

# **Israel's Military: Emotions, Violence, and the Limits of Dissent**

Submitted in partial fulfilment for the requirement of the degree of Ph.D.

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## **Summary**

The thesis contributes to the feminist and critical engagements with the Israeli military and its violent behaviour against Palestinian civilians. Intrigued by the public, military, and political reluctance to condemn the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) for their individual and collective violence against Palestinians, this research presents the artificial and multifaceted construction of a professional, non-threatening, and humanitarian military subjectivity as a material and symbolic figure that constrains local and international dissent against the Israeli military. This idealised image is constituted through a variety of Israeli soldiering (self-)representations that capture, circulate, and provoke emotions that determine affinity with the Israeli military and the denigration of Palestinians. Therefore, this project shows that a repertoire of emotions constitute and circulate a romanticised military image that strengthens the affective divisions that sanction and justify the enactment of violence in the Middle East.

To my family,  
Wherever you might find yourself...

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## Introduction

Local and international human rights organisations, Israeli conscientious objectors, local and foreign journalists, scholars and human rights attorneys warn about the widespread violence pursued by the Israeli military against Palestinians. Nevertheless, despite the growing visual and written evidence that incriminates the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) for their violent behaviour, the Israeli public, political figures, and military leaders are reluctant to condemn the Israeli troops for the violence perpetuated in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.<sup>1</sup> With an interest in the limited investigation, prosecution, and conviction of the IDF's violent behaviour against Palestinians, this project examines the Israeli military's reduced accountability for the violence enacted against Palestinians, and interrogates the societal, military, and political tolerance for the violent behaviour of the Israeli forces in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Situated at the blurred intersection between civil and military relations in Israel, this research studies individual and collective practices, processes, and actors that contribute to the constitution and the (re)production of the conviction that the 'IDF is the most moral army in the world' despite incriminatory evidence that shows the Israeli forces' pervasive violence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

More significantly, the disclosure of the IDF's violence against Palestinians through visual or narratives of dissent elicits intense debates regarding the methods used to record these episodes of violence, concerning the actors that circulate visual representations of violence, or regarding the subjects (both Israeli military forces and Palestinians) of those recordings. For instance, during the early days of the Second Intifada, a twelve-year-old Palestinian boy, Mohammed al-Dura, and his father were killed by the Israeli troops in the Gaza Strip. The killing was recorded and its video recording was disseminated in the local and international public sphere. If the killing of the Palestinian boy outraged the international community, Israeli voices doubted the authenticity of the footage that was circulated to the wider public.<sup>2</sup> In Israel, the debates

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<sup>1</sup> B'Tselem, 'The Occupation's Fig Leaf: Israel's Military Law Enforcement System as a Whitewash Mechanism' (Jerusalem, B'Tselem, 2016). Available at: [http://www.btselem.org/download/201605\\_occupations\\_fig\\_leaf\\_eng.pdf](http://www.btselem.org/download/201605_occupations_fig_leaf_eng.pdf) [Accessed 30 July 2017].

<sup>2</sup> Dawber, A. 'The Killing of 12-year-old Mohammed al Durrah in Gaza became the defining image of the second Intifada. Only Israel claims it was all a fake'. *The Independent*, 20 May 2013. Available at:

provoked by this episode transformed al-Dura into a recurring figure that is associated with the Palestinian cunningness to simulate pain and death in order to unfairly condemn the Israeli security forces for violence pursued in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, *Breaking the Silence*, a human rights organisation that includes Israeli veterans and active duty military personnel, is both admired and condemned for its continuous efforts to disseminate the Israeli forces' confessions of the violence witnessed and perpetuated in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.<sup>4</sup> With a focus on the military, political, and public leniency for the IDF's violence against Palestinians and the passionate debates that accompany the revelation of the Israeli military's violent behaviour in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, the following central research question and thesis statement drive this project:

How do emotions arise within and constitute the conviction that the 'IDF is the most moral army in the world' inside civil and military spheres?

