

“Homosexuality and the Israel Defense Forces; Did Lifting the Gay Ban Undermine Military Performance?” by Aaron Belkin and Melissa Levitt, Armed Forces and Society, vol. 27, no. 4, 2001.

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Abstract:

In this paper we argue that Israel’s 1993 decision to lift its gay ban did not influence military performance. Then, we assess three arguments raised by experts who claim that Israeli experiences are not relevant for determining what would happen if the U.S. Congress and Pentagon lifted the American gay ban. In particular, we assess the claims that most gay Israeli combat soldiers do not disclose their sexuality to peers, that some receive special treatment, and that cultural differences distinguish the U.S. and Israeli cases. We agree with each argument but our interpretation of these factors differs from experts who claim that Israeli military experiences are irrelevant. While no single case study can show decisively what would happen if the U.S. changed its policy, we suggest that the Israeli experience lends some weight to the claim that American military effectiveness would not decline if known homosexuals were allowed to serve.

150 words.

As the number of countries that permit gay and lesbian soldiers to serve in the armed forces has grown over the past two decades, it has become increasingly important to determine whether official decisions to include homosexual service members in the military lead to changes in organizational performance. Although most NATO countries as well as a handful of other nations allow gay and lesbian soldiers to serve, there has been little empirical analysis of whether the decision to lift a gay ban influences armed forces' ability to pursue their missions. Theoretical studies have addressed this topic but there has been no in-depth empirical work on the actual consequences of a decision to lift a gay ban.¹

Israel is a case in point. A few scholars conducted careful studies in the immediate aftermath of Israel's 1993 decision to abolish restrictions on gay and lesbian soldiers. However, the long-term impact of the new policy was not yet apparent and even the most thorough of these early analyses is only eight pages long.² Our rationale for considering more recent evidence that accumulated in the seven years since Israel lifted its gay ban is that with a history of over half a century of continuous military engagement, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) is considered to be one of the premiere fighting forces in the world. Hence, the Israeli case affords an opportunity to examine the impact of lifting a gay ban in a high-stakes security context. After discussing the historical evolution of homosexual personnel policy in Israel, we examine whether Israel's decision to abolish restrictions on gay and lesbian soldiers influenced military performance, readiness, cohesion or morale. Finally, we ask if lessons from the Israeli case may be relevant for determining whether lifting the American gay ban would undermine the effectiveness of the U.S. armed forces. Our findings are that Israel's decision to lift its gay ban had no impact on performance and that despite differences between the two cases, lessons from the Israeli experience are relevant for determining what would happen if the U.S. Congress and Pentagon lifted the American gay ban.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Israel Defense Forces plays a central role in the daily life and identity of the Israeli people.³ Since its founding in 1948, Israel has fought five major wars, conducted numerous major operations against hostile neighbors and supplied an army of occupation in the West Bank and Gaza for more than 30 years. The wide-ranging and extensive nature of these operations has provided the IDF with nearly unparalleled combat experience. Israelis rely on a strong military to ensure their safety as citizens and as a nation, and the IDF has been central to the Israeli sense of mission concerning the renewal of the Jewish homeland. Although the prestige of the IDF has declined somewhat in recent years and although it no longer plays as prominent a role in the nation-building process as it once did, the IDF remains an important institution in Israeli life and the boundaries between civilian and military culture “remain porous or, according to some views, virtually nonexistent”.⁴

The IDF acts as an important agent of socialization for Israelis as well. Military service is mandatory for Jewish men and women at the age of 18 and it provides a common experience for young Israelis entering adulthood. Men serve for three years and women serve for just under two years. While women do not serve in combat and primarily occupy support roles, in recent years they have gained greater access to a range of opportunities such as elite fighter pilot training. Once Israelis complete active duty, men remain in the reserves until they are 55 and women serve in the reserves until they marry or turn 24. Because Israel is home to a large number of immigrants and includes people with diverse cultural, religious and socio-economic backgrounds, the IDF still embraces the ideals of a melting pot for many Israeli groups.⁵

The Israeli military never has formally prohibited service by homosexuals. Because of the personnel demands of a nation continuously at war, the IDF generally has pursued an officially inclusive conscription policy. Before 1980, however, known homosexuals usually were discharged. In 1983, the IDF for the first time officially spelled out regulations relating to

homosexuality in the Manpower Division Standing Order K31-11-01, 'Service of Homosexuals in the IDF'. The regulation stated that homosexuals would not be limited in their positions or discharged from service solely because of their sexual orientation. It did, however, prohibit sexual minorities from serving in top secret and intelligence positions. The order required officers to refer suspected homosexuals to a mental health evaluation center to determine whether they were a security risk and maintained sufficient "mental strength and maturity" for military service. Based upon the results of the evaluation, the Field Security Department could decide to do nothing, terminate the soldier's service, limit his or her deployment, or conduct an extensive security investigation. The IDF did not maintain regulations that were specific to homosexual behavior as military codes prohibited all sexual activity, whether homosexual or heterosexual, on military bases as well as sexual relationships between officers and their subordinates.⁶

In 1993, the IDF faced mounting opposition to its restrictive policy in the wake of the Knesset's first hearings on homosexual issues. Professor Uzi Even, chairman of Tel Aviv University's Chemistry Department, created a public sensation when he testified that he had been stripped of his rank of officer and barred from sensitive IDF research in the 1980s because of his sexual orientation. Even conducted highly classified military research for 15 years and was open about his sexual orientation and therefore not at-risk for blackmail when the IDF revoked his security clearance.⁷ His testimony "created a public storm – against the military and for Even".⁸ In response, the IDF issued a statement declaring that it did not discriminate against gays and lesbians and did not prohibit homosexuals as a group from sensitive assignments. Prime Minister Rabin declared that "I don't see any reason to discriminate against homosexuals" and he called for a military committee to explore the matter.⁹

The military committee then drafted amendments to the 1983 order that officially "recogniz[ed] that homosexuals are entitled to serve in the military as are others" and declared that sexual minorities would be judged fit for service "according to the criteria in force for all candidates for security service".¹⁰ The amendments also shifted the assumption of security risk

away from sexual minorities as a group. As a rule, placement or advancement of sexual minorities in the military would not be restricted. Cases where a possible security risk existed were to be handled on an individual basis. According to official policy, gay and lesbian soldiers were to be treated the same as their heterosexual peers.

EFFECT OF IDF INCLUSION OF SEXUAL MINORITIES

In order to determine whether Israel's decision to lift its gay ban undermined military performance, cohesion, readiness, or morale, we gathered information systematically from six different types of publicly available Hebrew and English language sources including (1) all published, scholarly books and journal articles on the topic; (2) interviews of all known experts on the issue of gays in the Israeli military from the Defense Ministry, the IDF, Israeli and American universities and civil rights organizations (n=35); (3) all newspaper articles and wire service dispatches relating to homosexual service in the IDF stored in the Lexis/Nexis Middle East database (1985-2000; n= 24); (4) all articles on Hebrew University's internet collection of newspaper and magazine stories concerning sexual minorities (1993-2000; n=199); (5) Fourteen Israeli web sites related to gay and lesbian issues; (6) government documents including transcripts of Knesset hearings and military orders relevant to homosexual service in the IDF. Although our footnotes do not include citations to most of these sources, we examined all of them and included the most relevant references in the paper. Certainly it is possible that we missed some evidence although we tried to ensure that our universe of sources was comprehensive. For example, we asked interview subjects repeatedly to suggest additional experts from different sectors and we contacted all suggested individuals.

