WOMEN AND THE ISRAELI MILITARY CULTURE:
A DOUBLE-EDGED OPPORTUNITY STRUCTURE

Orna Sasson-Levy and Gilly Hartal

The relationship between security and gender has long been central to the academic discourse, both in Israel and beyond. The standard argument is that militarization processes create and reinforce dichotomous, hierarchical and essentialist perceptions of femininity and masculinity, thereby relegating women to the status of second-class citizens.[1] Given the militarist nature of Israeli society, this argument is pertinent to scholarship concentrating on Israel, which has long validated the contention. [2] However, in this chapter, we ask how Israeli women located at relatively powerful intersectional positions of ethnicity, class and nationality might, in fact, actually capitalize on their positionality to gain power in the military and political arenas.

Introduction

For present purposes, we define militarism as a combination of ideology, institutional practices and everyday interactions that promote an understanding that weapons and the management of violence are routine, self-evident and integral to Jewish Israeli culture. Over quarter of a century ago, Baruch Kimmerling argued that "cultural militarism" characterizes Israel, in the sense that (a) armed forces are deemed essential to the social experience and collective identity, and (b) wars are perceived to be unavoidable.[3] Employing Kimmerling's definition of Israel as a militarist society, Hannah Herzog subsequently wrote: "life in the shadow of a protracted Arab-Israeli conflict and constant [perceived] threat has become a powerful mechanism for reproducing the gendered division of labor, and, consequently, gender inequality".[4]

Although this argument seems self-evident, its fault is that it assumes security issues and militarism exert a *uniformly negative* impact on women. Moreover, it

fails to consider the political-historical development of security and militarization in Israel and the Middle East, and thus portrays the association of militarism and gender in static, a-historical terms.

In order to challenge the uniformity of this interpretation and propose a more nuanced and complex analysis of the relations between gender and security, we propose adopting an intersectional approach.[5] According to the intersectionality framework,[6] gender is constructed at the intersections of ethnicity, class, and nationality, which together establish a "junction which is not necessarily a product of the different roads that lead to it."[7] Intersectionality can signify fluid categories of identity and subjectivity (who people are and how they identify), or political structures of inequality (the way the social structure works to establish and preserve power).[8] By applying this framework, we wish to ask how women located at relatively powerful intersectional positions in Israel can use their positionality to gain power in the military and political arenas. Guided by the intersectionality framework, we here propose both a modifying argument and a counter-argument to the standard argument which opened this paper.

- The modifying argument is that distinct groups of women are positioned differently vis-à-vis the military complex. Women from marginalized groups and non-Jewish women in particular suffer politically and economically from the dominance of security issues within Israeli society – more than do women from hegemonic groups.

- The counter-argument is that women who identify with nationalism and accept militarism as essential for security – which is true of most Jewish women in Israel – do not see themselves as victims of militarization. On the contrary, they promote their social status by participating in militarist institutions and the militarist discourse, with the aim of gaining power from *within* the dynamic Israeli militarist society.

Thus, Israeli militarism functions as a double-edged sword. It includes some women in the national(ist) collective and enhances their sense of belonging and self-worth, while simultaneously marginalizing and even excluding others by

denying them the economic and political opportunities afforded to male members of the militarist culture.

Consequently, women in Israel either reap the benefits of militarism or suffer its costs depending on their social and geographical positioning, their political views, their education and even their age group. Moreover, in Israel's case, relations of women to security are also quite dynamic and change over time. The state has always offered women the opportunity to attain membership of the national collective by joining the bandwagon of militarism. However, it is really only over the past two decades, with the (perceived and actual) intensification of geopolitical threats, and the growing involvement of women in combat military roles, that they have also been given the option of gaining power through militarist institutions.

These changes in gender–security relations lie at the heart of this chapter. Its first section elaborates on the conventional argument that militarization hinders women's social status, whereas the second part presents the opposite argument, showing how militarism can incorporate and even empower some groups of women. We conclude with theoretical questions that emerge from the intersection of these contradictory arguments.

