Galia defined the situation in terms of sexual harassment in real time. However, in other cases, the women had difficulty defining incidents that they were part of in terms of harassment, and it was only in retrospect, after an interval of years, that they understood that they had been harassed. Thus, Elana, who served as a secretary, said:

> Today we call that sexual harassment. Then we didn't call it by that name. We didn't call it that then. … It didn't reach the level of rape and the like. But touching, certainly verbal statements … they were much less careful 10 years ago than they are today. And the significance of authority and power relations, today it has taken on a totally different significance than it once had.

Elana clarified that behavioral norms have changed over time, and that which was not defined as sexual harassment in the past is defined as such today. The borders of the gray area, therefore, are permeable and change depending on the specific context.

Until now, we have dealt with the objectifying gaze that establishes the commander's power over a young woman, but the objectifying gaze can sometimes also come from "below." In other words, the woman can be subjected to the male gaze when she holds the power and the harassers are the soldiers that she commands. Amit, an officer in a supplementary education course, described:

> Soldiers, [under my command], so long as they are in the course they can't touch you, [but] you hear comments that they intended for you to hear even though they were ostensibly talking amongst themselves. A sort of situation where you cannot really reprimand them about it because you aren't supposed to hear, but you hear: "She got fat," "she got skinny," ''What a rack

> she has," "What color is her bra?" "I would do her." All sorts of shocking expressions like that, which then I didn't know how to cope with.

Amit was exposed to harassment that ostensibly was not directed at her but directly wounded her. The masculine gaze that objectifies the woman commander's body is a practice of hidden resistance (Scott 1990), the aim of which is to restore the "proper" gender order. Women who supervise men in the workplace directly challenge the gender order and represent a power threat and are therefore more often harassed than women in traditionally feminine roles (McLaughlin, Uggen and Blackstone 2012). By turning the commander into a sexual object, the men reclaim the power that was "stolen" from them by the commander. This is essentially *gendered harassment*, to use Laura Miller's (1997) term, that is, harassment that is intended to enforce traditional gender roles and prevent women from accruing power. This harassment targets women but is not sexual; often it cannot be traced to its source (*ibid.*), and therefore it is hard to submit a complaint regarding such behavior.

Indeed, despite the fact that Amit experienced a troubling sexual humiliation, she had difficulty defining it as harassment, since it was not focused at her directly but was conducted "behind her back." This is clearly a gray area, which makes it difficult for Amit to act directly against the harassers.

Amit's reaction was not unusual. We saw from the interviews that whether the objectifying gaze was an expression of men's power over women or an expression of male opposition to women's power, the women found it difficult to define this gaze as harassment. Therefore, they did not file complaints but instead found other practices to cope with the impact that the gaze engendered. One of the more common practices was to attempt to avoid any direct encounters with men who had a history of harassment. Again and again, the women described how they shaped daily routes for themselves in the public space in order to bypass the threat of harassment. Ruti said: "If you see him [the Sgt.-Major] go somewhere, you don't go there. If you wanted to get a drink from the cooler and he is in the area, then you don't go. You know that experience in the military? I definitely felt that it was something I had never felt anywhere else."

Amit, the teaching officer, used the exact same words:

> We felt physically uncomfortable. I'll explain it to you, for example, if we knew there were areas with a concentration of men, soldiers or commanders, then we bypassed them and so we wouldn't pass that way. We were really uncomfortable, you know, about moving around freely in the men's area on the base. When the showers were far away it was a real nightmare. I think, though, that at the time we didn't know how to express it, we didn't know what we were experiencing until the end.

The threat of harassment effectively limited the women soldiers' movement in the space. According to their stories, the men dominated the physical space of the base, and the women could not feel free in it. Therefore, the attempt to avoid

sexual harassment mapped the women's daily physical space on the base, and they intentionally planned ways to avoid it.

Ruti talked about another practice. In order to protect herself, she covered her body obsessively as if a "provocative" appearance was the reason for sexual harassment:

> I think the sexual issue in the IDF is very very very problematic. Very, very, very problematic, I think that ... then at least, the experience, I don't know how it is today, I can tell you that I felt like I needed to be … I used to go around with shirts closed up to here, and I had to be so so unfeminine … I remember that before I was drafted I used to go to the beach topless, I felt so feminine, sexual, and young and I was celebrating my youth, and when I was in the army I was in a situation where I tried not to be so like that all the time, as though my movements shouldn't be sexual, that I won't be exposed, that I am not that.

Liron spoke in the same vein:

> I used to dress there, so that God forbid they wouldn't think that I'm tempting. I used to go around with a military coat tied here, hair combed back in a bun, without makeup, with nothing. I looked as neglected as possible, and I came to … I would neglect my appearance so much, and I am one who does care [about her appearance], and … the important thing was that no one should look at me, I said … no, no, I don't know. I was … I was worn out. I used to get lots of migraines in that same period.

The women not only defended against and deflected the harassing men but also took upon themselves the responsibility "not to tempt the men." Thus, they expressed, almost subconsciously, identification with traditional Jewish religious views of modesty that demand of women to cover themselves up in order to protect the man from temptation (Ir-Shai 2012).

Hiding one's sexuality sometimes took the form of more extreme behavior like that of Roni, the helicopter electrician, who, in order to protect herself from sexual harassment, spread, deliberately, a rumor that she was a lesbian. Another extreme example is the relatively common phenomenon of eating disorders in the military.[3] Meital said:

> Then [in the military] I felt a hard feeling of undefined embarrassment … today I know that absurdly it was an attempt to disappear through food, an attempt to be less attractive, and a lot of anger and distress that were directed inward instead of outward … This "complex" accompanies me everywhere, it will always be there and the story of the … the fear of being a woman in the full sense of the word, who is connected to her femininity and her sexuality and her attractiveness and her power and her strength without apologizing for it and feeling guilty, is not something I am yet capable of doing.

Meital directly linked eating disorders to the desire to erase her femininity (Bordo 1993). While male combat soldiers acquire more control over their bodies during their military training (Ben-Ari 1998, Sasson-Levy 2008) and thus are able to celebrate their bodies and put them on display, the women must conceal their bodies and protect them from the objectifying gaze. That demand becomes explicit and formal when women who command men must tie up their hair and refrain from wearing makeup or perfume in order not to demonstrate femininity. These guidelines effectively place the burden of responsibility on the woman, when the message is that if she protects herself and covers her body, she won't draw the undue attention of the man and won't be sexually harassed. In retrospect, some of the women criticized this placing of the burden of responsibility for harassment on them and are resentful of it, as Amit nicely described:

> There was no discussion amongst us of sexual harassment and what we were going through, and that was important. So if I had to add something to the training it would be that, that experience. Instead of repressing all the time, you need to talk about how you are a woman in front of the soldiers and what that might arouse, what its implications are, what happens if. Instead of the hysteria of hiding your bra, not showering, not putting on perfume, being a boy in essence.

The organizational culture, according to Amit, actively attempts "to repress the phenomenon all the time" and there is no organized instruction for women on how to cope with male violence.

Isolated and harassed in the blue-collar masculine spaces

A different pattern of harassment was told by interviewees who served in blue-collar technical roles, such as airplane mechanic, who were often isolated in a masculine space. These women represent a duality: on the one hand, they perceived themselves as trailblazers, possessors of a unique symbolic capital that is received by serving alongside men, but at the same time, they are cognizant of the price they pay for this sort of role. Being a small gendered minority isolates them in a way that causes them to be more likely targets of certain types of sexual harassment (Butler and Schmidtke 2010). The sexual harassment in the blue-collar roles is part of a wider system of gendered harassment and general bullying. Roni described what was demanded of her when she arrived on base:

> [You need] to prove that you're not some dope, that you're not there just because they want to show that the flight crew has a female mechanic ... you are always different, and you are constantly fighting to show that you aren't different, that you can do it, that you aren't what is said about you … it is to always have to prove yourself, there will always be comments behind your back, and people will always say, no matter what you do, that you aren't

> doing it well enough, even if you are doing it twice as well as a man … and they are always denigrating you.

Most of the soldiers in blue-collar technical roles are men of lower classes. Their military assignment positions them at the bottom of the military masculinity pyramid (Sasson-Levy 2003a). The entry of women into these professions further undermines their masculine self-image. The objection to women in these roles takes the form of sexual harassment, which is a common technique used on women entering masculine areas, to protect the male territory. That is, sexual harassment is another practice that men use in order to mobilize masculinity in a way that women experience as harmful (Martin 2001). Thus Inbal, the airplane mechanic, and Chen, the drones' mechanic, described bullying and sexual innuendo on the part of their commanders. Roni, the airplane electrician, described a more acute form wherein the men would talk among themselves in a vulgar sexual manner, while (ostensibly) ignoring the fact that a woman was present in the space.

However, the men are not the only ones who are threatened by the women's service. The women who serve in blue-collar roles are also usually from a lower class and a more traditional background. During their military service, they are worried about preserving a sense of respectability as young women. For example, Inbal explicitly stated that she feared for her good name because she served alone in a male environment:

> At the beginning, also because I was only around boys, I would always go to their bunks after work hours and hang out … and then I said they'll say I sleep around, each time someone else is accompanying her. And really I was such a good girl … so at the beginning I was afraid, I said maybe I will tell the boys who walked me back not to give me a kiss on the cheek.

Even when the women soldiers developed friendships with their male colleagues, the imagined male gaze always left them feeling the need to preserve their good name, especially sexually. Moreover, most of them internalized that male voice and cooperated with it and, therefore, they placed the responsibility and blame on other women soldiers when they are harassed. Thus Roni differentiated between herself and a woman soldier who "uses her sexuality":

> There was this trashy secretary who used to come around and they used to treat her in a very … that is, they used to harass her. She enabled it, so to speak, for it was very easy to come with an open shirt and expose her cleavage, let's say, to get everything she wanted, because she wanted to leave early. Really, that's the way it is, and she took advantage of it.

By linking the harassment to the "super-feminine" secretary's role, Roni marked boundaries between the secretaries and herself, who served in a trailblazing "masculine" role. At the same time, she displayed typical behavior for women who are in the status of the token, who must pay the price of being "one of the boys" by

being willing to occasionally come out against the “girls” (Kanter 1977). Thus, it is specifically among these women soldiers that we heard voices putting the responsibility or blame on the women victims, as Inbal said:

> When sexual relations do occur, it isn’t by force. The women soldiers are cooperating. I’m not talking about cases of rape or things like that, but when commanders take advantage of their authority, and let’s say the women soldiers spend time with them, I saw it with my own eyes, that women soldiers are with them because they think they will get something out of it… no one is forcing them.

Inbal made a distinction between rape and other kinds of harassment, and thus differentiated between the woman as victim and the woman who brings the harassment upon herself. Inbal and her friends perceived themselves as those who “were privileged” to be equal colleagues with the men, but in this position they found themselves in a “gender trap”: on the one hand, they tried hard to retain “proper femininity” in order to reduce the power threat they posed to men; at the same time, they must be modest about their femininity lest by flaunting it they exposed themselves to more sexual harassment.

The trap they fell into explains the feeling of isolation that they expressed, as women in a man’s world. The sense of isolation becomes stronger as there are many situations in which very young girls are left alone for long hours with men. This situation was conspicuous in interviews with Humvee driving instructors who, as part of their roles, spent long hours alone in the field, usually at night, with reserve soldiers who were older than them. Hila described:

> We would go out for a field exercise, and one or two [of the men] would stay with me. Do you understand how dangerous that is? …We would sleep in the field. What is it like to be with the same men all the time, with four, five, men in the vehicle, and I am so embarrassed, I am the only girl … I don’t really understand the army commanders’ thinking, how could they, how could they do something like that. And I can tell you that sometimes no one knows where you are for hours. You are alone in the desert, that’s not dangerous? Think about it. … They let me be in the field alone, when I was such an innocent girl … nothing happened. God Forbid. Yes? And no, only God protected me, but I’m saying that there could have easily been a situation and I heard that there were situations.

Hila described a situation where “the army’s commanders,” who are supposed to protect and defend the “young and innocent” female soldiers, abandoned them to a situation that she defined (again and again) as “dangerous.” Hila’s fear was realized in the case of Roni, who was left alone during a night shift:

> It was the Sabbath when I had my shift alone … I had to sleep at the squadron and this reserve soldier was married, wearing a skullcap, who played very

> social and everything, sat with me in my department, and suddenly out of nowhere he came over and caught me and kissed me. And I panicked and shook and I didn't know how to respond to it. I was very shocked, I didn't know how to cope with it.

War rooms are another space where women are left isolated in a masculine space, but the stories of women soldiers who served in war rooms describe a very different situation.

Between intimacy, sexual freedom, and harassment

The gray areas of sexual harassment do not just originate from the women's difficulty in interpreting the men's behavior but also from their difficulty in interpreting their own behavior. Some of the women talked about their service period as one of sexual liberation where they were very active, but this sexual activity involved, at times, sexual harassment. Ilanit said:

> There was this thing that the girls had, and the boys, that we were simply in a crazy atmosphere of promiscuity. We would go out on weekends like crazy, to dance, returning each time with a different man. I know that it [sexuality] comes up among the soldiers, and among women combat soldiers … for the entire army period, we would go out on weekends, and not just me, we could go out with three different guys in one weekend. Just like combat soldiers.

In Israel, the masculinity of the combat soldier has achieved a hegemonic status and turned into a social ideal, which is emulated by other men and women alike. Apparently, the combat soldier is also a model for sexual behavior for some of the women soldiers, primarily those who serve in non-traditional, high-prestige roles. It is important to reiterate that these are very young women leaving their homes for the first time, and for some of them it is an opportunity to experience social, intimate, and intensely sexual life, as Meital (operations officer) described:

> Ah … first of all I was a teenager … to be in that situation, filled with youths, filled with young people, filled with guys without their wives. People who seemed then to be very old, but what is 25–26 today, all of those drooling platoon commanders, that with them it was somehow ok, it was not yet considered something aggressive.

The experience of military service, in terms of age, distance from home, and the intensity of the social relationships within the peer group, resonates in many ways with the American college experience. As in the college experience, these relationships often lead to taking advantage of women, as well as harassment and violence against women. However, in the context of the military, the women are more vulnerable because of the hyper-masculine culture, the rigid hierarchy, and the fact that they are drafted by a mandatory coercive law. The intensive talk about sexual

experiences came up mostly in the stories of women who served in roles close to the core of combat, such as operations officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs). These soldiers and officers spend their entire day in the war room, which is staffed almost exclusively by men, mostly powerful men, under whose spell these young women often fall. The women are part of a demanding security reality that often creates a hedonistic state of mind. Their stories described an atmosphere overflowing with sexuality, within which they themselves enter into intimate relationships and, at the same time, are victims of harassment when the line between the two is blurred and not always clear to them.

There is confusion in their narratives between being enamored of these men, most of whom are older and married, and anger at these same married men who are seeking sexual relationships with the young soldiers. Bareket's description encapsulates this well. Bareket grew up on a kibbutz in the south. Today, at age 35, she is married and the mother of a little girl, attending graduate school in New York. During her military service, she was a sergeant in an operations room, and she explained:

> I had an amazing platoon commander who I also stayed in touch with afterwards, and he invited me to the Sea of Galilee and he really wanted to hit on me, and he was also married. Everybody there was married and everyone there … it was disgusting … And not just how they used to treat girls … there was one there, in exactly the same role as mine, Yonatan, and he was a little fat, and I remember one day … his commander called him "dog," like that, "dog come here," That's how they used to treat him, it was so disgusting, they were so disgusting … They used their power and they would pig out, they would have binge eating parties all the time, and they hit on girls and sexually harassed them. There were a few nice ones, but the nice ones got carried away too … totally got carried away … totally. There was one who was really charming, I could even have been a good friend of his, but he totally hit on me … there weren't one or two like that, they were all like that … maybe there were some with morals, I don't know, but even the most well thought of, were so …

Bareket constantly alternated between the enchantment and attraction ("I had a platoon commander who was really charming," "there were a few nice ones," "there was one who was really amazing") and rejection and harsh criticism, which in retrospect, take over the text. She described an organizational culture wherein the objectification of the Other—the weak man or the woman—goes hand in hand with binge eating, beverage guzzling, and self-glorification. It is a culture where everything is permissible and everything is acceptable, and young men and women are its victims. As opposed to Bareket's description, the others described a world even more confusing, a world where the lines are blurred so much that it is difficult to know how to act. Adi, a safety officer in the navy:

> I was an officer among guys, in the control room I heard stories about sexual conquests and sexual acts, comments, and sexual jokes. They would talk

> about other officers in the zone in a very vulgar and sexual manner when I was in the room. I felt like it was impossible for me to open my mouth and tell them "I don't want to hear such things," because then no one would talk to me. If I present myself as some sort of conservative woman and demand distance and a certain level of speech, no one will talk to me. Most of the work relationships were not professional but actually on the basis of personal relationships and interactions of a more personal nature. That is, if you didn't get along with someone on a personal basis, you couldn't get anything out of him on a professional level as well.

Dealing with ongoing security situations, working at irregular hours and spending long hours together, the separation from the reality of "normal" life, all create an informal atmosphere and work relationships that overstep the boundaries of the military role. Indeed, Adi, in her remarks, highlighted the connection between the personal and the professional—she suspected that a personal controversy would damage her ability to operate on a professional level, and therefore she did not allow herself to express her opinion about the manner of speaking within the sexist culture on the base.

Hila, the Humvee driver, also stressed the blurry boundaries of interactions between men and women in the military:

> You are with guys, and you don't know who they are at all. Do you understand? If he, if he's someone who will touch me? … and let's say that I'm an attractive girl? What, it's not a problem for him to touch me. Do you understand? And a situation is created, that also, let's say, there were instances where the girl wanted it too, the Humvee operator would sometimes want a soldier that was with her. Do you understand?

Hila was aware of the complex situation wherein it is possible that the women soldiers sometimes want the intimate touch, and therefore the boundary between harassment and not-harassment is elusive and indistinct. Ilana talked about the confusion she saw in retrospect between personal attention and harassment:

> Someone told me that she was traveling with the driver and the driver groped her, today there's a name for that. [But] she talked about it like "wow, apparently I liked him and he liked me,"—she didn't consider it harassment, definitely not, she took it to the place of wow, I got attention. It was also someone who really craves attention so it aligned with her need and she interpreted it as something warm and loving and not coercion, totally not. Today, I can say that it was sexual harassment. … It's part of a different perspective, from tools … from things that I internalized over time.

These stories describe not just sexual harassment but also, to a large extent, the emotional exploitation these young women are subjected to. They are sometimes

harassed and sometimes flirting, sometimes enjoy and sometimes suffer—the line between consensual intimate relationships, forbidden relationships, and relationships based on power and subordination is pliable and thin. They are left without a clear ability to define the incident and to respond accordingly.