The project argues that emotions arising from (self-)representations within the IDF constitute a professional, non-threatening, and humanitarian soldiering image that nurtures civil, military, and political tolerance for violence against Palestinians.

In order to support this argument, this thesis focuses on the productive power of emotions in cultivating the contemporary Israeli military subjectivity. It examines the role of emotions in constituting an impeccable Israeli military figure and in securing its dominance despite visual and written incriminatory evidence that shows the Israeli forces' violence against Palestinians. In this regard, this research studies the aesthetic, educational, rhetorical, forensic, commemoration, legal, and bureaucratic practices that craft the Israeli military subjectivity. By examining the pedagogical practices through which recruits are immersed in the Israeli military culture and the aesthetic military

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<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/the-killing-of-12-year-old-mohammed-al-durrah-in-gaza-became-the-defining-image-of-the-second-8624311.html> [Accessed 24 August 2017].

<sup>3</sup> Auerbach, Y. and Lowenstein, H. 'The Role of National Narratives in Reconciliation: The Case of Mohammad al-Dura', *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 16 (2011) pp. 210-33.

<sup>4</sup> Ziffer, B. 'The Problem with Breaking the Silence'. *Haaretz*, 26 June 2015. Available at: <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.662860> [Accessed 30 July 2017]; Lynfield, B. 'Breaking the Silence: Former Israeli soldier branded a traitor for asking troops to tell their West Bank stories'. *The Independent*, 2 January 2016. Available at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/breaking-the-silence-former-israeli-soldier-branded-a-traitor-for-asking-troops-to-tell-their-west-a6794256.html> [Accessed 30 July 2017].

(self-)representations on social media, the project shows the efforts pursued by the IDF to constitute a proficient, compassionate, and devoted soldiering figure that resembles the Western military forces. Furthermore, it examines the affective reverberations caused by various violent encounters between the Israeli military and Palestinian civilians. These episodes provoke controversies, contentions, and polemics that reinterpret the IDF's violence against Palestinians and shift accountability from the former to the latter. Finally, this research explores the emotional complexity that accompanies the commemoration, bureaucratic, and legal practices of burying and honouring dead Palestinian and Israeli Jewish bodies within the Israel/Palestine conflict. It indicates these various social practices capture, circulate, and invite a repertoire of emotions that cultivate a professional, non-threatening, and humanitarian military figure. This romanticised representation circulates between the civil and military spheres, and provokes kinship and affinity with the IDF, and respectively, antagonism and opposition towards Palestinians.

By mapping out the social practices through which the Israeli romanticised military figure is constituted and sustained, this project tries to elucidate the social processes, institutions, and actors that inform the political, military, and public reluctance to investigate, prosecute, and condemn the Israeli military forces for the violence enacted against Palestinians. Moreover, the study of the affective constitution of the Israeli military subjectivity illustrates this image informs the societal, military, and political indignation regarding the conviction and the imprisonment of military forces guilty of abusing, harassing or killing Palestinians. Finally, yet significantly, the study of the role of emotions in fashioning military subjectivity interrogates the continuous Israeli individual and collective support for the IDF despite their violent behaviour against Palestinians, and explains the continuous hostility and opposition towards Palestinians who have been hurt by the Israeli military personnel.

This project speaks alongside other feminist critiques of the occupation, of the Israeli military practices under the occupation, and of the power asymmetry that marks Palestinians' everyday lives. The project situates itself along other critical voices of the IDF such as Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian, Simona Sharoni, Jeffrey Goldfarb, or Amir Merav and Hagar Kotef. They study the power asymmetry between the IDF and Palestinians, and investigate both the Israeli military's powerful position and the

practices through which Palestinians contest their marginalisation.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, through its aim to map out the productive role of emotions in constituting the Israeli military subjectivity, this research is affiliated with the eclectic scholarship that approaches military practices through critical and feminist lenses. This literature pays attention to individual and institutional military expressions and criticises both everyday and structural dimensions of militarism, militarisation, and military life. It questions the permeability between civil and military spheres, the reverberation of military violence within the most intimate and private spheres of life, and interrogates the gendered, racialised, classed, and ethnic hierarchies that characterise the military and that reverberate in its social practices.<sup>6</sup>

