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Competition and Exclusion: Explaining Anti-Feminist Religious Rhetoric in the Israeli Defense Force

Yagil Levy

האוניברסיטה הפתוחה, הקריה ע"ש דורותי דה רוטשילד, דרך האוניברסיטה 1, רעננה 43537, ouri-ppes@openu.ac.il
The Open University of Israel, The Dorothy de Rothschild Campus, 1 University Road, Raanana 43537 Israel

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Abstract

Two social changes that have taken place within the Israel Defense Forces – feminism and religiosity – are marching toward a confrontation. The clash is between two groups that have significantly increased their presence in the combat units since the 1990s. This clash has gradually taken the form of religious rhetoric that has turned from, traditionally, refraining from publicly questioning women's fitness as combatants to discourse that gradually delegitimizes women's service.

Borrowing the theoretical theme of the *split labor market*, I will argue that there is a link between the extent to which the growing introduction of women into field units threatens to devalue the religious youngsters' symbolic rewards and the escalation of anti-feminist rhetoric, gradually aimed at excluding women from the military.

Two social changes that have taken place within the Israel Defense Forces – feminism and religiosity – are marching toward a confrontation. The clash is between two groups that have significantly increased their presence in the combat units since the 1990s – first, religious groups, then women, albeit in less significant numbers – by overcoming cultural barriers. This clash has gradually taken the form of religious rhetoric that has turned from, traditionally, refraining from publicly questioning women's fitness as combatants to discourse that gradually delegitimizes women's service.

Based on the theoretical theme of the *split labor market*, I will argue that there is a link between the extent to which the growing introduction of women into field units threatens to devalue the religious youngsters' symbolic rewards and the escalation of anti-feminist rhetoric, gradually aimed at excluding women from the military.

The first section presents the background to this clash and the puzzle concerning the response of the religious sector. It is followed by a section presenting the

theoretical theme of the split labor market and its application to the military sphere to analyze intergroup conflicts. Based upon this theme, the third section analyzes the clash between the groups, leading, in the concluding section, to the development of theoretical conclusions.

Background and Puzzle

Israel is faithful to the draft system. Historically, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) is the only Western army that drafts women as part of an egalitarian ethos. Nevertheless, women have been relegated to the sidelines and have served mainly in auxiliary roles because of their alleged unfitness for combat. By linking masculinity with military service, the demeaned position of women in the army was transferred from the military to the civilian sphere (Berkovitch, 1997; Robbins and Ben-Eliezer, 2000; Yuval-Davis, 1985). Male-based soldiering dominates the public sphere while the family embodies the private-domestic sphere - the domain of women (Herzog, 2004). At the same time, religious women have traditionally, at the request of the religious parties, been exempted from military service by law and only some of them serve on a voluntary basis (see below).

A watershed for the feminist movement as regard military service was Alice Miller's petition to the High Court of Justice in 1995. The court accepted Miller's complaint about the rejection of her application to the pilots' training course, and as a result this course was subsequently opened up to women. Miller's struggle was backed by women's organizations and female members of the Knesset (Israeli Parliament) who, for the first time, put military service on their agenda.

Indeed, in 2000, the *Security Service Law* was amended to state that equality would be maintained throughout the military. At the same time, manpower shortfalls drove the IDF to offer better opportunities to women and thereby utilize their human capital (Rapaport, 2007). Consequently, the percentage of jobs open to women rose from 56% in the 1980s to about 90% in 2010; and while in 2001 only 1% of the combat roles were occupied by women this number rose to 3% in 2010, who could volunteer for them (unlike men, who were obligated to serve in most of them). Concurrently, the proportion of women serving as clerks decreased from 26% to 13% in the years 1998-2008. Barriers have been reduced but have not completely

disappeared, as the remaining 10% of the jobs which are still closed to women are mostly combat roles (Chief of Staff 's Advisor on Women's Issues, 2009; Lerer, 2010).

Until the 1970s, religious recruits were also in practice excluded from significant positions (mainly in combat) within the IDF because of their fears about coming into close contact with secular conscripts in mixed combat units, with the secularization impact that this might have. This anxiety led many of them into auxiliary roles and away from the possibility of a military career (see Cohen, 2004). Demographically, about 20% of the Israeli Jewish population is orthodox, about 40% of whom define themselves as ultra-orthodox (*haredi*), namely, members of the most theologically conservative wing of Judaism, some sects of which are non-Zionist. While the former serve in the drafted military, the ultra-orthodox are exempted in accordance with an historical deal between the ruling parties and the *haredi* parties.

Since the 1980s, an increasing number of religious youngsters, particularly national-religious youngsters who link religion with national mission, have been joining the combat ranks. Two interacting factors account for this change. The first was the gradual recognition among religious Zionist youth that the time had come to challenge the secular middle class (mostly Jews of European descent), who were identified with the founding of the state and the dominant Labor movement. This was the social group that had founded the IDF, manned its upper echelons, and identified with its achievements. The establishment of *Gush Emunim* ("Bloc of the Faithful"), the ideological foundation that underpinned the settlement project in the West Bank after the October 1973 War, marked a change within national-religious society. It was a shift from an ideology based on a partnership with secular Zionism to an attempt to subject the national project to religious principles and hence to challenge the dominant secular paradigm (Aran, 1990).

This factor overlapped with the decline in motivation to serve among the secular middle class that followed the transformation of Israeli society into a market society, beginning in the mid-1980s, and was exacerbated by the impact of the First Lebanon War (1982-1985), which alienated part of this class, who opposed the political goals the war was allegedly intended to advance, from the IDF. The market society promoted values and interests that competed with those of military service and was among the driving forces behind Israel's peace moves in the 1990s. Religious

youngsters, along with other groups, such as Russian immigrants and the more mobile strata of *Mizrahi* immigrants from Muslim countries, took advantage of this drop in motivation. The vacuum that was left allowed these youngsters, especially the organized and motivated religious group, to succeed in the army and to replace the social stratum that had historically been identified with the IDF. For the national religious group, serving in the IDF helped forge an alternative autonomous identity to the dominant secular Zionist ethos by taking part in promoting the newly defined "common good" of the Israeli community and challenging the secular hegemony in the military, the embodiment of 'new Israeliness' (Levy, 2007a, 85-88).

Constrained by the growing manpower shortfalls, the IDF promoted special arrangements that encouraged the recruitment of religious youngsters to combat units, such as pre-military Torah colleges (*mechinot*), allowing many of the religious conscripts to defer their induction so that they could study for a year at the college for 'spiritual fortification', and *yeshivot hesder* ('arrangement academies') – a special program that enabled Torah study in a *yeshiva* alongside combat service in homogeneously religious frameworks. These frameworks reduced the probability that religious soldiers would be secularized during their military service. Both frameworks are led by rabbis who negotiate with the IDF the terms of the integration of religious conscripts into the military. Military service thus became a significant mobility track for religious youngsters, particularly for those who were promoted to officers. In 2010, the graduates of the religious *mechinot* and *yeshivot hesder* constituted about 10% of the army's combat force (Levy, 2011, 72), a large percentage of religious recruits man the infantry brigades, with a steep rise in the number of religious graduates of the infantry officers' course, from only 2.5% in 1990 to 26% in 2008 (B-Anonymous IDF Senior Officer, 2010, 53), while the overall proportion of religious soldiers in the regular combat units is about 25-30% (Cohen, 2004).