A culture of harassment

Through the women's stories, we showed various instances of men's behavior that deeply discomforted and alarmed them. In addition to direct sexual harassment, often the women soldiers were personally insulted as a result of a collective behavior, which was not necessarily directed at them but is part of a general chauvinistic culture of sexual harassment. This phenomenon of daily, almost banal, harassment is widespread, so much so that we suggest defining the Israeli military's culture as a "culture of sexual harassment." By that we mean that frequently the sexual harassment is part of the collective behaviors and traditions that are passed down from generation to generation in the military unit and contribute to male solidarity. This is essentially environmental harassment (Miller 1997), which features characteristics of bullying (Koeszegi, Zedlacher and Hudribusch 2014). This culture of harassment can be expressed in a variety of military-specific contexts: during a course when the commander orders the women soldiers to spread their legs "like a whore," during a class when the instructor uses a picture of a naked woman to illustrate principles of combat or to make sure the soldiers are alert, on T-shirts designed by soldiers to celebrate the conclusion of training courses, with drawings that humiliate women, or by collective singing of "lewd songs" to any woman soldier passing by on base.

For example, Sasson-Levy (2006) quotes a man soldier from one of the infantry divisions:

> The whole company was standing together, in rows of three, and then two women soldiers passed by the company. The commander said: "Come, I'll teach you something new. I yell: Who is that? You answer: 'That's a whore, come to the support unit and we'll open your ass.'"And then he took us for a quick march around the base and every time we saw a female soldier he yelled that and all the soldiers answered. The commander was satisfied, laughing, yelling at every female soldier. One of the soldiers asked: "Sir, isn't this sexual harassment?" and the commander answered: No, in the army it's allowed.

This story demonstrates how environmental sexual harassment is an acquired habit, a learned behavior that is taught to the new recruits by their commanders. A company secretary gave another example of environmental harassment:

> There are those songs … "Ruti is a whore, Ruti gives head to the whole company." Who sings it? Either the staff or the infantry companies who have a

> repertoire of these songs. They sit and everyone "Ruti is a whore," but they used to sing it at all the girls.

Ruti understood that, when the NCOs sing these songs to her, they do not mean that she is promiscuous or even sexually active. It was, she insisted, the military way of communicating professional dissatisfaction with her. Still, the message was communicated by emphasizing her sexuality and representing it as cheap and contemptible. The song then has a dual function: it constitutes an example of military chauvinist behavior for the young male soldiers and thus plays a part in their socialization process in the military culture; and it makes clear to the company secretary what her "real place" is in that society. Ruti was able to endure the incident because she defined the song as a type of "gender performance" (Butler 2011 [1990]), a way for male soldiers to present their masculinity, and had nothing to do with her personally. She identified the song as part of a public discourse and not a personal one; but she also understood what it says about women's place in the military (Sasson-Levy 2003b).

Emily, an operations officer, declared that she had learned to accept the environmental harassment: "Look, I got used to the sexual comments, after all, I served in Golani [infantry brigade], they [the soldiers] were my pals, it was my environment." On the other hand, we will see later on that she refused to accept the personal harassment when it was aimed at her directly.

Studies conducted on the US military indicate that there is a strong correlation between an organizational culture that permits environmental harassment and personal sexual harassment, including groping, pressure to submit to sexual contact, sexual letters or phone calls, and sexual assault (Butler and Schmidtke 2010, Firestone and Harris 1999). The environmental harassment is therefore a legitimizing source for personal harassment.

Indeed, going back to the woman soldier's experience, we see that she often has trouble distinguishing between environmental harassment and personal harassment, and that the transition between the personal and the general is fluid. For instance, Daniella, an infantry instructor, described the rumors that were spread about her that she had sex with officers. Daniella exemplified in her remarks the fluidity in transitioning from a culture overflowing with sexuality to harassment:

> There were many rumors that I did this, and I did this with that in the car. … It was excruciating, it was very, very hard for me. There were also persistent rumors in my second position that I slept with the division commander, which wasn't true. Maybe he eyed me a little, looking back. But a rumor, as soon as it is spread, is something that is very hard to cope with. It was very hard for me, I also reacted very strongly, crying and upset. So many people know, they are all already talking about it and you don't have any control … It was really on the verge of sexual harassment. It creates an opening, a vicious cycle where the more they bother you when they know there are rumors about you, the more the commanders will hit on you and try their luck, and permit themselves to make comments since they think you are sleeping with the division commander.

Rumors about sexual activity are in and of themselves a type of environmental sexual harassment (Miller 1997). Moreover, according to Daniella, the rumors were one of the ways to legitimize personal harassment. It seems that the offensive masculine behaviors are shaped anew at any moment, at the expense of the woman soldier, and this fluid and blurry situation perpetuates the harassment.

Ofek, an education officer in the air force, presented the same unclear situation concerning the military's humor culture:

> The truth is yes … I was sexually harassed. It didn't really faze me then. First of all the chauvinistic and sexist comments—that was all the time … I am simply not one of those girls who get excited about it, I know that's not so alright. It was all the time, I simply don't really pay attention to it. But there was one dramatic event. We brought a speaker about sexuality and he brought some sort of sex toy made of beads, we were perhaps 50 officers, and the laughter started because of the beads. The next day, I got an envelope from the maintenance squadron commander who is a lieutenant colonel through internal mail, and inside the envelope were the beads, and attached to them was a ribbon that is usually attached to a plane which says on it "Remove in times of distress." The letter was addressed to education officers from the commander of the maintenance squadron. Now it was just for laughs, as if you know … it didn't really bother me, but there were other people who thought it was definitely sexual harassment and thought that I should take it higher. It annoyed me but I didn't really want to. I think that really truly I was afraid of a confrontation with him, I also said it was a fine line these jokes, to be part of the gang or not to be part of the gang is a very thin line, and I wasn't sure maybe I had led him on … I don't know, I didn't want to get into it, finally I avoided it altogether.

Ofek's story exemplifies all the difficulties in defining sexual harassment in the context of a culture of harassment. On the one hand, the culture of "jokes"—the never-ending banter—is considered a positive dimension of the social life in the army and is mostly described as equal enjoyment for all the participating sides. In fact, both the men and the women ignore that the humor in the "jokes" culture is often focused on issues of sex and gender in a hierarchic and offensive manner. It is a kind of routine banal daily sexual harassment that is considered a given part of the gender relations. Thus, Ofek avoided filing a complaint because she wanted to remain "one of the gang" and to belong to the jokes culture.

On the other hand, the squadron commander was passing her sex toys. He was thus violating the banal environmental harassment and harassed her directly. Therefore, Ofek interpreted the incident as "dramatic." Nevertheless, her interpretation fluctuated between "It was just for laughs, it didn't really bother me" and "it annoyed me."

The dilemma whether to respond to the incident is conducted as an internal negotiation on the definition of the situation: does the incident constitute environmental sexual harassment or has it become personal sexual harassment? Ofek preferred to leave the definition of the incident as environmental harassment since

she feared a confrontation with the commander. In order to justify her inaction, she enlisted the classic trope of women when faced with sexual harassment: "And I wasn't sure if I had perhaps led him on." The first reaction to sexual harassment is often confusion, self-doubt, and self-accusation as the victims are not sure if their understanding of the behavior is correct and whether the harasser's purpose is negative ("Maybe he is hitting on me?") (Charney and Russell 1994). These doubts are what led Ofek's story to an almost inevitable end: "I didn't want to get into it, finally I avoided it altogether."

Ofek's reaction is not exceptional. In the next section, we will examine the direct and indirect ways that women choose to respond to sexual harassment.

Women confronting sexual abuse

When women live in a culture of sexual harassment, they often find it very difficult to react to the offensive behavior and prefer to ignore it. For instance, Roni said: "A lot of girls choose to simply ignore it since we don't know how to cope with it. We don't understand that it's really horrible." Roni continued and explained why she chose to ignore the harassment and not to file a complaint about the guy who attacked her: "Today, I understand it is horrible. But also, what are you going to do, go to the bastard and destroy his life? Destroy his family and all because he stumbled? You don't know how to deal with it. Luckily, I didn't have to bump into him on the base every day, he was a reserve soldier."

By using the term "stumble" Roni indicated that the man is not responsible for his actions—the attack was described as an exception, which is not necessarily indicative of his daily behavior. Similarly, Chani also proposed ignoring the harassment as her primary response: "People who were married also tried to hit on me. But it's as if you don't, even if you see it, you ignore it. But, in general, I wouldn't see it. I was so innocent, and naïve and stupid."

Ignoring sexual harassment is strengthened by a mutual code of silence among the women. Galia, who was actually attacked, was asked in the interview if she had heard any similar stories from other women: "No, there was a very prominent code of silence. … because I didn't talk about it either, so why should anyone tell me if I don't tell anyone?" The concept of a "code of silence," which was repeated in other interviews, reveals the social prohibition on talking about sexual harassment, one that implies that women should be ashamed of themselves for being sexually harassed, and so talking about harassment disgraces the woman even further.

Another response is to trivialize the harassment, through humor, for example. Sigal, an education instructor, gave a common answer to the question of whether men soldiers treated her as a sexual object: "For sure, but you get through it with humor. You understand that you can't get angry about it because if you do get angry about it you create a sort of distancing."

A further way to cope with sexual harassment is to present oneself as someone who cannot be harassed. Some of the women stressed in their interview that "I cannot be harassed." By this presentation, they divided the world of women in

two—those that can be harassed and those that cannot—and they were careful to put themselves on the strong side of the dichotomy. Thus Yuli, commander of a tank instructor's course, answered the question "Did you encounter sexual harassment?" "I am sure that there was. [But] I am a woman that cannot be sexually harassed. So I never smiled with embarrassment, and not all that. I very much understand the war on it, because it's clear to me that not everyone is like me, but I was never ashamed …"

At the base of the claim "I cannot be harassed" is the thought that the harassment is first of all the responsibility of the harassed because "she can be harassed." This claim reflects the social expectation of women to learn how to cope with sexual harassment by themselves. If a woman does not manage to cope by herself, her personal virtue and professional value are damaged. It is clear from Yuli's story that when women soldiers say "I cannot be harassed," they don't mean that they are not harassed but rather that they "don't get excited, and in fact ignore the harassment."

Indeed, ignoring sexual harassment or interpreting it as "just something that happens" and "part of everyday culture" are women's most prevalent reactions to sexual harassment (Thomas and Kitzinger 1994). The women soldiers aspire to achieve the status of the "good citizen," the professional and committed soldier, through their militarized encounters with the state, whereas sexual harassment relates to them as sexual objects. If they react to sexual harassment by being insulted and offended, they would be confirming the discourse that the harassment itself is trying to create, the one that constitutes women as sexual objects. Thus, when women ignore the insulting character of the "jokes" and refuse to be hurt or offended, they do not allow the harassment to attain its intended exclusionary and aggressive power. Moreover, if they label the event as sexual harassment and act upon it as such, they would be seen as constituting a "gender problem" within the army and therefore would not be treated as an integral and equal part of it.

Furthermore, an awareness of sexual assault would associate these soldiers with the identity of victim. In their eyes, the victim is defenseless and vulnerable and has no place in a military whose duty it is to defend the weak. There is an inherent contradiction between the discourse and identity of victim and those of belonging to the army and state on an equal footing, and women soldiers experiencing sexual harassment are positioned at the center of this contradiction. The trivialization of sexual harassment, then, is a challenge to the harassment in military culture, a response that expresses a refusal to submit to the army's definition of femininity (Sasson-Levy 2003b).Thus, women find myriad ways to justify ignoring sexual harassment.

Nevertheless, not all of the women soldiers ignore sexual harassment. Some of them find more active means to react to harassment, methods that buffer the harassment when faced with the harasser and sometimes even stop it altogether.

The story of Roni, airplane electrician, illustrates a creative method of coping with the culture of harassment, as she and her friends applied indirect pressure on the men and reversed the culture of harassment. During their electricians' course,

Roni and the few other women in the men's course felt pressured by the commanders, who were unable to cope with women in the course. The commanders used to conduct invasive cleanliness inspections in the women's rooms. In response, the women soldiers plastered the walls of their rooms with pictures of naked men and indeed succeeded in preventing the commanders from returning to their rooms. Though their protest remained in the "masculine language," it is an unusual act of resistance to men's collective harassment.

However, Roni's story is an exception, because it is very difficult to respond to environmental harassment. Women usually respond only when the harassment is directed at them personally. For example, Emily, who previously described the atmosphere of overflowing sexuality in the war room, generally knew how to respond to the harassment, even when it came from her direct commanding officer:

> When the deputy battalion commander said to me, "Turn towards me, so what if you have a nice ass," I never felt like a victim, I simply turned to him and opened up on him and let him have it. I dealt with him from a place of power. I felt very strong. I didn't feel like someone was taking advantage of me or that I was weaker than him, I would answer! I stood my ground, for the most part it wasn't hurtful. I believe that the things I experienced, other girls would have experienced as traumatic and offensive sexual harassment, I didn't feel that way.

Emily's direct response contains an educational aspect: the woman soldier taught the harasser how to behave through a clear and decisive statement, which delineated firm boundaries as to what was permissible and impermissible. Yuli also demonstrated this nicely: "From my perspective, I always thought that I could say whatever I wanted, such as: "Don't talk to me like that," or: "Calm down," or things like that. The women soldiers presented themselves as the mature, responsible adult who preserves the rules of proper behavior, and in doing so, they acquire power." At the same time, they also took responsibility for the situation and therefore often wondered if they did not act in too tempting a manner.

The lack of clarity regarding the "guilt" of the harasser is perhaps one of the explanations for the fact that there are almost no stories about direct physical responses against the harasser. In this context, Daniella was almost jealous of the "butch girls'" reactions to harassment:

> In the next unit, there were these butch girls, they were harassed less, they also interpreted comments less as sexual harassment because they were like that it … they just weren't into it and they had no problem slamming a rifle into someone's head, if they weren't spoken to nicely. There were girls who cuffed the trainees, they had no problem reacting in the moment, to curse, to say "who the hell do you think you are?"

Daniella attributed the physical response solely to butch women, to the "masculine women," but she was afraid that it was not an appropriate response for

a “proper” woman. However, when she was harassed in a civilian public space (and not on the military base), and the harasser was not a soldier, she dared to use physical force herself:

> It was someone on the bus coming back from base. I fell asleep and I woke up with his hand in my crotch, his hand was between my legs. I took the butt of my rifle and bashed him in the face, making his nose bleed. I have this picture in my head to this day of him bleeding on his white shirt, he was religious, by the way.

In the military space, it is dangerous to use force against men, and so there are only a very few of these stories. On the other hand, it is easier for women to cope with sexual harassment by recruiting other men against the harasser. This tactic is very noticeable, especially among women who served alone in masculine spaces. Roni described how she dealt with the sexual assault upon her when an older reserve soldier tried to forcibly kiss her:

> I wanted to complain, I hesitated. No, I remember that at the time I didn’t want to talk about it, it really roiled me … I didn’t know how to cope with it and I told two friends of mine who were career soldiers, and this guy, he was almost murdered because of them, because they just wanted to kill him and I chose to cover it up, like many girls do, many many girls … because we don’t know how to cope with it.

Inbal, who was afraid she would get a bad name for having fraternized with men, also used her friends as shields in order to cope: “You learn little by little that the most important thing is to know what and who you are, and my friends, someone just had to say something bad about me, they would immediately defend me.”

Indeed, when she was harassed by her commanding officer, her friend on the base forced her to confront him:

> I remember that my commanding officer once made some remark with a sexual innuendo. I was very offended. Then I told my friend about it and he forced me to go and talk to him. And I remember that we were standing in front of him [the commander] and then he [the friend] pushed me, as if to talk to him. And I told him, I told him that the way he talked to me and his innuendos were very offensive to me. And I am happy I said that, despite, you know, it ended with innuendo and not more than that. But I said it, and I stood my ground, and maybe I prevented other attempts. But I stood my ground and I told him he should understand that no one talks to me that way. And it is because of my friends because I told them and they forced me to talk to him and I am happy I told him that.

Inbal talked to the commander because of the support and insistence of the friend. Even in the interview years later, she repeatedly stressed the power that she gained

from the confrontation with the commander, which not only empowered her personally but maybe prevented additional harassment. Emily sought help from other men when directly and personally confronting the harassment was not enough:

> I remember one time the whole battalion was sent down South on standby and I had to stay in the Golan Heights [in the north] with him [the deputy battalion commander] alone. It was so scary, in the morning I would wake up and he would be looming over my bed and say "Get up operations officer!" (talking in a masculine voice). I told on him, about these games that he … it made me feel disgusted … so a friend of mine from the battalion disabled his jeep for a few weeks in revenge. And the battalion commander told him [the deputy] don't mess with her, she's not your underling.

When the deputy battalion commander not only expressed himself crudely to Emily, as we saw above, but invaded her private space when they were alone on the base, she felt threatened. This time she turned to the men, including the battalion commander, for help, but she felt uncomfortable seeking help, which she indicated by using the phrase "I told on him" to signal that it was perceived as an illegitimate action.

Turning to men for help is deeply embedded in the patriarchal culture, which is well maintained in militaristic environments. This approach reflects the common social script of the knight, who demonstrates his masculinity by protecting other women.

We see that the women soldiers reacted in different ways to the harassment, but only very few chose to file a formal complaint (therefore it is not surprising that there was not a single one among the interviewees who had done so or at least talked about it). The *Advisor to the Chief of General Staff on Women's Issues* reported (in February 2014) that 561 complaints had been received that year by the military's rape-crisis center; however, 61 percent of those seeking help did not file a complaint. This low rate of complaints indicates that the women soldiers do not trust the military's institutions. The story of Adi, a safety officer in the navy, demonstrates why they do not:

> A woman soldier that I knew, who was a checkpoint soldier [Border Police], was sexually assaulted by her commander. As a punishment for filing a complaint, she was transferred from her position. That same commander continued to command a unit largely comprised of women. It turns out there was a previous incident when he was a checkpoint commander and the complaint was buried then too. And during the entire investigation he continued in his position and continued to command women. And she was reassigned from her position to a lesser position. They removed her from her position and assigned her as a secretary in my unit, without a professional position.

In this quote, Adi actually described institutional silencing of sexual harassment, as the harassed herself was the one punished, and not only was she transferred to another base but transferred from a professional job to a low-status one. This is,

of course, one of the reasons the women soldiers do not file complaints and search for informal ways to respond to sexual harassment. Daniella's story about the military's continued ignoring of her complaints bolsters this claim:

> I experienced a lot of sexual harassment in the army. In field roles there's always friction with guys, and we were in the field most of the time. There was a lot of sexual harassment. From their perspective, it was simply (our) incorrect interpretation of closeness. For example, when I tried to complain about someone who had harassed me over a long period of time, my commanding officer, the deputy battalion commander, asked me to drop it. When I didn't agree, it went to the battalion commander, and he also tried to convince me to drop it and when I didn't agree it went to the deputy division commander. It became an investigation of me, they invited me to an inquiry, about sexual harassment against me, you understand? Finally it ended with me getting a promise from the deputy division commander that this person … in retrospect it turned out that this person had a long history of sexual harassment and everyone knew it, you understand? Everyone talked about it but he was promoted to a very very senior position. At some stage after I had already left, he was appointed department head and worked closely with women. … There was definitely room for me to file a complaint and take it all the way as an officer, since yes, being an officer is power, I have no doubt of that. Other girls who were sexually harassed were simply transferred to another base, when they filed a complaint they were transferred to another base, but they couldn't do that to me.