In our search for published evidence in English and in Hebrew we have not been able to find any data indicating that lifting the gay ban undermined Israeli military performance, cohesion, readiness or morale. In addition, none of the thirty-five experts we interviewed could recount any indication that the lifting of the gay ban compromised military effectiveness. The

comments of Professor Stuart Cohen, a Professor and Senior Research Fellow at the Center for Strategic Studies at Bar-Ilan University who has written extensively on the Israeli military, were typical of our findings: “As far as I have been able to tell, homosexuals do not constitute an issue [with respect to] unit cohesion in the IDF. In fact, the entire subject is very marginal indeed as far as this military is concerned”.¹¹ In a recent interview for ABC news, Israeli Brigadier-General Oded Ben commented that Israelis show “a great tolerance” with respect to homosexual soldiers in the military.¹² Scholars, officials, NGO observers, and service members interviewed for this report echoed the theme of tolerance put forward by the Brigadier-General. When asked if she had experienced any problems because of her sexual orientation, for example, a female soldier who served between 1993 and 1996 stated: “I was quite amazed to find out that people either thought that my sexual orientation was ‘cool’ or were indifferent to it”.¹³ Amir Fink, the co-author of *Independence Park: The Lives of Gay Men in Israel*, argues that the IDF policy changes, among larger societal changes, have resulted in a more open attitude in the military: “I believe that ... after the 1993 change in regulations there are more soldiers who are aware of the fact that there are gays in the unit and [that] they should treat them decently”.¹⁴

In an October, 1999 article on sexual minorities in the military entitled “Coming Out of the Kitbag”, the IDF newspaper *Ba'machne* includes comments from seventeen heterosexual soldiers about their attitudes toward having a gay commander.¹⁵ While the responses do not constitute a representative sample of heterosexual IDF personnel, they are consistent with the results of our interviews and literature searches. Two of the seventeen soldiers (12 percent) interviewed for the *Ba'machne* article felt that serving under a homosexual commander would constitute a problem for them. One soldier explained that “The truth is it would be a bit strange for me. Not that I am primitive or homophobic, but among my friends there aren't any gays. I would try to get used to the idea and if I did not succeed I would request a transfer. I do not think that gays are less good, but it would be a bit difficult or strange for me”. The rest of the respondents stated that the sexual orientation of their commanding officer would not make a

difference to them. Ayah provides one example of this attitude: “I respect gays a lot. There is no problem with their service in the Army. It is none of my business if my commanding officer is gay. If he has already decided to participate this does not have to interfere with work...”

While the question posed about working under a gay commander did not address the issue of showering together specifically, twelve of the respondents brought up this issue as well. Three soldiers expressed some concern about showering with a homosexual soldier, although they stated that in general they did not have a problem with gay soldiers. Second Lieutenant Gal in Human Resources explained his feelings: “I don’t have anything against homosexuals in the army. They’re citizens of Israel like you and me. The sexual orientation of the workers around me doesn’t interest me. It does interest me if his output suffers from it, maybe if it bothers him and he needs help. I wouldn’t shower with him. There are cubicles here at [the officer’s training base]”. Eight of the respondents stated that they have no problems showering with sexual minorities. Dima, an officer, expressed the prevailing view of the respondents who brought up the issue: “They’re citizens of the state, like all the other citizens. I think that even if they have a different sexual orientation, that doesn’t have anything to do with hateful feelings. I don’t have a problem showering with [homosexuals]. It seems to me that it wouldn’t be a problem”.

No statistics have been collected on the number of incidents of harassment of known homosexual soldiers in the IDF. In 1993, in the wake of the changes in IDF policies toward homosexuals, the Knesset empanelled a committee to investigate complaints of harassment. Uzi Even, who was involved in the review, stated that none of the cases had their roots in anti-gay bias.¹⁶ Brigadier-General Uri Shoham, the military’s judge advocate general, reported recently that harassment because of sexual orientation is very rare and that he could remember few, if any, cases. He further stated that that he had never had to deal with harassment against gay troops in his career as a military lawyer. Because individual commanders generally handle harassment, however, Shoham’s lack of knowledge of such cases does not mean that problems have not occurred.¹⁷ For example, a female officer presently in the IDF told us that she experienced

general acceptance from most of her superiors and peers. She said that “In the unit I serve in I have heard of no discrimination (in either direction) toward gays”. She added, however, that “[r]umors (usually from the news) do show the existence of some such problems in ‘closed units’ ([w]here one lives on base)”.¹⁸

Walzer uncovered two cases of harassment of homosexual soldiers in the IDF. In one case, a female former soldier recounted in 1997 how the male officers on her base tried to sleep with female soldiers: “The thing was that any girl who refused got a reputation as a lesbian. And the way it was portrayed was very dirty. It’s true that none of them were lesbians, but the response to them was so harsh that I didn’t dare say anything”.¹⁹ Even though her commander eventually dealt with the problem, the humiliating treatment convinced her to keep silent about her own sexual orientation. When told of the two examples of harassment, Brigadier-General Shoham replied that if they were the only cases that had come to light, the military’s policy could be considered quite successful. In light of his research, Walzer believes that vicious harassment of sexual minorities in the IDF is rare.

The IDF does not conduct any special education or sensitivity training related to sexual orientation issues. In contrast, the Israeli military provides training on sexual abuse of women and harassment of new immigrants and Mizrachim, Israelis of North African or Middle Eastern origin.²⁰ One board member of Agudaht Zechuyot Ha-ezrach, Israel’s primary gay-rights group, expressed overall approval of the military’s policies toward sexual minorities but other scholars and representatives of gay rights groups have declared that the IDF could do more to address the concerns of sexual minorities in the military and that many soldiers are not aware of official policy.²¹

The findings that emerged from our interviews and literature searches are consistent with brief reports on the IDF prepared by the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) and the RAND corporation in the immediate aftermath of Israel’s 1993 decision to abolish restrictions on gay and lesbian soldiers.²² In interviews with embassy and IDF officials, active and reserve military

personnel, scholars, a member of the Knesset, and personnel from the leading homosexual rights and civil rights groups in Israel, RAND and GAO researchers found that Israel's long-standing informal inclusion of homosexuals in the military had neither created internal problems nor jeopardized combat units. Officials interviewed for the GAO report stated that homosexual soldiers performed as well as heterosexual soldiers. Based on the officials' experience, homosexual soldiers had not adversely affected "unit readiness, effectiveness, cohesion, or morale".²³ Security personnel noted that homosexual soldiers were able to hold security clearances without posing an unnecessary security risk. Gal, the director of the Israeli Institute for Military Studies, affirmed the findings of the GAO and RAND studies: "According to military reports, [homosexuals'] presence, whether openly or clandestinely, has not impaired the morale, cohesion, readiness, or security of any unit. Perhaps the best indication of this overall perspective is the relative smoothness with which the most recent June 1993 repeal of the remaining restrictions on homosexuals was received within the IDF and in Israeli society as a whole".²⁴