## **Research Design: Approach, Methods, and Limitations**

### ***A Feminist Approach***

This thesis is a qualitative research project that follows a feminist approach in order to study the political role of emotions in sustaining hierarchies of visibility, subjectivity, and accountability that shield the Israeli military personnel from individual and collective responsibility for their violent behaviour against Palestinian civilians. It stresses that pedagogical, aesthetic, forensic, rhetorical, legal, bureaucratic, and respectively, commemoration practices produce a benign military subjectivity that is infused by a repertoire of emotions that enable the justification, concealment, and reinterpretation of the IDF's violence against Palestinians. The research shows this image confines dissent against the Israeli military and informs the Israeli public, military, and political tolerance for the IDF's violent behaviour in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. *Educational practices* refer to the didactic activities through which recruits are socialised within the Israeli military culture. Furthermore, *aesthetic*

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<sup>5</sup> E.g. Sharoni, S. 'Homefront as battlefield: Gender, military occupation, and violence against women', in *Women and the Israeli Occupation: The Politics of Change*, edited by Tamar Mayer (London, Routledge, 1994), pp. 107-22; Shalhoub-Kevorkian, N. *Militarization and Violence against Women in Conflict Zones in the Middle East: A Palestinian Case-Study* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009); Shalhoub-Kevorkian, N. *Security Theology, Surveillance and the Politics of Fear* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2015); Kotef, H. and Merav, A. 'Between Imaginary Lines: Violence and its Justifications at the Military Checkpoints in Occupied Palestine', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 28 (2011) pp. 55-80; Goldfarb, J. C. 'The Sociology of Micro-politics: An Examination of a Neglected Field of Political Action in the Middle East and Beyond', *Sociology Compass*, 2 (2008) pp. 1816-1832.

<sup>6</sup> E.g. Basham, V. M. *War, Identity and the Liberal State: Everyday Experiences of the Geopolitical in the Armed Forces* (London and New York, Routledge, 2013); Belkin, B. *Bring Me Men: Military Masculinity and the Benign Façade of American Empire, 1898-2001* (New York, Columbia University Press, 2012); Duncanson, C. *Forces for Good?: Military Masculinities and Peacebuilding in Afghanistan and Iraq* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

*practices* describe the IDF's (self-)images on its official social media accounts while *forensic practices* capture pathological and medical practices through which Israeli and Palestinian dead bodies are given different degrees of care in the aftermath of a violent event. *Rhetorical practices* designate the discursive moves through which the Israeli political, military, and respectively public figures react to, interpret, and debate violent encounters between Palestinians and Israeli forces. *Commemoration practices* describe the practices through which Palestinian and Israeli Jewish bodies are buried and honoured within the context of war, conflict, and violence. Finally, *legal* and respectively, *bureaucratic practices* indicate the actions pursued by Israel's Supreme Court and other state and non-state bodies in order to confine the commemoration of Palestinian dead bodies or to restrict the joint commemoration of Israeli Jewish and Palestinian dead bodies in Israel. Sometimes separate, sometimes blending into each other, these social practices carry an affective baggage for the purposes of constituting military subjectivity. As affective practices that consolidate the Israeli soldiering image, they embody, disseminate, and cultivate emotions that sustain violence, division, and harm, yet they remain open to appropriation, alternation, and disruption within the Israel/Palestine conflict.