It is clear from Daniella's story that the "brotherhood of arms" protects the harasser, and therefore at every stage, the commanders tried to persuade Daniella not to file the complaint. Thus the military culture covers for the male harasser and he can be promoted to a higher rank, despite being widely known as a serial harasser.

The reaction that punishes the harassed and not the harasser is seared into everybody's consciousness. Punishing the harassed woman not only teaches the others not to file a complaint but also undermines the women's (and the men's) interpretive world on the subject of sexual harassment—thus strengthening and sustaining the ambiguity of the phenomenon.

Gray areas of sexual harassment

Our contention in this chapter is not merely that there is a pervasive pattern of sexual harassment in the military but rather that the interviews show that the military encourages and sustains a "culture of harassment," that is, a culture that views every woman as a sexual object. In such a culture, male solidarity is preserved through the sexual humiliation of women, simply because they are women, on a daily basis. Women living within a culture of harassment feel and suffer from its effects all the time. However, they have great difficulty responding to it since it is a diffuse, ubiquitous culture, often impersonal, and a given part of military life.

It is important to remember that these are very young women who come to the military via mandatory enlistment wherein military service is perceived as part of the key script to transition into adulthood. Therefore, the experience in the military's culture of harassment can be viewed as a type of apprenticeship period, preparing the women for their encounter with the patriarchal state's institutions later on in life. During their military service, they learn what it means to be an adult woman in a patriarchal world, and when they are discharged they already know (with varying degrees of awareness) the difficulties that await them in the world of men. Some of them have even acquired minimal tools to cope with those difficulties. What they primarily learn is that the public space, which is controlled by men, always contains a certain amount of environmental harassment, which encourages and enables the more offensive personal harassment. If and when they encounter personal harassment, it opens their eyes and sometimes even becomes the basis for the development of gendered awareness, which spurs them not to accept this situation.

We identified three positional contexts in the interviews that increase the chances that environmental harassment will develop into personal harassment. The first context is when the feminine body is considered part of the requirements for the military role and becomes a basis for gendered power relations, as expressed in the role of the secretary. In these cases, sexual harassment is part of the performance of the commander's power, who considers the secretary, her body, and her sexuality part of the privileges of his status (see also Butler and Schmidtke 2010).

The second context is when women cross gender lines as part of their roles and enter roles that were formerly occupied only by men. The integration of women threatens the status of the men, who retaliate by undermining the women soldiers' professionalism through harassment. Hence, sexual or gender harassment is a way of reinforcing male power over women and thus may be one way for men to keep women "in their proper place" (MacKinnon 1979), a place wherein femininity is primarily identified with sexuality.

Finally, women are more prone to personal harassment when they are isolated in the masculine spaces. Even if they do not necessarily threaten the soldiers' or officers' masculinity, they are in a structurally inferior position, which makes it easier for men to hurt them. The personal harassment not only forces the woman to consider herself sexual in places that she would prefer not to do so, it also associates the woman with a worldview in which her sexuality is an expression of weakness and a source of shame and anxiety (Kamir 2002).

Despite the differences in the situations that encourage sexual harassment, it is striking in all of the women soldiers' narratives that they had a hard time recognizing the humiliating male behavior as sexual harassment. These behaviors should be seen then as interpretive "gray areas." As Maya said: "The boundaries are very blurred in the military. As if, I don't know how to define sexual harassment, you know, there are jokes, and there are insinuations." Meital, an officer, added: "So I didn't know that that was harassment. I thought that if they didn't rape me everything was fine." Amit, teaching officer, said explicitly: "It was complicated

vis-à-vis the soldiers, I have no doubt that much of what happened to me I would be able to define today as sexual harassment. Then, I didn't know to call it that."

Frequently, the understanding of what constitutes sexual harassment and the correct way to respond to it emerges only in retrospect. This late understanding was possible for the women we interviewed because they are older, and because the social discourse in Israel today does not shy away from examining and investigating sexual harassment.[4]

The plethora of gray areas, alongside the unstable place of women in the military, led to an interpretive labyrinth regarding incidents of sexual harassment. In the interviews, the women displayed a continuous pendulum between defining and being unable to define sexual harassment. First, the woman soldier asks herself, "Was what happened to me indeed sexual harassment? Maybe what happened was my fault? Does he want a serious relationship with me or is he harassing me? Is this just the military way of life or am I indeed offended and harassed?" Second, the woman soldier has a hard time deciding whether to act and how to act. Again, the woman soldier asks herself, "Am I exaggerating? Will they perceive me as weak, or as a problematic woman? Won't they label me a troublemaker and will I then have to pay a high price? Won't I destroy his life and career? Will the military system even listen to me and respond accordingly?"

The interpretive ambiguity embedded in the gray area is double edged. On the one hand, the ambiguity garners for the woman a certain interpretive space, which gives her a modicum of control in defining the situation and a measure of agency. Thus, as we saw, many women ignore sexual harassment or trivialize it, not because they are afraid but because they refuse to tacitly condone the definition of identity that the harassment coerces them into, that of the sexual object or the victim. Ignoring it, in this case, might be an effective strategy on the personal level, a source of personal strength (Sasson-Levy 2003b). But at the same time, the "gray area" of harassment also has harmful consequences for women. The difficulty in interpreting the incident reduces the woman's ability to act, since it leaves her in a state of confusion, lacking confidence and feeling helpless regarding the offensive action. Thus, she continues to be injured, without the ability to explain the damage and to respond to it and stop it.

This interpretive ambiguity is surprising given the fact that in the last few decades, the military has introduced very explicit regulations regarding sexual harassment, developed educational and informational activities on the subject, offered clear tools to file a complaint, and sometimes even punished harassers.

One explanation for the phenomenon is the historical context: the interviews cover military service in the early twenty-first century, only a few years after the regulation was passed. The women who were interviewed represent a stage when the significance of the new regulation was not yet internalized, and they thus continued to find it difficult to define the situation.

However, we contend that the explanation for the plethora of gray areas is more structural and does not solely derive from the historical context. We assert that gray areas of sexual harassment are constant social constructs, even in an era after the legislation. That is, despite the fact that today there is clear legislation, educational

activities, and a military punishment for sexual harassment, the military discourse and culture succeed in preserving the phenomenon of daily sexual harassment by shaping it as an area that is impossible to clearly define. That means that the gray areas are in fact the mechanism that establishes sexual harassment as an ongoing phenomenon and enables the perpetuation of the culture of harassment.[5]

One can therefore discern two contradictory processes within the military treatment of sexual harassment of women. On the one hand, there is an intensive regulations process that delineates clear boundaries regarding proper behavior towards women and codifies the way to treat harassment. This is a result of civilian society's influence on the military and of the codification processes that the military has been undergoing over the last decade (Cohen and Cohen 2012). Opposing this process of clear regulations, we witness a widespread and informal phenomenon of boundary blurring: these are the gray areas that obscure the meaning of sexual harassment and thus obfuscate the boundaries between women and sexuality, between demand for equality and sexual objectification, and between military professionalism and interpersonal intimacy. By the same token, Hillman (2009) shows that the US military also introduced better legal treatment and an improved formal policy regarding sexual harassment. However, the response to these processes in the US military is not the blurring of boundaries but rather the explicit crossing of boundaries to commit sexual attacks, assaults, and rape (*ibid.*). In both cases, we see that opposite the formal top-down regulations enacted to protect women, there are always bottom-up processes that undermine the status of women and threaten their integration into the military.

Thus we argue that sexual harassment embodies the contradictory forces in today's militaries: on the one hand, there are forces that call for women to be integrated into the military based on discourses of equality and justice. On the other hand, there are opposite forces that seek to preserve the male chauvinist culture, which is perceived as essential for military operational effectiveness. The women are harassed not because they tempt the men or because the men are horny (McLaughlin, Uggen and Blackstone 2012), but because they "pollute" the masculine space and their mere presence provokes objection (Koeszegi, Zedlacher and Hudribusch 2014). The more they are present in the military sphere, the need to delineate them as Others grows; as more formal mechanisms are enacted that seek to educate, oversee, and punish violence against women, more circumventive processes develop that push the harassment into hard-to-define gray areas.

The existence of these two simultaneous processes, one that seeks to de-gender the military sphere and the second that re-genders it over and over, shows that the struggle for women's place in the military continues and morphs from time to time. The realm of sexual harassment is a major site in which this struggle is expressed today, and the women's military service is shaped by it.

Notes

1 As a result of the definition of sexual harassment as a criminal offense in 1998, then Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Chief of Staff Shaul Mofaz declared war on sexual

harassment in the military in 1999. General Staff Order declares that sexual harassment is a criminal offense that could result in a court martial for the harasser. Sexual harassment is defined in the General Staff Order as "Extortion with threats, indecent assault, disparaging or humiliating behavior or suggestions and actions done to a person who showed the harasser that they were not interested in them—where each and every one of the detailed examples is of a sexual nature." The order determines that in the context of a subordinate relationship, these behaviors will be considered sexual harassment even if the harassed did not show the harasser that they were uninterested in such attentions. In addition, the order determines that a refresher course on sexual harassment should be carried out in every unit annually. A booklet detailing what constitutes sexual harassment and to whom one can turn for assistance is given to women draftees at the Induction Center. A stricter policy is also expressed through the designation of special adjudication officers who are authorized to judge sexual harassment by bringing officers who were found guilty before the Contract Abrogation Committee and the lengthening of the investigation by the criminal investigation department (CID) to 45 days.

2 According to the army, 49 percent of the reported incidents are physical incidents and the rest are verbal. (See: The Knesset Committee on the Status of Women and Gender Equality, 2014. Protocol No. 60, 3 February 2014, Jerusalem: Israeli Knesset).

3 An example from the media: Buhbut, Amir, "Hundreds of Women Soldiers Suffer from Anorexia,"*Maariv NRG*, 13 January 2008.

4 The social discourse on the topic strengthened in the wake of the verdict against President Moshe Katsav, which found him guilty of the harassment and even rape of women who worked for him. In 2011, Katsav began a seven-year jail term. Additional instances of rabbis, Knesset members, senior police commanders, and university professors being brought to trial kept the topic on the public agenda.

5 The law, which was passed in California in October 2014 and requires an affirmative consent to have sexual relations, is an example of an attempt to minimize the gray areas and to strive for less ambiguous definitions of sexual harassment in order to protect women through a clearer interpretation of situations of harassment and assault. See an example from the media: New, Jake, "The 'yes means yes' world," *Inside Higher ED*, 17 October 2014. https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2014/10/17/colleges-across-country-adopting-affirmative-consent-sexual-assault-policies.

7 Dis/acknowledging military violence

Women breaking the silence of occupation

Do not hear, do not see, do not speak

Interviewing over 100 women, we were surprised to discover that barely any mentioned the military's externally directed violence. Despite the fact that some of the women served during the First Lebanon War (1982–2000) and others in the Occupied Territories, these experiences were not presented in their service stories. Only a few of the interviewees directly addressed the military's violence. For example, Emily, who served in the operation room, said:

> The soldiers of *Golani* [an infantry brigade] went out on an ambush and killed six terrorists. There was celebration, and then our missiles accidentally ignited a fire, and six [of our] soldiers were killed. I remember it like it was yesterday. We heard their screams over the radio. I shiver just talking about it.

Emily recalled the military's violence with fascination ("There was celebration") and only later thought about the loss of human lives—the loss on "her" (Israeli) side.

These voices are relatively rare and, in general, the women did not dwell upon the significance and cost of participating in a fighting army and certainly not on taking part in an occupying army. They also did not address the emotions associated with violence, such as hatred, fear, and revenge, in their narratives. There is a "thunderous silence" regarding violence, so much so that it is hard to discern from most of the narratives that the women speaking served in an actively fighting and occupying military. It sometimes seems as though they were discussing a civilian workplace and not service in a military that often engages in premeditated wars or military operations and controls a civilian population. How can this be explained?

The most common explanation, which the women asserted themselves, is that they do not discuss violence because they did not directly encounter it, as most of them served on the home front. While some soldiers are "tradesmen of killing" (Lasswell, quoted in Ben-Ari [1998]), most soldiers—men and women alike—are positioned away from the front lines and have no direct contact with the military's violence. Thus, most soldiers can overlook the fact that they are part of a violent institution. This is especially true for women, who are usually kept away

from sites of violence in order to safeguard their morality and not to impede the military effectiveness that relies on male bonding (Lomsky-Feder and Ben-Ari 2007). Even women who serve in semi-combat roles, such as those who surveil the borders, watching the border on a screen and directing soldiers from afar to their targets, encounter violence only via technological mediation and not directly. Women's encounters with the military's violence should be understood, then, as a continuum, where at one end are most women soldiers, who do not encounter it in their everyday lives on the base, and at the other end are a few women who are involved directly with violent military operations (such as border patrols in light infantry units).

Despite the fact that most of the women were not exposed directly to military violence, it is hard to believe that they were unaware of violent military actions. Reports about military violence in the Occupied Territories is broadcast constantly on Israeli and foreign media networks. Thus we can infer that the silence in the interviews is not the result of ignorance but of choice (more or less conscious) not to know (Herzog and Lahad 2006, Zerubavel 2006a), while their distance from violent areas makes this choice easier.

This choice is connected, among other things, to women's status as the "outsiders within" the military. The military places the male warrior, who is willing to sacrifice his life for the protection of women and children, at the center. Iris Marion Young (Young 2003) argued that "the role of the masculine protector puts those protected, paradigmatically women and children, in a subordinate position of dependence and obedience" (*ibid*., 2). Hence, military violence is founded on hierarchical, gendered perceptions and reproduces them. When women serve in the military, they are first of all grateful that they are allowed to participate in this vaunted endeavor, which had been previously closed to them. The women find it difficult to undermine the legitimacy of the institution that grants them the opportunity to ostensibly be equal to men. Moreover, some of them aspire to participate in the violent acts, in order to be rewarded with the privileges and prestige that the military core bestows. Thus, the integration of women into combat roles, which was intended to reduce gender differences and broaden the sense of equality, causes them to largely lose their autonomy and their ability to object to male patriarchy. The women's entry into the military arena subjugates them even more to masculinist hegemony, whether out of identification with male actions or as a form of self-censorship. The source of this self-censorship is their perception that they lack the social legitimacy to discuss violence, certainly not critically, since they were not really "there"(Lomsky-Feder 2004). Bolstering this claim is the fact that the few women who broke the silence are those who served in violent areas and use their exposure to violence to gain legitimacy to voice their political opinions. Yet even those women do not speak extensively about their experiences.

However, the women's silence cannot be solely attributed to their status as "outsiders within" but also to broader processes in Israeli society, which brings about what Ariella Azulai (quoted in Herzog and Lahad 2006, 7) terms "collective loss of vision." This is a silence constructed socially by sophisticated and effective denial mechanisms.

National denial mechanisms

While military violence is generally perceived as legitimate, various war situations undermine this justification. In his classic book *Just and Unjust Wars* from (Walzer 1977), Michael Walzer established an ethical approach known as the "just war theory." According to Walzer, a just war has two meanings: that which addresses the justice behind the decision to go to war, and that which concerns just conduct during a war.

In the Israeli context, the ongoing occupation calls into question both the justification for going to war and the justification for the violent conduct of the military. However, Israeli Jewish society finds it extremely difficult to confront these moral issues. Military violence contradicts the nation's self-image as a moral society, whose main source of legitimacy is to provide a national homeland to the persecuted Jewish people. In an attempt to preserve the image of a just society and a moral army, Israeli society developed various mechanisms to deny military violence both within the organization and in wider society.

The first denial mechanism aims to preserve the Jewish self-image of the victim. Positioning victimhood at the center blinds most Israelis from seeing the (Palestinian) "Other" and from recognizing that Israel is the occupier in the conflict between them. It creates symmetry between the two sides and defines Israeli society first and foremost as a "community of suffering" opposite a similar Palestinian community (Lomsky-Feder 2011). Especially salient in this context is the cultivation of the memory of the Holocaust as a national trauma (Segev 1993), as well as the strengthening of the traumatic discourse that portrays the soldiers as victims rather than aggressors (Lomsky-Feder and Ben-Ari 2010, Shavit and Katriel 2009).

Blurring the distinction between victims and victimizers is also intensified by the denial of Palestinian suffering. Silencing the narrative of the "Other" on the receiving end of military violence is clearly expressed in the refusal of the Israeli state to formally recognize the memory of the Nakba (see e.g., Ram 2009).

Another mechanism that has emerged since the late 1990s to neutralize the violence is the rising dominance of the legal and human-rights discourses. These discourses, which Ben-Ari (2009) terms "restraining discourses," penetrate the military via various practices and bestow an aura of legitimacy upon the military's violence.

Finally, other mechanisms are developed in order to curb moral deliberations and silence critical voices. Grassiani (2013) argues that the dynamic of the military routine in the Occupied Territories generates "moral numbing" that blurs the soldiers' own moral criteria and ethical standards. While Grassiani shows an indirect silencing mechanism to prevent the emergence of moral questions, Erica Weiss (2011) highlights a direct and more aggressive silencing mechanism. In her work, she discusses the de-legitimation in Israeli society of political/conscientious objectors and the almost complete obstruction of this resistance channel via the pathologization and feminization of the refusal to serve. Those who, despite everything, voice their protest against the Occupation in the public sphere encounter strong opposition. This opposition has increased dramatically and has turned especially vocal and violent in the wake of the war in Gaza in the summer of 2014.

The entirety of these mechanisms can be viewed as "cycles of denial/silencing" that entrap the individual in Israeli society and make it difficult not only to object to military violence but also to acknowledge its presence and deal with it emotionally, cognitively, and morally. These mechanisms contain what Taussig (1999) termed a "public secret" or, in other words, what is known to the members of society but cannot be spoken of (Zerubavel 2006a). Silence, then, is not just a passive practice (in that it may signify apathy or ignorance) but an active practice that demands a constant ongoing reinforcement (Herzog and Lahad 2006).

Against this backdrop, the women who succeeded in breaking out of these cycles of denial/silence and made their voices heard are exceptional, and it is they that the next chapter will address (on raising one's voice as resistance see [Gilligan 2013]). Before we analyze the women's testimonies, we wish to locate them in the context of women's anti-war activism in general and in Israeli society in particular.

Women's anti-war protest

Traditionally, women's anti-war voices have been characterized by two major bases of legitimacy: republican motherhood and the discourse of feminism and universal human rights. The vast literature of women's political protest reveals that motherhood is the most available framing for legitimizing women's social struggles (Ray and Korteweg 1999). Some of the major examples are the Women's Peace Party, established during World War I (Kennedy 1995); and Women Strike for Peace, which acted first against nuclear armament and later against the Vietnam War (Swerdlow 1993). Both groups used maternal politics as an antidote to a male-dominated, militarist culture that privileges the experience of war. Similarly, motherhood has been mobilized for women's protest against state violence in other societies such as Russia (Caiazza 2002), Britain (Cockburn 2007), and Argentina (Navarro 1989).

