

What is the Appropriate Model for Female Service in the IDF?

Pnina Sharvit Baruch

In Israel's 2013 election campaign a great deal of attention was paid to the subject of ultra-Orthodox conscription into the IDF. However, although this subject has direct implications for the service of women in the IDF, due to the demands for separation in the course of military service between ultra-Orthodox soldiers and women, the issue of service of women in the IDF was hardly the subject of public discussion. Moreover, when a ministerial committee headed by Minister Yaakov Peri¹ was established to examine the issue of ultra-Orthodox conscription, a female minister was appointed to the commission only in response to the protest of women's organizations.² As a result, Minister Limor Livnat was appointed as a member of the committee, and at her initiative and urging, the issue was discussed by the committee, with the participation of Brigadier General (res.) Gila Kalifi-Amir, former Women's Affairs Advisor to the Chief of the General Staff, and myself.³ As a result of the discussion, the committee's conclusions included a clause stipulating that the conscription of ultra-Orthodox men be conducted in a manner that does not impact detrimentally on the status of women in the IDF, and a provision to this effect was introduced in the draft bill on the subject deliberated by the parliamentary committee chaired by then-MK Ayelet Shaked.⁴ This clause was also included in the final wording of the Law in Section 26, which stipulates: "The status and integration of female military entrants in the security services will not be infringed upon due to the security service of yeshiva graduates and the graduates of ultra-Orthodox educational institutions under this Chapter."⁵ Another directive pertaining to the service of women that was included in the bill is the proposal to extend the service of women by four months, to 28 months, in parallel to

the reduction of service for men from 36 to 32 months. This proposal also appears in the final version of the law itself but its implementation has been postponed to a later date, as will be discussed below.

This introduction illustrates a number of typical aspects of the issue of women's service in the IDF. The first is the fact that it is an issue that is regarded as marginal. There are always more pressing issues on the Israeli agenda in general and in the security realm in particular, as reflected in its discussion as a peripheral topic in the context of the "major" issue of ultra-Orthodox conscription. Second, the issue is always classified as a "sectoral" matter of interest primarily to women. Had it not been for the work of Limor Livnat it is doubtful that the issue would have been advanced in the government. Indeed, the issue was also raised in the Knesset primarily by women's organizations and female Knesset members. Men sometimes provide support and backing, but it is rare for them to take the initiative on such issues. A third aspect is the typical perspective underlying the discourse, whereby women need to be protected and their rights must be balanced against the security interests of the system. In other words, the presence of women in the military is to a certain extent perceived as a "burden" and obstacle to the fulfillment of national interests. While the enlistment of all ultra-Orthodox is defined as an essential interest, the need to protect the rights of women and find a solution for their needs is regarded as a burden with the potential to hinder the fulfillment of the primary interest.

These aspects have a direct impact on the motivation of women to serve in the IDF. Like all people, women are not interested in being where they feel less valued. Increasing the motivation of women to serve is therefore linked to the broader issue of the advancement of the status of women in the IDF. The question, then, is what should be done in order to reach this goal. One option is the use of a discourse of rights, meaning, an emphasis on the right of women to equality and equal opportunity. Realization of this right requires working via public channels, women's organizations, female politicians, and female media figures, and simultaneously through legal channels such as the High Court of Justice (HCJ). This is a legitimate and important course of action that has achieved most of the advancement on this issue thus far. Prominent in this regard is the HCJ judgement in the petition of Alice Miller, submitted by the women's lobby more than a decade ago, which resulted in the opening up of the Israeli Air Force's pilots training course to women.⁶ An alternative approach is the discourse of interests, i.e., emphasis on the

fact that the service of women in the IDF is in the interests of the security system itself. In this way, the discussion is not framed as an effort to find a balance between national security and women's rights, but rather that the service of women in the IDF is understood, in and of itself, as advancing the basic interests of the IDF and the State of Israel. The advantage of the latter strategy lies in the fact that it is not based on viewing women as passive players who need to be protected but rather on the understanding that what benefits women benefits the system, and that there is a shared interest in promoting the issue. Of course, one approach does not preclude the other, and it is possible and preferable to employ both simultaneously.