Since the early 2000s, with the growing presence of women in combat units, the two groups have been engaged in a struggle over the mode of their integration. Central to this dispute is the rabbis' demand that religious men and (mostly secular) women be kept separate in combat units, a demand that may re-set barriers to the equal integration of women into these units.

Here is the puzzle: the religious rhetoric has gradually been changed from refraining from publicly questioning women's fitness as combatants to delegitimizing

women's service. Apparently, cultural motives are at work: women's presence in the units threatens religious life, mainly by violating rules of modesty. Nonetheless, religious rhetoric was not limited to the demand for arrangements that would separate religious soldiers from women and thereby protect the religious from this threat, arrangements that the IDF could promote as part of its policies of "diversity management" (Lomsky-Feder and Ben-Ari, 2007). Rather, this rhetoric increasingly extended to the demand for exclusion of women, religious and secular alike, from the ranks.

Israeli scholars have not adduced a sufficient answer to this puzzle. Studies which addressed the religious-feminist conflict (Lerer, 2010; Levy, 2010), mapped the contradictory interests involved but did not explain the dynamics of this clash, which has developed from ignoring the issue to exclusion-oriented rhetoric.

But this gap represents a broader shortfall. Central to the updated, relevant literature of military sociology is the issue of intercultural encounters experienced by armies, and the diversity management they practice to cope with these encounters. The military must adapt, scholars argue, in the light of the new peacekeeping missions that highlight the issue of intercultural competence needed to develop smooth cooperation with other nations' armies and local populations (see, for example, Winslow et al., 2006). More importantly, militaries respond to the empowerment of identity politics to create and preserve sufficient legitimacy with their stakeholders, such as politicians (Soeters and van der Meulen, 2007, 4-5).

This type of study leaves less space for studies dealing with inter-group conflicts. A functionalist tone governs this literature, which is confined to the way militaries cope with new challenges to reinforce their professionalism, effectiveness, cohesiveness and legitimacy. Less attention is paid to conflicts appearing among groups which have already been integrated into the military and the military's (dysfunctional) role in feeding as much as mitigating them. Furthermore, the notion of identity politics focuses on how groups demand fair access to military positions and fair representation in the public sphere. Recognition of diversity thus extends to cultural redesign of the forces to provide a suitable, tolerant cultural environment for different groups, either through integration or separation and autonomy with an effort to create a shared organizational format that could bridge intercultural conflicts. Less

studied, however, are situations in which diversity management leads to exclusion rather than integration by favoring one group over another.

Arguably, the current scholarship may fail to explain the underlying shift in the religious rhetoric. Identity politics may limit itself to institutional arrangements allowing religious soldiers to avoid being in close physical proximity with women for religious reasons (Rosman-Stollman, 2008, 622-623). Exclusionist strategy is not part of the toolkit of identity politics-incited diversity management. More hidden interests must therefore be exposed to identify the linkage between women's integration and the escalation of rhetoric. Answers then should be sought by using an alternative conceptual framework, giving more weight to intergroup competition.

This article tackles the empirical puzzle and the scholarly gap by accomplishing a twofold goal: first, applying, and thereby developing, the theoretical theme of the "split labor market" in the area of intergroup relations within the military; second, using this concept to explain the puzzle, and thus also exhibiting the explanatory power of this theme beyond the case under study.

Two methodological notes are useful. First, a single case study is used here. Robert Yin (2003, 39-40), provided several rationales to justify a single-case over multi-case design, one of them being a "critical case." If a conclusion is inferred from this case, it permits logical deductions of the type, "If this is (not) valid for this case, then it applies to all (no) cases" (Flyvbjerg, 2006, 229-231). A single case can represent a significant contribution to knowledge and theory building. Such a study can even help to refocus future investigations in the entire field, claimed Yin. In the case of Israel, the ethos of the "people army" has traditionally prescribed unabatedly inclusionist policies of recruitment. Thus, if a mainstream group dares to employ exclusionist rhetoric, than the explanation offered for this may permit logical deductions to other cases in which the inclusionary ethos is weaker.

Second, similar to other studies based on the theme of the split labor market, analysis of the strategy opted for by the higher-paid group is not confined to the rhetoric that explicitly and intentionally ties threats with strategic moves. Rather, the study is based on an interpretative approach, connecting rhetoric with interests and challenges or threats. Distinction between types of interests is thus relevant as Isaac (1987) suggested: revealed preferences, which are subjective interests, are not the

same as objective interests, namely what an agent would do under ideal circumstances, and real interests, defined as those norms, values, and purposes implicit in the practice of social life and associated with social roles as principles of action. It follows that building on actors' explicit preferences is not sufficient for understanding their attitude and an interpretive approach is needed to better understand the "practice of social life" that guides and misguides preferences.

The Theoretical Concept – The Split Labor Market Theory

Edna Bonacich (1972) introduced the theory of the split labor market. A split labor market must contain at least two groups of workers whose price of labor differs for the same work. Employers aim at having as cheap and docile a labor force as they can. Cheaper labor is used by employers to undercut wage standards. Therefore, higher paid labor is greatly threatened by the introduction of cheaper labor into the market, fearing that it will either force them to leave the territory or reduce them to its level. If the labor market is split ethnically, class antagonism takes the form of ethnic antagonism.

Two strategies can be deployed by high-paid workers to protect their status:

- Caste – An endeavor to restrict lower-priced workers' access to specific occupations.
- Exclusion – An endeavor to prevent the physical presence of cheaper labor in the employment area, thereby preserving a non-split, higher priced labor market.

Both strategies require effort to build coalitions with powerful allies within the institutional arenas, inasmuch as the state can play an important role in regulating labor competition.

Arguably, the military can be analyzed as a sort of a split labor market. It contains several ethnic and gender groups whose price of labor/service differs for the same work/service. In a conscript military as well as in a volunteer force as a public service (generally maintaining the same level of payment to different groups for the same work), price of labor does not refer to monetary costs. It mainly relates to symbolic rewards that groups expect to reap from their service.

Armies always reward soldiers in ways that are valuable in civilian life. Soldiers figure in two reward systems simultaneously: (1) *material rewards*, which are essentially monetary and generally immediate, such as salaries, pensions, job training, housing, financial aid for higher education, and other social goods; and (2) *symbolic rewards*, which stem from the prestige and honor associated with military service. While material rewards with monetary value have a clear worth outside the military, the value of symbolic rewards in civilian society depends on the social context.

Therefore, convertibility matters, namely, the ability of groups to convert the power they acquire within, and owing to, military service, such as honor and prestige, into valuable social resources – symbolic and material alike – in the civilian sphere. Conversion is the transformation of a symbolic asset from one form to another, while purely monetary rewards are generally not converted (Levy, 2007b).