Though the discourse of motherhood is a very effective legitimizing tool, it has also generated criticism, mostly from feminists who argued that the archetype of "women as caretakers" can easily be co-opted by patriarchal, patriotic, and militaristic discourse (Cockburn 2007, Di Leonardo 1985, Kaplan 1994). Indeed, other women, disturbed by the "moral mother" imagery, have sought alternative framing for their social protest. Since the 1980s, women's movements in Israel and many other countries have linked their demands for peace and gender-equal opportunities within the framework of human rights, as leftists or as feminists (Moghadam 2001).

Women's military service, on the other hand, has not been acknowledged as a basis for anti-war protest. Though women veterans were a part of Vietnam Vets Against the War and Veterans For Peace in the United States, their specific voices have not been studied.

Although women in Israel have been drafted into the military since the establishment of the state, the most dominant presentation of women in the context of war has been the icon of women as mothers, not as soldiers. This has been true in a

range of Israeli cultural arenas such as poetry, literature, cinema (Zerubavel 2006b), memorial ceremonies (Lomsky-Feder 2005), and commemoration sites (Baumel 2001). Some of these representations were critical of the military but did not serve as a base for women's anti-war activism until the 1980s. Women first joined the anti-war protest during the First Lebanon War (1982), when a new movement, Parents Against Silence (later renamed Mothers Against Silence), called for Israel to withdraw from Lebanon, using motherhood as its main source of legitimacy (Helman 1999a). The actual withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000 is often credited to a second women's movement, Four Mothers, which was active 15 years later. This movement gained legitimacy and public attention due to its framing as a non-partisan group within the acceptable framework of motherhood (Hermann 2009).

Despite the effectiveness of the symbol of republican motherhood, the prolonged occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the impact of a globalized human rights discourse generated the second type of women's activism, framed by a discourse of civil rights. The first intifada (the Palestinian uprising against Israel's rule, 1987–1993) gave rise to Women in Black—a small group of women protesting the Israeli occupation who sought to enter an all-male security sphere as equal citizens rather than as mothers of soldiers (Helman and Rapoport 1997). Women in Black was followed by other women's movements that framed their criticism in terms of human-rights discourse, such as Machsom Watch (Checkpoint Watch), established in 2001 in reaction to the second intifada (Helman 2015, Kotef and Amir 2007). These varied movements have broadened the range of women's political discourse. Yet the voice of republican citizenship anchored in military service, which often serves to legitimize men's political criticism, has been absent from women's political discourse.

Women Breaking the Silence (WBS) testimonies thus provide an opportunity to study the framing of women veterans' voice of protest. As mentioned earlier, Breaking the Silence (BTS) is a protest movement founded in 2014 to oppose the abuse by Israel Defense Forces (IDF) against the Palestinian population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In the winter of 2010, the organization published testimonies of women soldiers who served in the Occupied Territories (either in combat or support roles) for the first time in a collection entitled *Women Breaking the Silence* (WBS).[1] We argue that military service shapes women's anti-war discourse and introduces new voices and new themes into the field of women's anti-war protest, in Israel and beyond.

In giving voluntary testimony, the women declare that they have valuable knowledge about the state's violence and that this knowledge situates them in opposition to the state. Unlike most of the literature on women's testimonies, which exposes voices testifying on gender-based violence (Jolly 2011), particularly those of victims of rape, domestic violence, and war, here we read testimonies of women who are not victims but are rather complicit to one degree or another in acts of victimization.

In their case, the encounter with the state or, rather, the confrontation with the state is manifested and articulated at the moment of testimony. Testimony is not any transmission of information or account of memory, but rather it is a speech

act with the intent of revealing to the public a heretofore-concealed truth (Givoni 2013). Thus, these women act out of moral and ethical conviction in order to challenge the moral numbing that is prevalent among Israeli soldiers (Grassiani 2013) in particular and in Israeli society in general. Shavit and Katriel (2009) follow Foucault's (2001) term of fearless speech, or *parrhesia*, in defining the activists of Breaking the Silence as defying witnesses, indicating those willing to risk themselves in order to bring their truth to light.

Reading the women's testimonies, we ask: what do women see and what do they not see when they participate in military violence? Moreover, we inquire what it means for women soldiers to talk about military issues and what the sources of legitimacy are that they enlist to validate their knowledge. In other words, what do these testimonies teach us about women's encounters with the state?

Listening to the women's voices, we could not ignore the women's intense experience of their ambivalent position as "outsiders within," both inside and outside the military core. The service in the Occupied Territories and the engagement with military violence intensified the tension between belonging and not belonging to the military space. This tension is expressed through severe gendered silencing mechanisms that are enforced on women serving in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. They were highlighted again and again in the women's testimonies when they described their day-to-day life in the military.

Gendered silencing mechanisms

Often, the women soldiers who gave testimonies were the first or among the few women in combat units or were the first women to serve in support roles in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT). The military conveys to the women that they are crucially necessary, for example, as only women soldiers may check Palestinian women at checkpoints or handle the Jewish female civilian population. Despite this, during their military service, the women have to cope with hostility, discrimination, exclusion, and silencing mechanisms. Thus Tamar, from the *Sachlav Unit*,[2] said:

> The boys hated the fact that there were girls in their unit; it really upset them. I'll tell you why: Every time something happens in Hebron, girls in guard positions are immediately replaced by boys, because there are [already] enough boys in the field. So all of the boys have to take up the girls' posts immediately, and the girls are quickly rushed to the action.

Since there are few women in the combat zone, every one of them is required for roles that only the women perform. Thus, a "competition for action" results between men and women, which arouses resentment and hostility in the men.

The hostility and distrust of the men soldiers was conveyed to the women through ongoing "initiation rites" that they had to endure, challenging them to exhibit more violence toward Palestinians and to prove that they deserved to be in combat units. Dafna, a combatant, described these prolonged "initiation rites":

> Five of us girls joined a new company—this was the first time girls had served there. We had a difficult time: Everyone looking at us, testing us. … It was truly a battle of survival for us. Always having to prove ourselves and live in the shadow of proof.

The women had to prove their soldierhood and their authority not only to their fellow soldiers in their units but also to the Palestinians. Carmit served as a combatant in the Border Guard unit. She described how the Palestinians reacted to "a strong, robust woman" as she portrayed herself:

> So one way they had of coping with it was to laugh. They actually started laughing at me, really laughing. The commander looked at me … and said, "What? You're going to just let that pass without incident? Don't you see [that Palestinian] laughing at you?" And you're supposed to restore your self-respect so that the soldiers don't laugh at you later on, back at the base, you see. I saw all [the Palestinians] backing away … standing in a row, and starting to laugh at me.

Carmit was challenged by both the Jewish and the Palestinian men. For that moment, a "men's coalition" formed against her. Her reaction was to exert authority by using violence:

> I told the "leader" of those laughing to come closer. I got up in his face and said, "Come on. What? You're afraid of me? Come on!" And I kicked him in the balls. Then I said, "How come you're not laughing? How come you're no longer laughing? Like, what? What happened? How come you're not laughing?"

Carmit's account reveals the interrelations between occupation, military service, and gender: the Palestinians laughed at her because she is a woman combatant. At the same time, her fellow soldiers demanded that she respond with force in order to prove that she meets the standards of combat masculinity, but actually, they were demanding of her to maintain the (masculine) honor of the company.

While women who served in support roles did not go through such harsh initiation rites that socialized them to cooperate with the violence, they encountered other ways of silencing. Some discussed their ongoing exclusion from access to inside information, on the grounds that whoever was not a combatant could not understand. Roni, an education officer in the Border Patrol:

> When it came to the important stuff, they blew me off, never allowing me access to the real inside information, keeping me out of the loop … You hear conversations, about what's happening, but they never really let you in, because as far as they're concerned, you're an outsider: You're a girl; you're [just] an education officer …

The women's sense as outsiders intensifies the feeling of being excluded from the inner circle of military knowledge and from the camaraderie of men (see Basham 2009). The outsider's position has a silencing effect: The testimonies indicated

time and again the women's sense that they could not voice criticism or cast doubt on military conventions during their service. The interviewees, combatants and non-combatants alike, stated that they did not speak up during their service due to the very real fear of being labeled or identified as biased, as well as due to a sense of weakness and of being in the minority. Idit, an operations sergeant at a checkpoint in Gaza, stated simply: "Why didn't I say anything? Because if I'd said anything, I wouldn't have had any friends." Dafna said: "I felt like a minority. I didn't feel like I could criticize and say things and talk about what happened." The few who dared raise even the most measured criticism were marked as leftists and informers, were socially ostracized, and had to undergo more initiation rites than others in order to prove their loyalty to the army and the state.

Hence, military service in combat zones can be a trying experience for women. Often, these women soldiers do not feel rewarded for serving in these positions and are not given equal standing within their units. Some women soldiers try to overcome their dual problematic status by adopting the behaviors of armed masculinity, committing even more violence than the male soldiers. Other women take the outsider position, looking on in silence at the acts of occupation.

The women soldiers' silence, their choice not to know, not only stems from the desire to avoid encountering this horrible reality but is also a reaction to the gendered silencing mechanisms (on patriarchal silencing mechanisms see [Gilligan 2013]).Yet the testimonies themselves show us moments wherein the soldiers decide not to remain silent any longer, when the events of the reality challenge their choice of silence and not knowing.

The movement between knowing and not knowing

Nofar served as a company clerk in the occupied city of Hebron, where 165,000 Palestinians are bullied and intimidated by 750 Jewish settlers. While Nofar came forward to testify, thus indicating that she had a story to tell, in the testimony itself, she repeated over and over the phrases "I don't know." Nofar demonstrated how the phrase "I don't know" is part of the cultural discourse readily available to women (Brown and Gilligan 1993). Her lack of certainty regarding her own knowledge was conspicuous, for example, when she was asked specific questions about Palestinian detainees:

Interviewer: But you knew that they detained people.

Nofar: But I never saw the detainees. Nor did I know exactly; I didn't engage in operational activities. I think I pretty much didn't want to know. Like … it wasn't part of my job.

Interviewer: But with all [your] political awareness …?

Nofar: There wasn't any, no, I wasn't [aware]. Maybe I closed my eyes to it. Maybe I didn't want to know that I was there.

Interviewer: You were really in the middle of the action.

Nofar: That's right, but I … you know …sort of didn't see, I don't know. I sort of closed my eyes, perhaps because it was too hard for me. If I had really been engaged in it, then maybe …

Interviewer: So what were you engaged in?
Nofar: The soldiers, social events, personal conversations.
Interviewer: But the reality was two meters away.
Nofar: And I didn't relate to it … I don't know. Regarding the Palestinians, I don't know. I didn't ask, [and] they didn't tell me.

In the Israeli military, Nofar's job as a company clerk is indisputably a women's assignment that focuses on attending to the soldiers' welfare on the base. Because she did not leave the base and so did not directly encounter the day-to-day reality of the occupation, she could easily choose not to know. One event nonetheless pierced the wall of not-knowing that she built: the day she encountered a handcuffed Palestinian detainee inside the base. She defined it as critical moment, the moment that she saw the Occupation.

This was Nofar's "politicizing moment" (Davis 2013), in the sense that it was a moment where she chose to know of the Occupation and to recognize the violence that the army committed in its capacity as an occupying military. Consequently, Nofar wanted to hold discussions on ethics among her soldiers, but her commander would not allow it. The BTS interviewer sought to elucidate why Nofar did not insist on talking to her soldiers about these topics, and she replied:

> I was heavily involved in my soldiers' social world, and [was expected] just to make things fun and take them mentally out of the trenches as it were, and not to push them further in, as that could drag them down. [Their jobs are] really a drag. So, you know, it was somewhat escapist; I wanted to help them in some sense to escape the reality. [And …] lots of times I myself didn't want to go into it and enter into political debates. I didn't want to be the leftist that introduces those topics. Because I wanted to be the company clerk for everybody.

Nofar avoided political debate not only because she wanted to be accepted by all but also because she was not certain about her political knowledge, and she continued: "Often I felt as though I didn't know enough to enter into political debates. I didn't feel I had enough arguments [to support my beliefs]." Nofar did not have the strength to keep on challenging and discussing the occupation, so she withdrew into silence and denial of the violence she'd witnessed—a silence that was finally broken by her post-discharge testimony.

Ayelet, who served as a lookout in field intelligence, could not fail to know what was going on in the field. As she explained, her job was to photograph the daily routine and report events that appeared irregular and required a military response. Therefore, in contrast to Nofar, Ayelet knew a lot about the everyday reality of the occupation, yet her knowledge was mediated through the camera, without her having direct contact with the civilian population. The Occupation was translated into neutralized professional knowledge that manifested clearly in Ayelet's testimony. She exuded confidence in this knowledge, and to a great extent, it protected her from facing moral and emotional questions.

Ayelet's politicizing moment was an incident that penetrated her "wall" of professional knowledge, compelling her to face the violence of the Occupation and its political and moral meaning. In this incident, Ayelet reported on what appeared to her to be four Palestinian children preparing to throw a Molotov cocktail. IDF forces responded with live fire, and later on it emerged that one of the children was killed while fleeing. In the wake of this incident, Ayelet realized that, despite the sophisticated technology and rules of engagement for the use of weaponry, everyone (she, the soldiers, and the commanders) was acting under a high level of uncertainty and arbitrariness. Furthermore, Ayelet learned that her professional knowledge was enlisted to build a retroactive narrative used to explain what happened and justify violent incidents. This insight was reinforced in her debriefing with the *Shabak* (General Security Services, also known as the Shin Bet) investigator, who sought to compare her professional knowledge regarding the incident with information that he wanted to extract from the suspects:

Ayelet: He asked me to give a written account of the incident as it occurred. That's it. Then you have to sign it, and you're done.
Interviewer: What did you write?
Ayelet: [I wrote down] what I'd seen. But then I wasn't certain what I'd seen, but it did happen.
Interviewer: Why weren't you certain?
Ayelet: Why wasn't I certain? Because it wasn't that bad [what the Palestinian boys did], it didn't affect anything, and also, because you start to ask yourself: "So supposing they [the boys] just put their hands up?"

Ayelet knew her limitations, and understood the importance of interpretation of the photographed reality:

Ayelet: I told [the investigator] what I recalled happening, and then I asked him what happens if it didn't in fact happen. He said that even if it didn't happen, they [the boys] would confess [to it] …
Interviewer: What does that mean, "they'd confess?"
Ayelet: I didn't ask.
Interviewer: How come?
Ayelet: At first, I asked the investigator, "What does that mean, 'they'll confess?'" And he said, "They'll confess." Then I decided I'd rather not know.
Interviewer: He didn't want to say?
Ayelet: No. I didn't want to hear. I think he was actually enthused [talking] about it.

In the debriefing with the *Shabak* investigator, it dawned on Ayelet that her professional knowledge did not actually help to curb violence, and this realization led her to choose consciously not to know ("Then I decided I'd rather not know,"

"I didn't want to hear"). The years-later testimony is to a large extent a remedying of this decision not to know what happened.

In Ayelet's story, not knowing is revealed as an intentional act that should be consistently maintained while she grappled with the knowledge that occasionally breached the personal and social denial mechanisms. Few refuse to remain in this purgatory between knowing and not knowing and ultimately let go of the protected place of not knowing.

Thunderous silence as resistance

Inbal, who served as an education officer in Gaza, was one of those who chose, near the end of her service, to know. In her testimony, she described her ongoing attempt not to know, which was challenged constantly by reality. She made the decision not to know after seeing a spotter's clip of an incidence of severe violence. Despite the fact that it was a visual image, mediated and far removed from the actual scene, it shook her up:

> I viewed a clip from the observation tower that showed some elderly Palestinian farmer who apparently inadvertently got too close to the border fence, and you see a tank shell coming and blowing him to bits. I looked at the Palestinian, and I looked at the spotter who was watching the clip, and I thought about the soldiers inside the tank, and it was simply, like, I don't know. If you take yourself outside it for just a second, it makes no sense. It's senseless, and it's inhumane.

The blatant gap in power relations between the tank and the elderly farmer troubled Inbal. After viewing the clip, she recalled: "I believe that after that, I decided not to know any more [about other incidents]." In her testimony, she described "cycles" of knowing and of not knowing. She coped with the knowledge of the occupation by portraying it as a different world: "It's like a movie with lots of death, with a reality that doesn't make sense, with soldiers who do inhumane things [to others] and to themselves." In this parallel reality, people follow different emotional rules:

> If you want to function, you have to somehow put up a barrier. You can't feel too much. You have to be pretty robotic, pretty cut off. So I don't believe that these people are bad or animals or I don't know what. It's everyone, each individual to a differing degree and in a differing way, but it was pretty much across the board, the cutting [oneself] off.

Yet this denial mechanism did not hold up in the face of the reality of the Occupation. Toward the end of her service, Inbal was sent to collect the bodies of Israeli soldiers from a tank that sustained a hit:

> It was a Saturday when a tank ran over an explosive charge, (…) Those left [on base] to remove the bodies were mainly us, i.e., the adjutancy staff and

> myself. I recall that I stood there and just watched it all. They appeared to be protecting me because they didn't let me go inside [the tank], just [let me] help outside it. So I just stood there watching parts of what used to be a human being, and my mouth …my jaw just dropped, and I just stood there with my mouth open. We were there for twelve hours, I think it was, and I just … I just didn't know what to say, didn't know how to take it, how to digest it. I just didn't comprehend what was happening, that there had been human beings in there, and they just burned to death.

After this event, Inbal stopped functioning: "For the next month and a half, until my discharge, I just sat in the office and mostly stared at the ceiling, went outside, went to my friends' offices and sat with them. I just couldn't accept it." While Inbal's reaction could be interpreted as a traumatic one, it can also be read as passive resistance to continuing to cooperate, at least in her retrospective view: "After the tank incident, because I chose not to run away and not to use any defense mechanism, [not] to say, 'I'm wiping this out,' not to look at humans as fully human, I really couldn't manage to function after that."

As such, we can understand Inbal's coming forward to give testimony as the continuation of her act of resistance, that is, as a direct result of her choice "not to use a defense mechanism any longer," to know and to tell what happens in Gaza. When she looked back on that period, Inbal spoke with harsh criticism of the occupation, while she understood her complicit role as an education officer therein:

> So I don't know. I felt like some Nazi propaganda minister or something, like I … something horrible, fascist … The truth is that I'd look … I'd sit facing the [IDF code of ethics] and try to analyze the values [therein], and I simply didn't believe anything written there, and I didn't care what was in it, it seemed so irrelevant, so detached, so not the truth, like, why in God's name are we even here? And if we're here, there are no values to talk about, because morals and war don't go together.

While Inbal's resistance was passive, Gali resisted more actively after she chose to know. Serving as a Border Patrol police officer on the Jordanian border, Gali saw the occupation "up close and personal," as she was in charge of controlling the Palestinians' movement and took part in body searches at the borders. Gali's ability not to know was therefore reduced compared to that of other women who served inside bases, such as education officers. Yet Gali's testimony, too, reflects the movement between not knowing and knowing. Before enlisting, Gali held right-wing views and supported the occupation. She hoped to serve in a masculine combat role and to participate in "real action," and she was frustrated to find out that she was stationed in a Border Patrol unit. But serving as a border inspector changed her political stand:

> As I got further along in my service, I thanked God that I'd been stationed there, as it changed my outlook. You see little children, and parents, and

> young guys and not-so-young guys, and you … as banal and predictable as it sounds, I didn't know it before that. You learn to look those people in the eye and have them look you in the eye. You understand?