The Enlistment of Women in the IDF since the Establishment of Israel

Upon the establishment of the IDF it was decided to enlist women, and a women's corps was set up based on the concept of the IDF as "an army of men assisted by women." In accordance with this approach, 70 percent of the women conscripts served as clerks and in other traditional auxiliary positions. Until the mid-1970s, 44 percent of the service positions in the IDF were not open to women. Between the 1970s and the 1990s, there was a massive process of force re-organization whereby more men were directed toward combat positions, resulting in the coining of the phrase "women substitute for men," referring to the training of women for professional positions to solve the manpower shortage in positions that had been vacated by men (combat instructors, armorers, drivers, airplane mechanics, radio and signal operators, etc.). Beginning in the mid-1990s, and as a result of the 1995 H CJ ruling in the matter of Alice Miller, military service began to be perceived as an issue of rights, and the demand for official equal opportunity increased, alongside a rejection of the bureaucratic and economic excuses used to justify the failure to afford equality.⁷

In 2007, then-head of the IDF Manpower Directorate, Major General Elazar Stern, appointed a committee headed by former Manpower Directorate head General (res.) Yehuda Segev, comprising senior male and female officers and selected academics. The purpose of the committee was to engage in shaping the service of women in the IDF for the decade to come. The committee's conclusions, submitted in September 2007, included far-reaching recommendations aimed at achieving fundamental equality between men

and women in the IDF. However, many of these recommendations have yet to be implemented.

Today, women account for approximately 30 percent of all those serving in the IDF. More than 40 percent of the women in Israel do not enlist, including ultra-Orthodox women (with the exception of an extremely small number), most religious women, Arab women, Druze women, women falsely declaring themselves as religious, and women who are not conscripted due to a lack of suitability.⁸ According to the IDF spokesperson, 92 percent of all positions in the IDF are currently open to women.⁹ However, in practice, many of these positions are only theoretically accessible to women and are not actually filled by them. Positions that used to be considered male positions are staffed by women at a rate of 28 percent.¹⁰ Indeed, there are still some positions in which no women, or very few, serve, and not only in distinctly combat units such as special units and infantry units, which are completely closed off to women. On the other hand, administrative positions that were once considered to be female positions are now assigned with equality, and many men today serve as clerks.¹¹ Despite this progress, and although women make up 50 percent of the officers in compulsory service, the percentage of women drops among the higher ranks, to approximately 25 percent of all captains and majors and 13 percent of all lieutenant colonels. Continuing up the ladder, we find only 24 female colonels, 13 female brigadier generals, and one female major general (out of hundreds of officers holding the rank of colonel and above). The figures are those of mid-2013.¹²

Utilizing Female Human Resources in the IDF and the Duration of Service

The Segev Report offers proposals and solutions for changing the public discourse and thereby leading to a perception of women in the IDF as a resource that should be cultivated out of the interests of the security system itself. The report's recommendation for significantly advancing the integration of women in the IDF is based not on an effort to fulfill women's rights to equality, but rather on the rationale of a more effective use of resources that will benefit women and the military alike. According to the report, the realization of this vision must proceed by changing the principle of utilization of human resources to a principle of "the right person in the right place," whereby "men and women are utilized in their service in an identical manner, according to relevant criteria reflecting the needs of the

IDF and the motivation, abilities, and individual qualities of the enlistees, and not according to their gender.” To this end, the Segev Report recommends merging the human resources systems and equalizing the duration of service of women and men in the IDF.¹³

Actualization of the vision articulated by the Segev Report, therefore, requires the merger of the IDF’s HR systems, which are currently separate for men and women, into one unified system, beginning with the selection and placement systems. Today, when men and women undergo separate and different selection processes, gaps exist. Still, the merger of systems is not enough. Concrete change also requires equalization of the duration of the service of men and women holding the same positions. As long as significant differences remain in the duration of service, women will not be assigned the vast majority of significant positions that require extensive training. Although in some cases women have the option to volunteer to extend their service so that it is equal in length to the service of men – and thereby attain such positions – this is not a systemic solution, as it saddles the young women in question with the burden of making the difficult decision to volunteer for considerable extended service. Moreover, from the systemic perspective, the IDF has no way of anticipating the number of women that will agree to volunteer. It is therefore unable to rely on female resources and has no reason to invest in making the necessary modifications for absorbing them into a unit (such as suitable living quarters, adjustments in the weight of equipment, etc.). For this reason, some positions remain inaccessible even to female volunteers.