In the context of a country continuously at war, lack of service is considered suspect. Unrestricted participation in the military by sexual minorities therefore serves to bolster the core Israeli value of common defense of the nation rather than threaten military cohesion or morale. When asked if he had heard any suggestion by military officials that known homosexuals affected operational effectiveness, combat readiness or unit cohesion, a board member of the homosexual-rights groups Agudaht Zechuyot Ha-ezrach responded: "No, I have never heard any such nonsense".²⁵

RELEVANCE TO THE AMERICAN CASE

The issue of gays in the military has been hotly contested in the United States in recent years. When President Bill Clinton attempted to force the Pentagon to allow known gays and lesbians to serve in the military at the beginning of his administration, Congress reacted by

including new statutory guidelines for homosexual service members in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1994. According to the compromise referred to as “Don’t-Ask, Don’t-Tell” that was embodied in Congressional law as well as Pentagon implementing regulations, known homosexuals are not allowed to serve in the U.S. armed forces. The unit cohesion rationale, the official justification for the new policy, is that if known gays and lesbians were allowed to serve, unit cohesion, performance, readiness and morale would decline.²⁶

During Congressional hearings that culminated in the passage of “Don’t-Ask, Don’t-Tell” and on numerous occasions since that time, scholars and experts debated whether the experiences of foreign militaries might confirm or falsify the plausibility of the unit cohesion rationale.²⁷ Experts who advocate allowing known gays and lesbians in the U.S. armed forces often claim that foreign military experiences prove that performance does not decline after the lifting of a gay ban. Critics often respond that foreign experiences are irrelevant to the American case and that they do not show that the U.S. military would remain effective if the gay ban were lifted.

In the case of Israel, experts have raised three arguments to bolster their claim that the evidence from the IDF is irrelevant for determining whether the U.S. military would remain effective if the gay ban were lifted. First, they have argued that even though Israel lifted all restrictions on homosexuals in 1993, no known gay and lesbian soldiers have served in combat or intelligence units of the IDF. Second, they say that large organizational and cultural differences distinguish the American and Israeli cases. Third, experts claim that gay and lesbian soldiers receive special treatment in the IDF. We agree or partially agree with all of these arguments. Our interpretation of these findings, however, differs from experts who claim that foreign military experiences are irrelevant. While no single case study can show decisively what would happen if the U.S. changed its policy, lessons from the Israeli experience seem to us to be relevant for determining what would happen if the U.S. Congress and Pentagon lifted the American gay ban.

In particular, we believe that the Israeli experience lends some weight to the claim that American military effectiveness would not decline if known homosexuals were allowed to serve.

Known gay and lesbian soldiers in combat and intelligence units of the IDF

According to Professor Charles Moskos, one of the principle architects of “Don’t-Ask, Don’t Tell”, there are no known gay and lesbian soldiers in combat or intelligence units of the IDF. During testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee in 1993, Moskos stated that known gay soldiers were not assigned to elite combat units, did not work for intelligence units, and did not hold command positions in any branch.²⁸ In later work, Moskos reaffirmed that “gays are excluded from elite combat units, and most sleep at their own homes rather than in barracks”.²⁹ During two recent appearances on *National Public Radio*, Moskos said that there are no known gay soldiers in combat or intelligence units of the IDF.³⁰

Our findings indicate that Moskos is partially correct. As is true with many militaries, a distinction must be made between official IDF policy concerning sexual minorities and the realities of informal IDF practices and culture. Like the rest of Israeli society, the IDF was until recently an environment in which sexual minorities were largely invisible. Prior to the lifting of the ban in 1993, the vast majority of gay and lesbian soldiers kept their sexual orientation private due to fears of both official sanctions and ostracism from fellow soldiers.³¹ Lesbian and gay soldiers often preferred to wait until reserve service to be more open about their sexual identity since the atmosphere was less restrictive and more conducive to a separate personal life. Rafi Niv, a journalist who writes on gay issues, confirmed in 1993 that “Most gay soldiers I know are in the closet”.³²

Even before Israel lifted its gay ban in 1993, however, some known gay and lesbian soldiers did serve in the IDF and some were promoted through the ranks and served in positions requiring top security clearances. In 1993, for example, an Israeli Military Attaché assigned to the Embassy in Washington, D.C. declared that Israel did not have a blanket ban on homosexuals

for top-secret positions.³³ Gal reported in 1994 that prior to the lifting of the ban, much latitude normally was given when a seasoned soldier was discovered suddenly to be a homosexual. He said that homosexual soldiers did in fact serve openly in units with top security clearances and that soldiers who excelled were unlikely to be removed once their sexual orientation was revealed. According to Gal, “Commanding officers, even in highly classified intelligence units, who had homosexual soldiers who performed satisfactorily under their command refrained from enforcing [the ban on homosexuals in sensitive units]”.³⁴

All available evidence suggests that the IDF continues to be a place where many homosexual soldiers choose not to disclose their sexual orientation. As more gay Israelis have grown comfortable about expressing their orientation in recent years, however, greater openness has been found in the military as well.³⁵ A woman who decided to bring her partner to one of her base’s social events in 1997 explains that “the decision was preceded by consultations with my professional commander... He recommended to me quite warmly not to hide my sexual orientation and promised to support me professionally if there were any problems following my revelation”.³⁶ A June, 2000 Israeli television broadcast that was sanctioned by the IDF featured homosexual active-duty and reserve soldiers discussing their experiences of being gay in the military.³⁷ Walzer found that military personnel generally reported positive responses to their coming out and in 1997 he spotted a soldier in uniform at a gay pride march. When asked if appearing in uniform could cause problems with military officials, the soldier replied: “No, not at all. I can come here in uniform. The military command is accepting of [gay and lesbian soldiers]”.³⁸ An officer interviewed for this report had no problems rising through the ranks as an out lesbian. When asked how overall attitudes had changed from before the 1993 policy change, the major replied: “I have felt a change for the better, mainly in the attitude of security officers, but not as big a change (because not as big a change was needed) as it seems by the change in army regulations”.³⁹ While no official statistics exist on the number of known gay and lesbian soldiers in the IDF today, these and other sources indicate growing openness.

