

A Battlefield of Social challenges Military Service and Female Empowerment

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Abstract

Armies are known for their masculine characteristics, therefore women serving have to cope with a double challenge: fulfilling their military mission, and handling the masculine environment .

The current study examines how women are affected from military service, by a combination of a qualitative and quantitative methods. During the years 2015-2019, 3800 men and women responded to an internet questionnaire concerning their service experience. Out of these, 30 men and women were randomly selected for phone interviews.

These findings show that military service experience for female is mainly social- It empowers their interpersonal communication skills, and provide them essential characteristics for future roles in the society.

State of art: Social sciences, Civil-Military Relations

Key words:*socialization, female empowerment, social polarization, pluralism, professional army, citizen-soldier military*

Date of Submission: 30-01-2021

Date of Acceptance: 14-02-2021

I. INTRODUCTION

One of the outcomes by transition military service to professional service model, is female duties, an issue that has been undergoing change in the past decades (Sasson-levy, 2014). Female roles in these armies is also influenced by the changes in the battle field characteristics, mainly the extended use of technology and remote fighting means. These reduced the direct encounters between warriors and enemies, and the resulting risk for life (Lutwak, 2002).

Yet, there is an on-going discussion about the army effectiveness as a social mobility mechanism relating to female empowerment. On the one hand it is claimed that the role of women in western armies is reinforced and they are continuously more involved in core functions. On the other hand, there are those who claim that the gender hierarchy in the army is controlled by men, and eternalizes gender gaps preventing women from reaching key positions.

The same process accrues in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), in relation to the integration of women (Englander, 2006), where some claim that there is a structured conflict between genders, based mainly on a religious background (Levy, 2014). This leads to internal arrangements limiting the operational roles of women, and even gender segregation as well as physical and ideological separation of genders during military service (Haber & Sharvit-Baruch, 2013).

Focusing on the discussion relating to the participation and fulfillment of women in the military in the western world in general and in Israel in particular, leads to knowledge gaps relation to the effect of the service on the social development of women in the foreseeable future – Does the army provide a platform for the empowerment of women despite the built-in tensions and difficulties, or does this conflict, controlled by men, eternalize male superiority and prevents women from furthering their positions in the army and in society in general.

Main research question:

How are women affected by their service in the IDF?

This question is followed by sub-questions:

1. What is the unique characteristic of female service in the IDF?
2. How are the gender differences expressed during military service?
3. How does military service affect female social concepts?

The main argument in this study is that despite tension in the Israeli society, that affects gender-related decisions in the IDF, women are significantly empowered during their military service. This results from their coping with social aspects, empowering their skills for open discussion with other cultures, containment of 'others',

acquiring networking skills that improve their social capabilities. These processes allow women to display greater flexibility in their thinking about social aspects.

These aspects may enhance the status of women in society since the military service increases communication and social skills, as well as capabilities for coping with the structured conflict between conservatism and progressiveness. Such skills are essential in the era of increasing social polarization, and the expansion of the influence of social networks. Hence the role of women in society may become more significant in the future.

II. FEMALE MILITARY SERVICE – UNIQUENESS AND MISSION

World-wide, armies have dealt with increasing women motivation forenlisting, resulting from the need for high-quality manpower and restricted national resources. As the army has traditionally been a popular militia with male dominance, women have been placed after men in the social hierarchy (Sasson-levy, 2014). The more social and technological the army, the variety of roles open to women has expanded significantly (IDF-BSD, 2011).

In the IDF the missions of the human resources department over the past decade were directed at reducing social gaps and integrating unique populations, while empowering women and their integration(Tishler & Hadad, 2011). This social value motif of the military service was integrated in the normative document ‘The spirit of the IDF’, written in the early 2000’s - nowadays it appears that these missions will be achieved (Itsik, 2019).

This is important as it is implement along two other dramatic processes in the IDF ‘The neo-professional army’ and ‘The market army’.