As already noted, the possibility of extending the duration of service for women was discussed by the Shaked Committee appointed to deal with the legislation relating to ultra-Orthodox conscription. The draft bill contained a proposal to shorten the service of men to 32 months and lengthen that of women to 28 months, leaving only a four-month gap between the compulsory service of men and women. In a discussion in the Knesset, Major General Orna Barbivai, who was then heading the Manpower Directorate, explained that the reduction in the duration of male service required extension of the duration of female service in order to prevent insurmountable gaps in human resources. That is to say, the extension of female service came at the initiative of the IDF in pursuit of the interests of the system. In the course of the committee discussions, IDF representatives guaranteed that if the duration of service were extended, the selection and placement processes for

men and women would be almost completely equalized for most positions. In addition, it would be possible to standardize the service of women in different positions that today, due to the long period of training, require them to volunteer, so that in practice, women would be assigned additional meaningful positions (without requiring them to volunteer). Still, the IDF representatives did not agree to commit to immediate equalization of the selection, standardization, and placement processes prior to the passage of the legislation.

In the Shaked Committee discussions, the proposal to extend the service of women was opposed by a number of voices that addressed the issue from various perspectives.¹⁴ The motivation of some opponents was ideological, as in the case of some of the religious Zionist representatives who took part in the discussions, whose position was that the presence of women in the IDF only weakens the military and prevents fulfillment of the concept of “our camp will be pure.” Others based their opposition on the desire to protect the women themselves, as with MK Merav Michaeli, who maintained that the service of women should not be extended until the military guaranteed them full equality. This, she stipulated, would involve opening up all positions (including combat positions) to women and fundamentally changing the perception of women in the IDF. Another position articulated in opposition to the proposal, for example by MK Elazar Stern, held that the extension of women’s service would mean placing a greater burden on those already serving, who account for only approximately half of the women in Israel, instead of focusing on expanding conscription and drawing in elements who are not already serving.¹⁵ Instead, it was argued, the best route to facilitate the integration of women into additional jobs is not in the extension of regular service but rather in the allocation of standard standing army positions for jobs requiring a longer duration of service.

Proponents of the proposal to extend the service of women in the current legislation maintained that it already made sense to implement the extension of four months as a first step to full equalization of the durations of service of men and women. The main reason cited by the supporters of this approach was the fact that such immediate implementation through legislation, while making sure that the military made good on its commitment to equalize the tracks of placement and standardize new positions, would propel the system toward greater equality of opportunity for women now, instead of waiting for the system to change and only then equalizing the duration of service.

According to this approach although the IDF might ultimately extend the service of women without guaranteeing them equal opportunity, this is a calculated risk that needs to be taken. Because the army has explicitly committed itself to equalize its selection and placement tracks, it would subsequently be possible to criticize, and even challenge in court, failure to fulfill this undertaking. The underlying premise of this position is that as long as a significant gap exists in the duration of service between women and men there will be no gender equality in the IDF. Women will not be assigned meaningful positions and will continue to be considered “second class” soldiers, to use the words of the former female head of the Manpower Directorate. The idea of standard standing army positions sounds promising; however, the chances of funds being allocated for this purpose, particularly in the present era of cuts to the security budget, are slim. This approach is consistent with my position on the matter as I presented it during the committee discussions.

The debate on the duration of service of women is related to the question whether the IDF should transition into a system of differential service, that is, one that sets a different duration of service for different positions, as recommended by the Segev Report. One argument offered by opponents of extending the duration of women’s service is that military service is, in any event, a waste of time for many of the women (and men) serving in the IDF, and that there is therefore no justification for extending service instead of discharging this personnel to enter the labor force and the realm of academic study, where they can make more substantial contributions. Differential service based on the position and nature of service, as opposed to gender, will solve this problem. The weighty questions raised with regard to differential service require separate analysis, and for the sake of the present discussion, whether the duration of service remains uniform for all or whether differential service is set according to the position in question is of no consequence; what matters is to put an end to the distinction based on gender so that instead of the existing separate provisions in the law for the conscription of men and women, there will be one provision dealing with all conscripts, regardless of gender.