Part 1: The Marginalizing Edge: Women as Victims of Militarism

The argument that militarism is detrimental to women's status has a long pedigree. In "Democracy or Militarism" (1899), peace activist Jane Addams (1860-1935) claimed that to accept militaristic actions as a part of international politics is to normalize further violence. To support her claim, she cited instances of increased social violence, which she connected to the formal acceptance of war. In "War Times Changing Women's Traditions" (1916), Addams identified the gender dimension of growing militarism in World War I, and argued that war valued soldiers and devalued women and children.[9]

Similarly, contemporary scholars often associate militaristic ideology with gender stratification and inequality.[10] As the institution most closely associated with the

state, the Israel Defense Force (IDF) carries the spirit of militarism into society, and thus shapes gender relations well beyond the barracks. Israel is the only country in the world that conscripts both men and women, which could signify the construction of a gendered egalitarian citizenship. However, even though its recruitment and promotion policies are purportedly based on universal and achievement-based criteria, the Israeli army remains a male-dominated territory where masculinity -- exclusively identified with power and authority -- is the norm. Unlike men, women are easily exempt from military service on grounds of marriage, pregnancy or religious beliefs. Thus, the law grants priority to a woman's family roles over her obligations to military service.[11] Women comprise only 34 per cent of the regular army, and serve a shorter conscript term (24 months as opposed to a man's 32 months). These differences alone limit the range of roles to which women may be assigned, and constitute a definite barrier to women's advancement in the military and well beyond – creating a veritable "brass ceiling".[12]

The militarist culture of Israel preserves the perception of men and in particular soldiers as courageous protectors. This image derives from the ongoing violent conflict between Israel and its neighbors; but also from efforts at portraying Israeli fighters as ethical, gallant men who confront the world's difficulties and dangers in order to protect women and children. As Iris Marion Young noted, this construction of the courageous, responsible, and virtuous warrior positions women as the ones who adores their protector and defer to his judgment in return for the promise of security. The role of the masculine protector places those protected, paradigmatically women and children, in subordinate positions.[13]

This relationship, of masculine protector and protected women, is reproduced in the structure of citizenship, which is pivotal, as it not only bonds the individual and the state but affects all other aspects of societal life. In militaristic societies such as Israel, a republican discourse defines citizenship in accordance with an individual's contribution to state security, which determines in turn the level of civil rights that he or she can enjoy.[14] Once citizenship is identified with military

service it is constructed according to the lifecycle of men, thereby creating a gendered hierarchical citizenship.[15] Even when enlisted by law, Israeli women are not seen as equal partners in the performance of ultimate obligations to the state, and pushed to the margins of republican citizenship.[16]

Such a militarized structure of citizenship is thus based on the gender construction of the military itself. Indeed, the decision to conscript women has not changed the gender power relations in the Israeli military. The military remains a masculine organization in which gender is a formal and overt organizing principle.[17] As we shall see, from the *macro* level of citizenship, through the *meso* level of the political, the military and the labor market, to the *micro* level of family spaces and gender identities, protector-protected relations have far-reaching consequences for women's status in Israeli society.

In the following sections, we examine each level sequentially.

Women in the Military

For many years, most women in the Israeli military served in "feminine roles" such as secretaries or welfare NCOs. However, a significant change in the military gender regime was introduced in 1995, when the Israeli High Court of Justice, in a landmark decision (*Alice Miller v. the Ministry of Defense*) ruled that the military had to enroll suitably qualified women in the prestigious Air Force Academy. This ruling eventually led to the opening of additional combat roles for women in units such as the border police, anti-aircraft batteries, artillery, light infantry and naval commandos. The IDF Women's Corps was dismantled in 2000, and many training courses, including officer training, became gender-integrated.[18] Since 2000, no less than four semi-infantry gender mixed battalions are actively engaged in securing the borders with Egypt and Jordan.

Despite these reforms, the IDF gender regime remains largely intact, as only 9 per cent of Israeli women soldiers serve in combat roles.[19] Women are barred from armored, infantry, and reconnaissance elite units, the three specialties at the core of combat. Officially, 92 per cent of military occupations are open to women, but in 2008 it was found that half of all military roles were still dominated

by men.[20] These included most occupations paving the way to advancement to senior military – and civilian – positions. The brass ceiling for women is located five ranks below the pinnacle of the military hierarchy: in 2016, the most recent year for which official statistics are available, women comprised 25 per cent of all majors, but only 14 per cent of lieutenant colonels, and 10 per cent of colonels. Only four women were brigadier generals.[21]