Professionalization of the army, and mainly in operative and technological roles has increased integration of women in combative units, which has not occurred in the past (Sasson-levy, 2014). During the past decades, women in the military have managed to ‘break the glass ceiling’ and to be appointed as battalion commanders in field units, as well as continued service in administrative roles (Beeri, 2019). The need for cooperation between the different arms, requiring inter-personal communication, and the establishment of instrumental units to conserve defense stability within peace boundaries, the increased need for human resources to cope with the challenges of the civilian hinterland have significantly increased integration of women in different units and roles.

Nevertheless, the utilitarian discussion that characterizes the ‘Y generation’ (Almog, 2014), has negatively affected male motivation to serve in the army in significant jobs. Military service in the ‘market army’ has increased male expectations for social remuneration, especially for those serving in combative units (Levy, 2010). Hence, motivation of men to serve has decreased over the past decades, forcing the army to integrate more women into its ranks.

Changes in the battle field, combined with the social trends have enabled the army to reinforce platforms for the integration of women in a wider range of roles than in the past. It is still maintained, however, that the army is controlled by masculine concepts, preserving the traditional gender hierarchy (Sasson-Levy, 2014).Military service demands a high personal price that may deter women from serving in the army in the future (Havman & Levi-Zehira, 2014).Therefore, we need to examine the sources of the motivation of women to serve in the army at this time.

III. MOTIVATION OF WOMEN SERVING IN THE ARMY

Military service is considered as the major contribution of an individual to his country and society. Together with feminist influences for a more just gender distribution are the reasons for more women entering military roles (Sasson-Levy, 2014).

It is claimed that over the past decades, governments have neglected social needs, mainly the integration of special populations, addressing the challenges of the civil hinterland during wars, and even the economic needs of weaker populations (Livio, 2012).Therefore, the IDF has undertaken more social missions as a result of such neglect.

Examining the data relating to the enlisting of women to the IDF shows several intriguing facts: The percentage of women volunteering for social activities before military service is significantly higher than that of the men (IDF-BSD, 2011. In addition, women are more alert to the security risks and their implications.

Moreover, the need to include women in the developing cyber systems, operation of unmanned military weapons, intelligence and computers enables them to serve in more relevant roles in order to create opportunities for social mobility(Haber & Sharvit-Baruch, 2013), and issue that is directly related to the subject of ‘market army’.

The integration of their significant social contribution and the relevant security contribution helped women gain greater influence in an organization which is traditionally viewed as strictly masculine. Yet a military career is still not generally welcomed among women who tend to avoid frequent change, and view

themselves as 'homemakers' holding the family together (Lunney, 2013) reeducating the children, and in general supporting the main provider – the man (Hubner & Mancini, 2005).

Enlistment data from many western armies show an increase in the percentage of women serving (Kelty, Kleykamp & Segal, 2010), but the military is still viewed as a masculine profession. Hence we have to ask, how are women empowered during their military service and what are the consequences of their continued involvement in military roles?

IV. THE EFFECT OF MILITARY SERVICE ON SOCIAL ASPECTS

Military service, although changed over the past decades, still includes clear social aspects, resulting from the need to integrate special populations, deal with human distress, and a need for effective inter-personal communication. Although female motivation to serve in combative units has increased, the percentage of women in combat manpower is still low (Sasson-Levy, 2014). The variety of roles offered to women increases their number in combat support roles, requiring more and varied skills, in view of the military challenges that have become more social than in the past (Moskos, 2000).

The most significant cultural effect on armies in the post-modern era is that transition from the warrior ethos to the diplomatic ethos – which in itself is a significant experience for women fulfilling the different roles that developed in this era (Hajjar, 2014). The increased social challenges and the need for reducing military resources require women to have higher negotiation skills, persuasion and integration, and an emotional containment of social variance (Tishler & Hadad, 2011). Moreover, skills that were acquired during military service are proven as very efficient in future roles, in society and in and also in private sectors (Senor & Singer 2011).

In societies maintaining gender separation during service, the challenges for women in the military increase (IDF-BSD, 2011). The containment required of women in such a conflict is enormous, and needs to create thinking flexibility and creativity. This is subject to a military gender functioning, without obliterating or declining certain groups. Fulfilling the professional goals defined for the military role leads women to maximize their social skills (Haber and Sharvit-Baruch, 2013). It is also maintained the gender separation and the preservation of hierarchy between women and men suppress social services, create tension and lead to a negative social conflict (Sasson-Levy, 2014).