To date, the duration of service for women has not been extended. Although a clause was introduced into the law stipulating a four-month extension of service for women and empowering the defense minister to decide on equalization of the assessment, selection, and placement processes for

men and women, this clause's implementation was made conditional upon the enactment of regulations on the subject that can only be presented to the Foreign Affairs and Security Committee between July 2016 and July 2019.¹⁶ This strange arrangement means the rejection of the idea, at least at present. One hopes that it is only a delay, and that the required regulations will ultimately be enacted, the necessary changes made, and the duration of service extended.

The Nature of the Positions that are Open to Women

Discussions on the service of women in the IDF tend to focus on the suitability of women for combat positions. This was also true in the Shaked Committee, where some participants limited their focus to the question of whether women could serve as fighters in the General Staff Reconnaissance Unit or Golani – and answered negatively. This aspect of the discussion is typically heated and emotionally charged and includes points that are pertinent, such as the fear of women being taken prisoner, as well as others that reveal the prejudices of those making them, such as the assertion that women would endanger the forces due to their “hysterical” and “cowardly” nature, or the charge that the presence of women would weaken the men and harm the cohesion and the sense of brotherhood that exists in such units.

Without going into depth, or, to be more precise, into the shallow nature of such arguments, it is important to point out that the question of the integration of women into infantry units is not the essence of the discussion, and the tendency to divert it in this direction in order to decide it on this basis reflects an element of demagogy. It is clear that this is not truly the crux of the issue, as most positions in the IDF are not actually field combat positions in infantry units. There is a wide variety of extremely meaningful positions – including combat positions – that do not require the soldier to carry 70 kilograms on his or her back for 50 kilometers. The rule should be that women can hold any position unless there are objective prerequisites that women cannot fulfill, and that only then is it justified to refrain from integrating them into such positions. This issue does not need to be resolved by legislation, but rather within the framework of the professional criteria of the military itself.

According to the remarks made by Women's Affairs Advisor to the Chief of the General Staff Brigadier-General Rachel Tevet-Weisel in the course of the Shaked Committee discussions, positions are closed off to women based

on three parameters taken together: inability to carry out the operational mission; inability to endure the operational environment, meaning the field conditions in which the mission is supposed to be carried out; and limited scope, meaning that in the event of an insufficient potential pool of suitable female candidates, there is no reason to invest resources in making the required adaptations to enable women to serve in the position in question. On the surface, these parameters appear to be reasonable. However, when we decide what constitutes an obstacle to a woman by virtue of her being a woman, it is important not to introduce prejudices into the discussion, including claims regarding “hysteria” and lack of toughness. Women should not be kept away from the front lines in general, nor do I find the concern of a woman soldier being taken prisoner convincing. Although concerns regarding sexual abuse are serious, male prisoners may also be subjected to abuse and torture, including sexual assault, and the injury they sustain as a result is not necessarily any less serious.

Another argument against the integration of women into combat positions is the lack of worth in investing in the effort due to the small number of women who are actually interested in service of this kind. Indeed, men and women are characterized by physical differences. Moreover, boys and girls are treated differently from birth, and face different social conceptions regarding what is expected of them. This reality undoubtedly has an impact on the motivation of women to hold combat positions. Nonetheless, the path to such positions for suitable female candidates who, despite everything, are interested and may succeed in them, should not be blocked as a matter of course. Furthermore, women who do manage to attain such positions must endure an extremely difficult process of contending with a male environment that is not always friendly, to say the least. This requires mental fortitude that not all men (or women) possess, and in part explains the reluctance of many women to undergo this experience. Still, this was true of every new area that women have joined. In this context, we need only recall how difficult it was initially for women to go from being secretaries to being managers, from being nurses to being doctors, from being actresses to being directors, and so forth. The presence of women in these professions is now taken for granted, and their contributions in these fields undeniable. In light of the above, the small number of potential candidates for various positions may initially justify a technical solution, such as their concentration in a specific conscription cycle. However, the placement of women in such positions must

not be completely prevented and the necessary adaptations must be made to facilitate their placement and service. Otherwise, the result will be a vicious cycle that ensures the continued exclusion of women from these positions.