Even though we agree that most homosexuals in IDF combat and intelligence units do not acknowledge their sexual orientation to peers, it is also true that some known gays do serve in such units. Indeed, some IDF combat and intelligence units have developed a reputation as particularly welcoming to gay and lesbian soldiers and some have developed a gay culture. Ro'ei, a tank corps soldier, reported in 1999 that "I have not had any problems being gay. On the contrary, in my base we had a large gay contingent. You would come to the base, and you know one other gay person, who knows another gay person, etc...In my basic training, people knew that I was gay and it was enough that there was one homophobe in my unit... After that, I had nothing to be afraid of. People come out of the closet while they are civilians, why could I not do it during the Army. Sometimes, it's even easier because you are protected from society. You don't have friends from the same town so you can be more open in the Army".⁴⁰

Kaplan and Ben-Ari conducted in-depth interviews with 21 self-identified gay IDF combat soldiers and found that five of them (23.8 percent) were known to be homosexual by at least one other member in their combat unit.⁴¹ And, as this study goes to press, Kaplan and Belkin are in the process of administering a survey to determine if known gays serve in IDF combat units. Full details of our study will be reported in a subsequent publication, but our results thus far deserve mention. To date, we have administered a survey to 268 IDF service members that includes the following question: "Do you know (or have known in the past) a homosexual or lesbian soldier in your unit"? Our results are as follows: among combat soldiers (n=136), yes=17%; maybe = 23%; no =60%; among non-combat soldiers (n=132), yes=20%; maybe=14%; no=64%.

If we estimate conservatively that two percent of Israel's 130,000 active duty land forces are gay, and if we extrapolate based on Kaplan's finding that 23.8 percent of gay combat soldiers are known by at least one peer to be homosexual, then we can estimate that 2,600 active duty IDF foot soldiers are gay and that 619 of them are known by at least one member of their unit to be homosexual.⁴² Even if this informal estimate is wildly exaggerated, recall that opponents of

lifting the ban claim that *no* known gays serve in combat and intelligence units in Israel. Even in combat and intelligence units with known gay soldiers, however, we found *no* evidence of a deterioration in cohesion, performance, readiness or morale. Generals, ministry officials, scholars, and NGO observers all have claimed that their presence has not eroded cohesion, performance, readiness or morale.

Those who believe that low disclosure rates underscore the irrelevance of foreign military experiences assume that if the American ban were lifted, many gays and lesbians would reveal their sexual orientation. This assumption seems highly questionable. A considerable amount of evidence suggests that gay and lesbian soldiers in the U.S. and in Israel are driven by the same factor: they reveal their sexual orientation only when safe to do so. With regard to Israel, Fink confirmed the impression of numerous experts who we interviewed: "... I think it really depends on the unit and on the commanders in the specific unit. In some units it will be really a piece of cake to come out and people [will find] it something that makes their unit more diverse, more interesting. ... There are other units in which especially a commander can be a conservative or homophobic and not help the gay soldier to be part of the unit ..."⁴³

The same calculus motivates Americans. For example, a study of American police departments that allow open homosexuals to serve identified seven known gays in the Chicago Police Department and approximately 100 in the New York Police Department.⁴⁴ Several different factors may account for the variation in disclosure rates but scholars who have compared organizations believe that much if not most of the variance reflects the fact that safety is the primary determinant of Americans' decisions to reveal sexual orientation. Since safety varies from organization to organization depending on whether leaders express clear messages in support of integration, disclosure rates vary as well. Koegel claims that "Perhaps one of the most salient factors that influences whether homosexual police officers or firefighters make their sexual orientation known to their departments is their perception of the climate...[T]he more hostile the environment, the less likely it was that people publicly acknowledged their

homosexuality”.⁴⁵ Similar variance can be found in the U.S. military and a recent study found that while 21.2 percent of naval officers know a gay sailor, only 4.1 percent of Marine officers know a gay Marine.⁴⁶ It seems likely to us that this difference results from the fact that it is safer to reveal one’s homosexuality in the U.S. Navy than in the Marines. Indeed at least one study has found the U.S. Navy to be more tolerant toward homosexuals than the Marines.⁴⁷

To summarize our response to the first argument, known homosexuals do not undermine cohesion and performance in Israeli combat and intelligence units. And, the fact that many gay Israeli soldiers choose not to reveal their orientation does not indicate that the Israeli experience is irrelevant for determining what would happen if the U.S. lifted its gay ban. On the contrary, the evidence shows that both Israelis and Americans come out of the closet only when it is safe to do so. Scholars who believe that many American gays and lesbians would reveal their sexual orientation if the ban were lifted need to answer two questions. First, if American culture or the American gay rights movement are primary determinants of disclosure rates, then why have so few homosexuals revealed their sexual orientation in some U.S. police and fire departments that allow known gays to serve? And second, why do the majority of gay Israeli soldiers decline to reveal their sexual orientation despite the recent emergence of an Israeli gay rights movement that includes widely-attended pride parades and civic and human rights organizations? Even the Pentagon’s own studies have found that gay and lesbian soldiers are as committed to national security, patriotism, and military effectiveness as their heterosexual peers.⁴⁸ To suggest that they would reveal their sexual orientation when doing so would undermine their personal safety or the effectiveness of their units seems to contradict the available evidence.

Special Treatment

Experts who claim that foreign experiences are irrelevant for determining if lifting the gay ban would undermine American military performance argue that although many nations

allow homosexuals to serve in their armed forces, gay soldiers receive special treatment in these cases. Even if the decision to allow known homosexuals to serve does not harm the military, the special treatment that gays and lesbians receive can undermine cohesion, performance, readiness and morale. In the case of Israel, for example, Moskos, has noted that while it is true that gays are expected to fulfill their military obligation, it is also true that they receive de facto special treatment. For example, gay soldiers are assigned to 'open' bases, allowing them to commute to and from home and to sleep at their own homes rather than in barracks.⁴⁹

Similar to the argument about the absence of known gays and lesbians in combat and intelligence units, we have found that Moskos's claim about special treatment is partially correct. Some evidence suggests that prior to the 1993 decision, the IDF treated homosexual and heterosexual soldiers equally in many cases. For example, Gal noted that "aside from a few exceptions, "homosexuality has almost no bearing on an individual's military career".⁵⁰ Colonel Ron Levy, a former head of the IDF mental health system, insisted that homosexuals were not discriminated against by the military as a group.⁵¹

However, other data confirm that treatment of gays and lesbians was not always equitable before the 1993 regulatory changes. Gal Uchovsky, a journalist who analyzed IDF treatment of gays and lesbians, stated that "It's a question of who you are and where you serve".⁵² An openly gay reservist for an intelligence unit who had access to top-secret material told one journalist that everyone knew that he and several other of the unit's members were gay. "It's not an issue," he said. But he added after a pause, "in my unit".⁵³ Ilan Sheinfeld, a reserve tank crew member, reported that security officers reduced his security ranking and allegedly bugged his phone although they did let up after he was transferred to another job. Sheinfeld declared that "One hand doesn't know what the other is doing".⁵⁴

No quantitative data are available on whether sexual minorities continue to face increased scrutiny for promotions and sensitive positions. Publicly, the IDF insists that homosexual soldiers are screened for positions according to the same standards as heterosexual soldiers. For

example, Brigadier-General Shoham, the judge advocate general, stated in 1998 that the IDF accords equal rights and duties to gay and lesbian soldiers. The commander in charge of draftees also reported in 1999 that “we are not interested in the sexual orientation of the soldiers”.⁵⁵ In support of these claims, a Board member of Israel’s primary gay rights organization who was interviewed for this report knew of no cases in which a soldier had been denied benefits, promotions or assignments because of his or her sexual orientation.⁵⁶ A review of newspaper articles and web sites related to lesbian and gay issues in Israel also uncovered no stories of soldiers who were denied promotions because of their sexual orientation.