Therefore, we need to examine to what extent women are empowered in the army and what are the social implications of their military service within the social characteristics presented.

V. METHODOLOGY

5.1 Research tools and the population sampled

The current study integrates a quantitative methodology involving theoretical statistical analysis and multi-variate regression to examine the variables affecting the level of pluralism of women discharged from active military duty during the past four years, and a qualitative methodology involving in-depth interview analysis of this female population.

During the years 2016-2019 internet questionnaires were posted in social networks to over 3800 men and women all over Israel. Half of them were high-school students, aged 16-18, and the other half, youngsters after their military service, aged 22-25. The participants were required to state their position in relation to certain phrases related to conflicts in the Israeli society.

The phrases are derived from other studies examining cohesion, strength, solidarity, patriotism, fear of terror and war, and readiness for emergency situations in the Israeli society (Ben-Dor & Lewin, 2017).

The internet questionnaires were anonymous. Participants were asked to provide details of their military service, their parents' service, family education and socio-economic status. The data was collected on a spread sheet for Google Sheets software, which avoids typing errors, and allows real time follow-up on the accumulated answers. Three pilot trials were conducted on the questionnaire before its final version, reducing duplications, and avoiding misunderstandings, creating an option of contacting the participant for additional interviews or questionnaires.

50% of the participants were female and the other half male, 50% secular, 20% traditional, 15% religious (minority or ultra-orthodox), all the rest defined themselves as 'no religion'. 90% of the participants were Jewish, 5% Druze and the rest Moslem Arabs (mainly Bedouin). Their characteristics are similar to their distribution in the IDF. The characteristics of the military service: 30% combat soldiers, 40% in combat-support roles, and the rest regular soldiers. All the participants finished their military duty in the IDF.

The participants were offered the option to attach their e-mail address for an optional personal interview – over 300 left their address, and 30 of those were randomly selected for in-depth interviews to examine common aspects related to the effects of military service, both for the social or the cultural dimensions.

The combination of the qualitative and quantitative methods has not been used in the current research field during the past decade. The method answers two essential questions: the nature and trends of development

of female military service of women as compared to men, and the reasons for the different trends between genders.

The qualitative phase includes two layers: The first is coding the issues raised in the interviews by categories, in order to define a common denominator between participants as to the manner that the military service influenced them. The second is a deeper layer to identify characteristics on the personal level of the interviewees, and their subjective experiences during their military service.

5.2 The study variables

The variables chosen were selected based on the response of the participants to the internet questionnaire, including self-report data.

Dependent variable:

Pluralism (PL) – contains two parameters: The level of tolerance and the level of agreement. The tolerance parameter is based on the identification of the participants with phrases related to the need to accept and contain disputed phenomena in the Israeli society. The agreement parameter is based on the identification of participants with phrases expressing essential democratic principles. The answers are graded from 1-6 on the Likert scale.

Independent variables:

Gender (GNDR), military service (SRV), parental education (EDU), religiosity (RELJLVL). These variables were selected based on a study relating to the effect of compulsory military duty on political attitudes (Barkai, 2007).