The process of making the changes necessary to accommodate women in different positions is known as “gender mainstreaming” and involves adapting the system and the working environment for the integration of women. An example of such an adaptation might be the installation of a switch or a handle that is appropriate for the proportions and the strength of the arm of an average woman. Awareness of such elements are necessary from the planning stage in order to prevent a small switch from becoming a physical obstacle to the possibility of integrating women, which is a missed opportunity not only for women but also, and more significantly, for the military organization as a whole, which is thereby rendered unable to effectively utilize its manpower. This recommendation also appears in the Segev Report and, to a certain extent, is already implemented by the IDF.¹⁷

The Treatment and Advancement of Women in the IDF

Another recommendation of the Segev Report has to do with the institution of a “gender code” to define behavioral norms to ensure the equal and respectful treatment of women. According to IDF representatives, there has been improvement in the IDF with regard to the awareness and treatment of cases of sexual harassment.¹⁸ Without detracting from the importance of this issue, however, it is also necessary to undermine chauvinist and sexist conceptions and attitudes that do not reach the level of harassment. Moreover, although it is important to increase awareness of the issue among men, it is no less important to reinforce women’s awareness of their right (and obligation) to insist on receiving equal and respectful treatment. This requires an educational process beginning in school and even in preschool. Women need to be able to demand appropriate treatment, and there must be internal legitimacy within the IDF to raise complaints regarding such issues.

This aspect is also related to another subject mentioned above – the “appropriate integration” between women and religious soldiers in the IDF. With regard to ultra-Orthodox soldiers, as mentioned above, the new law explicitly stipulates that their conscription should be undertaken in a manner that has no detrimental impact on the status of women. At the same time, claims of the exclusion of women and their diversion from various positions and locations have also been made in the context of their encounter with

religious soldiers who are not classified as ultra-Orthodox. This dynamic is the product of the larger number of religious soldiers in the IDF and the intensification of religious extremism among some of them, and, in relation to the present discussion, has been visible particularly in the context of various demands for modesty and separation.¹⁹ This is not an abstract concern and it is essential to remain on guard: all acts of removal, exclusion, or excessive downplaying or concealing of women must be halted, and religious considerations should not be permitted to influence assignments and promotions. This matter is addressed by an updated order regarding “appropriate integration,” known as the “joint service” order, which is meant to resolve such issues with greater resolve. This order should be approved as soon as possible. The violation of the basic rights of those serving in the army cannot be justified without appropriate justification simply in order to protect the “feelings” of a different population.

Another important aspect has to do with the advancement of women within the military system. The state of affairs today is unsatisfactory, to say the least. The number of women holding ranks of colonel and above is extremely low. This situation exists not only in combat units but also in distinctly rear formations, such as the Home Front Command and other such bodies. Opening up a larger number of meaningful positions to women is likely to improve the situation in the long run but is not, in itself, a sufficient solution. It therefore also makes sense to consider instituting quotas, or at least affirmative action, so that in cases in which two candidates meet the criteria to an equal extent, preference will be given to the appointment of women. The Segev Report likewise recommends setting quantitative targets for the advancement of women to senior ranks, based on the premise that there is sometimes no choice but to start changes from the top, instead of waiting for them to emerge gradually, from the bottom. Breaking through glass ceilings without external assistance is extremely difficult and sometimes impossible.

Beyond its significance for actualizing the right to equality and increasing the motivation of women to serve in the IDF, the integration of women into senior positions can serve to directly advance the interests of the IDF. Women and men do not necessarily always think differently about everything, but they do sometimes have divergent perspectives, and the more points of view represented in a decision making forum, the better the resulting process.²⁰ Moreover, the mere inclusion of a larger portion of the population within

the pool of people competing for senior positions increases the possibility of finding and appointing high quality individuals, and, in this case, high quality women.

It is important to emphasize that the ball is not only in the men's court; women must also make demands of themselves – to reach the most demanding jobs and compete for command positions. Although it is no easy task to hold a senior position in the IDF while at the same time bearing most of the responsibility for the family (and today most woman bear the majority of the burden in this context), there is also a significant trend in which husbands are willing and interested in playing a more significant role at home, which may serve to ease the burden on women.²¹ In addition, in order to encourage women to compete for senior positions, and based on recognition of the contribution made by women holding these positions, the military system would do well to take family considerations into account and to ease, to the greatest extent possible, the combination between family life and service in the IDF (this would also be beneficial for men serving in the IDF, who frequently miss out on spending time with their children at critical stages of their lives). For example, greater efforts to adhere to the timetables for meetings – both in terms of refraining from unnecessary rescheduling and starting and ending meetings on time – would save the army many wasted man (and woman) hours²² and would also allow for the better combination of professional and family obligations on the part of IDF personnel. Moreover, my own experience has taught me that, at least for those serving in headquarters positions, a more efficient working framework during the day can enable getting home at a reasonable hour most days, without necessarily detracting from the quality or quantity of the work being done.