In order to study the productive power of emotions in the Israel/Palestine conflict, this research scrutinises the materialisation of emotions and the emotionality of material (self-)representations of living and serving under the occupation in order to map out the role of emotions in constituting, (re)producing, and at times, troubling the Israeli professional, non-threatening, and humanitarian military image. Therefore, the empirical material gathered in this research project represents 'an archive of feelings' insofar as the 'cultural texts [assembled here are seen] as repositories of feelings and emotions, which are encoded not only in the content of the texts themselves, but in the practices that surround their production and reception'.<sup>7</sup> Due to its focus on the emotions recorded, disseminated, and invited by military (self-) representations that construct the Israeli soldiering subjectivity, this research regards emotions both as cultural expressions of personal experiences, and as affective relations between and among subjects, and the materiality of the world they encounter.

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<sup>7</sup> Cvetkovich, A. *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures* (Durham, NC and London, Duke University Press, 2003), p. 7.

Liz Bondi, Joyce Davidson and Mick Smith claim emotions are relational, and implicate and constitute subjects, objects, and contexts. They argue for a ‘non-objectifying view of emotions as relational flows, fluxes or currents, in-between people and places rather than ‘things’ or ‘objects’ to be studied or measured’.<sup>8</sup> Put differently, emotions do not refer solely to the emotional baggage of subject, but they are also social constructs that entail, capture, and describe a series of affective relations between and across subjects and the socio-political, cultural, and economic power dynamics they encounter. Likewise, Sara Ahmed stresses that emotions are ‘social and cultural practices’ that ‘do not reside in subjects or objects, but are produced as effects of circulation’.<sup>9</sup> This definition describes emotions as social relations between and across bodies and the materiality of the world in which they are situated. Drawing on Ahmed and Liz Bondi et al, this project defines emotions as socio-cultural and relational practices that are not bounded by subjectivity, spatiality, and temporality. It focuses less on the essence of emotions and is more interested in exploring, as Stewart suggests,

‘the intensities they [emotions] build and what thoughts and feelings they make possible. The question they beg is not what they might mean in an order of representations, or whether they are good or bad in an overarching scheme of things, but where they might go and what potential modes of knowing, relating, and attending to things are already somehow present in them in a state of potentiality and resonance’.<sup>10</sup>

The definition of emotions as socio-cultural and relational practices situates subjective experiences within the wider power structures and trajectories that characterise the Israel/Palestine conflict. This research focuses on the political role of emotions in sustaining hierarchies and examines the ways in which emotions are presented, incited, and acted through for the purposes of justifying and concealing the IDF’s violence against Palestinians. It interrogates the means of and the consequences of individual and collective actors’ reliance on emotions in order to govern war,

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<sup>8</sup> Bondi, L., Davidson, J. and Smith, M. ‘Introduction: Geography’s ‘Emotional Turn’’, in *Emotional Geographies*, edited by Liz Bondi, Joyce Davidson and Mick Smith (London and New York, Routledge, 2005), p. 3.

<sup>9</sup> Ahmed, S. *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2004), p. 8.

<sup>10</sup> Stewart, K. *Ordinary Affects* (Durham, NC, Duke University Press, 2007), p. 3.

conflict, and violence within the Middle East. Explicitly, the thesis focuses on the role of emotions in producing subjectivity in the Israel/Palestine conflict, on the emotions that govern the social relations between Israeli Jews and Palestinians, and on the emotions that characterise local and international engagement with the Israel/Palestine conflict. Therefore, this study engages with the emotions recorded in military (self-) representations (pain, hate, happiness or kindness) and with the emotions circulated to and elicited by the dissemination of these (self-)images to local and international viewers (anger, solidarity, compassion, empathy or kinship). By investigating the emotions encoded in military (self-)representations and in their distribution and reception, the project examines the emotional repertoire that nurtures affinity and support for the Israeli military, and respectively, hostility and opposition towards Palestinians. In this regard, the thesis builds on Sara Ahmed's investigation of the role of emotions in the social world. It concentrates on her interrogation of the role of emotions in producing collective bodies and the boundaries that define them, and on her exploration of the relation between and across subjectivities and the socio-political context in which they are invested.<sup>11</sup>