Most significantly, convertible symbolic reward is attained through the role of military service in setting criteria, and hence serving as a hallmark of citizenship and other rights, from political to social. Conceiving of military sacrifice as the supreme civic obligation fits neatly with the republican tradition that ascribed great value to active participation in democratic politics in order to promote the common good (Oldfield, 1990). The extension of franchise in the U.S. and Europe to women and younger people following wars or the opportunities provided to war veterans by the GI Bill of Rights in post-WW II in the U.S, attest to this linkage.

Hence, groups may compete over convertible assets, such as access to prestigious combat roles, and more importantly, on their convertibility into valuable civilian assets, such as, prestige, power, multiple rights and the advancement of other interests. Struggle meant an endeavor to occupy new positions, or defend those previously possessed, against an external "occupier". The group's price rises or falls with realistic expectations about the symbolic rewards the group seeks to reap from its military service and thereby derives its profile of military motivation to occupy positions or defend exiting ones.

These two modes of reward work at the same time but at a different intensity in conscripted and volunteer forces, alike. Even in a vocational force such as in the U.S., where material rewards are paramount, high-propensity soldiers are strongly influenced by patriotic motives (Woodruff et al., 2006). Patriotism can be perceived

as a sort of symbolic reward, as it embodies an expectation that military service matters on the community level and the individual has a role in promoting this value, the fulfillment of which transforms the soldier from an ordinary into a first-class citizen.

Small wonder that patriotism was wrapped up with religion, in this case conservative evangelicals who have taken over 50% of the military chaplaincy posts and painted the war in Iraq and Afghanistan as a religious war (Marsden, 2011). Religion replaced race by helping create an identity of white, religious soldiers separated from society, which is viewed as weak and corrupt (Sharlet, 2009). In other words, religious patriotism helped create internal hierarchies within the military (for example, Muslim soldiers are less valued in a conflict where "Jesus Killed Mohammed"), with an agenda of manifesting superiority vis-à-vis the rest of society.

In a similar vein, the aims of LGBT organizations at lifting the military's ban on gays in the U.S. military are premised on the understanding that this move is essential for removing other obstacles for equal opportunities in the civilian sphere.

As Levy (2007b) argued, inverse relations are observed between material and symbolic rewards. The military's increased reliance on the former frequently devalues the latter, and vice versa. Therefore, as an employer, the military and its political supervisors may attempt to produce symbolic rewards as a means of lowering the need to deploy higher monetary rewards. For example, despite the vocationalization of the U.S. Army, the republican rhetoric of the citizen-soldier tradition has dominated the public discourse since the 1990s, with voices claiming or granting special rights in return for military service, praising soldiers and veterans as paragons of patriotism and good citizenship and hailing the fallen as model citizens, devoted to the political community. One explanation for this trend may be that in order to reduce the pecuniary costs of a volunteer force, the polity offers soldiers social approbation to compensate for their sacrifice and at relatively low pay (Krebs 2009). Surely, theocratization of the military augments this impact.

At the same time, even if the military deploys symbolic tools, it may still pursue ways to favor one group over another to reduce the price of service by employing a group whose expectations for symbolic rewards are lower, or at least more affordable from the military's perspective. Likewise, it can favor a group whose symbolic

expectations are lower than the material expectations of the other. Indeed, encouragement of women's integration into Western conscripted militaries since the 1960s went hand by hand with the growing alienation of middle-class males from the military. Women's price was lower, limited to expectations for leveraging military service to increase equal opportunities in the civilian sphere, while re-attracting middle-class males entailed offering generous monetary packages. Encouragement of women's integration involved cultural changes allowing such integration. Against this background, the efforts of male-dominated organizations to curtail this integration in the twilight zone between conscription and vocationalization is more understandable.

Inter-group competition may thus evolve either in a direct or an indirect manner. Entrance of the lower-paid group can threaten the higher-paid group directly, by attempting to occupy its position, or indirectly, by affecting the cultural design of the military (such as gender diversity management), thereby devaluing the higher-paid group's already-possessed assets.

To sum up thus far, the theme of the split labor market offers several advantages over alternative concepts used to deal with intercultural tensions in and over military service, by: (1) providing tools to analyze the dynamics of tension in terms of competition; (2) deepening the understanding of intergroup clashes by focusing on military positions in terms of their convertibility to rewards potentially accessed outside the military; accordingly, (3) broadening the scope of competition to deal with indirect patterns as well; (4) differentiating groups' motivations by their expectations (5) giving a more active role to the military command as a "market regulator".

This application of the theoretical theme will be exemplified through the case of Israel and further developed in the concluding section.

The Israeli Military Labor Market

In the Israeli military labor market, the national-religious represents the higher paid labor while women represent the cheaper labor.

Initially, as explained above, military service was viewed as a significant mobility track for religious youngsters in a militarized society, particularly for those who were promoted to officers, and as an opportunity taken by the second generation of *Gush Emunim* to challenge the secular dominance in the military and in society. However,

since the 1990s, a new agenda has been observed among this group leading to increased expectations to produce two symbolic rewards from the service.

The first is de-secularizing the military culture by instilling principles of religious culture among the units. For the religious leadership, the very presence of its youth in the ranks is also part of a spiritual mission through which religious youngsters provide the IDF with dignified values, in the words of the *hesder* leaders, Rabbis Sherlo and Stav, "bringing the fruits of Torah face to face with Israeli society" (2005). The transformation of the role of the army chaplain is an indication of the changes that have taken place. While in the past army chaplains have focused on the institutionalization of religious arrangements to enable a religiously tolerant environment, they have gradually been assigned a new, more general role, focusing on socializing secular soldiers. IDF Chief Rabbi Avi Ronsky, who was appointed in 2006, declared that secular Zionism was in crisis and therefore:

> Part of my job as the chief military rabbi, perhaps the central part, is to reconnect the soldiers with the values of Judaism… This translates into military power because we cannot import the French Legion to fight for us (cited in Ringel-Hoffman, 2006).

Similar to the example of the evangelization of the U.S. military, theocratization of the military mission helps portray the religious groups as paramount relative to the "weaker" seculars. Unlike the U.S. case, however, state and religion are not separated in Israel and the military is defined as a Jewish (albeit not religious) military, a reality that provides tailwind support to theocratization.

The second is theologizing the military mission by protecting the borders of the perceived-holy "Greater Land of Israel," namely the occupied West Bank. Theological, cultural design has gone one step further, beyond just ascribing religious meaning to military activity with the progress of the peace process with the Palestinians after the Oslo Accords of 1993. Since then, rabbis have issued religious decisions (*piskei halacha)* that focused on professional issues and subjected military discipline to theological considerations, such as rules banning religious conscripts from participating in the evacuation of settlements that the peace process may have prescribed. Such decisions were part of the attempt to break the monopoly of secular military thought and were consistent with *Gush Emunim*'s original agenda

(Kimmerling, 1993). With this new agenda, the service price of the religious became higher.

Relative to the religious, women's expectations are more modest. Military service is seen in republican terms of leveraging access to power resources in the civil sphere, or at least, eliminating barriers to such resources. As Knesset Member Naomi Chazan, who promoted equality legislation, argued

> It's not just that some women will now have the opportunity to join the old-boy networks…Men have been used to seeing women as inferior helpers. Now they have to get used to women as equals, even as superiors (cited in Prince-Gibson, 2000).