Conclusion

The motivation of women to serve in the IDF is directly related to their status in the IDF: the way in which they are treated, their ability to hold meaningful positions, and their horizon of advancement. All these are in need of improvement.

In every discussion on this issue, it is important to understand that the service of women in the IDF is important for advancing the interests of the IDF as a whole, beyond its significance for the women themselves. From the perspective of the IDF, it is first and foremost a question of the values of the IDF and its classification as a liberal and egalitarian military. In

addition, the failure to completely integrate women into the IDF reflects a missed opportunity to effectively utilize significant potential for high quality personnel that can contribute to the efforts of the IDF to achieve its goals. From the perspective of women themselves, what happens in the IDF has an impact on them not only during their service, but also in terms of their opportunities after their service, in light of the great impact that military service has on professional opportunities in civilian life, and in light of the access enjoyed by senior officers after their discharge to power centers in the realms of business, politics, and society in Israel. This issue may also have implications for the personal development of women and their self-esteem and self-identity during a decisive period in their life. When a woman is given the message that from a professional perspective she is unimportant and insignificant during her military service, this conception is likely to have an impact on other areas of her life.

In addition to the benefits that the IDF can derive from actualizing meaningful service for women, such a process would also undoubtedly benefit the public service sector and the labor market in Israel. The state benefits significantly from the high quality human resources discharged from the IDF, which receives training through a wide variety of channels, contends with complex challenges in the course of military service, and subsequently puts skills to use in civilian life. It would be a shame if high quality women were not also able to undergo these processes, as this would mean a failure to make effective use of their full potential, not only during military service but afterward as well.

The State of Israel is currently facing many challenges on both the domestic and the international level, some of which have proven difficult to solve in a satisfactory manner. The advancement of women in the IDF is a challenge with solutions that are known, clear, and implementable. All that is required is the decision to implement them. Hopefully, the security and government establishment will succeed in making the right decisions.

Notes

- 1 The Ministerial Committee “To Promote Sharing the Burden in Military Service, Civilian Service, and the Labor Force,” led by Minister Yaakov Peri, was appointed by the Israeli Government in April 2013.

- 2 Gili Cohen, “Female Reserve Officers to the Prime Minister: A Woman is Needed on the Committee to Determine Equality in Sharing the Burden,” *Haaretz*, April 8, 2013, <http://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politi/1.1988162>.
- 3 We were invited to the discussion as representatives of Forum Dvora – Women in Foreign Policy and National Security, a voluntary forum of women engaged with these areas.
- 4 The Special Committee to Discuss the Bill Regarding Equal Sharing of the Burden in Military Service, Civilian Service, and the Labor Market, and to Resolve the Status of Yeshiva Students, hereinafter the “Shaked Committee.”
- 5 In addition, as part of the amendment in question, Section 26.28(4) of the Security Service Law obligates the Defense Minister to update annually the Knesset’s Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee regarding the impact of the law’s implementation on military service in the past year, including issues pertaining to the status and integration of women in military service. It was also determined that a report in accordance with this section would be delivered to the Knesset Committee for the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality.
- 6 H.C.J. 4541/94, *Alice Miller v. Minister of Defense*, PD 49(4), p. 94 (in Hebrew); for an English translation of the ruling, see <http://www.dindayan.com/rulings/94045410.z01.pdf>. In the spirit of this ruling, an amendment was introduced to the Security Service Law in 2000 (Section 16a) that stipulated that every woman possesses an equal right to that of a man to fill any position in military service, unless such differentiation is required by the essence and the nature of the position.
- 7 This description is drawn from the September 2007 report of the Committee for the Design of Women’s Service in the IDF in the Coming Decade, chaired by Major General (res.) Yehuda Segev (hereafter, the Segev Report). The report was never officially released but was leaked to the media and has been quoted in other public reports and publications.
- 8 The provision of an automatic exemption to any woman who declares herself to be religious is a problematic issue that also has impact on women’s motivation to enlist and serve. It is also an issue clearly in need of legislative correction, but this is beyond the the scope of this article. With regard to the conscription of religious women, the IDF is working toward encouraging expanded enlistment within these groups through the provision of suitable conditions. Michal Gelberd, “”Serving in Skirts: In the IDF, the Effort Continues to Enlist Religious Girls,” IDF website, November 8, 2013, <http://www.idf.il/1133-19844-HE/IDFGDover.aspx>.
- 9 Rotem Pessó, “Indications in the IDF of Progress in Improved Integration of Women in All Realms, with an Emphasis on the Technological Realm: Sources in the Manpower Directorate Stress that the Trend Will Continue,” IDF website, March 8, 2013, <http://www.idf.il/1133-18483-he/Dover.aspx>.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Ibid.