5.3 Study limitations

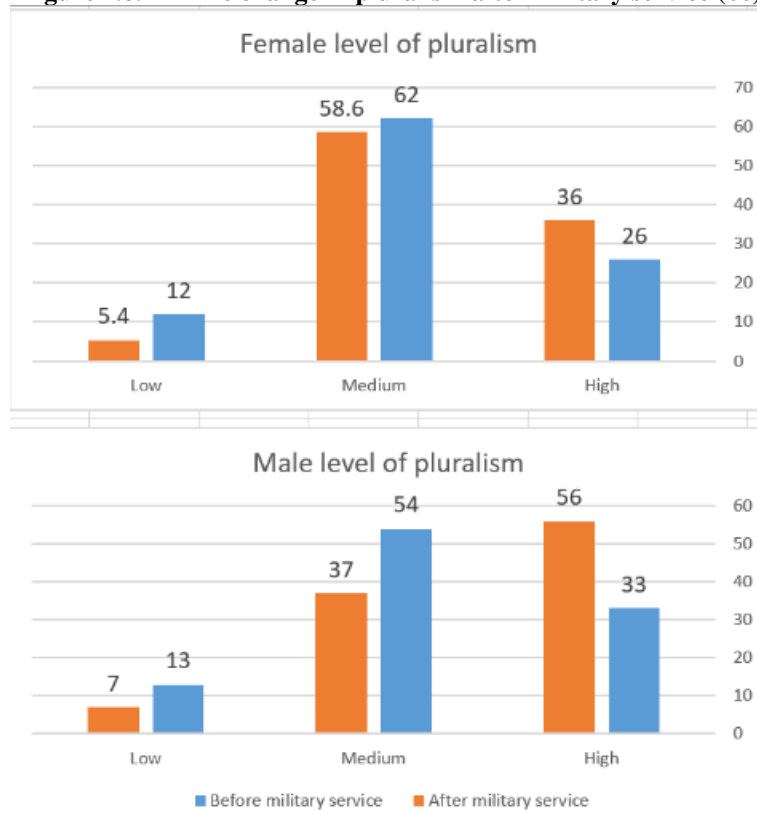
Most of the participants in the study served in the army, and therefore it is less representative of the air force, navy or intelligence corps. Nevertheless, the study describes the main characteristics of those serving in the army.

Moreover, as this is an internet questionnaire based on self-report, there may be biases relating to sensitive issues such as type of service, which may be enhanced to portray a more significant service than it actually was. In addition, the socio-economic background of the participants is biased towards the higher socio-economic levels – 60%, 30% represented medium levels and 20% come from low-income families. This bias presents a clear picture of this level, as it is claimed they experience the post-modern era on a deeper level.

VI. FINDINGS

6.1 Quantitative analysis

Figure No. 1 – The change in pluralism after military service (%)



According to Graph No. 1 it is seen that pluralism rises among men and women after the military service – this rise takes place in the years between high school and the release from army duty. It may be presumed that the service itself had a clear effect on tolerance and agreement among the study participants. It may be seen that among men the effect was higher, where in the higher category the rise was 23% for the men and 10% for women in the same category.

Table No. 1 – level of pluralism for women (n=1710) scale 1-6

Phrase	Change in PL level	Post military service		Before military service	
		Standard deviation	average	Standard deviation	average
Wholeness of society is more important than the wholeness of the country	Positive	1.50	4.39	1.41	4.33
Freedom of speech should be allowed during war even for those opposing it	Positive	1.55	4.36	1.5	4.23
Parliament members should not be allowed to dismiss each other – it is the people’s prerogative	Negative	1.61	3.64	1.63	3.80
I am ready to have an Arab neighbor	Positive	1.56	4.68	1.64	4.62
An LGBT parade should be allowed even on streets where religious people live	Negative	1.74	2.91	1.81	2.94
Even terrorists should have appropriate legal representation	Positive	1.83	3.62	1.78	3.33
Defense budget should be cut in favor of welfare issues	Negative	1.44	4.10	1.41	4.14

Analyzing the change in average response to the different phrases and comparison between women before and after army duty show minor changes, mostly positive, level of variance remains high.

A multi-variate regression on the effect of the independent variables on the level of pluralism shows that the gender variable is not significant, as compared to the other variables which are highly significant in relation to their effect on pluralism. The whole model is highly significant.

Table No. 2 – The effect of parental education, level of religiosity, army duty and gender on the level of pluralism

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.33	.11	.11	5.05

ANOVA (PL)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	8230.75	4	2057.69	80.77	.000
Residual	68938.17	2706	25.48		
Total	77168.33	2710			

Coefficients (PL)

	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	19.97	.29	.00	67.73	.000
TOTEDU	.66	.07	.17	9.51	.000
RELIGLVL	-1.57	.11	-.27	-14.58	.000
SRV	.42	.19	.04	2.17	.030
GNDR	-.30	.19	-.03	-1.55	.121

To summarize the quantitative analysis - it may be seen that there is an apparently positive effect of the period of army duty on the level of pluralism, but the nature of the difference between men and women is indeterminate regarding the level of tolerance and agreement since the gender variable is not significant in the model. This issue requires further study within the qualitative analysis section of the interviews subsequently performed.