Therefore, women were mainly focused on the very access to significant positions in the military, more than on the conversion of these to powerful position in the civilian sphere. Beyond formal procedures allowing opening of jobs to women, women activists also successfully struggled to overcome cultural hurdles such as sexual harassment (Amram-Katz, 2005).

Still, limited expectations that made women the cheaper labor force are also derived from the asymmetrical balance of power between religious soldiers and women. The rabbis' influence stems from the organizational infrastructure established by the Zionist religious sector: educational networks, communal settlements, youth movements, *yeshivot hesder* and *mechinot,* as described above, and more. Owing to this infrastructure, the IDF believes that the rabbis have a critical influence on their students, determining their very motivation to enlist into combat roles, and it therefore cultivated a sense of dependency on the rabbis. In the terms of labor market, the religious are "unionized labor."

On the other hand, women are represented by women politicians, NGOs, and the Chief of Staff 's Advisor on Women's Issues, a brigadier-general whose mission is to advance gender equality in the ranks. Without an organizational infrastructure, women's organizations do not intensively interact with women recruits and therefore do not affect their motivation in a manner that may cause the military command to seriously consider their preferences (Levy, 2010).

Yet, from the military's perspective as an employer, the service of both groups became required in light of the drop in motivation of the secular middle-class males. It was able to attract into its ranks what it perceived to be a pool of ideologically motivated religious soldiers that can be used at a time when it was embroiled in politically controversial fighting in Lebanon, which had driven away a considerable proportion of the secular middle class, and later on in the West Bank and Gaza. The IDF thus attracted soldiers who displayed loyalty to the military organization and military thought, soldiers who would not mobilize their civilian networks to protest against the military, as their secular predecessors had done, protests that limited the IDF's space of freedom. As was evident during the Al-Aqsa Intifada (2000-2005), due to the change in the social composition of the military, the IDF regained part of its operational autonomy, as attested to by its ability to gradually escalate its response to the uprising until it had reoccupied most of the West Bank without encountering protests from the ranks (Levy, 2007a, 109-115).

At the same time, the moderate flow of women into auxiliary and combat roles helped the military to cope with manpower shortfalls. For example, it could fill combat positions such as the Border Police, which became active in the occupied territories, or the unit securing the Egyptian border for smugglers, infiltrators, and terrorists. Likewise, women comprise about 10% of the reserve units, compared to almost zero percent about 15 years earlier (Chief of Staff 's Advisor on Women's Issues, 2009, 25).

Both groups' integration, therefore, delayed the vocationalization of the IDF by means of decreasing the need to deploy monetary tools to attract skilled labor into the military, given that the military had fewer symbolic tools to re-attract the secular middle-class, the Israeli dominant group which gradually distanced itself from the military. In practice, the year 2000 was the last time (until 2010) that the government needed to significantly increase monetary rewards. Then, in 2000, it amended the *Absorption of Discharged Soldiers Law – 1994*, so as to grant privileges to discharged conscripts with differential payouts to be given to combat as compared with non-combat soldiers.

From the IDF's perspective, religious soldiers were more attractive than women, with their higher relative weight in the combat units, the fewer barriers to their integration into combat roles and the power possessed by their rabbis. Therefore, it

tolerated their grievances as a way of granting symbolic rewards to this group. Though women's costs of service were lower, in this case the higher-paid group was favored as its perceived quality of labor was more appreciated, and yet this group's costs were lower than that of its secular predecessor, whose costs meant challenging the military thought. Such favoritism became critical when the religious and women clashed, as when the religious viewed women's integration as jeopardizing their symbolic assets. In this case, the IDF favored the higher-paid group but, still, it did so as a means of easing pressures for monetary assets or more critical symbolic concessions to the secular groups.

Devaluing Religious Assets

Women's growing integration within the field units threatened to devalue the symbolic rewards of the religious, mostly those presented above. Three means of devaluation are relevant.

First, devaluing de-secularization by encouraging the *haredim*'s growing rates of exemption or enlistment into all male units. While recruitment is a strategy of the national-religious groups, it is not a strategy that has been adopted by the *haredi* groups. Owing to its political power, this sector successfully created a new track of mobility based on state-subsidized *yeshiva* studies that offered the low-class *haredi* young better opportunities than the military, in which they would have occupied mainly "blue-collar" positions. Indeed, the number of *haredim* exempted from service rose from about 2.5% of potential male draftees during the 1970s to 11% in 2007 (Knesset, 2007a).

It follows that the national-religious strategy may be strongly affected by its competition with the *haredim*, who offer religious youngsters an alternative track. Critical in the religious debate over male military service is the question of whether military service breeds secularization at a significant level or not, from which derived the ambitions of the national-religious wing to firmly harmonize religious life and military service. However, more intense interaction between men and women due to the opening of combat roles to women deharmonizes these values because of the alleged exposure to immodest conduct and its impact on religious faith. Women's integration has thus become a major issue in the dialogue between the IDF and the

rabbis. Rabbi Eliezer Sadan, the founder of the *mechinot*, communicated his concern through this example:

> To practice rescuing a wounded soldier from a tank, you must put your hands under the soldier's shirt, and lift him by the armpits. Can you imagine that a male soldier would practice this on a female? (cited in Prince-Gibson, 2001).

With the Zionist-*haredi* rivalry, the possibility that religious draftees or their rabbis might prefer exemption or enlistment into the homogenously male *haredi*-religious battalion (the *Netzah Yehuda* battalion), may weaken the national-religious rabbis' inclination for compromise (see Sheleg, 2004). As Rabbi Avraham Baron, director-general of the union of *yeshivot hesder* stated in 2001: "If religious soldiers have to start questioning whether the IDF is 'holy', they would start enrolling in *haredi* yeshivot" (cited in Shapiro and Gilbert, 2001).

Exemption or tracking into homogenous units obstructs the national-religious cultural agenda by impeding the creation of a critical mass of religious soldiers in combat units, thereby reducing cultural influence. Critical mass not only increases religious soldiers' influence on their secular peers, as Rabbis Sherlo and Stav, cited above, wish, but also shapes practices and informal arrangements: decreasing the likelihood that secular soldiers or their commanders violate religious law, creating attentive audiences to rabbis' sermons, attracting the joining of more religious soldiers due to the enhancement of religious community life in the unit, and more. Female-free zones thus become essential from a religious perspective.

Furthermore, organizational interests are also at stake. Tens of institutions – about 45 *yeshivot hesder* and 15 religious *mechinot* – are at work, mostly established since the 1980s and employing hundreds of people. Their existence depends on the cultural arrangements that recognize the special status of religious draftees. Furthermore, the very nature of these institutions provides the rabbis who head them with almost unrestricted access to military bases. But unlike the frameworks nurtured by *yeshivot hesder* and *mechinot*, the *haredi* battalion and other all-*haredi* units are under the influence of *haredi* rabbis, and encouragement of the *haredi* track may impair the status of the national-religious institutions.