Gali's formative incident occurred when a young man was detained because one of the other woman soldiers complained that he "talked back" to her. Gali interprets what happened differently: "He [the Palestinian] was sure that it was all in good fun, because we're talking here about young people, our age." But the interaction, which Gali perceived as harmless flirting, turned into power relations of the Occupation, and the young man was detained:

> The station commander was responsible for everything that happened there, and it was he who took this boy [into detention], and I followed them. We got to the [police] station, and they went into a closed room, and I remained outside the room. I didn't know why I stayed there; I didn't have to. I don't know. Something told me to stay. Now, looking back, I recall. I heard through the closed door everything that was going on inside.

It was the moment that Gali chose to know: she could have not followed them; she could have not stayed there and not listened, but she did so, and was a direct witness to violence. From that incident onward, she began collecting information on what went on in the Occupied Territories by asking soldiers from various units to tell her what they did: "I'd ask them casually, I'd sit with them and they'd tell me their experiences. All sorts of minor looting and stuff that they thought was amusing and that they thought I'd find amusing as well."

For Gali, the decision to know was a moral act, and she interpreted her military service as a life-changing event that transformed her into a political woman:

> I don't believe that if I'd have performed a different job, in another place, I could have changed my opinions like that and opened my horizons and seen what really happens … I think a lot about the conflict, really, whether in my studies or in the seminar that I want to do, or a book I'm currently reading, in conversations I have with myself or with others, who are always frustrated that I start talking politics with them. One of the reasons for that is really my army service. It really changes you, it shakes you up, it raises views that you never thought you'd have. It changes who you were; you're not the same person. You look at things differently; it's not black and white, there's a lot of gray, it's not good guys and bad guys. You have people who are human beings who want to live, and you learn to look them in the eye. […] I think it's good that I was where I was.

In testifying years later, Gali spoke of her army service as an edifying and enlightening experience that opened her horizons, and she continued in civilian life to study and learn what happens under occupation. When women choose to know, in the course of their army service, they grapple with daily confrontation, each in her own way. While Gali's choice, like Inbal's, was folded into her opposition

to the occupation, both their resistance lies within the bounds of private, non-demonstrative acts. In contrast, the choice of some of the interviewees to know encompassed more active resistance in the military space; they chose not only to know but also to break their silence.

Breaking the silence while serving

As a combatant, Tal fought side by side with men on the Lebanese border. She talked about that period in the first person plural, that is, "we." The transition from Lebanon to serving in the Occupied Territories changed the nature of the unit's activity to that of policing, from which the women were distanced, and Tal was posted in the operations room. When describing this period, Tal's speech changed from "we" to "them." From her new post in the operations room, she knew a lot about what went on. Tal opposed the violence that was committed unnecessarily on the civilian population and tried to curb it. For instance, she would try to monitor the firing of rubber bullets to disperse demonstrations, which required permission from the operations room. She described typical radio conversations between herself and the soldiers in the field:

> Do we have approval for rubber? No. Approval for rubber? No. Now do we have approval for rubber? No. Every five minutes. … On and on. Every minute, like a kid on a road trip: Mom, are we there yet? Mom, when do we get there? That's what they were like with their "approval for rubber." I'd tell them: "Five minutes. I'm checking with the deputy battalion commander."

Tal did not back down under the men's constant undermining of the women's military professionalism, and she challenged military decisions in the field to employ violence, attempting to rein it in. Similarly, Nira, who served in Hebron as an education officer, did not remain passive in the military space. Although not involved directly in any acts of violence, Nira chose repeatedly to see the reality of the occupation with eyes wide open. Her formative moment was when she first arrived at her base and discovered that soldiers had stolen prayer beads from Palestinians:

> I went around to all the companies, all smiling and greeting. I went around among the soldiers and talked with them, and noticed that nearly all of them had *masbáchot*, these strings of beads, as well as lots of "mini" copies of the Koran. I asked them where they'd gotten them, and they said, "What do you mean? We were in Kalkilya [a Palestinian city] just now, and we brought back souvenirs, from their houses." As a new soldier on the base, I went to a [routine welcome] interview with the brigade commander the following day, and he asked me, "So what do you think of the brigade so far?" And I said, "It's fine, except that I saw soldiers with *masbáchot* and Korans from Kalkilya that they took as souvenirs …"

The commander followed up on Nira's report with the soldiers' direct commander, who said: "I've never seen this girl. She's lying. She's making it up. What are you saying? My soldiers would never do a thing like that." The confrontation between

Nira and the direct commander continued over the phone, as Nira testified: "I told him, 'Look. It happened.' He said, 'Who are you anyway, you pipsqueak? You don't understand …' From that moment, I was banned from that company. For four months I wasn't allowed near them."

Thus Nira was caught between loyalty to her soldiers and her own moral code. Her loyalty to the soldiers was challenged again when she was sent by the commander to "spy" on the soldiers in order to report back on the "prevailing mindset" in the brigade and, in particular, on the soldiers' attitudes toward the Palestinians. Thus, she learned about soldiers' difficult emotional reactions, as well as about violent acts. Her exposure to the cruel reality of the occupation was a trying experience, and she indicated stoically that she had a period of depression. Yet despite the high emotional price that she paid, she continued throughout her service to respond to immoral and violent behaviors of soldiers:

> One day, when I was an officer in Hebron, I went to the sentry post at the entrance to the base to catch a ride, and while I was standing there, I notice two soldiers hanging around [and] there was this blindfolded detainee, with his hands cuffed behind his back. All of a sudden, one of them goes up to the detainee and without any warning, knees him in the head, I mean this guy just kicked him in the head. My first instinct was, I jumped on [the perpetrator], grabbed him, and said, "You're coming with me." He didn't understand how come a woman soldier was saying that to him. He pushed me—he was big—and ran into the barracks. At that moment I was furious. I left the sentry post and ran straight to the brigade commander's quarters.

Nira resisted the gendered silencing mechanisms and was willing to pay the price, such as ostracism. In contrast to Nira, most women cannot withstand the pressures brought to bear on them. The women differ in their strength facing gendered silencing mechanisms, but what they all have in common is that their testimonies were shaped by their ambivalent location as women acting in a masculine arena. Their narratives emphasize two recurrent themes. First, they criticize the behavior of the soldiers and describe it as raging, military machismo. Second, they challenge national solidarity, which is based on the link between the state, the military, and masculinity, when they express identification with the Palestinians and alienation from the Jewish settlers.

Criticizing the occupation from a gendered perspective

Criticism of military masculinity[3]

In their reflexive narratives on their military service, the women adopted the stance of conscious observers. They watched the male soldiers' conduct and repeatedly described behaviors that elicited their anger, revulsion, and critical disagreement. In particular, they blamed the male soldiers for enjoying the policing actions, for being "over-enthusiastic," in their words, and they identified this behavior as masculine. Tal, a combatant, described the soldiers' behavior during house searches:

> There were young soldiers with me who wondered: "Can we mess up their house? Can we throw the pictures around? Can we?" No. In my opinion no, you don't touch a thing. Even if you want to search for weapons or something behind a picture, take it off the wall, check if there's anything there, and hang it back in place … The deputy company commander went out to chart a Palestinian house; when he came back he said to me: "We messed up their house. And it was a type of game. What fun." He was so enthusiastic about it: "We messed up their house!" And instead of thinking "We are such men," in my mind I was thinking about those poor women who are now cleaning up the mess that the soldiers made, and the fear of the children who are at home, seeing their house getting messed up. I mean, things like that happen and then we're surprised that at the age of eighteen [the Palestinians] blow themselves up?

Tal's criticism was directed at the men's behavior, characterized by over-enthusiasm and pleasure in an action that created chaos in a Palestinian home. While the commander demonstrated his masculinity by exhibiting his power over the occupied population, Tal identified with the women who would clean up the mess that the soldiers made. She observed men, particularly her commander, from the point of view of a mature person—the men were like children who play soldiers without understanding the consequences of their actions.

This position is also expressed in comments made by Anat, a company secretary in the Paratroopers, who used the common slang word *mefagèr* ("retard"), which indicates childish, unsophisticated, irrational, and immature behavior. Anat talked about the offensive practice among soldiers of taking photos with Palestinian detainees:

> I didn't take pictures of things like that. My soldiers did, of course. A lot. My soldiers would; they wouldn't abuse [the detainees] but they would throw [insulting] remarks at them … They [the soldiers] were also very young, you have to understand that there was this type of enthusiasm, something kind of retarded. They would make me very angry. Very. Hearing soldiers coming back from an arrest or just a patrol, and hearing the way they talked about it and laughed about it, that would really make me angry.

In Western thought, men are associated with reason and emotional self-control, which signifies superiority over women, who are believed to be more emotional than men (Lutz 1990). Militarized masculinity in particular is "obsessed" with emotional restraint, which is depicted both as a prerequisite for the warrior's masculinity (Ben-Ari 1998) and as its signifier. Composure, therefore, is understood in the military as an ideal that should be attained by all soldiers (Sasson-Levy 2008). Here, however, instead of self-controlled and level-headed warriors, Anat portrayed immature, childish men. She placed herself in the role of a responsible adult or a parent when she said, "my soldiers are very young," even though they are clearly the same age, and she was the company secretary, not their commander.

Unlike Anat, Dafna was a commander. She explained her difficulties in commanding her soldiers during inspections of Palestinians going through checkpoints in gendered terms:

> It just irritated me that I couldn't talk in a rational way. Like, I couldn't tell someone that I think that this is a little too much or that he is being overly-enthusiastic, like a retarded kid holding a weapon. Sometimes I felt like I couldn't talk in a mature manner … I remember that when I was a commander, we needed to stop an entire bus and get all of the passengers off. I did what I had to do, nothing beyond that. I got them off, lined them up and asked each one for their papers. I remember that I had a soldier there who was overly enthusiastic, yelling and showing off, and that bugged me. At times like that, even when you're the commander you don't always make the final call and I'm sure that that's because I'm a woman. [They'd say] "She's so sensitive." As far as I was concerned, I wasn't in an emotional place. For them, it was going to that place. I did what needed to be done, as far as I was concerned that was enough, there was no need to get overly enthusiastic.

Dafna's and other women's testimonies convey multiple meanings regarding the men's conduct. First, they deconstruct the image of the hegemonic masculinity that is based on the emotionally and physically self-controlled and disciplined combat soldier. The women interpreted the use of force, and even more so the enjoyment derived from that force, as both masculine and childish, and they sought to distance themselves from it. The men were scorned because they did not seem to understand the moral significance of their actions or the fateful implications of combat.

Moreover, by infantilizing the men soldiers, the women minimize the men's responsibility and absolve them of the blame for their behavior. Infantilizing the men, which is a broader cultural trend pertaining to soldiers in Israel (Lomsky-Feder and Ben-Ari 2010), allows the women to place themselves in a position of power—now the women are presented as the mature ones, behaving in a rational, composed manner. Through this symbolic role reversal, the women expose the social construction of hegemonic masculinity as an empty shell and challenge their inferior position in the gendered military hierarchy.

However, as we will see in the next section, the women themselves use an emotional discourse when it comes to identifying with the victims of the occupation. Hence, the emotions seem to be moving from one location to another in their narratives, but at all times they had a gendered meaning.

Undermining national solidarity

A second prominent theme in the women soldiers' testimonies is the undermining of national solidarity, which was manifested through both their identification with the Palestinians and their alienation from and rejection of the Jewish settlers.

Identification with the Other is not an exclusively feminine quality; many of the men's testimonies also described moments of identification with the Palestinians (Shavit and Katriel 2009). However, identification with the Other is gendered, as women viewed the Palestinians from within their own world. From an encounter with a Palestinian girl, woman, man, or boy, the women soldiers develop an imagined life story on which their identification is founded. Their empathy and compassion, the ability to put themselves in someone else's shoes, arises from the perceived resemblance between their own homes and the Palestinian's homes and families. Thus, they emphasize human sameness rather than national and cultural distinctions. By developing a story of complex, human family life, Reut, a non-commissioned social welfare officer in the paratroopers, explained why operations that entail home searches were emotionally taxing for her:

Reut: The army requires you not to be humane, demands you be a robot, enter a home that isn't yours and take a person who is three times your age, at best. The people could be very old. A little older than you, your father's age or your uncle's age, or your older brother's age, take them out of the house and do things in a very cold, calculated way. You really have to be a robot in order to do it.

Interviewer: What do you mean by a robot?

Reut: A robot in terms of entering a place and thinking: I'm entering a place that isn't mine, I'm entering a house that isn't mine, I'm going in and before I went in the children may have had homework to do, or something may have happened in school, and the girl has a boy whom she loves, but he doesn't love her back—it's like entering a family's personal story—you can't do it. You won't be able to do it. Ninety percent of these operations would not have taken place if during the briefing held before the operation we would have been told that "The 17-year-old is going through a very tough adolescence, the neighbor's son doesn't want her. The kid has already failed math a few times, he's dyslexic. The father has major issues with his wife, they are never pleased with one another, they are on the verge of getting divorced; now please enter and detain the father, gently." No, that wouldn't have happened. [Instead] the commanders say in the briefing: "There's some piece of shit who's going to carry out an operation, to blow up a bus." They paint a picture that is very easy to look at. You go in, you carry it out, you leave.

Reut infused "real" life into a sphere that the army seeks to neutralize and characterize as military zone. She portrayed this territory as a domestic sphere, from the point of view of a mature woman who is cognizant of relationships between adolescents, marital problems, teenagers' problems, educational issues, and learning disabilities. She thus put forward not only compassion for the other side but also true recognition of their humanity.

Similarly, Shir described an event that led to identification with the Other. Shir joined a tracker patrolling a route that is designated for Israeli cars only. "The trackers," she says, "are great people, but they are also eager to exhibit masculinity, and you've got a girl in the jeep." The tracker stopped a Palestinian man driving a jeep full of produce:

> We got out of the jeep and there were fruits and vegetables on the truck, you could tell he was a merchant. We got to the truck, opened the door, the driver was around my father's age, older. Old. He came out white, pale, with a bag of ... it was grapes, a bag of oranges. "Take, take," [he said] in Hebrew. He gives it to us. I'm standing there, I don't ... and he says: "Take, please take." He just wanted to bribe us, calm us down. I couldn't take it. Meanwhile the tracker asked for an identification card, and the man was shaking. Shaking. I ran back to the jeep, I said to him: "I don't ..." Even now when I think about it I feel bad. I mean, nothing happened, he was released, the tracker also saw my reaction so he relaxed and let him go quickly. ... And the only thing I could think of was: This person, who could have been my father, was afraid of me because of the uniform that I was wearing, because I was in a military jeep and he was willing to sacrifice his livelihood so that we wouldn't do anything.… That stayed with me for years. And that's nothing, since we didn't beat him or anything ... but it was so significant for me because it was a real slap in the face. Seriously.

Shir saw in the older driver someone who could be her father, and therefore her identification with him turned this seemingly minor incident into a constitutive event in her consciousness. From that moment, she said in her testimony, she stopped believing what she was told, particularly the claims that all Palestinians are dangerous terrorists.

Realizing the military's arbitrary power exercised in routine everyday situations raises the witnesses' empathy for the other side. This realization is demonstrated in Roni's story, which describes an encounter to which she could not remain indifferent. Roni joined a house search for weapons in the middle of the night. Only during the operation itself did she realize that she was brought along in order to search the Palestinian women. Searching a woman's body raises contradictory emotions—fear and revulsion, as well as shame and identification with the woman:

> In this case, even if I'd known Arabic, I wouldn't have known what to say because I'd entered their home at two in the morning, woken them up, put them in a corner. The women and children were in a corner; they didn't move the entire time we were walking around. I can't even tell you whether someone told them not to move or whether they did so out of fear. They just followed us with their eyes. I remember it was really hard for me when they looked at me. It's really hard with the kids and really hard with the mother, really, because her gaze is following you all the time and I

> remember feeling like I was wronging her, as a woman. I go into her home and wake up her and her kids. I felt like the men were much rougher than us under these circumstances.

Through Roni's description, we can follow her gaze until she met the eyes of the woman on whom she focused. She refused to enjoy the power of her status. Instead, she chose to see the Palestinian woman's point of view and expressed a woman's solidarity that crosses borders, a solidarity that she felt she was betraying.

The three testimonies of Reut, Roni, and Shir address their identification with the Palestinians through their focus on the domestic sphere and family relations. Their narratives show that, at times, they suspend their national solidarity, and that serving in the Occupied Territories produces moments of alternative identification.

However, identification with women as women is not taken for granted. While the encounters with the Palestinians arouse empathy and identification, the encounter with Jewish women settlers gave rise to feelings of anger and alienation therefrom. The feelings of estrangement from the Jewish settlers were especially blatant when they deconstructed the image of the Jewish mother protecting her children:

> I saw a mother rocking her baby while the Palestinians were shooting at the road, and she was telling him, "Don't cry, sweetie, it's like music," and they're shooting a machine gun at them. They're shooting a machine gun at the road from the Arab town, and she's telling her baby not to cry, that it's like music, and you have to cope with it and it's our land and this is where we'll be and don't cry. And all I want to do is take the baby, take him home and put him in bed. And she's sitting there on the road while they're shooting at him. They're shooting at her baby and she's saying, listen, it's like music. And like, I don't know, for me it was so … every Arab who passes by they throw stones at him, everything is so extreme. Everything is full of anger and hatred.

The settlers' children are also represented in the testimonies as violent subjects. As Tamar put it:

> I was in Hebron this one time and there was this beautiful little blonde girl. She must have been about eight years old, I reckon. She was little. I remember she had a brother in a stroller, a baby. She'd put stones in his hand and say, "Throw them at an Arab, throw them at an Arab." And he was tiny in his pushchair, doing it, throwing them.

Tamar shatters in her words the image of the innocent, naïve girl, who turned out to be promoting violence as she took care of her younger brother.

The sense of alienation derives not only from the way the settlers treat the Palestinians, but also from the way the settlers relate to the soldiers. Anat, a

company clerk in the paratroopers, described how the settlers marked her as an outcast, because she was a woman soldier:

> I just love little children, and if I ever see a baby or a small child, I try to play with him. And they were constantly shouting at me: Don't touch our children! Get away from them! And: You're not allowed to touch! You're not allowed to touch! A three-year-old. … It was really, really difficult for me, emotionally … I would have preferred Nablus. I'd rather have seen those Arabs all day long and not seen my soldiers defending a bunch of morons.

The settlers constantly draw clear-cut boundaries between them and the soldiers, as we can see in Tamar's words that describe the way they "welcome" the soldiers:

> The moment we arrived with the jeep they were shouting at us, "Nazis, Nazis …!" Yes. They looked like real extremists. … I'd come to save the State of Israel somehow, and all of a sudden, during my first week, I received such a blow, I didn't know what was going on.