This thesis acknowledges the development of 'an affective turn' in social theory that is preoccupied with the 'scholarly inquiry' of 'emotions, feelings, and affect (and their differences)'.<sup>12</sup> Although scholars like Brian Massumi or Patricia Ticineto Clough are inclined to view the 'affective turn' as a discipline that follows an individual trajectory, this project highlights that the 'affective turn' was developed concurrently within, against, and alongside feminist theory.<sup>13</sup> In this respect, 'the affective turn' represents a branch of feminist theory that permits scholars to rethink key questions of feminism.<sup>14</sup> By turning towards the study of emotions, feminist theory challenges the mind/body dichotomy and argues against a gendered reading of the social world that associates objectivity and rationality with masculinity, and irrationality and passion

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<sup>11</sup> Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*; Ahmed, S. 'Affective Economies', *Social Text*, 22 (2004) pp. 117-39; Ahmed, S. 'The Skin of the Community: Affect and Boundary Formation', in *Revolt, Affect, Collectivity: The Unstable Boundaries of Kristeva's Polis*, edited by Tina Chanter and Ewa Płonowska Ziarek (Albany, NY, State University of New York Press, 2005), pp. 95-111.

<sup>12</sup> Cvetkovich, A. 'Depression is Ordinary: Public Feelings and Saidiya Hartman's *Lose Your Mother*', *Feminist Theory*, 13 (2012) p. 133.

<sup>13</sup> Massumi, B. *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham, NC, Duke University Press, 2002).

<sup>14</sup> Koivunen, A. 'An affective turn? Reimagining the subject of feminist theory', in *Working with Affect in Feminist Readings: Disturbing Differences*, edited by Marianne Liljeström and Susanna Paasonen (London, Routledge, 2010), pp. 8-27.



with femininity.<sup>15</sup> The feminist scholarship has a long tradition in introducing emotions, passions, affects, and feelings in its research programme. For instance, Audre Lorde and bell hooks use emotions in order to articulate the intersectional underpinnings of social injustice.<sup>16</sup> Donna Haraway and Sandra Harding discuss the ethics of research and the emotional entanglement between the researcher, and the objects and the subjects researched.<sup>17</sup> Finally, yet significantly, Julia Kristeva provides a socio-cultural examination of emotions through the lens of philosophy and psychoanalysis.<sup>18</sup>

Equally significant, the ‘affective turn’ amends feminist theory. Some feminist scholars, due to their interest in Michel Foucault’s disciplinary power, have been accused of failing to explore corporeal and material subjective experiences due to their interest in critiquing the productive role of power over the subject.<sup>19</sup> Consequently, the ‘affective turn’ argues for an engagement with affects and focuses on the intensities, the forces, the desires, the potentialities, the flows, and the connectivities associated with the human body and the relations between human and non-human bodies.<sup>20</sup> By presenting a materialist critique of the social world, scholars closely associated with the ‘affective turn’ are concerned with ‘matter, biology and energetic forces’ thus arguing for distinguishing between emotions and affects.<sup>21</sup> Brian Massumi, one of the leading scholars associated with the ‘affective turn’, believes that ‘affect is irreducibly bodily and autonomic’ while emotion refers to ‘subjective content, the sociolinguistic fixing of the quality of an experience which is from that point onward defined as personal’.<sup>22</sup> Similarly, Patricia Ticineto Clough differentiates between emotions and affects. If one links emotions with subjective experiences, for Clough, affect captures ‘a substrate of

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<sup>15</sup> Koivunen, ‘An affective turn?’, p. 11; Pedwell, C. *Affective Relations: The Transnational Politics of Empathy* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p. 13.

<sup>16</sup> Lorde, A. *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Trumansburg, NY, Crossing Press, 1984); hooks, b. *Yearning: race, gender, and cultural politics* (Boston, South End Press, 1990).

<sup>17</sup> Harding, S. (ed.) *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader: Intellectual and Political Controversies* (New York and London, Routledge, 2004); Haraway, D. J. *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York and London, Routledge, 1991).