The second mean of women-incited devaluation relates to political impact. By impeding the creation of a critical mass of religious soldiers in combat units, the likelihood that units would be involved in settlement evacuation increases. The more units staffed with religious, the greater the obstacles the army meets as indicated by a series of protests and resistance which emerged from units deployed in Gaza and the West Bank. This impact is impaired by decreasing religious soldiers' large presence in the field units (see below).

Third, a new issue has appeared on the agenda, undermining the gender order in religious communities. Religious women have traditionally been exempted from military service by law at the demand of the religious parties. Aside from concerns about secularization and arguments about modesty, this demand was part of the social construction of women as mothers who should not be disturbed by military service (see Berkovitch, 1997). As a compromise, some religious women voluntarily serve in National Service, which is civilian work in areas such as education, nursing, and internal security. Serving in a civilian framework eases the rabbis' concerns that religious women will be interacting intensely with men.

Nevertheless, since the beginning of the 2000s, religious women's presence in the army has grown significantly. For example, about one third of graduates from prestigious girls' high schools prefer military service as opposed to about 15% in previous years (Goodman, 2005). Likewise, the proportional number of religious women trained for officership is greater than that of their secular peers (Knesset, 2007b).

Beyond the role played by internal processes in religious society, the opening of combat roles to women accounts significantly for this trend. Rabbi Yona Goodman (2005), the former secretary of *Bnei Akiva*, the mainstream, national-religious youth movement, argued that

> A woman seeking to engage in medical practices can change sheets in a hospital as part of national service…or serve in the military as a medic in a field unit. What is more attractive?

In other words, military integration of secular women inspires religious women as well, or at least that is the general impression. Military service is thus among the factors that may shake up the gender order in religious society. As such, it has become

part of the broader debate over the role of religious women in the traditional family along with other feminist trends. Among these trends are the "literacy revolution" in which women study theological texts, an activity that was heretofore a male prerogative, along with the acquisition of higher education, integration into the labor market, reorganization of the division of roles between the sexes within the family, and participation in political activity (El-Or, 2002). Pressures for more gender equality has also generated a backlash, such as the separation of boys and girls in the activity of *Bnei Akiva* (see Lau, 2010), that testified to the gradual radicalization ("*haredization*") of the national-religious wing in Israel.

Religious women even report that for them military service is "going against the stream" (Bar-Dror, 2007). Women make better use of the distance from home than do men, to reinforce their separation from the family and to experience personal autonomy. This experience might be even stronger for women from a lower socio-economic background, in which religion plays a key role, because military service is a mechanism for both undermining the relatively strong patriarchal structure in such groups and improving women's social status in civilian society (See Dar and Kimhi, 2004). Thus, women's integration into field units threatens the internal religious gender order.

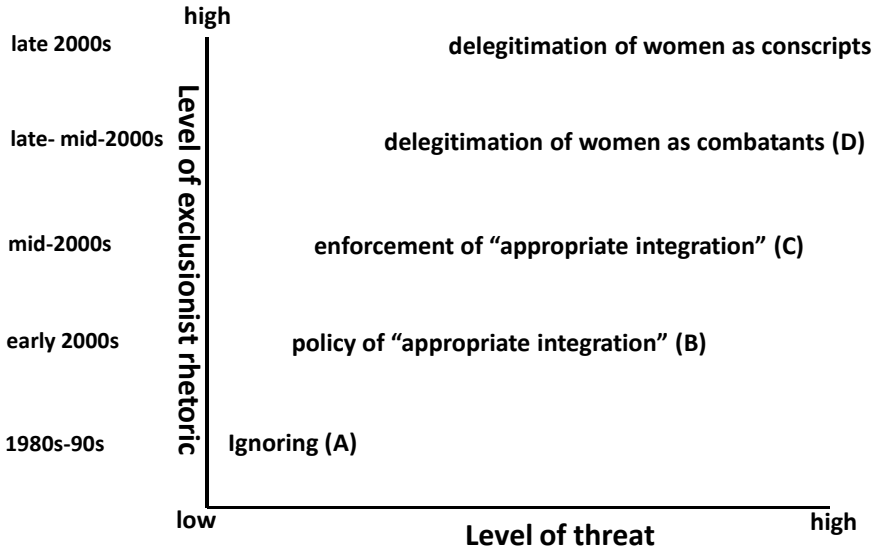
In the military split labor market, the entrance of the cheaper group threatens to devalue the gains of the higher-paid group. Still, unlike in a civilian labor market where the competition is over monetary rewards and as such becomes a direct competition between laborers, here the competition runs in an indirect manner and at the inter-group level. It is not that the entrance of women directly devalues the gains of religious soldiers because the commander/employer favors them as a cheaper labor force. Indirectly, however, their entrance hampers religious males' rapid integration and encourages religious female integration and as such devalues the symbolic rewards religious soldiers expect to reap from their military service.

The religious, like any other highly-paid group facing a challenge from cheaper labor, protected their assets by curtailing the entrance of women. The more their efforts failed while the threats were increasingly growing, the more the anti-feminist rhetoric was escalated, moving from caste to exclusion.

Threat and Exclusion

The response of the religious to the challenge posed by women is depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Threat and Exclusion



Until the 2000s, women's military service was not part of the religious agenda, aside from the issue of religious women as described above (stage A in Figure 1). Only with significant integration of women conscripts into combat and other roles in the field units has this issue been placed on the religious agenda.

In response to the rabbis' concerns, the military command formulated the "appropriate integration" guidelines in 2002, which developed rules for the shared life of women and religious soldiers. The rules are meant to enable religiously observant Jewish men to serve together with women without excluding the women. Examples of such rules include separate residential arrangements, a requirement for wearing modest clothes, allowing religious soldiers to serve in all-male unit to avoid interaction with women (IDF Directive no. 33.0207). In short, this policy focused on providing cultural protection to religious soldiers and attempted to bureaucratize, even demystify, the issue of joint service by men and women by creating formal rules (Lerer, 2010, 13). However, this policy also formed a semi-caste strategy as it implies

creation of female-free zones within the units/bases and favored the needs of religious soldiers inasmuch as they enjoy a significant quantitative advantage (stage B).

Nevertheless, many rabbis have demanded that the rules be reshaped or at least interpreted in a manner that heightens the separation between genders (for example Sherlo and Stav, 2005), while the IDF identified gaps between rules and implementation (see Knesset, 2005). This pressure to "try harder" was highly influenced by the sense that the threats to the symbolic rewards of religious soldiers were aggravated because of processes taking place outside the direct competition. The *haredim*'s rates of exemption continue to grow by 4% per year, peaking to more than 10% of potential male draftees (Knesset, 2007a). At the same time, religious women's demand for more significant roles in regular tracks increased as evidenced by the establishment in 2002 of a special project by *Aluma*, an NGO supporting religious women who have decided on, or are considering, enlistment into the military, helping them preserve their religious life during their army service (*Aluma* website). To a large extent, even if the organization did not convince women to opt for enlisting into the regular track rather than joining the traditional National Service, this action was in defiance of the general tone of the religious communities. Evidently, despite the widespread campaign in high schools against draft dodging (2007-2008), the religious-education division in the Ministry of Education (an autonomous division) stands firmly against exposing religious students to this campaign (Knesset, 2007b).