Even though available information suggests that official treatment of sexual minorities has become more equitable since the 1993 removal of homosexual restrictions, however, it seems clear that sexual minorities do not always enjoy equal rights and that they continue to be viewed with an increased level of scrutiny by some commanders. Official differentiation still exists, if perhaps in a more muted form. For example, the IDF negotiated the first settlement providing survivor benefits to a same-sex partner in 1997. However, the same-sex survivor received less than the full monetary compensation usually given to war widows and widowers. While there are no rules against promoting gays and lesbians, a clinical psychiatrist stated that soldiers in her care still “suspect that if they come out, they won’t get a good position”.⁵⁷ Kaplan and Ben-Ari conclude that “The new policy has only partly percolated into practice. Similar to what has been found among other nations of NATO, full integration has tended to lag behind policy changes”.⁵⁸

Despite the lack of perfectly equal treatment in all cases, several important qualifications should be noted. To begin, we found that unequal treatment is rare and that most Israeli gay and lesbian soldiers are treated the same as their heterosexual peers most of the time.⁵⁹ Gay soldiers are assigned to open as well as closed bases and most cases of unequal treatment that we found consisted of local attempts to resolve problems flexibly rather than systematic extensions of special rights. For example, some *heterosexual* soldiers are allowed to live off-base or to change units if they are having trouble with their group. And, some commanders allow *heterosexual*

soldiers to shower privately. When gay soldiers encounter hostility from others in their units, the issue tends to be handled as a discrete situation rather than the symptom of a systemic problem. Most importantly, we have not found any evidence to show that differential treatment has undermined performance, cohesion, readiness, or morale. Indeed, most of the experts who confirmed that Israel's decision to lift its gay ban did not undermine performance, cohesion, readiness, or morale also confirmed that the treatment of gays and lesbians has not been perfectly equitable in all cases. Despite their awareness that treatment has not been perfectly equitable at all times, all experts agreed that lifting the gay ban did not undermine military effectiveness.

Organizational and Cultural differences

A third argument that experts have invoked to show that foreign military experiences are irrelevant for determining whether lifting the gay ban would undermine American military performance is that important organizational and cultural differences distinguish the United States from other countries that allow known homosexuals to serve. More specifically, they argue that the U.S. military is a unique institution that cannot be equated with foreign armed forces. In addition, unlike most other countries, the United States is home to powerful gay rights groups as well as large and highly organized conservative organizations.

In the case of Israel, this argument is correct. We believe that several important organizational and cultural differences distinguish the Israeli and American cases. To begin, many American citizens do not regard service in the armed forces as a necessary rite of passage. In Israel, on the other hand, the prevalence of security issues and the system of near-universal conscription have made participation in the IDF the primary rite of passage into Israeli citizenship and a necessary precondition for consideration as a full member of society. Although the military's prestige has declined somewhat in recent years, full participation in the armed forces by gays and lesbians still is seen by many as the fulfillment of a shared responsibility to defend the nation rather than as a threat to military stability. According to Walzer, "the IDF has been a

unifying, uniform experience for Israeli Jews; those who escape service, namely the ultra-Orthodox, are highly resented by most Israeli Jews. That gays and lesbians seek to contribute to their country through military service is an affirmation of what the IDF tries to represent itself as: an institution that brings the diverse strata of Israeli society together”.⁶⁰ Because almost all Israelis serve in the armed forces, unit counselors who confront problems involving adjustment to military life and interpersonal relations emphasize flexibility and mutual accommodation. In the American armed forces, by contrast, the system of voluntary enlistment forces the military to compete with private sector employers who might offer more promising career options to potential recruits.

Another distinction between the two cases is that Israeli society does not have a longstanding tradition of anti-gay violence or hatred of homosexuals although observers have spoken of “a strong heterosexist outlook, in which one is presumed to be straight”.⁶¹ In the military context, IDF commanders do not use negative images of homosexuality as a motivator in basic training and they do not use the Hebrew equivalent of ‘faggot’ to humiliate soldiers who perform poorly. While the term ‘homo’ gets used, primarily it is employed by soldiers teasing each other.⁶²

Finally, unlike sexual minorities in the United States, homosexuals in Israel did not begin to develop a semi-autonomous culture or organized political movement until the late 1980s and early 1990s. Walzer says that until recently, the Israeli gay and lesbian community was not mobilized to demand its rights and that legislative victories such as the repeal of the sodomy law resulted from “top-down” elite action rather than grassroots political pressure. Conversely, anti-gay forces are not organized into social movements in Israel. For example, in the early 1990s GAO researchers who attempted to contact organizations that oppose homosexual participation in the military were told that none exist.⁶³

Despite organizational and cultural differences, we do not believe that the Israeli experience is irrelevant for determining whether American military effectiveness would suffer if

known homosexuals were allowed to serve in the U.S. armed forces. To begin, organizational structure does not seem to play an important role in determining whether the lifting of a gay ban undermines military performance. No two militaries are exactly the same and the twenty-three armed forces that have lifted their gay bans include different organizational configurations.⁶⁴ For example, some militaries such as the Canadian Forces are volunteer organizations that are not central to national identity while others such as the Israel Defense Forces are conscript militaries that play a more prominent role in the nation's consciousness. In the 26 years since the Dutch military became the first to lift its ban in 1974, no countries that have decided to allow known homosexuals to serve have reported a decrease in military performance.⁶⁵ Given that organizational particularities do not determine whether the lifting of a gay ban undermines the armed forces, the institutional differences that distinguish the Israeli and American militaries do not support the argument that IDF experiences are irrelevant for determining what would happen if the U.S. allowed known homosexuals to serve.

With respect to cultural differences, the Israeli public is not completely accepting of homosexuality and American society is not completely intolerant. Under traditional Jewish law, sex between two men is considered unclean and a 1983 study found Israelis to be considerably less tolerant of homosexuality than Americans.⁶⁶ Although Israeli culture has become more tolerant since the 1983 study, religious parties continue to oppose gay rights and gay and lesbian soldiers in the IDF continue to serve in the context of a macho organizational culture that promotes a masculinity oriented to heterosexuality and bonding through jokes about women and homosexuals. While Israeli commanders do not use the Hebrew equivalent of the word "faggot", poor combat performance often is equated with childishness and femininity and "...images of combat soldiers as masculine, tough and team oriented are often contrasted with stereotypes of homosexuality as characterized by effeminacy, mental illness, promiscuity, loneliness and insecurity".⁶⁷ A study by Sion and Ben-Ari of the humor used in two elite combat units found that jocularly about sexuality was explicitly heterosexual and included jokes and stories about

homosexuals.⁶⁸ Discussions of women and sex continue to be a uniting factor for unit personnel, even as the strong bond created in small units permits expressions of affection that would generally be avoided in all-male groups.⁶⁹ Just as Israeli culture is not completely tolerant, American culture is not completely intolerant. For example, a recent Gallup poll shows that 70 percent of Americans believe that gays should be allowed to serve in the military and a recent Harris poll shows that 48 percent of Americans believe that *known* gays should be allowed to serve in the military.⁷⁰