Although women have yet to achieve equality in the military, improvements in the military's gender regime, especially in assigning women to serve alongside men in the field, have sparked a backlash, led mainly by rabbis, who claim that men who serve together with women cannot observe Jewish modesty laws. To accommodate these sentiments, the IDF appointed an "appropriate integration" committee, tasked with defining rules for joint service. These rules, promulgated in 2002, permitted male religious soldiers to serve in gender-segregated units, and set standards regarding women's dress with the purpose of protecting the modesty of both religious men and women soldiers.[22] Nevertheless, the religious establishment expressed dissatisfaction with these rules and protested that the military was foisting secular values on religious soldiers (for instance by commanding men to serve alongside women or to attend lectures about acceptance of LGBT soldiers). In December 2017, the Chief of Staff issued new orders exempting religious soldiers from joint activities with women, including guard duty and land navigation training.[23] The order reiterates the principle that joint service of men and women is subject to Jewish law in its most stringent interpretation, and privileges religious male soldiers' sensitivities over women's equal rights for equal military service.

Religionization of Israeli society in general,[24] and the theocratization of the IDF in particular,[25] have clear ramifications for women's roles and opportunities in the army. As a result of these trends women are both excluded from certain "masculine-religious" units or subject to a campaign that altogether opposes their service.[26] Speaking specifically of Orthodox women, Rabbi Yigal Levinstein, the head of a pre-conscription religious academy situated in the West Bank, in March 2017 informed his all-male student body:

"They are driving our girls [*sic*] crazy. They draft them. They join [the IDF] as Jews and they are not Jewish when they are discharged […]. Their entire value system becomes confused, their priorities – home, career... They will make them all crazy. Agreeing to this is forbidden".[27]

In January 2018, the Israeli Air Force appointed its first-ever female squadron commander. In reaction, Rabbi Shmuel Eliyahu called on Chief of Staff Gadi Eizenkot to resign on the charge that he, Eizenkot, had adopted "a crazy feminist agenda," and that men's motivation to serve declined as a result of gender integration.[28] These sentiments were also voiced in Israel's parliament where Bezalel Smotrich, a member of the Knesset who represents the right-wing religious party, *Ha-Bayit Ha-Yehudi*, roundly castigated female participation in combat units, arguing that the IDF's task is "to win wars, not promote all kinds of 'enlightened and liberal values'".[29]

Women's military service in Israel thus has double significance. On the one hand, it does enable women to enter the public sphere of citizenship and contribute to the country's security. On the other hand, the military's gender division of labor, together with its chauvinist culture and the growing religious backlash against the presence of women in the army, reproduce dichotomous, hierarchical and essentialist perceptions of femininity.

Women in Politics

One result of women's marginality in the military used to be their exclusion from the political field. A career in the military and intelligence apparatus granted men, and only men, public visibility and an aura of responsibility, professionalism and authority, which makes the transition from the security to the political elite both swift and easy. Several Israel's prime ministers have been former combat officers; and former security officials have served as ministers of education, science and development/technology, communication, health, foreign affairs, police, defense, housing, science, culture and sport, tourism, transportation, industry and trade, and regional development.[30]

In their 2006 essay, Oren Barak and Gabi Sheffer explain this tight link between the military and political spheres in Israel via the development of a highly informal but very potent "security network". Since 1967, they argue, members of the security establishment have effectively monopolized national security priority setting. Incumbent and former security officials also maintain close ties with leaders in the political, administrative and business sectors. Participants in this network tend to share common values and perceptions regarding Israel's security, have similar individual and collective interests, and are capable of joining hands significantly to influence policymaking.

This hierarchical power structure has significant implications for women, given that members of the "security network" are predominantly men. Consequently, women find it much harder to participate in political and socio-economic decision-making. Thus, in her study of women's participation in the 1990s Israeli-Palestinian peace process, Sarai Aharoni found that very few Israeli women ever sat among official Israeli and Palestinian negotiators.[31] Even these few were almost all positioned "backstage" as professional and legal advisors, spokeswomen and secretaries. Supremacy of the military at the negotiation table shaped the image of a "good negotiator" as a military man, and contributed to shaping professional segregation based upon traditional gender roles.

Amal Jamal argues further that perceptions of national security also mean that Palestinian-Arab citizens of Israel enjoy only "hollow citizenship", their secondary status in Israeli society is due to and legitimized by the security threat. In patriarchal Arab society, women are the first victims of "hollow citizenship". For example, Israeli citizenship laws, confirmed as constitutional by the Israeli High Court in May 2006, limit, for security concerns, the right of Arab citizens to live with their spouses, if the latter reside in Palestinian territories occupied by Israel in 1967. The right of naturalization for aliens (non-Jews) who marry Israeli citizens is likewise denied to Palestinians (mostly women) from those territories.[32] Thus, Palestinian women from the occupied territories, who according to custom move after their marriage to live with their husband's family in Israel, find themselves living for many years without the right to work, to travel (to own a

passport), to social security, to health benefits, social benefits and more. This is one more example of how women from marginalized groups are made the main victims of nationalist-militarist policies.