6.2 Qualitative analysis

6.2.1 Primary categorical analysis

The first phase of the interview analysis related to locating information based on declaration of the informants and their division into categories, based on aspects that recurred clearly. This methodology enables

the analysis of the subjects of the interviews, from which we can delve into the personal experience of each participant.

During this stage, 4 central categories were apparent for men and women in relation to compulsory army duty: characteristics of the military system, characteristics of the contribution during military duty, the role of comfort and economic stability in relation to the possibility of long-term army duty, the effect of military service on personality, tolerance towards others and outsiders in the Israeli society.

Table No. 3 – categorization of main issues

	Female experience	Male experience
The military system	The system gives up on women. For some criteria women will be ruled out of the service and men will not. The organizational culture is clearly masculine. Even the response to women’s medical problems is basically faulty. The roles open for women are limited although the army declares that may roles are open. A woman needs to give more of herself to prove she is worthy, and break gender prejudices There is a tendency to support a professional army since it enables better use of manpower and resources	The military system is dominant. It decides, it is total. An essential system for the country. Often unworthy commanders have a lot of power. The army sometimes presence false successes. There is a ‘show’ culture with nothing to back it up. Ineffective system – inappropriate use of resources, wrong prioritization, the army is not operationally prepared. The army should remain national and not professional. This leads to social equality and enables the use of the highest quality in society
Contribution in the army duty	Contribution is mainly social– acquaintance with other cultures, communication and common denominators. Reinforced motivation for weaker populations to contribute more. The army service helps connect people. The common experience is unifying and leads to pride and trust among those who serve together.	The operational activities contribute to the country’s safety. The general feeling is that you contribute to something important and influential. The social contribution is considerable in terms of cohesion, equality, also between genders.
Stability and comfort	The tendency towards long-term service will exist when such service affords economic stability and comfort relating to residence close to the army unit location.	Motivation for long-term army duty is conditioned upon the ability to vary activities and to develop in the future. The motivation stems from professional challenges. When these do not exist the tendency is to leave the army. Economic considerations are not relevant in the masculine discourse.
Personality formulation	The army makes women more assertive, believe in their ability to perform, mainly cope successfully with the significant masculine hegemony.	Army duty leads to quick maturation, reinforcement of independent abilities and significant improvement in the ability to fit in a group.
Tolerance for others	A tendency to view the army as a platform enabling connection between groups of population, a positive social effect, reinforcing the collective aspects.	Tendency to view the exceptional and the weak as issues the army should not deal with due to high investment of resources for operative purposes.

The category analysis enables understanding the difference between men and women in relation to army service effects. This division reinforces the differences in relation to the experience of compulsory army duty, almost in every category. It provides a general context relating to the gender context of service. Almost all the women interviewed mentioned the male hegemony in different ways. The social aspect of the service is more salient for women, while men emphasized the operational-professional aspects. The social context also appears in the masculine discourse alongside the operational one.

In addition, men view the military system as inefficient due to its dwelling on social contexts at the expense of operational or professional ones. The female criticism focuses mainly on the implications of male dominance that characterizes the service leading to women not fulfilling their potential in the service, and a more declarative than practical discourse. Women tend to support a professional army, understanding that their fulfillment in such a model will improve.

Men rarely discuss contexts of economic stability or comfort. This is important for women considering options for service in the career army. Male considerations for extended service are professional and functional. Both men and women interviewed were critical towards the military system in general but both discuss the social contribution of serving in the army, the connection between populations who would never have met but for the army.

6.2.2 In-depth analysis of the interviewees’ comments

Analyzing the information from the interviews enabled to divide things into categories providing the context for differences between men and women in relation to the military service experience.

Gender conflicts

Most of the female interviewees requested to mention a significant experience during their military service chose an event where they had to prove their ability to perform and be assertive mainly because they are women.

V'. (female) who served as a psychological analyst describes the peak of her activity during the military service.