- 12 The above data is based on the remarks of Brigadier General Rachel Tevet-Weisel, Women's Affairs Advisor to the Chief of the General Staff, at a conference held in June 2013. Rotem Pessó, "Women's Affairs Advisor to the Chief of the General Staff: Supports the Extension of Women's Service in the Name of the Principle of Equality," IDF website, June 8, 2013, <http://www.idf.il/1133-19406-he/Dover.aspx>.
- 13 For details regarding the conclusions and recommendations of the Segev Report, see the document "The Service of Women in the IDF," published by the Knesset Research and Information Center on May 16, 2013, <http://www.knesset.gov.il/mmm/data/pdf/m03209.pdf>.
- 14 The committee's main discussion on this subject took place on August 28, 2013, although the minutes of this session have not been posted on the Knesset website. See: http://www.knesset.gov.il/protocols/heb/protocol_search.aspx. The above information is therefore based on my own personal notes from the discussion. A brief report of some of the proceedings appears on the Knesset website in the committee announcements of August 28, 2013, http://main.knesset.gov.il/Activity/Committees/ArmyService/News/Pages/pr_280813.aspx.
- 15 A similar argument was made by attorney Mike Blass, who appeared before the committee during its meeting of October 29, 2013, the minutes of which appear on the Knesset website. See *Ibid*.
- 16 Sections 2 and 15 of the Security Service Law (Amendment No. 19), 2014.
- 17 On this subject, see, among other sources, Brigadier General (res.) Gila Kalifi-Amir's article "Assimilating a Gendered View – A New Strategy in the IDF for Promoting Equality of Opportunity," *Maarachot* 436 (2011): 28-35, <http://maarachot.idf.il/PDF/FILES/1/112901.pdf>.
- 18 Rotem Pessó, "A Troubling Matter: An All-IDF Campaign to Address Awareness of Sexual Harassment," IDF Spokesperson Website, February 10, 2013, <http://www.idf.il/1133-18265-he/Dover.aspx>. See also Michal Gelberd, "The IDF Marks the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women," IDF Spokesperson Website, November 26, 2013, <http://www.idf.il/1133-20027-HE/IDFGDover.aspx>.
- 19 See the analysis offered in Karmit Haber and Pnina Sharvit Baruch, "The Service of Women in the IDF – A Continued Focused Effort or Regression?" a position paper of the Institute for National Security Studies and the Israel Democracy Institute, 2013, <http://heb.inss.org.il/index.aspx?id=4354&articleid=96>.
- 20 For the sake of comparison, in July 2011, the financial newspaper *Globes* reported that in the three largest sectors of the economy, the companies that stood out in terms of their rate of return for 2011 had relatively more women on their boards of directors. Yael Gruntman, "A Study Indicates that Boards with More Women Have Higher Returns," *Globes*, July 17, 2011, <http://www.globes.co.il/news/article.aspx?did=1000663862>.

- 21 Hila Weisberg, “Changing Directions: More and More Men are Willing to Forego Advancement at Work for the Sake of the Family,” *The Marker*, March 5, 2014, <http://www.themarker.com/career/1.2261737>.
- 22 See, for example, the opinion piece by Major Ariel Amichai, “It’s A Waste of Time,” *Maarachot* 437 (2011): 83-85, <http://maarachot.idf.il/PDF/FILES/0/112980.pdf>.