Women in the Labor Market

Although there exists no updated and comprehensive research on the ways that security issues shape women's positions in the labor market in Israel, the gender inequality constructed by the "security network" is evident there too.[33] As a general observation, we assume that the dominance of the security discourse in Israel erects both formal and informal obstacles to women's experience and advancement in the labor market. Formal obstacles are evident in the various occupations that entirely restrict employment to former combat soldiers, as is the case in the intelligence apparatus (such as the General Security Services [*SHABAK*] and the Mossad) and various private security companies. Elsewhere, the exclusion of women is not formal or palpable, but subtle, reproducing a structure in which the prestige of military service benefits men. This is true, for example, in many hi-tech companies based on employees' prior service in military intelligence units, and which recruit new personnel through their current employee networks, leaving little room for women in such companies.[34] Even high schools tend to prefer high-ranking former officers as principals, thus marginalizing women even in traditionally "feminine" realms such as education.[35] Similarly, many retired officers serve as directors of large public and private companies, managers of banks and hi-tech firms – a particularly powerful growth engine in the Israeli economy. Under their influence, substantial segments of private industry have become security-oriented, again limiting women's opportunities.[36] Arab women, and at times also ultra-Orthodox (*haredi*) Jewish women and women from the lower class are excluded from the more lucrative occupations in Israel, and on occasion even from simple, non-prestigious occupations because they did not serve in the army. For them, too, the tight link between security and labor market opportunities can be harmful.

One concrete example emerges from research on the occupational life of Bedouin professional middle-class women. Abu-Rabia-Queder notes that in Jewish public spaces in Israel, Arabic is labeled as the language of the enemy; anyone speaking Arabic is marked as hostile or as threatening.[37] The requirement to speak only Hebrew, and at time to conceal Arab identity altogether, becomes a major obstacle for Arab women in the labor market, even when they belong to the well-educated professional middle-class. These findings attest to the securitization of the civilian public sphere in Israel. Amir and Kotef explain that the security paradigm is based on a "normality" principle, and is thus prone to identify as suspicious and even as potentially threatening any deviation from given norms.[38] Although Amir and Kotef's analysis applies to the securitization of activism against the occupation in the West Bank, the above examples demonstrate how the logic of securitization has penetrated the labor market and the public sphere in general, with clear implications for women's occupational opportunities**.**

Women in the Private Sphere

In studying everyday family life, Hanna Herzog argued in 2004 that the Arab-Israeli conflict helps entrench familyism in Israel.[39] Analyzing discursive practices (books and radio programs) as well as non-discursive practices such as visiting military bases, laundering soldiers' uniforms and cooking special dishes for them, she demonstrates that "parenthood" implicitly takes for granted its identification with the woman's world and gender-divided roles. While parenting a soldier is supposedly gender-neutral in practice it is performed almost exclusively by mothers, thus further confirming two aspects: the centrality of the military as a cornerstone of men's masculine identity; and the centrality of the family as a cornerstone of women's feminine identity. This encounter between the two institutions – military and family -- reproduces the gendered division of roles in Israel. Herzog's analysis shows that the centrality of the military has been a cornerstone of men's masculine identity, and the centrality of the family a cornerstone of women's feminine identity. The encounter of the two institutions

has become a mechanism that reproduces the gendered division of roles in Israel.

Like the family structure under militarism, gender identities in militarist societies have been studied extensively: both the construction of gender identities of women soldiers[40] and the power of militarism to shape gender identities outside of the military.[41] In Israel, due to conscription, the "normative" transition to adulthood of both men and women takes place within a hyper-masculine, hierarchical, and total institution. Therefore, military service has differential consequences for the identity formation of men and women.[42] While men's gendered identity is constituted within an institution that encourages aggressive masculinity, women learn during their service mainly about their marginality. Outside the military, men continue to reap the masculine fruits of militarism, while women are identified with weakness and family life.