“I initiated a study dealing with the potential of women warriors in different roles onboard vessels. When we were asked to present the study to the Commander of the Core, his chief of staff did not authorize my attending the discussion. The corps is masculine, relying on the historical culture of core officers. My commanding officer insisted and then I could attend the meeting. This is a moment I shall never forget.”

O'. (female) served as a paramedic in a rear unit, describes her experience as a conflict where she had to be assertive:

“Our commander did not authorize an act essential for the fitness of the medical corps. I was certain he was wrong and his priorities were off. I decided to insist. I won. Until then I was shy, afraid to comment and dispute. Since then I have not been afraid to express my opinions. I learnt how to use this.”

N'. (female) served in the intelligence corps and tells of a negative experience during her military service:

“I understood our soldiers were about to be hit by enemy fire. I updated the desk commander but he did not adopt my opinions. I did not insist, and the soldiers were indeed hurt. Since then I do not give up, if I see an error, I go all the way”.

E'. (female) served in the air force as a flight inspector, and describes her significant experience:

“The area was foggy and I had to land a large number of aircraft simultaneously. I managed it. I felt I proved myself and showed that I can cope with unforeseen situations”.

The above experiences were described by the interviewees; they were not instructed towards any specific subject. It appears that many of their experiences focus on the conflict between men and women, forcing the women to be more assertive, prove themselves and not give up.

The experience of women versus those of the men

Most women interviewed emphasized the social role of the army, while the men mentioned the mission-professional aspects.

S'. (male) served in a combat unit, and then transferred to an educational commanding role. He described his experiences of the service:

“The height of my service was to protect a settlement surrounded by a hostile population. The understanding that I am safe-guarding civilians gave me enormous satisfaction. I understood I was doing something important. This is why I decided to transfer to an educational role to help others, be active and create cohesion within the group”.

R'. (female) served in a combat unit within the airforce:

“The most important experience was the first time I had to stand guard. Suddenly some of my friends came up to me and remained with me throughout the shift. This togetherness was important for me. I understood I was not alone.”

O'. (male) served in a medical rear unit. He describes his experience:

“I found a critical issue – we were short of a certain vaccine. It was my personal initiative to run the check. It was important to me to be prepared for any eventuality. My thinking was humane”.

H'. (female) chose national service and describes the reasons for her choice:

“I wanted to help people in distress. I helped special need elderly people and also children with cancer. The thought that they could reach me any time and I could help them was important to me”.

The significant common experience among women during military service is distinctly social and relates to interaction with partners or helping others. Men, on the other hand, put the mission first, but also emphasize its social purpose.

Effect of the service on personal and social issues

The interviewees were asked to grade on a 1-6 Likert scale the effect of their military service on a number of issues, some personal, professional and others social. The results show the differences between the genders:

Table no. 4 – skills improvement during military service

	Interpersonal communication (s.d.)	Profession-alization	Meeting other cultures	Getting to know the country	Decision making
Improvement among women	5 (0.66)	3.1 (1.28)	4.2 (1.47)	4 (1)	3 (0.68)
Improvement among men	3.8 (0.47)	4.2 (2)	4.5 (1.41)	5 (0.81)	4.9 (0.81)

The data presents averages between the two groups and show that for most of the issues there has been progress within the two genders during the army service. Interpersonal communication has undergone a more significant change among women.

The army as a platform for inter-gender equality

Most of the interviewees did not view the army as a platform advancing inter-gender equality. Yet many thought that in the transition from a national to a professional army such equality will be possible.

R'. (female) served as a warrior in the aerial defense unit. She describes:

“We have to become a professional army. Maximizing the potential of human resources under the current system is inefficient – there is unnecessary wastage of manpower”.

H'. (female) served in a unit coping with chemical weapon threats:

“I support the transition to a professional army. I know many people not suited for the current military system, as it interferes with their professional development. This is a waste”.

V'. (female) served as a research diagnostician:

“I support the transition to a professional army. Those who serve out of free choice contribute more. Motivation determines the quality of performance”.