More importantly, tolerant national climates are not necessary for maintaining cohesion, readiness, morale, and performance after the integration of a minority group into the military. Among the twenty-three nations that allow known gays and lesbians to serve in the military, many include powerful social and political groups that oppose gay rights.⁷¹ It would not be possible for the numerous American police and fire departments that include known homosexuals to continue to function smoothly if a fully tolerant national climate were necessary for the maintenance of organizational effectiveness. Without equating the experiences of sexual and racial minorities, the U.S. military allowed African American soldiers to serve on an equal basis when sixty three percent of the American public opposed integration.⁷² We do not equate the experiences of sexual and racial minorities but we do believe that the racial example shows that tolerant cultural climates are not necessary for maintaining organizational effectiveness when minority groups are integrated into the military. According to a recent study, “if the military services are eventually ordered to cease excluding homosexuals who engage in homosexual behavior, they will do so quite effectively and without major incidents, provided that the leadership...clearly communicate[s] support for the change”.⁷³

CONCLUSION

In our comprehensive search for published evidence and our interviews with all known experts on homosexuality in the IDF, we were not able to find any data suggesting that Israel’s decision to lift its gay ban undermined operational effectiveness, combat readiness, unit cohesion

or morale. In this security-conscious country where the military is considered to be essential to the continued existence of the nation, the decision to include sexual minorities has not harmed IDF effectiveness. In addition, while no official statistics are available for harassment rates of sexual minorities in the IDF, scholars, military officials and representatives of gay organizations alike assert that vicious harassment is rare. Despite the facts that the majority of gay combat soldiers do not disclose their sexual orientation to peers, that some gay soldiers receive special treatment, and that important organizational and cultural differences distinguish the Israeli and American cases, we believe that the Israeli experience supports the claim that American military effectiveness would not decline if known homosexuals were allowed to serve.

Professor Laura Miller has argued that although straight soldiers' reactions to open gays could undermine unit cohesion in the U.S. military, merely lifting the gay ban would not undermine cohesion, morale, readiness or performance.⁷⁴ Miller, whose conclusions are based on interviews she conducted over the past ten years with thousands of American soldiers, reasons that few gays or lesbians would come out of the closet in units where hostility and homophobia prevailed. Rather, Miller believes that American gay and lesbian soldiers would disclose their sexual orientation to peers only when they believed it was safe to do so. In other words, Miller draws a sharp distinction between the effect of the decision to lift a gay ban and the effect of the presence of known gays and lesbians in the military. The Israeli case seems to us to confirm Miller's distinction.

Appendix 1: PERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS

- Anonymous (Female). Former Soldier, Israeli Defense Forces. March 19, 2000.
- Anonymous (Female). Former Soldier, Israeli Defense Forces. March 20, 2000.
- Anonymous (Male). Former Captain, Israeli Defense Forces. March 22, 2000.
- Anonymous (Female). Former Lieutenant, Organizational Counselor, Israeli Defense Forces. March 18, 2000.
- Anonymous (Female). Major, Military Intelligence, Israeli Defense Forces. March 27, 2000.
- Anonymous (Male). Former Soldier, February 25, 2000.
- Anonymous (Male). Officer, IDF Mental Health Unit. March 28, 2000.
- Asher, Arian. Professor of Political Science, Graduate Center of the City University of New York. March 3, 2000.
- Brom, Shlomo. Brigadier-General (ret.) and Research Fellow, Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, Tel Aviv University. March 6, 2000.
- Cohen, Stuart. Professor of Political Studies and Senior Research Fellow, Center for Strategic Studies, Bar-Ilan University. March 22, March 24, April 2, April 5, April 10, 2000.
- Dale, Andrew. Israeli Citizen. February 3, April 13, and April 15, 2000.
- D. Monica. Shatil Organization, New Israel Fund, March 16, 2000.
- Demchak, Chris. Professor of Political Science and Public Administration, University of Arizona. April 11, 2000.
- El-Ad, Hagai. U.S. Coordinator for Jerusalem Open House. March 7, 2000.
- Drori, Gili. Post-Doctoral Candidate, Center for International Security and Cooperation, Stanford University. March 26, 2000.
- Eskenazi, Jean-Marc. Coordinator, Pa-amayim at UC Berkeley. February 27, 2000.
- Fink, Amir. Scholar and Co-Author of *Independence Park: The Lives of Gay Men in Israel*. April 11, 2000.
- Gabbay, Raanan. Board Member and Chair of the Overseas Relations Committee of Agudaht Zechuyot Ha-ezrach. February 25, March 28, and April 9, 2000.
- Gal, Reuven. Director, Israeli Institute for Military Studies. April 5, 2000.
- Galili, Shuly. New Israel Fund, San Francisco Office. February 19, 2000.
- Giladi, Eival. IDF Lt. General and Research Fellow, Center for International Security and Cooperation, Stanford University. March 29, 2000.

Gross, Aeyal. Professor of Law, Tel Aviv University. March 4, 28 and 29, 2000.

Ben-Eliyahu, Hadass. Behavioral Scientist, Israeli Defense Forces. April 8, 2000.

Harel, Alon. Professor of Law, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. March 21 and April 13, 2000.

Heller, Mark. Research Fellow, Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, Tel Aviv University. February 27, 2000.

Kaplan, Daniel. Scholar and Author of *David, Jonathan and Other Soldiers*. February 19, March 29, and July 18, 2000.

Lev, Shai. Deputy Director, Israel Department of Defense. March 28, 2000.

Levy, Yagil. Research Fellow, Hubert Humphrey Institute for Social Research, Ben Gurion University. March 4 and April 15, 2000.

Misrahi, Meytal. Founder, Israel Foreign Lesbos. March 20, 2000.

Rimalt, Zvi. Former Soldier, Israeli Defense Forces. February 28, 2000.

Shapir, Yiftah. Research Fellow, Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, Tel Aviv University. February 27, 2000.

Slozberg, Oren. Program Director, LYRIC. February 28, 2000.

Vitemberg, Ilan. Former Soldier, Israeli Citizen. March 6, 2000.

Walzer, Lee I. Author, *Between Sodom to Eden: A Gay Journey Through Today's Changing Israel*. February 24, 2000.

Yakir, Dan. Association for Citizens' Rights in Israel. March 25, 2000.

AUTHORS' NOTE:

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¹ The longest case-study on the impact of the lifting of a gay ban is Rosemary E. Park, "Opening the Canadian Forces to Gays and Lesbians: An Inevitable But Improbable Reconfiguration," in *Gays and Lesbians in the Military: Issues, Concerns, and Contrasts*, eds. Wilbur J. Scott and Sandra C. Stanley (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1994), 165-181. Also see the brief case studies in Gregory Herek, Jared Jobe and Ralph Carney, eds., *Out in Force: Sexual Orientation and the Military* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1996); National Defense Research Institute, *Sexual Orientation and U.S. Military Policy: Options and Assessment* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 1993); General Accounting Office, *Homosexuals in the Military: Policies and Practices of Foreign Countries* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. General Accounting Office, 1993); and Frank Pond, "A Comparative Survey and Analysis of Military Policies with Regard to Service by Gay Persons," in *Policy Concerning Homosexuality in the Armed Forces*, Hearing held by Senate Armed Services Committee. 103rd Congress, 2nd Session (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1993). For theoretical analysis see W. Darryl Henderson, *Cohesion, the Human Element in Combat* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1985); Ronald D.