The most significant threat was the Disengagement Plan – to withdraw from Gaza and evacuate the Jewish settlements with about 8,000 settlers along with another three settlements in the northern West Bank. This plan was put on the public agenda by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon in 2004 and implemented in 2005. The theocratic meaning ascribed by the religious to the settlement project was at stake. The perceived destruction of the settlement enterprise by the withdrawal threatened to return religious Zionism to the status of just another sector in society, while also undermining the self-identity of a considerable number of conscripts as bearers of a national mission (Sheleg, 2006). Hence, the plan provoked rabbis' calls for disobedience of their students, calls that affected the units staffed with *hesder* and *mechinot* soldiers.

It is not only that the disengagement threatened to devalue the symbolic gains of the religious soldiers in the military, but this threat also enhanced their bargaining

power vis-à-vis the military. Military commanders strove to minimize the scope of disobedience by enhancing the dialogue with the rabbis and gaining their ear when the religious community debates whether to allow its conscripts to take part in the evacuation or disobey; hence, the IDF's readiness to compromise on the demands of the religious sector concerning "appropriate integration."

Consequently, appropriate integration was enforced more stringently (stage C). Instead of rules subjected to the local command's interpretation, the military established, in 2004, a special administration headed by religious officers (at its head, the military appointed Rabbi Avi Ronsky, who two years later became the Chief Military Rabbi). In other words, the policy stakeholders were provided with the power to supervise the policy. In practice, this administration functioned as a kind of "modesty guard" inspecting the camps and managed by military rabbis. Women soldiers were presented as a sort of "modesty hazard" (see Knesset, 2005).

Furthermore, exclusion of women from some roles further increased: when army regulations permit religious men to object to serving together with women in the same combat unit, and when at the same time the number of religious soldiers has increased, this results in substantial barriers to the equal integration of women, particularly into field units. These barriers extend not only to combat roles, which in practice became barred to women in units with a significant percentage of religious soldiers, but also to women serving as trainers and other auxiliary roles. Gradually, as the Chief of Staff 's Advisor on Women's Issues stated, "appropriate integration has, over time, become the main – if not the only – perspective through which joint service by men and women is implemented in practice," and that the way the rules are interpreted "is mandated by religious extremism" (Klifi-Amir, 2011, 32). The initial semi-caste strategy was then widened.

Notwithstanding these efforts, the religious leadership still believed that appropriate integration failed. As Rabbi Baron said in 2006:

> The fact that there is a battalion such as Karakal [securing the Egyptian border], in which men and women serve together keeps me awake at night. It is a stain on the military... We will not win wars without help of God and God conditioned it on the military camp being holy (Harel, 2006).

A sense of failure to curb women's integration coalesced with a sense that other symbolic stakes are under an aggravated threat. Most important was the attempt of the national religious to thwart the disengagement, implemented by the IDF in 2005. Early assessments indicated that orders to evacuate the settlers would be disobeyed on a massive scale by national religious conscripts, who were commanded by at least some of their rabbis not to participate in such events. However, the IDF successfully averted massive disobedience by using a variety of strategies that leveraged the interest of the religious groups in maintaining their improved and empowered status within the ranks, as well as by distancing religious soldiers from the physical interaction with the evacuees (Levy, 2007a, 198-206).

Now the focus has shifted to the West Bank as the main arena in which critical decisions must be made in the attempt to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Clearly, the price of this resolution will be withdrawal from most of the territory and the dismantling of many of the Jewish settlements.

Against this background, the religious leadership came to believe that an army with a high percentage of national religious soldiers could not easily be sent to implement the anticipated future strategy of evacuation in the West Bank. Rabbi Shlomo Aviner, one of the settlers' rabbis, argued against disobedience in the disengagement by expressing this logic:

> To leave the army is to leave the nation. It is disengagement from the people! ... If you are not inside, you have no influence. You only harm yourself while others take your place – just as with the left-wing refuseniks … .(Aviner, 2005).

As an attempt to increase their political influence, the strategy of at least part of the religious leadership was to create a critical mass of religious soldiers in certain units (see Sheleg, 2005). One of the lessons learned from the disengagement was that units with a high percentage of religious conscripts were distanced from the inner circles of the evacuation, the circle in which settlers and soldiers clashed physically. Hence, the greater the critical mass, the thinner the inner circle in future evacuations will be, and thus the higher the threshold for activating the military, which would make the settlement project even more irreversible. This was especially so as the military saw fit to implement this policy of differentiating circles in the West Bank as well when it

(infrequently) comes to evacuate illegal outposts. Furthermore, religious critical mass helps create informal practices on the ground. For example, without the IDF's passive and active cooperation, illegal settlements in the West Bank could not have been expanded in defiance of the government's formal policy and its international commitments (Levy, 2011).

This religious critical mass strategy could be even more effective with a growing number of religious officers staffing the field officer echelons. Rabbi Yaakov Medan, a leading figure in the national-religious movement, summed up this logic when, shortly before the evacuation, he declared:

> But even if, God forbid, the decision is taken [for the IDF to carry out the evacuation]…, we must not support ideological disobedience, thus creating a stronger basis for ideological disobedience "to protect the settlers", currently on the margins of the left wing, and moving it into the center. We would also be distancing ourselves from the top ranks of the IDF, an idea that has been raised in various forums concerned about the religious right gaining control over the army (Medan, 2004, 24-25).

Increasing critical mass was challenged with more religious youngsters responding to the blow they had suffered as a result of the disengagement by enrolling in *haredi* yeshivas in order to avoid conscription (Harel, 2007a). By so aggravating the national religious-*haredi* competition, a more aggressive struggle against the presence of women in the military was encouraged. At the same time, the gender arena too was not silent, as when the first pre-military Torah College for religious women was established, with 20 students enrolling in 2007.

For its part, the military did not make life easier for the religious. Concurrent with attempts to reconcile with the religious sector after the disengagement and ensure the flow of their young into the ranks, the military appointed, in 2007, a committee headed by Major General (res.) Yehuda Segev to review the women's model of service.

Consequently, the religious rhetoric changed once again, turning to complete caste strategy (stage D). For the first time, religious speakers have cast doubt on the usefulness of integrating women into combat units and highlighted the difficulty women have in carrying out the demanding physical tasks. For this purpose, they used

religious officers to lobby and influence the work of the Segev Committee by presenting comparative data showing the alleged failure of Western militaries to integrate women in combat units (Harel, 2007b). Feminist winds in the IDF were portrayed as being promoted by leftist, liberal feminists in an attempt to weaken the military (Shelah, 2011).

Motti Yogev, a reserve Colonel and former secretary of the *Bnei Akiva* movement, even claimed that

> Combat service by women is unnecessary and does not serve the IDF's needs…The main problem in women's performance is the intensive and intimate co-mingling of men and women in the units. In the extreme, women soldiers were tempted by Arabs at the roadblocks where they served (cited in Rotenberg, 2004).