However, this is a very general statement, since different groups of women shape various gender identities in the military according to their ethno-class background and their military role. Thus, some women have been able to construct an identity that refuses the militaristic culture, resist the macho norm, the motherhood imperative, or the heterosexual norm altogether. They manage to do so even though their identities, too, are all constructed in one way or another in relation to the hegemonic hetero-normative image of the warrior and the mother in need of protection.

In this context, we also need to look at the gendered consequences of armed conflict itself. Commissioned by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) to assess the impact of armed conflict on women and their role in peace building, in 2002 Elisabeth Rehn and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf found that men and women experience wars in different ways.[43] Though more men are killed than women, the latter rarely have the same resources, political rights, authority or control over their environment and needs as do men. In addition, caretaking responsibilities limit their mobility and ability to protect themselves. That is also true in Israel, where for the past thirty years military clashes have not only endangered soldiers but also involved civilians on the home front. Especially

instructive, in this context, is a recent study by Sachs, Sa'ar and Aharoni of the impact of armed conflict on women in Israel during the Second Intifada.[44] They found that in ongoing conflict women's vulnerability is exacerbated by economic disempowerment and by their caretaking responsibilities. Poverty, minority status, and gender/sexual injuries exacerbated trauma that resulted from attacks motivated by national strife.

Thus, using the intersectional toolbox, we argue that a woman's specific location affects her vulnerability to armed conflict and militarism. Specifically, women from socio-geographically peripheral locations and Palestinian women in Israel are more affected by the centrality of militarist discourses and practices. These women are more vulnerable to situations of war, to the widespread militarist thinking and to the logic of security.

However, if we shift our gaze to groups of middle class Jewish women, we can detect a different pattern of relations between women and militarism.

Part 2: the counter argument
Powerful Women: Intersectionality as a Recourse

Having established how militarism and the logic of security often benefit men and can oppress women and compromise their interests, we now propose a counter-argument, according to which militaristic societies can be inclusive and even empowering for women of certain social groups as a result of specific intersectional politics. This argument refuses to view women as passive, or as merely victims of armed conflicts, and portrays them as capable actors.[45] In other words, using a political intersectional framework to "combat synergistic and formidable structures of subordination",[46] we argue that some groups of women *can* identify with the logic of security, *do* join militaristic institutions, or use the militaristic discourse in ways that *do* grant them sociopolitical power.

Isaac Reed's three-fold presentation of relational, performative and discursive dimensions of power serves as the basic categorization for understanding what constitutes power.[47]

Relational power refers to a person's advantaged or disadvantaged position in the social structure.

Using the relational dimension, we wish to untangle the different positionalities of women of diverse intersectional identities. Namely, the difference between Israeli women who possess some power (mostly middle-class Jewish women), and those who possess less power, a category consisting principally of lower-class Jewish women and Palestinian women.

Discursive power reflects the symbolic order and reveals how the security discourse embeds itself in the public and private spheres.

Using the discursive dimension, we wish to untangle how women employ power against specific narratives and social understandings of their "proper" place.

Performative power relates to "how situated action and interaction exerts control over actors and their future actions".[48] The performative dimension marks situations in which social power enables political transformation via public spectacles that make someone act in ways they would not otherwise do. We apply the performative dimension in order to unravel distinct performances women perform in order to be included in the militarized public sphere.

In Israel, participation in security-related work and in the military in particular has become a principal pathway for women to prove, but also to experience, their belonging to the national collective. This "militarization of belonging" has gained social acceptance especially in the last two decades, with the rightward shift of Israeli politics in 1977, and the intensification of violent conflicts along Israel's borders. As a reaction to the ongoing security threat, today many women "join" the militarist discourse and institutions out of identification with growing nationalist sentiment.

Women's enlistment also needs to be viewed from this perspective. Even though women are conscripted by law, they can easily obtain exemption; and indeed 42.7% of all Jewish women liable for the draft are granted service exemptions (compared to 27% of men).[49] Women's military service then becomes a form of volunteering. Women enlist out of a feeling of national duty, because they realize that military service is a way to achieve respectability, and in some cases even

achieve power by being included in the national collective. At the same time, the military has opened up more roles for women and offered them more challenging opportunities for self-fulfillment and promotion, thus encouraging women's enlistment.