In the Jewish Israeli context, the term *Nazi* symbolizes the ultimate evil. In calling the Israeli soldiers Nazis, the settlers intended to humiliate the soldiers and to distinguish themselves from the state's agents. Tamar received "such a blow" when she was taken by surprise by the blatant hate of the settlers toward the soldiers. Understanding the extent of the rupture between her and the settlers undermined her feelings of Jewish solidarity and impacted her political consciousness. Her next step, which actually took a couple of years, was to give a testimony to Breaking the Silence.

Women confronting the state

Analysis of the women soldiers' testimonies shows that the movement between knowing and not knowing about the occupation is the organizing principle of the narratives. All of the testifiers grapple with the questions "Do I know?" "What do I know?" and "What do I want to know?" For all of them, the formative moment of political awareness arose from situations wherein it was no longer an option not to know, no longer possible to hide behind denial mechanisms.

Yet knowing was not enough; the women soldiers needed strength and courage to come forward and give public testimony. Through the speech act of giving testimony, the woman subject constitutes herself as a political, ethical subject who summons the courage to tell the public things that it is forbidden to say. The women's testimonies reveal that this courage to speak out publicly is clearly gendered.

For women soldiers, the challenge of giving testimony lies in overcoming gendered silencing mechanisms of women in a highly militarized society, which glorifies men and the warrior masculinity (Aharoni 2011). Moreover, the women have to overcome military's silencing mechanisms, which are associated with women's dual position as "outsiders within" the military. The position of one

looking on from the side, not one who "was there" in first person, diminishes the value of women soldiers' knowledge. This position makes it difficult for them to mobilize traditional sources of legitimacy for giving testimony, which men can mobilize easily. According to Shavit and Katriel (2009), men base the legitimacy for their testimonies on two sources: The first is the authority of the witness who experienced the events first hand, and the second is the authority gained from suffering as a result of these events.

As soldiers who did not engage in real combat, the women need first of all to recognize the value of their knowledge. Their position as "outsiders within" makes it difficult for them to rest on the first source of legitimacy, firsthand experience, and also on the second, which is the emotional anguish of combat soldiers. Their indirect involvement in violent acts calls into question their right to give testimony on their suffering and their right to give voice to their traumatic experiences (Lomsky-Feder 2004). At the same time, their distress as women in a masculine organization (for example, due to sexual harassment) is not considered legitimate grounds for political testimony.

Therefore, in their testimonies, the women do not take the position of victim-victimizer expressed by the men (Shavit and Katriel 2009). As victims-victimizers, the message in the men's testimonies is "because I was the aggressor, I was also the victim; I'm the victim of my own aggression and of the state that sent me to be the aggressor." The women do not perceive themselves as victims and do not focus in their testimonies on their own anguish. Their testimonies are not characterized by a narrative of an agonized witness in need of empathy, but rather of someone taking the position of the responsible adult. At the same time, neither did the women take the position of victimizer. They mainly report on acts of aggression that they saw and only infrequently on their own aggression. Therefore, compared to the men's, their testimonies are not a site for confession (Helman 2015). In this sense, the women's testimonies serve less as a means of self-rehabilitation and more as ethical and political statements.

Thus, the content of their ethical and political statements reflects a gendered (women's) perspective. Coming from a marginalized position, they better understand the gendered power relations in the military and develop a critical view of the men combat soldiers. Portraying the men soldiers as children who enjoy war games, the women refuse to see them as "suffering heroes" or as models of hegemonic masculinity, symbolizing proper citizens. Interweaving their critical gendered reflexivity with their anti-occupation stand, they remove their empathy and identification from "our boys" to the "other." When they relocate their empathy from "our" soldiers and "our" Jewish settlers to the Palestinians, they challenge the division between "us" and the enemy and breach the boundaries that distinguish between and separate Israelis and Palestinians. Hence, for them, the encounter with the state's violence undermines the taken-for-granted commitment to the national collective, and in their testimonies, they deconstruct from within the Gordian knot that binds citizenship, military service, and masculinity. Thus, the women's testimonies to Breaking the Silence are a political and a feminist act at the same time: They protest the occupation while offering a new politics of gender and knowledge.

Notes

1 For more about Breaking the Silence and how these testimonies were produced, see section on research strategies in chapter two.

2 A Military Police unit that disperses demonstrations in the OPT, whether conducted by Palestinians or Jewish settlers.

3 This section was written in collaboration with Prof. Yagil Levy.

8 Gendered citizenship and military service

A comparative perspective

At the beginning of this book, we met Tali, a 17-year-old young woman, who was weighing her options for military service. When we met Tali as an interviewee a decade after her discharge, she retrospectively analyzed her service.

As a middle-class Ashkenazi Jewish woman, Tali was assigned the role of tank instructor, one of her preferred options. Tank instructor is considered a prestigious role for women. Tali considered the role to have fulfilled her non-formal contract with the military, a contract that emphasizes self-fulfillment, gender equality, and the prestige that comes from proximity to masculine combat. Tali stressed the fact that military service empowered her, and she emphasized the training skills she continues to use as a civilian in the present. Despite the fact that she was teaching soldiers to operate a violent war machine during the period of the First Lebanon War, the question of violence did not arise in her narrative, and she does not interpret her military role from a political or ethical perspective. Today, she talks about her military service with longing and nostalgia.

Her gendered experience included both "masculine" and "feminine" elements. In essence, as a tank instructor, she taught in the classroom as a teacher, a role that is defined in Israel as "feminine," but she was teaching men soldiers how to operate large, heavy war machines. She served with many women but only met up with them at night, whereas during the day, she worked alone among the men. She held professional authority over the men and had vast military knowledge, but she did not adopt clearly masculine models of leadership like infantry instructors do. Rather, she maneuvered between "feminine" and "masculine" practices. During her training, she had to face the challenge to her theoretical military knowledge by men officers who stressed their field experience. The attempt to undermine her military authority also manifested as derogatory comments about her body or her sexuality, which caused her discomfort and distress, but it is only in retrospect that she defined these hurtful experiences as sexual harassment. Her daily experience in the classroom and on the tank with the men soldiers taught her how to project authority through her body, as well as which emotions she could safely reveal to them. Through these experiences of body, emotion, and power, she achieved agency and, at the same time, learned that her power as a woman and an instructor in the military is both temporary and conditional.

Upon discharge, she discovered that her military knowledge was not transferrable to the civilian sector, although it did afford her a certain amount of symbolic capital, which improved her chances in the labor market. Her semi-masculine role did not garner her a path-breaking role in the labor market: She completed her bachelors and Masters in the social sciences, and today she runs an educational project, which does utilize the training and management skills she acquired in the military. The military service, which demanded contrasting gender performances, and the journey back to "proper femininity" in civilian life forced her to develop gender awareness and at the same time taught her the limits of her power as a woman citizen.

Over the course of this book, we examined women's military service experiences as constitutive of their future citizenship with a focus on the Israeli military. The Israeli military represents an especially interesting case study as it is the only military to conscript women. In this closing chapter, we offer a comparative look through the prism of the conceptualizations that we developed to show how relevant our concepts are for analyzing other state militaries. Specifically, the chapter will focus on a comparison between women's experiences in compulsory militaries, such as the Israeli military, and the service experiences of women who serve in professional, all-volunteer force (AVF).

Karl Haltiner (1998) argued that the dichotomous view of compulsory recruitment versus professional militaries can be misleading. He calls our attention to a continuum of different models, with armed forces based entirely on compulsory recruitment at one end (e.g., the Israel Defense Forces [IDF]) and those entirely devoid of compulsory service at the other (e.g., the United States, Britain, Canada, Australia). In between these endpoints, there are various intermediary types that are based on a combination of conscripted and volunteer forces. In general, the era of mass militaries based on compulsory service ended in the West at the turn of the century (Haltiner 1998, 32). Today, most Western militaries are based on professional (volunteer) recruitment and see the American military as a model to learn from and emulate (King 2006).[1] Therefore, in this chapter we will consider the US armed forces as representative of the model of the professional military and compare it to the Israeli military, which is based on the principle of mandatory service.

A second central difference between militaries is the nature of their mission. While most Western militaries are primarily involved in peacekeeping operations away from home, the Israeli military is a fighting force, whose mission is perceived as defending the home front. At the same time, the Israeli military has been maintaining an ongoing occupation and policing a civilian population for 50 years. The US military is also a fighting army that conducts military operations frequently, but these are wars fought overseas, away from home. These wars are often justified in the name of defending Western liberal democratic lifestyles from perceived threats posed by international terrorism and civil wars all over the world (Dittmer and Apelt 2008).

In this chapter, we will offer a comparison between the Israeli military and Western militaries by addressing the military service experiences of women,

which are shaped by the nature of their multi-dimensional contract, their gendered experiences in various military roles, and their encounter with external and internal violence.

Multi-dimensional contracts

The different recruitment structure shapes divergent contracts between women and the military. In a compulsory military, enlistment is by law, and service is perceived through the republican civil contract, which emphasizes contribution to the state. On the macro level, a compulsory military that enlists a significant portion of the population (such as Israel and Turkey) represents and intensifies the militarization of citizenship and shapes the boundaries of civic belonging. Therefore, in militaristic societies such as Israel, the combat soldier embodies the ultimate citizen. As a result, even when women are conscripted, the linkage between militarism and citizenship creates a differential and hierarchical citizenship structure that benefits men.

That being the case, the civic contract with the military, as we have shown throughout the book, is gendered to begin with. This gendering is expressed in the draft law itself, which offers women in Israel many more opt-out mechanisms than it does men (women are exempt if they are married or pregnant and by declaring that they are religious). These opt-out mechanisms appear to be a privilege reserved for women, but, actually, they constitute her as a second-class citizen, whose motherhood takes precedence over her citizenship as a soldier.

Compulsory conscription also shapes the social profile of those drafted: in the Israeli military, there are more women than in any professional military (34 percent), and they come from all social standings (except the women of the lowest social class who do not meet entry requirements). The women soldiers are younger than the ones in professional militaries, 18–21, and the majority are unmarried. Perhaps that is why women soldiers (as well as men soldiers) are presented in the public discourse in Israel as “children” in need of protection (Lomsky-Feder and Ben-Ari 1999). When the soldiers are perceived as children, their parents are a dominant factor in the negotiations with the military (Herzog 2004). Indeed, the military contract in Israel is not only vis-à-vis the woman soldier but with her family as well, and the families have considerable bargaining power and can influence the nature of their daughter’s service (Levy, Lomsky-Feder and Harel 2007).

Military service in Israel is considered a central part of the rite of passage to adulthood of young men and women, both in terms of civic maturation and in terms of personal empowerment, developing independence, autonomy, responsibility, and even acquiring job skills (see e.g., Mayseless 2002, Zaccai 2013). However, the meaning of coming of age during military service is shaped by the women soldiers’ intersectional contract: some women expect egalitarian self-fulfillment, some want to achieve respectability, and others expect to preserve their religiosity in military life (see chapter three).

The nature of the military’s contract with the enlistee and the characteristics of the population that serves are very different in the professional militaries. Most

Western conscript militaries traditionally restricted recruitment exclusively to men. The shift to a professional army and the subsequent need for more human power resulted in an increase in women's enlistment rates and the integration of women in roles that were previously considered to be "masculine" (Haltiner 1998, Iskra *et al*. 2002, Segal 1995). For example, while women constituted 7.5 percent of the French armed forces in 1995, their rate of participation increased after the abolishment of conscription in 2002, and in 2008 it stood at 14.2 percent.[2] In the Netherlands, the phasing out of conscription in 1996 opened up all military positions and military academies to women, but women still make up only about 9 percent of service personnel.[3] The American military faced a manpower shortage after changing to a volunteer army in 1973. Currently (2015), women's rate of participation in the US military is relatively high: women comprise about 15.3 percent of the entire armed forces, with higher participation rates in the air force (18.7 percent) and lower rates in the marine corps (7.6 percent).[4]

In professional militaries, the basic contract of the woman soldier with the military is the liberal contract, which shapes their expectations toward social mobility through acquiring education or a profession in return for their service. Patriotism, national identity, and even family traditions of enlisting are also part of the contract, but the main motivation is the financial incentive. The mobility motivation is gendered, as financial factors are more salient among women as compared to men (Woodruff and Kelty 2015), apparently because of their relative inferiority in the civilian labor market.

In contrast to a conscript army, the women who volunteer to join a professional military are of a wider age range. In the American military in 2014, most women were between the ages of 20 and 29, and over 50 percent were married. The meaning of service is linked to the transition to adulthood for them as well, but mostly in terms of achieving financial independence (Kelty, Kleykamp and Segal 2010).

The military offers a number of enlistment and promotion tracks that shape various entry-level positions (for example, in the United States, one can enter an officer's training course after enlistment or through the Reserve Officers' Training Corps [ROTC] or the military academies). However, the moment the woman soldier enters the military system, the track is more rigid as compared to the Israeli army, and she has fewer choices regarding the nature of her service. Certainly, the professional military organization is less flexible in every meaning of the word: the woman soldier has less bargaining power vis-à-vis the military, she can be deployed overseas for several months, she does not have much choice regarding her military role, and she does not have much power to shape the conditions of her service. The rigidity of the professional military makes it tougher for women, primarily when they are married and mothers, to integrate into the service. This is one of the main reasons for the minority of women in Western militaries, which constitutes an ongoing problem that preoccupies many militaries.

The reliance of the American armed forces, for example, on women is absolutely critical. According to a 2011 report from the Military Leadership Diversity Commission, three out of four people aged 17–24 are not even eligible to enlist

in the military due to failure to meet basic entry requirements, test scores, health status, citizenship status, or past criminal history (quoted in Eager 2014, 42). This is especially true for young men. Since young women are completing high school and college at higher rates than young men, militaries have become especially active in recruiting more women (Enloe 2000a, 85; for the British case, see Woodward and Winter 2004).

To do so, Western militaries are going to great lengths to integrate women by fulfilling their contract with the military. The Australian Defence Force (ADF), for example, launched more than 50 enlistment and promotion plans for women in the last decade. However, despite their efforts, women constitute just 15 percent of the ADF today.[5] Similarly, Germany passed legislation in 2005 to strengthen equal gendered opportunities by developing mechanisms that would allow women to balance family life and the military. In 2014, German defense minister Ursula von der Leyen announced a push for more family-friendly conditions at the Bundeswehr, including the creation of more childcare facilities and part-time work opportunities. The frequency of relocations, which put stress on family life, would also be reduced for soldiers. Still, women represent no more than around 10 percent of the German service force.[6]

That being the case, despite the transition of Western militaries from conscription to professional enlistment, the percentage of women in Western AVFs is very low. In order to understand who enlists, we have to look at labor market dynamics.

In the United States, many young people who cannot afford to go to college enter the military as a way of gaining marketable skills, ensuring economic stability, and earning money toward a college degree (Kleykamp 2007a, Kleykamp 2007b). The effects of labor-market dynamics are most pronounced where race/ethnicity, gender, and class (measured by education) intersect, defining doubly or triply disadvantaged people (Segal, Thanner and Segal 2007). Thus, for example, in 2011, 31 percent of the women in the military were African-American—double their percentage in the population—whereas white women constituted 53 percent of women in the military, far less than their percentage in the population, which stands at 78 percent (Eager 2014, 42).

Though the service is perceived as a mechanism for social mobility for African-American lower-class women, they often find themselves concentrated in low technical occupations of administration and support. Research repeatedly shows that African-American women in the past, as well as in the present, confront the consequences of "double jeopardy"—racism and sexism—in the military organization.

At the same time, despite the channeling of African-American servicewomen into less prestigious roles, there is no clear-cut evidence that they perceive that their contract with the military is abrogated. Lundquist (2008) found that African-American women rank the highest in terms of levels of satisfaction; African-American men rank second highest, followed by Latinas and then Latinos. White women fall last, suggesting that they differ least from white men in their satisfaction with military service. Lundquist argues that the higher satisfaction among minority (men and women) soldiers is rooted in the military's

meritocratic organization, which somewhat reduces racial segregation as opposed to the civilian labor market.

However, Lundquist emphasizes that while the US military has ameliorated some racial inequalities, it exacerbated gender conflict (e.g., by not preventing the epidemic of sexual assault, and through the tokenism many women experience, as we will show below) (Lundquist 2008).

In summary, the differing contract between a conscript army and a professional one attracts different populations and shapes differing expectations of service. These characteristics, alongside the differences in the nature of the military's missions (combat or peacekeeping), are significant, as we will see, in shaping the gendered experience of women as well.

Contrasting gendered experiences

The gendered embodied and emotional experiences of women in the militaries are shaped by the militaries' policies regarding women in service and the discourses that frame and justify this policy. As all the Western forces—mandatory and voluntary alike—confront the same dilemma of women's integration into the military, we will open with a discussion of the discourses surrounding this issue and look at how they are related to women's gendered experiences.

Competing discourses

In the past, women served solely in traditional "feminine" roles. Yet in the last two decades, the overall trend worldwide seems to be toward an extension of military roles for women, in both compulsory and professional militaries. Women's participation in Western forces was accelerated by a series of supra-national developments, such as the ruling in 2000 of the European Court of Justice[7] that European Union (EU) countries must implement gender egalitarian recruitment policies; UN Resolution 1325, which acknowledges the importance of assimilating a gendered approach in peace making and conflict resolution; and NATO's adoption of a gender mainstreaming approach (Sasson-Levy 2011a).

Australia, for example, lifted the ban on women in combat roles in September 2011, and the British defense secretary Michael Fallon announced in 2014 that he intends to end the army's ban on women serving in frontline infantry roles (Carreiras 2015). In December 2015, US defense secretary Ashton B. Carter announced that all positions in the US armed forces, including all combat roles, would be opened to women. The militaries differ between those in which all roles have been formally opened up to women (the United States, Norway, Denmark, Belgium, and Spain) and those where women are still blocked from the core roles (Israel).

These changes took place against a backdrop of loaded and conflicted debate. If, until 2000, the debate focused on integrating women into the military at all, in the last 15 years, the controversy has swirled around women's entry into combat roles (Kümmel 2002a, Kümmel 2002b). According to Woodward and Winter

(2004), there are a number of different arguments surrounding the integration of women into combat roles. In the British context, women's integration was justified in the beginning on the basis of a discourse of "equal opportunities," which was intended to address group inequalities and reflected an attempt to achieve justice for minorities. From the mid-1990s, the more prominent discourse is one of "managing diversity" from the perspective of organizational efficiency, where the emphasis is placed on the optimal integration of the individual into the military (*ibid*.). A third discourse that serves all of the militaries is one emphasizing progress, wherein recruiting women confers the military with social legitimacy as it demonstrates liberal thinking and broad-mindedness (on Sweden see Eduards 2012; on Israel see Lomsky-Feder and Ben-Ari 2007; on Britain see Woodward and Winter 2004).

