

## **Religionization, Exclusion, and the Military: "Zero Motivation" in Gender Relations?**

**Karin Carmit Yefet & Shulamit Almog**

The discourse surrounding women's marginality in the military and its implications for the exclusion of women in the public sphere is ostensibly part of a different era, the so-called 'first generation' of female service in the IDF. As is well known by now, the Alice Miller decision heralded a gender revolution in the military and gave rise to a 'second generation' of female service, which broke through many of the obstacles that used to prevent women from having a meaningful, equitable, and respectable military service. This article seeks to present a more complex picture of the status of women in the IDF. It delineates the story of gender equality in the military as part of a deeper, wide-ranging narrative of women's exclusion in the Israeli public sphere over the past decade. We argue that the chief factor which constructs women's inferiority in society – the incorporation of Jewish law in the legal system – has now become a new concealed yet powerful obstacle subverting the status of women in military life.

The article traces and analyzes the recent reinforcement of religious elements in the IDF, a phenomenon referred to as the "Process of Religionization," the apex of which is the enactment of a General Staff Directive known as the "Appropriate Integration Rules." The Directive – arising from a liberal containment of a religious minority carried out with a view to allowing multiculturalism in the 'People's Army' – was designed to regulate the joint service of religious men and secular women under one military roof. We argue that in practice, the Integration Rules act as segregation rules; they reestablish the gender barriers women have fought against for years, and in so doing they give rise to a 'third generation' of women's integration marked by their exclusion. In other words, the religious revolution can be seen as nullifying the accomplishments of the gender revolution and as seeking to return women to their 'appropriate' place within the military and within society.

Finally, the article situates the Directive in a wider context, suggesting that it is a meeting point of forceful intra-masculine coalitions – the national-religious camp and the military-conservative camp – acting to promote their common interest of female exclusion. We argue that the process of religionization has strengthened the alliance between religiosity, militarism, and masculinity, as part of a move whereby the religion of civilian security joins the religion of Jewish halakhah. Thus it is in the name of protecting national security and the 'camp holiness' that the foundations of a fourth – mono-gendered – generation, as devoid as possible of female soldiership, are being laid.

The article concludes that the Appropriate Integration Rules are the nexus of two excessive barriers to female equality in Israeli society – religion and the military – and that they further construct a new-but-old hierarchal gendered apparatus.