Indicative of women's desire to be included in the militarized national collective is the new phenomenon of religious women who choose to enlist despite the prohibitive edicts of their rabbis. Young national-religious men tend to view military service as a constitutive element in their life course, and their presence in combat units far exceeds their proportion in the overall number of servicemen. National-religious women, on the other hand, are cautioned by their rabbis not to enlist out of fear that in the military they will compromise their modesty or abandon their religious way of life altogether. Nevertheless, between 2010 and 2016, the number of religious young women in uniform skyrocketed by 250 per cent.[50] For many of them, the goal is to prove that, like men, they too are committed to serve the state. At the same time, enlistment is a way of expressing objection to the religious establishment and their identification with the wave of religious feminism in Israel.[51]

However, we should note that the experience of women's military service is not unified, but varies along ethnic and class lines. Women from lower-class backgrounds still serve in traditionally feminine, non-prestigious roles, and primarily perform clerical functions. Middle-class women, on the other hand, often serve in prestigious, relatively gender-neutral roles such as military intelligence, or in non-traditional and high-status roles such as tank and infantry instructors. For the latter group, military service provides professional training, and even opens the door to lucrative hi-tech employment in the post-service market. For them, conscription contributes to their civic status and their perception as equal citizens, and enhances the career prospects of middle-class women.

Importantly, due to the militarization of Israeli society as a whole, women's identification with the security logic is not limited to military service. One of the main manifestations of this phenomenon is the rise of powerful right-wing women MKs. In the past, most women in the Knesset represented center or left parties

with an ideology of gender equality. However, the past 15 years have witnessed a significant increase in the total number of women MKs (from nine in 1999 to 34 in 2018), many of whom represent right-wing parties. Some now serve in senior political positions, as do Justice Minister Ayelet Shaked, Minister of Culture and Sport Miri Regev, Minister for Social Equality Gila Gamliel and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Tzipi Hotovely. By joining the discourse of security, these women have attained real political power and prestige.

These women parliamentarians have gained not only relational but also performative power in understanding that being part of the national camp and holding a militarist ideology empowers them. Moreover, they use their identities and positionalities (specifically Jewish religion and nationalism) to situate themselves within an intersectional map, not in a subordinate position or under a regime of inequality. That is, they use the same intersectional location to embody an opposite position on the axes of power, one of agency, dominance, leadership and influence.

Motherhood serves as special justification of and legitimacy for women's participation in militarism. For example, bereaved mothers have a special social prominence and even political power in Israel. Miriam Peretz, a bereaved mother who was in 2018 awarded the prestigious Israel Prize "for Lifetime Achievement and Special Contribution to Society and the State", has attained social and political power due to the miserable situation of losing two of her sons in wars. Another example is the social movement "Four Mothers", whose members in the late 1990s based much of their right to demand that the Israeli Government withdraw the IDF from southern Lebanon on the fact that they were mothers of combat soldiers. This basis of legitimacy enabled women to partake in public sphere but confined the legitimacy and framing of their participation to the narrow and traditional framework of motherhood.

Israeli homonationalism[52] provides a very different indication of how a group of people can use their power to rework their (group) position within the power structure in order to gain social legitimation, national inclusion and formal equality. Most LGBT individuals in Israel serve in the military, and for many of

them identification with the state and with the nation is a given.[53] Moreover, ~~many~~ some LGBT individuals are involved at the highest levels of national politics, including in the right-wing Likud party. The coupling of LGBTs with nationality and normativity is indicative of a process of inclusion of some LGBT individuals within mainstream society, which involves adopting the hegemonic ideology and militarist discourses.

An interesting phenomenon demonstrating how, like LGBTs, women can also leverage their military participation as a source of legitimacy for political voice, comes from the other side of the political spectrum, from the testimonies that women soldiers have given to the NGO named "Breaking the Silence" (founded in 2004 by IDF veterans in order to disclose Israeli military misconduct in the occupied Palestinian territories). Traditionally, women, in Israel and elsewhere, have based their antiwar protest on "republican motherhood," which is the notion that while men earn their citizenship through contribution to the collective's security, women belong to the national collective through their roles in reproducing and caring for the next generation. As noted above, republican motherhood served as the main source of power for the "Four Mothers" movement. Women's military service, on the other hand, was still not acknowledged as a basis for antiwar protest. In 2010, however, "Breaking the Silence" published testimonies of women soldiers who served in the occupied Palestinian territories. For the first time, women's military service was leveraged into a political voice challenging military policies, showing how women can use their military service as a source of symbolic capital that can legitimize political criticism.[54] Even though their initial ability to speak in public is a result of their privileged positionality in the first place (i.e. their relational power), they choose to mobilize it and create performative power that transforms their identities as women and gives them authoritative, critical public voice.