Against these discourses that justify gender integration, there are pervasive and widespread ones that argue for the exclusion of women from the military and especially from combat roles. The most notable discourse emphasizes women's physiological differences as crucial in terms of the selection criteria and training standards for military roles. Military organizations confront these physiological differences in several ways: Some choose a universal training standard for men and women; others opt for a standard differentiated by gender (Cohn 2000, Kimmel 2000) or standards defined by the military role and not by gender (Woodward and Winter 2004). The solution chosen influences and shapes women's daily experiences in the military, both in training and during operations. Another widespread argument against integrating women into combat roles contends that they undermine unit cohesion (Basham 2013, Eager 2014), thus downgrading military masculinity and operational effectiveness (Woodward and Winter 2006).[8] In response, scholars of gender and the military claim that the proper measurement standard is task cohesion and not unit cohesion, and women do not impair task cohesion (Basham 2013, Brownson 2014, Eager 2014).

In general, most of these claims do not stand up to empirical research (Carreiras 2015). Moreover, in the transition from classic combat roles to peacekeeping operations (PKO), many scholars argue that integrating women actually increases operational effectiveness (Bridges and Horsfall 2009). Nevertheless, the exclusion arguments are very effective in shaping the militaries' gender regimes and preserving men's superiority. While formally welcome, women constitute a tiny minority among combat soldiers both in the professional and the compulsory militaries (Carreiras 2015, Rones 2015, Sasson-Levy 2011b, Winslow and Dunn 2002, Woodruff and Kelty 2015). For example, in the US armed forces, just 2.7 percent of women soldiers serve in frontline units.[9] And in Israel, women comprise only 7 percent of the IDF's combat forces.[10]

The overall research finding is that integrating women into combat roles is a legal success, but there is a gap between the formal policy and its implementation in military's everyday life. The literature describes several informal mechanisms that are central to preventing women from assuming combat roles successfully. First, integrating women is often implemented without any advanced research, and militaries do not adapt the service conditions for women, thus complicating

the integration process and portraying it as inherently problematic (Eduards 2012, Sasson-Levy and Amram-Katz 2007). In addition, the social atmosphere works against integrating women. Gerhard Kümmel (2002a) shows how integrating women into the German military has been confronted by men's ambivalent feelings; Winslow and Dunn (2002) chronicled the men's hostility to women in the Canadian army, and Liora Sion (2008) indicates the same with regard to the Dutch army; Eager (2014) demonstrates through women officers' testimonies how they are prevented from fulfilling their duties in the field, and Sasson-Levy (2003b) outlines how a harassing chauvinistic culture in the Israeli army signals to women in "non-traditional" roles that they are not a part of the military's core.

In summary, despite the fact that women have the formal opportunity to cross gender boundaries in most Western militaries, they are still an insignificant minority in all of them. Moreover, women's achievements on the battlefield are defined as unique and unusual instances that merit media headlines but do not bring about a system-wide change in the gendered culture of the military (Eager 2014). So long as women are excluded from the core combat roles, they will continue to experience their military service as "outsiders within." Women's gendered experiences in the various militaries must be understood, then, from the perspective of their structural marginality. This common marginality is constructed and experienced in different ways. There are four major variables that shape women's gendered experiences in the various Western militaries: (1) The rate of women in the military, (2) the nature of the military mission—combat versus PKO, (3) military–family conflict, and (4) the military as a heteronormative institution.

The rate of women in the military

A significant difference between the Israeli forces and other militaries is the percentage of women who serve. As mentioned above, in Israel, a third of the conscripted army is women, whereas in the professional militaries, the percentage of women is much smaller, usually no more than 15 percent. This difference is crucial in shaping the experience of being a small minority of women in a masculine space.

When women constitute only a small minority, their basic experience is that of a token, which is characterized by high visibility resulting in strong pressure for performance excellence; isolation from social and professional networks; and polarization of gender differences, which encourages behavior that adheres to gendered stereotyping (Kanter 1977, Yoder 1991). Indeed, women in professional militaries, and particularly those who serve in combat zones, repeatedly report the difficulties of being an isolated woman in the face of hostility and the objections of the men; the great pressure to excel and a fear of failure in the face of rigid gendered judgments; and the struggle against gender stereotypes imposed upon them as part of the men's attempts to distinguish themselves.

Eager (2014), in her book about women in the US armed forces, brings examples of tokenism. She quotes Second Lieutenant Jane Blair, who is embarrassed when another woman soldier gets shell shock; Blair says, "I felt

especially embarrassed that it was a female marine. A cowardly female marine was just what we needed in front of the grunts" (Blair, 2011, 146, quoted in Eager 2014, 48). Apparently, Second Lieutenant Blair worries that the "cowardly reaction" will be interpreted in gendered terms that will be applied to all women, and especially to her. Similarly, Sion (2009), who researched Dutch units deployed in Bosnia and Kosovo, describes how, despite common difficulties, not only did the women not support each other, they also judged the other women through masculine stereotypes.

Based on conversations with servicewomen in the British Army, Basham (2013) shows that because of their minority status, they must constantly work harder in order for their achievements to be recognized. Norwegian women soldiers also talk about experiencing exclusion and difficulty integrating in the military unit. This difficulty shifts based on the gendered makeup of the units, where the more mixed the unit is, gender-wise, the less pressure there is on the women (Kristiansen and Sodergren 2015).

The experience of being a feminine minority assumes additional expressions in an army that deploys its soldiers abroad for extended periods of time. Serving overseas, in field conditions not adapted to women, creates a difficult work environment that negatively affects them: The women suffer from sexual harassment in the co-ed showers, from chronic urinary tract infections and dehydration because of a lack of appropriate hygienic conditions, or from drastic weight loss (see for example, Eager 2014 on the US military, Basham 2013 on the British military, and Eduards 2012 on the Swedish military). To sum up, being a small minority in the military, women experience tokenism to its fullest, and its consequences are not only professional but also have severe embodied and emotional ramifications.

In the Israeli military, where the percentage of women is higher and where its soldiers serve close to home, tokenism is less aggressive and less comprehensive. The tokenism experience is more salient among women who serve in trailblazing roles such as pilots or women in technical roles.

At the same time, the availability of women personnel in the Israeli military, which is cheap and taken for granted, frequently leads to latent unemployment and the use of over-qualified women in menial jobs (Sasson-Levy 2010). This situation generates feelings of boredom, waste, frustration, and anger, which at times leads to the women's alienation from the state and its citizenry (see chapter three). We did not find similar testimonies of latent unemployment in studies of professional militaries where women personnel is rare and more expensive.

The nature of the mission: Combat vs. peacekeeping operations (PKO)

The Israeli military is preoccupied with fighting at home, which is perceived as defending the security of the state. While the military has mainly been involved in policing a large civilian population in the Occupied Territories over the last 50 years, the dominant discourse that shapes the Israeli military is one of danger, sacrifice, and protecting the home front. In this traditional nation-state discourse, the combat soldier's supremacy is unequivocal, and he stands at the top of the

military hierarchy. The military identities regime, including women's identities, is organized around the man combat soldier. Indeed, as we have shown, women in "masculine" roles tend to mimic combat masculinity, and women in other roles also see it as a main axis against which to shape their identity. Thus, while women do have opportunities to cross gender boundaries, gendered power relations are not undermined.

An intriguing question is whether the shift from traditional fighting to PKO challenges the gendered power relations in the professional Western militaries. These missions are characterized by operations amongst a civilian population, and most of them do not include any offensive operations. Most of Europe's militaries mainly conduct PKO, while some of them were also involved in "traditional" combat operations, for example in the Iraq (2003–2011) and Afghanistan wars (2001–2014). When discussing militaries engaged in PKO, the discourse on integrating women tends to highlight the importance of women and femininity for the forces (Brownson 2014, Kronsell and Svedberg 2011). The formal discourse about the significance of women in PK forces is phrased by the United Nations (UN) thusly: "Female peacekeepers act as role models in the local environment, inspiring women and girls in often male-dominated societies to push for their own rights and for participation in peace processes."[11] In addition, it was argued that their presence reduces the men soldiers' sexual harassment of the local women and the mixed units get more recognition and cooperation from the local population (Bridges and Horsfall 2009).

PKOs engender a demand for different abilities and skills in military operations that challenges the traditional ethos of the warrior. Missions in civilian spaces force the militaries to adapt themselves to the constraints of local cultures. To illustrate, the US military assigns women soldiers to fulfill roles that men cannot do, such as body searches on women at checkpoints or operations that necessitate entering women's spaces inaccessible to men. The women conduct conversations with local women to assess their need for aid, gather intelligence, or help open schools and clinics. The Lioness program, a unique case of an all-women's unit in the coalition forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, was created in this context. The servicewomen in the Lioness program manned checkpoints and joined patrols to check for weapons caches in the homes of Iraqis and Afghans (see Eager 2014, 54–60). On the one hand, creating such a unit recognizes the unique importance of women in PK roles. On the other hand, the expectations of these women are based on cultural perceptions of femininity. Even if the women contribute to organizational effectiveness, from their perspective, they have been pushed into traditional roles and feminine spaces, although some joined the army to challenge gender boundaries. These traditional perceptions were strengthened when the Lioness program was renamed "female engagement team" (Eager 2014, 58).

In more general terms, all of the soldiers—men and women—deployed on PK missions require skills such as mediation, containment, dialogue with local residents, and humanitarian assistance—qualities that are culturally defined as feminine. Thus, scholars ask whether the change in the nature of the military mission actually makes the army "softer." Does the military gender regime indeed change in favor of reducing gendered power relations (Duncanson 2015, Eduards 2012)?

Empirical studies indicate that even if there are changes in masculine military beliefs, there is no clear evidence that the military gender regime has changed. In fact, there are a number of hints that the opposite is actually true. First, despite the ongoing recognition of the importance of women in peacekeeping forces, in 2014, out of approximately 125,000 UN peacekeepers, women constituted merely 3 percent of military personnel and 10 percent of police personnel in UN peacekeeping missions.[12] Second, the identification of PK missions with so-called "feminine" qualities reinforces binary and essentialist perceptions of violent men and caring women, which anchor gendered power relations (Basham 2013, 82). Likewise, alongside new definitions of PKO forces, the traditional combat model is still the most dominant. For instance, in militaries whose primary missions are policing civilian populations, the soldiers' training and exercises are still conducted according to the traditional model of combat soldiers (Haaland 2012 on the Nowegian military, Sion 2008, Sion 2009 on the Dutch military).

Eduards (2012) contends that the Swedish military promoted formal changes toward gender equality in order to present an image of an egalitarian and moral army. But the attempts to neutralize gender differences were enacted without taking into consideration the dominance of masculine culture in the daily military reality. Thus, the formal changes were met with severe objections on the part of the men, which were expressed by an increase in sexual harassment (for example, of 40 women deployed to Kosovo in 2003, 8 complained of harassment by their fellow soldiers). Similarly, Greenwood (2016) argues that hegemonic combat masculinity just changes its skin in operations among civilians. Greenwood terms this *chameleon masculinity*, since it conceals the direct violence that characterizes the traditional warrior and strategically adopts behavioral practices identified with femininity. On the surface, such masculinity is more open to redefining gender relations, but in actuality, it is merely an expression of how hegemonic masculinity adapts itself to new conditions while maintaining the gender hierarchy.

Thus, women's dual experience of being an "outsider within" is strengthened, rather than reduced, in the complex context of PKOs. Eduards (2012) shows how, in the eyes of the locals, women soldiers are used as a signifier of a moral and enlightened military: they "protect the women of the (third) world" but internally they are the object of harassment by their fellow soldiers (Eduards 2012). Doan and Portillo (2016) also point to a dual gendered experience overflowing with tension. In their study, many of the women who served in Iraq and Afghanistan testified that the locals perceived them as a "third gender" that enabled effective interactions. While the American soldiers perceived themselves as enlightened and progressive in comparison to the patriarchal local culture, they were the ones who harassed the women soldiers and not the local men. The intersection of Western, gender, and military identities in the women's Afghanistan and Iraq service created a dual gendered experience of reduction in gendering vis-à-vis the local men, while preserving the gendered hierarchy vis-à-vis their colleagues.

That being the case, women's experiences in professional militaries are shaped by a military masculinity struggling to maintain its precedence in the face of a changing military mission. While this context does create an opening for change and opportunities to reduce gender hierarchies, nevertheless, at the same time, the

women are pushed into traditional "feminine" roles and forced to cope with their men colleagues who feel threatened by their presence. These men demonstrate their hostility and express their frustration, among other ways, through sexual harassment, which we will discuss at length later.

Military–family balance

Family–military relations are shaped by the demographic profile of the serving women. The nature of the citizenship contract, as we have seen, causes a compulsory military to draft a clearly different population than that of a professional military in terms of the intersection of age, social class, and race/ethnicity.

The Israeli military drafts women right out of high school, and most of those serving are young adults aged 18–21. The women soldiers in mandatory service are always single, since marriage and pregnancy are grounds for immediate exemption. The public discourse perceives serving in the military as a maturing experience, as it enables new sexual and intimate experiences (Levin 2011). For some of the young women, the intense social encounters and the distance from parental supervision allow a period of sexual permissiveness and of exploring their sexual orientation more freely. The military is also considered the premier matchmaking institution of the state, and many couples meet during their military service. In fact, there are many similarities between the Israeli military service experience and the college experience in the United States, as both are considered periods wherein young adults take advantage of their youth without family commitments.

In a professional military, however, the women enlistees are predominantly older. For example, in the United States, in 2014, 57 percent of active duty members were older than 25[13] (Kelty *et al*. 2010, p. 184), and as already mentioned, in 2005, 52 percent of women soldiers were married, of which 49 percent were married to other soldiers (*ibid*., 190–1). Compared to civilians, women in the US military marry earlier and give birth earlier (Lundquist and Smith 2005). The rate of mothers among servicewomen varies according to ethnicity and race. In 2007, 52 percent of African-American women soldiers, 34 percent of Hispanic women soldiers, and 33 percent of white women soldiers were mothers (Kelty, Kleykamp and Segal 2010, 192).

The military's attitude toward reproduction among servicewomen changed during the transition to a professional military. For instance, up until the 1990s, pregnancy was grounds for immediate discharge from the British Army. Today, pregnant women can choose between discharge or remaining in the military and serving on a home-front base in an office until the birth. Women soldiers also receive six months maternity leave (Basham 2013, 71–2). Ostensibly, the military is displaying more flexibility toward mothers; however, in effect, if a woman decides to remain in the service, it is understood that after her maternity leave, she will return to being just like all the other soldiers. The rigid contract that includes serving overseas places especially difficult demands on mothers in general and on single mothers in particular. This difficulty is even more pronounced when the women are married to other soldiers. Eager (2014, 53), who

analyzes women soldiers' narratives, presents moving accounts, describing the high price of leaving children behind at home and the difficulty in dealing with forced separations.

It would appear that the intersecting pressures of the family and the military explain why there are fewer married women soldiers than married men soldiers (Kelty, Kleykamp and Segal 2010, 190). The data also shows the fragility of the family structure where the wife/mother serves in the military: the divorce rate among servicewomen is higher in comparison to men soldiers, and the divorce rate among servicewomen is higher than the civilian rate as well (*ibid.*, 191). Therefore, starting and maintaining a marriage appears to be most challenging for military women (*ibid.*). A change in policy and an increase in support for families can strengthen the women's resiliency to the tensions involved in military service, and yet professional militaries still have not succeeded in raising the rate of serving women.

The military as heteronormative institution

Policies regarding lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people vary from one force to another, but, in contrast to everything we have discussed until now, this policy is not dependent on the question of whether the army is a professional or mandatory one. The Israeli military, a compulsory one, is very liberal regarding LGBT people. All orders concerning the service of LGBT people were dropped in 1998, and today there are no orders whatsoever regarding the service of gays and lesbians. The change in the military's policy (which took place 15 years before a similar policy change in the US military), is explained by the fact that military service signifies first and foremost ethno-national boundaries, that is, boundaries between Jewish and Arab citizens of Israel (Levy 2007b). It is as if the liberal policy is saying: If you are Jewish LGBT, your place is on the inside. The liberal policy was expanded recently (in 2016) when, as a result of a lawsuit by a transgender combat soldier, the military decided to allow soldiers who wanted to undergo a sex-change process to do so during their military service.[14] The liberal policy regarding LGBT soldiers enables the development of a number of gay-friendly niches like the Intelligence Corp, where there is a high concentration of gays, and a unit of HUMVEE drivers where a local lesbian-friendly culture has developed.

The relative tolerance of military policy toward LGBT soldiers does not contradict the heteronormative norm in the military. As we noted, the military is considered a socialization arena for heterosexuality and one of the main sites for finding one's spouse. The dominance of the heteronormative model finds expression through the hostility toward and abuse and harassment of homosexuals that exist alongside the liberal policy. In a study based on reports from LGBT soldiers (of which just 12 percent were women), 45 percent of respondents noted that homophobic remarks were uttered frequently in their unit. Combat units are characterized by homophobic verbal violence more often (53 percent) than home-front units (44 percent). In addition, 7 percent of respondents experienced physical violence

because of their sexual orientation. It is therefore not surprising that most of the respondents in the sample who were out of the closet in their civilian lives chose to "return to the closet" during their military service. Just 35 percent disclosed their sexual orientation to their fellow soldiers (Shilo *et al*. 2006).

The professional militaries in the West differ with regard to their tradition of tolerance of LGBT soldiers. The Dutch army has a history of tolerance and has encouraged LGBT enlistment since the beginning of the 1990s (Moskos 1993). This policy became law and was expanded to cover all of the EU militaries following the ruling from the European Court of Human Rights in January 2000 to lift the ban on gay men and lesbians in the armed forces (Woodward and Winter 2006).

In contrast, the US armed forces struggled mightily against the acceptance of LGBT people into its ranks. After many years of a total ban and more years of a "Don't Ask Don't Tell" policy, in 2013, President Obama rescinded all prohibitions on LGBT people in the US armed forces.

The policy regarding LGBT people in the military shapes not only the gendered experiences of lesbian women in the military but also the experiences of straight women. The prohibition on open service for LGBT people for years created a complicated gendered experience. In many militaries, women in nontraditional roles tend to imitate combat masculinity as a way of integrating into the organization, and to acquire power and authority over soldiers. This kind of behavior could lead to the labeling of straight women as butch or dyke. In the Israeli military, women do not often complain about this label, perhaps because they know it is only a temporary one.

In the US army, on the other hand, "doing masculinity" is not simple for women soldiers. The "don't ask, don't tell" policy, which prohibited the military service of lesbians, posed a real danger for women who seemed too masculine. The threat of being labeled a lesbian and being discharged from the military encouraged women to enact gender strategies aimed at enhancing their femininity and ensuring their gender conformity. Thus Herbert (1998) reported that 70 percent of the women soldiers she surveyed strategized their gender practices toward femininity, employing behavior such as polishing one's fingernails, wearing cologne on duty, intentionally avoiding swearing, and dating many men (Herbert 1998). In a similar vein, but 20 years later, Silva (2008) argues that Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) female cadets redefine their gender perceptions "only to the point where they can still be recognized—and recognize themselves—as women" (ibid, 955). The aim of these "feminine" practices and interpretations is to reaffirm both the femininity and heterosexuality of the soldier.