Ray, "Military Necessity & Homosexuality", in *Gays: In or Out? The U.S. Military & Homosexuals-A Sourcebook* (New York, Brassey's, 1993); Charles C. Moskos, "From Citizens' Army to Social Laboratory," *Wilson Quarterly* 17 (Winter 1993), 83-94; Elizabeth Kier, "Homosexuals in the U.S. Military: Open Integration and Combat Effectiveness," *International Security* 23 (1998): 5-39; Robert J. MacCoun, "Sexual Orientation and Military Cohesion: A Critical Review of the Evidence," in *Out in Force*, 157-176.

² Reuven Gal, "Gays in the Military: Policy and Practice in the Israeli Defense Forces," in Scott and Stanley, *Gays and Lesbians in the Military*, 181-189; National Defense Research Institute, *Sexual Orientation and U.S. Military Policy*, 85-90; General Accounting Office, *Homosexuals in the Military*, 38-43; Paul Gade, Paul, David Segal, and Edgar Johnson, "The Experience of Foreign Militaries," in *Out in Force*, 124-125.

³ Israel's ground, air, and land forces include approximately 173,500 troops on active duty and 425,000 on reserve. Anthony H. Cordesman, *Middle East Military Balance 2000* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Security and International Studies, 2000).

⁴ Baruch Kimmerling, *The Interrupted System* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1985); Reuven Gal and Stuart Cohen. 2000, "Israel: Still Waiting in the Wings," in *The Postmodern Military: Armed Forces after the Cold War*, eds. Charles C. Moskos, John Allen Williams and David Segal (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 224. For recent changes in the IDF's role in Israeli society, see Stuart Cohen, "Military Service in Israel: From Nation-Binder to Nation-Divider?" Paper prepared for BESA Conference on "Armed Forces in Israel and Other Western Democratic Societies, Bar-Ilan University (June 8-10, 1998).

⁵ Israel does not conscript Arabs. Pregnant and married women, those with severe handicaps, and ultra-orthodox Jews also are exempted from service. See Yagil Levy, "The Right to Fight: Recruitment of Homosexuals in the U.S. and Israel," Unpublished manuscript (2000); Amia

Lieblich, *Transition to Adulthood During Military Service: The Israeli Case* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1989).

⁶ Clyde Haberman, "Homosexuals in Israeli Army: No Official Discrimination, But Keep It Secret," *New York Times*, 21 February 1993, 14.

⁷ Knesset Daily Hearings, Discrimination and Hindrances of the Acceptance of Sexual Minorities in the IDF (13th Knesset, 2nd Session, Feb. 10, 1993), 3202-3208.

⁸ Lee Walzer, *Between Sodom and Eden: A Gay Journey Through Today's Changing Israel* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 117-118; Robert Block, "Gay King David Theory Starts Goliath of a Row," *The Independent*, 11 February 1993, 11; *The Associated Press*, "Defense Official Says He Was Fired after Coming Out as Homosexual, 2 February 1993.

⁹ Amir Sumakai Fink and Jacob Press, *Independence Park: The Lives of Gay Men in Israel* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999), 11.

¹⁰ Amendments to K-31-11-01 Service of Homosexuals in the IDF, Manpower Division Standing Orders (Israel Defense Forces, 1993). For the English translation, see Walzer, *Between Sodom and Eden*, 118-119. Professor Aeyal Gross of Tel Aviv University reports in a forthcoming article that the 1993 revisions were canceled quietly in 1998.

¹¹ Stuart Cohen, Personal communication, 10 April 2000.

¹² Charles Gibson, anchor "U.S. Struggling with Issue of Gays in the Military," *ABC News*, 9 March 2000.

¹³ Anonymous, Personal communication, 18 March 2000.

¹⁴ Amir Fink, Personal communication, 11 April 2000.

¹⁵ The following section is based on Ma'ayan Zigdon, "Coming out of the Kitbag," *Ba'machne*, 22 October 1999, 21-25.

¹⁶ In one case, for example, two (heterosexual) soldiers made a bet to see who would perform oral sex on whom. Gay soldiers present at the time were appalled by the incident. See Walzer,

Between Sodom and Eden. Approximately three quarters of our interview subjects mentioned that vicious harassment is rare although approximately two thirds had heard negative comments about gay and lesbian people during their military service.

¹⁷ Walzer, *Between Sodom and Eden*.

¹⁸ Anonymous, Personal communication, 27 March 2000.

¹⁹ This paragraph is based on Walzer, *Between Sodom and Eden*, 134 and Walzer, Personal communication, 14 April 2000.

²⁰ For recent problems concerning the sexual harassment of female soldiers in the military, see Stacy Feldman, "The Gender Battlefield," *The Jerusalem Report*, 10 April 2000, 11; Gayil Hareven, "Of Vice and Men," *The Jerusalem Report*, 10 April 2000.

²¹ Raanan Gabbay, Personal communication, 9 April 2000; Oren Slozberg, Personal communication, 9 April 2000; Dan Yakir, Personal communication; 25 March 2000. All three are affiliated with gay rights groups in Israel.

²² National Defense Research Institute, *Sexual Orientation and U.S. Military Policy*, 85-90; General Accounting Office, *Homosexuals in the Military*, 38-43.

²³ General Accounting Office, *Homosexuals in the Military*, 43.

²⁴ Gal, "Gays in the Military," in *Gays and Lesbians in the Military*, 188.

²⁵ Gabbay, Personal communication, 9 April 2000.

²⁶ Janet Halley, *Don't: A Reader's Guide to the Military's Anti-Gay Policy* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999); Urvashi Vaid, *Virtual Equality: The Mainstreaming of Gay & Lesbian Liberation* (New York: Anchor Books, 1995).

²⁷ Policy Concerning Homosexuality in the Armed Forces; "The Connection", *National Public Radio* 20 December 1999; Charles C. Moskos and Stacey L. Sobel, "Should Gays Serve," *Salon* 13 June 2000, available at

http://www.salon.com/news/feature/2000/06/13/fight_club/index1.html.