Conclusion

Against the conventional wisdom that militarization and the logic of security are always "bad for women", we have here proposed a modifying argument, and a

counter-argument, both inspired by the intersectionality framework. The political intersectionality approach calls upon us to look at how diverse groups of women relate differently to nationalism, to the state and to militarism. Thus, the modifying argument is that marginalized groups in Israel, and in particular non-Jewish groups, are more vulnerable to the damage inflicted by wars, militarist ideology and discourse, and militarist institutions. At the same time, Jewish middle-class women can also find themselves on the margins of the military, the margins of the labor market and the margins of the political sphere since the logic of security empowers Jewish men disproportionately in all these profoundly interrelated arenas. Securitism is always gendered, and the monopoly of security over the public sphere preserves men's hegemony, which pushes women once again to traditional roles of caring within the domestic, private sphere.

The counter-argument is that at the same time, some women, especially Jewish middle-class women, can actually reap the benefits of militarization. In the last two decades, the military has opened up prestigious roles for women. The political sphere has accepted more women who have then gone on to gain political power. Even women's protest against the occupation is now empowered by military service. Thus, militarization provides more and more Israeli women with ways to belong to the collective, to accrue sociopolitical power and sometimes to use it against the policies of the military-industrial complex. Thus, adopting a political understanding of intersectionality[55] reveals a far more complex Israeli web of power-distribution and power-sharing than is generally assumed. Intersectional positions produce inequality and subordination for some women, but also offer the potential to mobilize relative power for others.

Ze'ev Lehrer argues that the Israeli militaristic gender regime is not an integrated, coherent structure but, rather, a highly dynamic field operating under the influence of conflicting pressures and opposing forces.[56] On the one hand, liberal women's organizations and lobbies along with bureaucratic forces (human resource needs) are driving towards greater equality for women in the military. On the other hand, religious and chauvinist forces are pressing for the maintenance of a clear gender order based on the dominance of the masculine

image of the combat soldier. This ongoing encounter between competing forces has created a diverse, multifaceted map of the integration of women, and various forms of equality and inequality in different internal settings.[57]

In the same vein, we argue that state ideology such as militarism does not construct a coherent gender regime, and therefore should not be viewed as a monolithic entity shaped top-down. Rather, we should "uncover how states are differentiated entities, composed of multiple gender arrangements".[58] This multiplicity leaves room for women actively to employ power positions or militaristic discourses, choosing to take part and work with power, rather than to be passively subordinated, restricted or produced by it. Consequently, we conclude that the state's militaristic ideology and practices create varied opportunities, and not just obstacles, for different intersectional groups of women, thereby generating diverse encounters with its institutions.

While the gender gap persists, large groups of (Jewish) women refuse to see themselves as victims of securitism. They are learning to benefit from the power it grants its followers. The contours marking the boundaries of power conform to the power dimensions Reed portrayed, in which, in order to gain or hold power some women have to be placed in a better position than others (relational power). Making a stand either for or against, women need to be heard and to take part in the militarist discourse (discursive power). Finally, they need to use their power and perform social sensations – "acts that transform the emotions" [59] – to draw attention in extreme ways (performative power). However, it is not easy to achieve these results, even in present conditions of gradually growing equality. Still restricted by their place within a militarist order, most Israeli women are as yet unable to benefit from this relative power position.

In this chapter, we have described an emerging situation in Israel that mixes both conservation (the modifying argument) and change (the counter-argument) of women's status under militarism. Ultimately, what is left to be determined is whether such change can create actual liberating opportunities for women that might lead to the end of militarism itself, or that might promote gender equality in Israel. In other words, the question that lingers is whether women who attain

power through militarism will have the influence to mobilize and change the militarist culture as a fundamental force in the oppression of women and other marginalized sectors in society?

ENDNOTES

[1] For an introduction to the literature on the relationship see: Helena Carreiras, *Gender and the Military: Women in the Armed Forces of Western Democracies.* London and New York: Routledge, 2006; Cynthia H. Enloe. *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000; Laura Sjoberg and Sandra Via (eds.), *Gender, War, and Militarism: Feminist Perspectives.* New York: Praeger Security International, 2010; Rachel Woodward and Trish Winter, "The Limits to Diversity: Gender, Women and the British Army", *Gender, Work and Organization* 13/1 (2006): 45-67.

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