Yet, strategizing toward femininity carries with it its own complications. First, since masculinity is the military norm, femininity is perceived as antithetical to the military. Thus, when women employ feminine gender practices, they risk being viewed as too feminine, which is also perceived as not serious, incompetent, and weak. A second complication derives from the longstanding (American) chauvinist military tradition, which treats women soldiers as "hypersexual objects" (Mitchell 1996, 39). Employing feminine practices might elicit the label of slut

or sexually available (Enloe 1988, Herbert 1998, Stiehm 1989). It seems then that women in the American military have been compelled to strike a balance between "femininity" and "masculinity." They must be "masculine enough" to do the job, but not too "masculine" to be seen as less than a woman (Herbert 1998).

One can assume that the policy change in the US military will lessen the burden on women in the military. However, there is no doubt that the rigid policy concerning LGBT soldiers has left its traces, which continue even today to shape the gendered culture of the US military and the daily experiences of women soldiers. Even after abolishing the prohibition on service for LGBT people in Western armies, it is clear that the military clings to its heteronormative heritage. Men's sexual harassment of women is one of the common patterns that preserve the military as a heterosexual space.

Dis/acknowledging violence

The third concept guiding the comparison between militaries is the encounter with external and internal violence and how it is dealt with. We will begin with the subject of internal violence toward women, which is expressed primarily through sexual harassment. The literature shows a clear difference in patterns of sexual harassment between the Israeli army and the US army.

Internal violence—sexual harassment

The US Armed Forces have been struggling with an epidemic of sexual assault and sexual harassment for over two decades (Enloe 2007). The issue of sexual harassment in the military became the center of attention as a result of the Navy Tailhook scandal in 1991, when 90 women service members alleged that they were sexually assaulted or harassed by 119 Naval officers and 21 Marine Corps officers during a convention in Las Vegas. In the wake of the scandal, the US military has yet to resolve the issue of sexual harassment.

While women represent just 15 percent of the military population, they are five times more likely to be victims than their male counterparts. Since the Department of Defense (DoD) began maintaining data on this issue, the number of reported sexual assaults has increased from 1,700 in 2004 to 6,083 in 2015.[15] The DoD 2012 survey indicated that 23 percent of women and 4 percent of men reported experiencing unwanted sexual contact since enlistment. Based on this survey, the DoD estimates that approximately 26,000 service members experienced some form of unwanted sexual contact, ranging from sexual contact crimes, such as groping, to sexual assault and rape, in 2012.[16]

To illustrate the harassment of women soldiers serving in forward outposts, Eager (2014, 49) tells the story of Kayla Williams, MOS Military Intelligence, who served on the border between Iraq and Syria:

> Williams dismissed the antics of some of the men in her platoon who start begging her to show them her "ass and boobs." The male soldiers even rake-up a pot

of money and throw in some M&M candies for good measure, but the reader can imagine how Williams must have felt – utterly objectified by her platoon mates.

In the British Army, women who served in combat-focused roles were sexually harassed more than women soldiers in other roles and, as a result, some of the women prefer to serve in home-front units (Basham, 2013, 58–9). Another example comes from the Swedish military, which is dealing with an especially high rate of sexual harassment. A study from 2005 stated that 47 percent of women officers and cadets and 36 percent of all of the enlisted women soldiers were sexually harassed or attacked. The phenomenon of sexual harassment is so widespread that, according to the study, it was one of the major factors in Swedish women's reluctance to sign up for peacekeeping forces (Shaltiel 2012).

Sexual violence is the main source of trauma among women veterans. While men are more traumatized by the external violence of combat, women are more damaged from the internal violence. The rate of sexual trauma among women veterans of the US forces is estimated at 20–30 percent, while the rate of sexual trauma among men veterans is estimated at between 2 and 4 percent (Kelty, Kleykamp and Segal 2010, 198).

In comparison, the situation of women in the Israeli military is better, as rape and sexual assault are not such a common phenomenon in the IDF. In 2013, for example, 4 percent of the women who complained to the military rape crisis center were victims of rape, while in the US military, the majority of the reported sexual offenses involved rape, aggravated sexual assault, and forcible sodomy. Still, the official statistics on the IDF from February 2014 show that one in eight women soldiers reported experiencing sexual harassment during their military service.[17] Moreover, the number of complaints of sexual harassment in the IDF is on the rise—from 511 complaints in 2012 to 667 complaints in 2014.[18] According to Yohalan's (the advisor to the chief of staff on women's affairs) estimation, the rise in reports indicates a rising awareness among women as to their rights.[19]

The differentiated patterns of sexual harassment between militaries are linked to both the structure of the forces (compulsory or volunteer) and the nature of the military mission. As a compulsory military, the IDF needs to be more committed to protecting its enlisted soldiers from harassment and abuse. The perception of the military as a "people's army," which constantly needs to gain societal legitimacy, compels it to demonstrate that it is a moral organization that protects its soldiers (Lomsky-Feder and Ben-Ari 2015). Thus, the military is more attuned to the voices of the civilian sector such as the families or women's organizations who demand harsher punishments and the securing of a safe space for women in the military. An additional aspect unique to the Israeli military is that it operates "close to home," and thus it is not detached from everyday civilian life like the US military is. Soldiers see their families and friends at least every other week, and they continue to be part of their previous civilian social circle.

The proximity to home, together with the social expectations that the "people's army" will protect its women soldiers, generated significant control mechanisms regarding sexual harassment in the Israeli military, which utilize education, deterrence, and punishment. However, despite the control mechanisms, banal daily sexual harassment is widespread in the IDF. In other words, women are continuously harassed, but they have difficulty identifying the harassment as such and countering it. In chapter six, we termed this phenomenon *gray areas* of sexual harassment, which are difficult to define and object to. Thus, despite "softer" patterns of harassment in the Israeli army in comparison to the US armed forces, it still does not provide a protected, safe space for women soldiers.

As opposed to a compulsory military, the US military is more similar to a workplace in that it is obligated to create a safe environment for women, but this obligation is not as firm as the commitment of a military that drafts young women by law. The women soldiers in the US military are older and are not perceived as "girls" away from home in need of protection. In addition, since the women are a small minority in the US forces and combat occurs far from home, American women soldiers often find themselves isolated and more exposed to sexual assault.

Moreover, it is impossible to understand the gendered experience of women in the US forces without looking into the men's contract with the military. Traditionally, the informal contract of young men with the US military specifies that they have a built-in right to sexual relations during their service. As Cynthia Enloe (2000b, 117) argues, the US military's unofficial stance is "prostitution-as-a-given," and many soldiers think of prostitution as a routine recreational activity. Buying sexual services from a local woman is figured into a man soldier's weekly budget (Enloe 2000b, 116). Despite the fact that it is the use of local prostitutes off base (for instance, in Germany, Japan, or Hawaii), the perception that the man soldier is owed regular sex influences, of course, relationships within the military as well. Enloe explains: "A military that tolerates (maybe even fosters) prostitution is a military that will breed male soldiers who feel hostile toward women soldiers who refuse to act like sex objects" (Enloe 2000b, 116). This masculine contract raises the rate of sexual harassment in the military, especially when the army cannot encourage the establishment of brothels off base such as when it is operating in Muslim societies like Iraq and Afghanistan.

Similarly, the British Army also takes for granted its men soldiers' sexual needs. Basham (2013) describes a campaign that urged servicewomen to carry condoms with them when deployed to Iraq to protect against pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. The advert does not require men to take similar precautionary measures and thus reinforces the notion that "boys will be boys." The responsibility for pregnancy is laid solely on the shoulders of the women soldiers, and the sexual behavior of men goes unquestioned (Basham 2013, 74). The men's informal contract with the military, which includes the right to active sexual relations, has clear implications for the level of sexual assault on women in the military.

Finally, it appears that the racial and class background of the population of women soldiers in the professional military in general, and in the US armed forces in particular, suggests an additional explanation for the epidemic of sexual

assaults. As the majority of the women in the US military are from the lower classes, the dominant groups, which have the power to control the military from the outside, have less of a direct interest to protect the women soldiers from a damaging military service. The social distance (the class gap) between the soldiers and the dominant groups in politics and civic society allows the state to disregard its soldiers' personal safety. In a manner of speaking, one could say that because of these women soldiers' intersectional positionality, the state can abandon them more easily. Looking more broadly, the class background of the enlistees explains why US society can continue to tolerate not just the sexual assaults prevalent in the military but also the price of heavy wars, and especially the inherent losses and the troubled states of many of its veterans.

External violence

While women are exposed to internal military violence, expressed in the form of sexual harassment, they are more shielded from exposure to external military violence. Distancing the women from direct confrontation with the military violence shapes the way they relate to it.

Since in Israel, combat is perceived as protecting the homeland in the face of existential security threats, fighting is always associated with heroism, sacrifice, and defense. In return for men's protection, the women are expected to cooperate and obey the patriarchal social order (Young 2003). Therefore, when women are given the opportunity to serve in the military by law, they are grateful for being able to take part in the national struggle. Women's participation in a compulsory military, if so, shapes their conformity and guarantees their silence regarding state violence.

The women soldiers' silence is especially "loud" when state violence is not perceived as legitimate. In Israel, as in most countries, the war for independence (1948) was and is perceived as existential and constitutive of the state, but further wars are disputed. The main controversy over the use of military violence is about the ongoing occupation of the West Bank and the occupation of Gaza until 2005 and its continuous siege since then. This occupation is an issue that cuts right through Israeli society and triggers polarized reactions to the military's violence. Since enlistment is mandatory, there will always be soldiers who participate in state violence against their will and even in contrast to their political views. Yagil Levy (2016) argues that, if and when these soldiers do not find state violence just, some of them will object and may protest after their discharge. Therefore, soldiers' and veterans' protests against the military's violence are more significant in a compulsory military. However, it appears that because women do not serve as combat soldiers, they feel like they have less legitimacy to talk about the violence, and, moreover, they are less likely to voice political criticism about the military and the occupation. While men utilize their military service to legitimize critique both within the military and in civil society, women

soldiers are less likely to do so. In contrast, women's anti-war movements tend to mobilize motherhood as a main source of legitimacy. Mandatory service, which excludes women from combat roles, turns out to be an effective mechanism to co-opt the women.

In a professional military, the question of soldiers' identification with the army's violence is paradoxical, and this paradox is more obvious in the case of women. On the one hand, the men and women soldiers choose to enlist in what they know is a violent organization. Therefore, one might expect fewer objections to the military's violence, since its members are self-selected. That is, anyone who objects to the military's violence would not consider enlisting. On the other hand, in professional militaries, patriotic sentiment is less dominant since soldiers enlist primarily for social mobility reasons, and this is even more true for women. Research shows that women's motivations to enlist are primarily occupational, and they are less committed than men to the principle of sacrificing themselves on behalf of the country (Woodruff and Kelty 2015). If their primary concern is economic, their identification and approval of state violence is not guaranteed, and we can expect that they will be more ambivalent regarding the violence. Indeed, a survey by the Pew Center conducted in 2011 showed that women in the US military were more critical of recent wars than their male peers. The survey found that 63 percent of female veterans said the Iraq war was not worth fighting compared to 47 percent of men, and this pattern repeated itself with regard to the Afghanistan war (quoted in Eager 2014, 42–3). That being the case, it appears that women in compulsory militaries have a harder time criticizing the military's violence as compared to women in a professional military.

Thus far, we examined women's propensity to criticize and even protest state violence. But it is important to note that women's relationship to violence can also be that of national identification and even fascination with military's aggressive force. Indeed, the common denominator between both types of militaries is the attempts by women from within the military and beyond it (members of parliament for instance) to open up combat roles and take part in state violence. As a result of these struggles, over the last decade, women soldiers do not just observe and support the military's violence from afar but also actually take part in it and are even wounded or killed (Eager 2014, Robbins and Ben-Eliezer 2000, Sjoberg and Via 2010).

Losing women soldiers in a military operation is a relatively new phenomenon in Western militaries, which garners much attention from the media and scholars alike.[20] More women are wounded or killed because the distinction between combat and non-combat roles is blurred both in the "new wars" and in peacekeeping missions. As a result of this blurring, even women who serve in "feminine" or traditional roles sometimes operate on the battlefield and risk losing their lives. Thus for example, since 2008, 100 women soldiers of the US armed forces have been killed in the fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan (Eager 2014, 1). The public discussion of the deaths of women in combat reopens the question of the connection between violence, gender, and citizenship.

Concluding remarks

To conclude, the comparison between the two types of militaries indicates that in the Israeli mandatory service the women are mostly younger than in an AVF, they have more freedom to shape the nature of their service and they do not have to struggle with the conflict between military and family life. Since they constitute a relatively large minority in the military, they are somewhat more protected from tokenism and from sexual harassment. Therefore, compared to women in professional militaries, their service leads them into fewer daily conflicts. Indeed, women's military service is part and parcel of the normative life course in Israel and is taken for granted. This nationalizing of the women's passage into adulthood (similarly to the men's passage) is the basis for women's commitment to and identification with Israeli militarism. Therefore, when women criticize militarism and unjust wars in Israel, they tend to base their protest on the more traditional source of legitimacy—motherhood—and usually do not employ their military service for protest purposes. It seems that drafting women into mandatory military at a time of violent conflict and their empowerment as "almost equal" to men enhances their co-optation to the national project. Thus, women's service in mandatory forces initiates them into gendered citizenship. This is the citizenship of the women as "outsiders within"—the women who are grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the state while being obedient to its institutions, and, at the same time, marginalized within them.

In a professional military, the service is perceived less as a key scenario that constitutes citizenship and more as a path for social mobility for marginal groups. For women, the military service experience is loaded with conflicts in comparison to mandatory service: the women are older, their contracts with the military are more rigid, their family–military conflict is intense and hard to resolve, the civil control mechanisms are weaker, and they are less protected from sexual harassment. Moreover, as men are an absolute majority in professional militaries, the organization preserves traditional and blatant perceptions of armed masculinity. The shift of Western militaries to peacekeeping missions did not bring about a change in this warring masculine culture. Therefore, the participation of women in peacekeeping missions appears to be a two-edged sword: they are sent to fulfill roles that are perceived as "essentialist feminine" and continue to be harassed and marginalized. Paradoxically, it appears that the gendered experience of women in professional militaries, to which they enlist out of their own free will, is more difficult than the experience of women who are forced to serve by law.

Notwithstanding the differences among the two types of militaries, we argue that the encounter of women with the state during military service becomes an initiation process into gendered citizenship. In this process, the women learn to be obedient and at the same time act as agents vis-à-vis the state and maximize the resources that the state can provide them. They strongly experience their marginal location as women in a masculine organization and, at the same time, some of them get to enjoy the opportunities the state offers them. Finally, they are socialized to deny violence and to cope with it. Thus military service both creates varied

opportunities and sets obstacles for different intersectional groups of women, thereby generating diverse encounters with the state.

While the military is an extreme case, all state institutions are gendered domains that hold power over their citizens and constitute an arena for negotiating citizenship. Therefore, we believe our three new concepts—the multi-level contract, the contrasting gendered experiences, and dis/acknowledging violence—are eminently applicable to studying gendered encounters with other state institutions, such as the welfare system or the court system: The *multi-level contract* outlines the range of opportunities that shapes women's expectations from the state. Thus, it signifies the state's power to benefit or harm the woman citizen. The *contrasting gendered experiences* give concrete meaning to the embodied and emotional nature of women's civic participation in everyday life. Finally, the concept of *dis/acknowledging violence* reveals the women's encounter with the oppressive power of the state and the manner in which they contend with that violence. Thus, the three concepts translate the abstract concept of citizenship into daily tangible experiences that shape the sense of belonging to the state and show how these experiences receive meaning through an ethnicity–gender–class toolbox. This theoretical framework sheds light on the state structure that delimits the individual's possibilities, as well as the range of the individual's ability to act and to choose. The significance of these concepts lies in allowing us to consider gendered citizenship through a nuanced high-resolution lens rather than by relying on generalized and expansive social categories. Bringing these three concepts together, we can examine the relationship between women and the state in a critical, rather than a deterministic, fashion and thus highlight the doubled face of the state: the repressive coercive power and its enabling and protective power.

Notes

1 In recent decades, we have witnessed convergence processes among Western militaries, characterized by a tendency among Western armed forces to imitate the current structure of the US military (King 2006). This convergence is the outcome of globalization processes, political developments in global security, and a certain shift to peacekeeping, humanitarian intervention, and military operations that are based on sophisticated remote-control technology (Kümmel 2002a, Kümmel 2002b).

2 See report submitted to NATO by Ministère de la Défense (2008) of France: http://www.nato.int/ims/2008/win/reports/france-2008.pdf

3 See report submitted to NATO by the Government of the Netherlands (2008): http://www.nato.int/ims/2008/win/reports/netherlands-2008.pdf

4 See online newspaper article: Johnson, David, and Bronson Stamp, "Women's Progress in the US Military," *Times Labs*, 8 September 2015. For more information on the percentage of women in the armed forces of NATO countries, see Carreiras (2015).

5 See online report written by Defence People Group (2014) in the Department of Defence in Australia: http://www.defence.gov.au/publications/womenintheadfreport.pdf

6 See an example from media: Marx, Bettina, "German Army Losing Luster for Female Members," *DW*, 26 January 2014, http://www.dw.com/en/german-army-losing-luster-for-female-members/a-17387214

7 See the website of the European Court of Justice: http://curia.europea.eu/en/transitpage.htm

8 Alongside these two global discourses, there are local discourses to exclude women, such as the religious discourse in the Israeli military (Levy 2010, Sasson-Levy 2010).
9 See: CNN Staff, “By the Numbers: Women in the US Military,” 24 January 2013, http://edition.cnn.com/2013/01/24/us/military-women-glance/
10 See newspaper article: Harel, Amos, “Rate of Female Israeli Soldiers Serving in Combat Roles Doubled in Four Years,” *Ha’aretz*, 23 October 2016.
11 See website: Women in Peacekeeping, United Nations Peacekeeping: http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/issues/women/womeninpk.shtml
12 Ibid.
13 See report by Office of the Deputy Assistant of Defense (2014, 35): http://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Reports/2014-Demographics-Report.pdf
14 See newspaper article: Elizara, Rotem, “Fighting the Consensus,” *Yediot Ahronot*, 22 February 2016.
15 See annual report on sexual assault made by Department of Defense Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SAPRO) (2015): http://www.sapr.mil/public/docs/reports/FY15_Annual/FY15_Annual_Report_on_Sexual_Assault_in_the_Military.pdf
16 See statutory enforcement report by US Commission on Civil Rights (2013): http://www.usccr.gov/pubs/09242013_Statutory_Enforcement_Report_Sexual_Assault_in_the_Military.pdf
17 See parliament protocol: The Knesset Committee on the Status of Women and Gender Equality, Protocol No. 60, Jerusalem: Israeli Knesset, 3 February 2014.
18 See newspaper article: Lutzky, Dafna and Tali Heruti-Sover, “Rise in Sexual Harassment Complaints in the IDF. And How Many Indictments Were Issued?” *The Marker*, *Haaretz*, 5 April 2015.
19 See newspaper article: Alon, Gideon, “Increase in the Number of Sexual Harassment Complaints in the IDF,” *Israel Today*, 3 February 2014.
20 See, for example, the chapter dedicated to women killed in Iraq and Afghanistan in the book by Eager (2014).

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