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- ²⁸ Policy Concerning Homosexuality in the Armed Forces, 350.
- ²⁹ Charles C. Moskos, "From Citizens' Army to Social Laboratory," in *Gays and Lesbians in the Military*, 64.
- ³⁰ "World Affairs Council Weekly Broadcast," *National Public Radio* 1 May 2000; "The Connection," *National Public Radio* 20 December 1999.
- ³¹ National Defense Research Institute, Sexual Orientation and U.S. Military Policy, 85-90; General Accounting Office, Homosexuals in the Military, 38-43.
- ³² Haberman, "Homosexuals in Israeli Army," 14.
- ³³ Pond, "A Comparative Survey," in *Policy Concerning Homosexuality*.
- ³⁴ Gal, "Gays in the Military," in *Gays and Lesbians in the Military*, 186.
- ³⁵ Approximately two thirds of our interview subjects spoke about the openness or growing openness of the IDF although not everyone framed the issue this way. For example, one respondent said that she had seen no change over time but that she had always found the IDF to be accepting of gays and lesbians. There was a general consensus among interviewees that negative attitudes about homosexuals persist but that the military, like the rest of Israeli society, is becoming more accepting.
- ³⁶ Cited in Walzer, *Between Sodom and Eden*, 133.
- ³⁷ Aeyal M. Gross, "Between the Homosocial and the Homoerotic: Gays/Military in Comparative and International Law—A summary," Unpublished manuscript (2000).
- ³⁸ Cited in Walzer, *Between Sodom and Eden*, 114.
- ³⁹ Anonymous, Personal communication, 30 March 2000.
- ⁴⁰ Zigdon, "Coming out of the Kitbag," 25; 22.
- ⁴¹ Danny Kaplan and Eyal Ben-Ari, "Brothers and Others in Arms: Managing Gay Identity in Combat Units of the Israeli Army," *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 29, 4 (forthcoming); Danny Kaplan, Personal communication, 18 July 2000. Interviewees reflected a broad range of

social backgrounds and served in elite infantry brigades, the armored corps, artillery units, combat engineering units, navy attack ships, submarines and pilots' school. Interviewees served 3 to 4 years from 1980 to 1996. While most were sergeants, two were officers

⁴² The two percent figure is conservative. Canadian experts, for example, estimate that 3.5 percent of the Canadian armed forces consist of gay and lesbian soldiers. Surveys have found that 7.3 percent of American veterans have had gay sex. See Aaron Belkin and Jason McNichol, *Effects of the 1992 Lifting of Restrictions on Gay and Lesbian Service in the Canadian Armed Forces: Appraising the Evidence* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: Center for the Study of Sexual Minorities in the Military, 2000), available at www.gaymilitary.ucsb.edu; Lois Shawer, *And the Flag Was Still There: Straight People, Gay People and Sexuality in the U.S. Military* (Binghamton, NY: Harrington Park Press, 1995), 198.

⁴³ Fink, Personal communication, 11 April 2000.

⁴⁴ Paul Koegel, "Lessons Learned from the Experiences of Domestic Police and Fire Departments," In *Out in Force*, 137.

⁴⁵ Koegel, "Lessons Learned," In *Out in Force*, 138.

⁴⁶ John W. Bicknell, Jr., *Study of Naval Officers' Attitudes Toward Homosexuals in the Military* (Monterey, Calif.: Naval Postgraduate School M.S. Thesis, 2000), 176.

⁴⁷ Bicknell, Study of Naval Officers' Attitudes.

⁴⁸ Theodore R. Sarbin and Kenneth E. Karols, "Nonconforming Sexual Orientations and Military Suitability," in *Gays in Uniform; The Pentagon's Secret Reports*, ed. Kate Dyer (Boston, Mass.: Alyson Publications, Inc., 1990), 34-35. This is also known as the PERSEREC report.

⁴⁹ Moskos, "From Citizens' Army to Social Laboratory," in *Gays and Lesbians in the Military*, 64.

⁵⁰ Gal, "Gays in the Military," in *Gays and Lesbians in the Military*, 187.

⁵¹ “Israeli Army Denies Discriminating Against Homosexual Soldiers,” *The Associated Press*, 7 February 1993.

⁵² Eric Silver, “Easier to Be Gay,” *Jerusalem Post*, 25 February 1993.

⁵³ Haberman, “Homosexuals in Israeli Army.”

⁵⁴ Silver, “Easier to Be Gay”; Sasha Sadan and Asher Wallfish, “IDF Policy on Drafting Gays Won’t Change,” *Jerusalem Post*, 8 February 1993.

⁵⁵ Zigdon, “Coming out of the Kitbag,” 24.

⁵⁶ Gabbay, Personal communication, 29 March 2000.

⁵⁷ Zigdon, “Coming out of the Kitbag,” 21-25.

⁵⁸ Kaplan and Ben-Ari, “Brothers and Others in Arms,” in *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*.

⁵⁹ Approximately three quarters of our interview subjects said that some discrimination exists but that in general, sexual orientation is not a major issue with regard to promotions or equal treatment.

⁶⁰ Walzer, Personal communication, 14 April 2000.

⁶¹ Walzer, *Between Sodom and Eden*, 16.

⁶² Danny Kaplan, “The Military as a Second Bar Mitzvah: Combat Service as an Initiation Rite to Zionist Masculinity,” in *Imagined Masculinities: Male Identity and Culture in the Modern Middle East*, ed. Emma Sinclair-Webb and Mai Ghoussoub (London: Al-Saqi Books, forthcoming).

⁶³ Walzer, *Between Sodom and Eden*, 19. General Accounting Office, *Homosexuals in the Military*.

⁶⁴ A list of nations that allow gays and lesbians to serve in the armed forces is available on the web site of the International Gay Lesbian Association at

http://www.ilga.org/Information/legal_survey/Summary%20information/armed_forces.htm.

⁶⁵ Gade et. al., “The Experience of Foreign Militaries,” in *Out in Force*.

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- ⁶⁶ Gal, "Gays in the Military," in *Gays and Lesbians in the Military*.
- ⁶⁷ Kaplan, "The Military as a Second Bar Mitzvah," in *Imagined Masculinities*; Kaplan and Ben-Ari, "Brothers and Others in Arms," in *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*"; Michael Levertov, "Male Preserve," *Ha'aretz Magazine* (4 June 1999); C. W. Anderson and H.R. Smith, "Stigma and Honor: Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual People in the U.S Military," in *Homosexual Issues in the Workplace*, ed. L. Diamant (Washington, D.C.: Taylor and Francis, 1993) 65-89.
- ⁶⁸ L. Sion and Eyal Ben-Ari, "Hungry, Weary, and Horny: Humor and Laughter in Israel's Military Reserves," unpublished manuscript.
- ⁶⁹ Danny Kaplan, *Brother and Others in Arms: The Making of Love and War in Israeli Combat Units* (Binghamton, NY, forthcoming).
- ⁷⁰ Gallup Polls 2000. Available at <http://www.gallup.com/poll/Indicators/indhomosexual.asp>; "The Harris Poll Election 2000," (PRNewswire, 15 February 2000).
- ⁷¹ Barry Adam, Jan Willem Duyvendak, and André Krouwel, eds., *The Global Emergence of Gay and Lesbian Politics; National Imprints of a Worldwide Movement* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1999).
- ⁷² Elizabeth Kier, "Rights and Fights: Sexual Orientation and Military Effectiveness," *International Security* 24, 1 (Summer 1999): 196.
- ⁷³ Gade et. al., "The Experience of Foreign Militaries," in *Out in Force*, 127.
- ⁷⁴ Laura Miller, "Are Open Gays a Threat to Cohesion", Lecture presented to the Center for the Study of Sexual Minorities in the Military, University of California, Santa Barbara, 21 April 2000, available at <http://www.gaymilitary.ucsb.edu/programs.htm#six>.