Rather than just ensuring that religious soldiers will serve in a suitable cultural environment, the new strategy was aimed at completely distancing women from combat units. Particularistic rhetoric focused on the interests of the religious conscript now turned into a universalist rhetoric focused on national security considerations.

This rhetoric became more legitimate after the Second Lebanon War (2006), in which the IDF had been portrayed as having failed to achieve the war goals, mainly failure to launch a massive division-size ground operation in South Lebanon. A retrospective trend inspired efforts to rehabilitate the IDF after the war. Much of the blame was heaped on reforms embarked upon by the IDF in the years prior to the war, including the acceptance of women as combatants. Returning the organization to its roots meant removing women from combat roles. Proposals for redrawing the traditional and familiar gender boundaries could now get the public ear. Furthermore, new collations could be built between religious and secular, conservative, senior officers adhering to restore the traditional gender division of labor in the military by, inter alia, excluding women from combat (Lerer, 2010, 16-17).

Nonetheless, this containment battle formally failed. In 2007, the Segev Committee recommended adopting a model of full equal opportunity for women (Lerer, 2010). Now the battle focused on implementation. At the same time, religious symbolic assets were put under growing threat of devaluation with the new political agenda regarding the West Bank. In 2006-2009 the government was headed by Ehud

Olmert, who campaigned for election on a platform of support for the partial withdrawal of Israel from the West Bank to continue the momentum of the withdrawal from the Gaza Strip in 2005. In practice, the government negotiated with the Palestinian Authority over significant territorial compromise in the West Bank and renewed the Israeli commitment to dismantle some of the illegal outposts established in this area. At the same time, integration of religious women into the military continued to grow.

Now, from the religious perspective, the battle to contain women's integration became more acute. In consequence, some of the religious leaders turned from caste to exclusion. For the first time, calls were voiced to phase out mandatory service for women, religious and secular alike (stage E).

Prominent Zionist-religious leader Rabbi Shlomo Aviner ruled that army service is forbidden for all women. In an open letter he wrote in 2008: "Never enlist in the army…ever... It is forbidden! Forbidden like kashrut! Forbidden like Shabbat! And especially forbidden like modesty!" (cited by Nahshoni, 2008). His argument was clear: "We need you to function as a pure and clean woman… and not to undermine your mental foundation." In other words, he tied military service to the attempt to restore the traditional gender division of labor in the religious communities.

More significant was the declaration of the IDF Chief Rabbi Avi Ronsky who said (and later denied) in 2009 in a conference of religious women soldiers: "I personally think that a priori, women should not serve in the army" (Pfeffer, 2009). Importantly, this was not a call which came from the margins but from the mainstream of the national-religious wing. Concurrently, other rabbis continue to argue that appropriate integration has failed, and called for the adoption of the *haredi* model of all-male units, especially in light of a case when three religious soldiers were jailed after refusal to attend a class with a woman trainer (Rotenberg, 2007).

Yet this time, the religious battle was successful. The recommendations of the Segev Committee were advanced only at the margins, probably because of the high command's tendency to avoid clashes with the religious leadership, which it sees as having its hand on the tap from which high-quality personnel flows into combat units. Likewise, efforts to integrate women into combat could not break the glass ceiling of about 3% share in combat roles with a disinclination even to exhaust the already

opened roles, mainly in the ground forces (see Klifi-Amir, 2011). Even if more factors than religious curtailment can account for this phenomenon, evidently the threat posed by women was tempered. Furthermore, at the time of writing, the outgoing IDF Personnel Directorate Head, Major General Avi Zamir sent a farewell document to the Chief of Staff, calling for curbing of the IDF's growing religious radicalization, with evidence about the impact of "appropriate integration" on restricting the role of women in the army (Harel, 2011). It follows that the policy worked beyond the original expectations and in the direction favored by the religious.

With this success, the religious exclusionary rhetoric has not yet escalated and only a few rabbis joined the calls of Ronsky and Aviner, but, at the same time, the potential for intergender, intercultural clash within the IDF reappeared.

Conclusions

The greater the threat to the symbolic assets of the religious through the growing presence of women in military units, the more their anti-feminist rhetoric increases, progressing from caste and culminating in exclusion, after years of almost total ignoring of the status of secular women in the military. For the religious, women's integration into the military ‘labor market' threatens to devalue their ‘price of labor' in terms of their ability to preserve the gender order, politically influence the military and culturally desecularize the ranks. Intergroup antagonism thus took the form of intergender antagonism. Inasmuch as the issue was not only the cultural environment in which religious soldiers serve but issues exogenous to this environment, such as the future of the settlement project and the gender order within the religious communities, the efforts of the religious sector were not limited to arrangements that would separate religious soldiers from women. Rather, the religious leadership extended their efforts to the demand for exclusion of women from the ranks, or at least creating a full caste system by creating all-male units.

It was with this puzzle that this article aimed to deal: explaining why the religious rhetoric has gradually changed. Not only have Israeli scholars not addressed this issue sufficiently, but this also represents a broader scholarly gap. Studies informed by the theme of diversity management, that to a large extent governs the updated scholarship on intercultural encounters within the armed forces, have confined themselves to

arrangements and practices that shape shared organizational values and structure rather than to conflicts. Premised on the theme of identity politics, less attention is devoted to situations in which a group would not limit its efforts to attain fair representation in the public sphere but work to exclude others. Thus, this article scrutinized the linkage between the religious group's conduct in the military and the broader interests of its social networks outside the military. Broadening the view of the religious agenda helped in understanding the extent to which the entrance of women threatens religious assets. The pursuit of a more suitable conceptual framework resulted from this conclusion, leading to the "split labor market."

The conceptual tool offered by the theory of the split labor market advances the study of intergroup conflicts in the military. Similar to the original theory, this theory helps explain intergroup conflicts within the military by portraying the military as a labor market in which competition evolves. Though the competition is over labor price, unlike the original theory, the price is not monetary but symbolic, namely, expectations at the group level of producing symbolic rewards from, and owing to, military service. Still, competition is competition and the theory furnishes tools for understanding how groups react to it.

Thus, by using the case of Israel as critical case study, the theme of the split labor market was developed and tested. It offers several advantages over alternative concepts used to deal with intercultural tensions, within and outside, military service.

First, it provides tools for analyzing the dynamics of tension in terms of competition, as Figure 1 captures: dynamic threats yield dynamic reactions. As the case analyzed here suggests, moreover, the theory helps in bridging between the level of interests, whether explicitly articulated or not, and the intra-institutional level of bargaining and competition over valuable positions in the military organization. Interests are reshaped when new groups enter the scene and strategies are adapted accordingly.

Second, the theory improves the understanding of intergroup clashes by focusing on military positions in terms of their convertibility to rewards potentially accessed outside the military. Competition is over convertible resources. This is essential in order to factor in interests and agendas created within the social networks sending their sons and daughters to the military. Relatively hidden agendas can thus be

revealed, thereby understanding the space of flexibility enjoyed by the competing groups and hence also better explaining their strategies. By further clarifying the complex interests of the religious group we can better understand why its struggle became so intense.