C'. (female) served as a squad commander in the Home Front Command, mentions gender equality resulting from the characteristics of the activities:

“In the Home Front Command women have greater opportunities. The unit was built on the concept of equality between men and women. I know from friends who served in combat units that there it was not the same. The ‘macho’ image rules there and women suffer from it”.

T'. (male) who served in an infantry unit views the professional army as an opportunity for women:

“A professional army will use women better – such a platform will know to take advantage of the differences between men and women and will be more effective.”

VII. DISCUSSION

From the qualitative and quantitative analyses, it appears that compulsory army service positively affects both men and women in connection to exposure to different cultures and improvement of inter-personal communication. Nevertheless, it appears that for most variables examined in the qualitative methodology, the influence was higher among men.

The in-depth interviews show that the compulsory service is a unique social experience from the women's perspective. The salient aspect is coping with a dogmatic system controlled by men and leading a clear masculine culture. The scope of coping presented by women includes coping with the commanding level that is generally masculine. They describe overcoming this difficulty as success, also the ability to express an independent opinion, argue and convince. For most women this is a formative experience in this context.

The unique aspect of female service is the ability to successfully cope with challenges that are mainly masculine. This in addition to developing their own social skills, and interacting with other culture. This supports the claim related to women's ability to develop in a masculine society in view of the barriers and gender limitations in the IDF (Sasson-Levy, 2014). In addition, the difference between men and women in relation to the effect of the service is the essence of the experience – for women this is a significant social experience while for the men it is a combined experience, mainly operational or professional – target oriented, integrated with a social challenge.

This may explain why the gender variable in the quantitative analysis was insignificant, as the service appears to be a social experience for both groups.

Military service affects social concepts differently between men and women on several levels. The service is an empowering experience for women – they feel they can prove themselves, acquire self-confidence, improves their communication skills. The service provides them with an opportunity to better integrate in the civil world. Nevertheless, Women abstain from continuing in the career army under the current system. They tend to support a professional army, which is conceived as more enabling and understanding female advantages, where they can maximize their potential more effectively.

Women view the professional army as more egalitarian platform, supporting the theory of the post-modern army (Moskos, 2000), that social elements are expressed better in the professional army since it integrates a larger variety of people in a gender context. This theory is even more valid in an era where the battle field becomes more technological. The physiological context is less dominant in such an army; hence women get more opportunities.

The findings discover a conflict within the position of the women – on the one hand they present military service as a formulating experience for coping with male dominance, an experience that provides important skills in civil life. On the other hand, they support the transition to a professional army, where gender conflicts are reduced.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The current findings show variances in the implications of compulsory army duty within the gender context. Females feel they can prove themselves in a masculine environment, they are more empowered than the men in inter-personal skills. They believe the army prepares them better for the challenges of civil life. For men the experience of the service combines coping with an operational or professional challenge together with social interaction.

Both genders emphasize the social advantages of compulsory army duty, while criticizing the military system with low effectiveness in utilizing manpower. Both genders view service in a professional army as an opportunity for women, but men prefer the current model of a national army. It is possible that men intend to preserve their hegemony in a citizen soldier army.

In sum, the study clarifies the unique contribution of compulsory army duty among women. As time passes, women increase their support of the professional army model, and maybe this is the direction the army will adopt in the future. It is possible that the Israeli society is moving towards a post-modern era. The IDF is conceived even today as the 'tribal fire' and becomes a more utilitarian platform. The transition into a professional army will mark a deep change in social concepts within the Israeli society, that hitherto concentrated on collectiveness and solidarity.

Such a process requires a change in the models of enlisting in the army, an army based on volunteering form long-term army service and requires practical examination – is the IDF preparing itself in the interim for such a dramatic change? Will the professional army still be considered the 'tribal fire'? These may be crucial questions for the Israeli society that has become more divided and conflicted during the past years. The compulsory army duty, requiring most youth to enlist, has been a bridge over these divisions.

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Ronen Itsik Ph.D candidate, "A Battlefield of Social challenges Military Service and Female Empowerment." *International Journal of Business and Management Invention (IJBMI)*, vol. 10(02), 2021, pp. 42-50. Journal DOI- 10.35629/8028