Third, by analyzing convertibility, the theory broadens the scope of competition by dealing with indirect patterns of competition. Similar to the situation in the civilian labor market, the cheaper group can directly threaten the higher-paid one by willingness to serve at lower costs in terms of lower expectations for symbolic rewards. As mentioned, this process typified the exclusion of many Israeli secular middle-class members from combat roles, gradually occupied by new groups since the 1980s. Most prominent among these new groups were religious recruits, who had been (then) ready to serve without placing ideological conditions on the performance of their duties as their secular peers had hitherto done. Having lost much of their interest in military service, many secular young men voluntarily accepted their exclusion, especially in a conscript military which has not much to offer this already-dominant groups in terms of new or more symbolic rewards.

Another situation illustrated in this study is that a low-paid group may endanger the assets of a higher-paid group in an indirect manner; that is, by changing the cultural setting of the military in a way that: 1) obstructs the ability of the higher-paid group to increase its presence, 2) decreases its convertible assets by undermining the status of the military so this status confers less prestige in the eyes of the higher-paid group and especially its social networks. In this case, the increased presence of women was depicted as a process potentially lowering the military's prestige in an organization that may fail: (a) to aggrandize the status of the male religious soldier vis-à-vis religious women; (b) to preserve the settlement project; and (c) to desecularize the IDF's culture.

The indirect threat is thus a unique process that may be offered by the application of the split labor market concept to the military field. A similar pattern was shown in other militaries in which the core, veteran elite group worked to restrict the entrance of perceived lower-paid groups, groups, for whom their very entrance was seen as an asset in and for itself, premised on expectations of future rewards. Examples of such groups were women, ethnic minorities and homosexuals. In such cases, the entrance of the new group posed a threat in terms of undermining the cultural identity of the

military, hence also impairing the convertible resources of the dominant groups as serving in a less valued (less masculine, less "white", etc.) military. It follows that both threats should be contextualized in relation to the relevant stakes in the civilian sphere.

Fourth, and relatedly, the theory differentiates groups' motivations by their expectations of producing militarily-related symbolic rewards and thereby derived the group's "market price." In general, expectations play a key role in determining the level of market price at the group level. Here again, interests created outside the ranks are more seriously considered.

Fifth, a more active role is associated with the military command as a "market regulator". Two insights are offered:

(1) In accordance with the original theory, the military favors the cheap group in terms of symbolic rewards, provided that monetary rewards are less subject to discrimination in a civil service, even in a vocational military. Low/high payments are not measured only according to their face value for the group, but according to the extent to which the payment requires less desired concessions from the military perspective. In this case, religious recruits were favored over members of the secular middle class whose expectations thwarted the military agenda by limiting its professional space of freedom.

(2) The interplay of symbolic and monetary rewards allows the military to deploy symbolic tools as a means of reducing the deployment of monetary ones, and thus to favor a group with affordable symbolic expectations over a group with less affordable monetary expectations, especially during the transition from conscription to vocationalization.

Using a different perspective from studies informed by diversity management, the military command faces a more complicated task, beyond ensuring representativeness-incited legitimacy, professionalism, effectiveness and cohesiveness. It also maneuvers, not necessarily explicitly and consciously, to maintain a flow of high-quality, but also relatively cheap, personnel. Cheap means monetary as well as symbolic costs that may extend to political costs, provided that social groups have a distinct political agenda (see, for example, the Western middle-

class' draft resistance during the 1970s-1990s), or at least politically-related values that may affect their military performance.

With these advantages, the explanatory power of the "military split labor marked" is exhibited. Intergroup conflicts within the military can be analyzed more thoroughly. By examining the symbolic rewards groups expect to produce from their military service, convertible to social assets outside the military, we can better understand situations in which established groups face a perceived threat.

For example, the debate of the 1990s about homosexuals in the U.S. military focused on the question of whether openly gay and lesbian personnel would disrupt unit cohesion and military performance. As Kier (1998) showed, the arguments against policy change were not supported theoretically or empirically. The hidden agenda of the opposing groups should therefore be investigated in the terms offered here, namely, a perceived devaluation of military service through the entrance of openly homosexual recruits, concerns that are legitimized but not necessarily explained, in terms of military effectiveness. Here, integrating the concept of convertible symbolic rewards with that of the military split labor market offers a new explanatory dimension.

At the same time, the proposed concept is useful in understanding other situations, in which the entrance of a new, previously-excluded group is resisted by the more established group although this entrance may increase burden-sharing. An example is the objection to equal integration of African-Americans into the conscript U.S. military. On the surface, groups work against their interests. But if we factor in the rewards the group produces from its service and its fear that integration of newcomers may devalue such rewards, we can infer that concerns about rewards tip the scale relative to the expected utility from the decreased burden.

Only when military service does not privilege servicing groups more than non-servicing ones, is burden-sharing favored over fears of reward-sharing or reward-devaluation. That is what motivated demands by majority groups to enlist minority groups to match their duties to already attained rights, such as the application of military service to second-generation foreign immigrants in France during the 1880s (see Brubaker 1992, 104-105).

A similar trend could be seen in the American attitudes towards the integration of African-Americans. Segregation and restricted quotas dominated U.S. policies until the 1950s, explained by racial prejudice and the military's concept of efficiency (Osur, 1981). With a racialized republican discourse that governed the post-WWII period, a clear racial hierarchy was institutionalized that privileged whites. Therefore, African-Americans encountered a double barrier to equal integration into the ranks and translation of their war sacrifice into successful claim-making for equal rights (see Krebs, 2006, 116-120). In other words, integration meant eradication of the racial structure by legitimizing the African- Americans' claim-making, hence valuable assets were at stake, from the whites' perspective. So even after WWII, whites could resist reward-sharing at the cost of sacrificing burden-sharing.

Desegregation was gradually implemented, influenced by the mixture of mounting pressures exerted by the civil rights movement on the administration and manpower requirements in the field for combat soldiers, that resulted in many instances of ad hoc integration in the Korean War and formal abolishment in the 1960s (Moskos, 1966). Yet, the decline in white soldiers' opposition to integration from 84% in 1943 to 44% in 1951 (ibid, 140), can be better explained in terms of decline in competition.

Decline in opposition can be correlated with decline in the prestige of the U.S military as selective recruitment was practiced, and its flawed performance that became apparent from the 1950s onward. At the same time, from the moment that the Truman Administration promoted civil rights (see, for example, Lee, 2002, 11-12), the military increasingly lost much of its value as an asset for the whites as it failed to guarantee their privileged status. Attenuated convertibility is instrumental to tempering competition inasmuch as elite groups' interests are dropped. Certainly, the new atmosphere of right-allocation played its role in mitigating tensions in the armed-forces but had the stakes remained high, this mitigating impact may have been weaker. At the peak, this integration ran smoothly concomitantly with the alienation of the white middle-class from the military during the Vietnam War and the subsequent abolition of the draft.

Analysis of the religious-feminist conflict in the IDF through the lens of the split labor market theory opens the door for better understandings of intra-military tensions. As such, this imported concept deserves further investigation.

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