<sup>18</sup> Kristeva, J. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1982); Kristeva, J. *Hatred and Forgiveness* (New York, Columbia University Press, 2012).

<sup>19</sup> McNay, L. *Foucault and Feminism: Power, Gender and the Self* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1992), pp. 1-11.

<sup>20</sup> Gregg, M. and Seigworth, G. J. ‘An Inventory of Shimmers’, in *The Affect Theory Reader*, edited by Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (Durham, NC and London, Duke University Press, 2010), pp. 1-25.

<sup>21</sup> Liljeström, M. and Paasonen, S. ‘Introduction: Feeling differences – affect and feminist reading’, in *Working with Affect in Feminist Readings: Disturbing Differences*, edited by Marianne Liljeström and Susanna Paasonen (London, Routledge, 2010), p. 1.

<sup>22</sup> Massumi, B. ‘The Autonomy of Affect’, *Cultural Critique*, 31 (1995) pp. 88-9.

potential bodily responses, often autonomic responses, in excess of consciousness'.<sup>23</sup> Alternatively, Teresa Brennan blurs the distinction between the social and the physiological by presenting affect as 'a process that is social in origin but biological and physical in effect. Affects do not only arise within a particular person but also come from without (...) via an interaction with other people and an environment'.<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, with an awareness of their nuances and the intra-disciplinary debates that shape the 'affective turn' in social theory, this thesis does not overstate the difference between emotions and affects. Rather, it interprets them as a continuum both in discourse and in practice. For instance, Elspeth Probyn argues emotion is the 'social expression of affect, and affect in turn is the biological and physiological experience of it'.<sup>25</sup> The project follows Probyn's dualistic view on emotions and affects, yet remains focused on the social construction of emotions and in their productive power in the social world. Therefore, it assumes that any physiological and bodily experience cannot be disentangled from the cultural and the social context in which it emerges since it gains meaning only through recognition and naming. Similarly, Ahmed is reluctant to distinguish between emotions and affect, between cognition and respectively, bodily experience, by arguing that it is difficult to believe 'they could be "experienced" as distinct realms of human "experience" '.<sup>26</sup>

Furthermore, by keeping in mind the relation between bodily experiences and their discursive representations, this research traces the interaction and the ambiguities between the corporeality of subjectivity (possibility of acting and being acted upon) and its materiality (the ways in which it is written, talked about, and represented). In this regard, it assigns equal significance to the discursive and the material by examining 'their interrelations as intimate co-dependence' therefore avoiding to think about 'materiality, affect and embodiment in opposition to textual analysis'.<sup>27</sup> The project travels between and intersects embodied and sensuous experiences of serving under the occupation with their discursive and symbolic representations in public statements, in local and international media, on social media or in popular culture references. Since

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<sup>23</sup> Clough, P. T. 'Introduction', in *The Affective Turn: Theorizing the Social*, edited by Patricia Ticineto Clough and Jean Halley (Durham, NC and London, Duke University Press, 2007), p. 2.

<sup>24</sup> Brennan, T. *The Transmission of Affect* (Ithaca, NY and London, Cornell University Press, 2004), p. 3.

<sup>25</sup> Probyn, E. *Blush: Faces of Shame* (Minneapolis, MN and London, University of Minnesota Press, 2005), p. 25.

<sup>26</sup> Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, p. 6.

<sup>27</sup> Liljeström and Paasonen, 'Introduction: Feeling differences', p. 2.

emotions are ‘generated within, circulated through, and productive of’ Israeli (self-)images of military service, this research examines the relations between the sensuous and the material representations of serving under the occupation and the political implications of circulating these (self-) images to local and international audiences.<sup>28</sup> Likewise, Victoria Basham believes the study of everyday military life should ‘take account of the wider interests that are served by those lived lives’.<sup>29</sup> Take, for instance, one of the pictures with military personnel disseminated on the IDF’s official Facebook account, which is discussed in the third chapter of the project. The picture shows Israeli servicewomen dressing up for the Purim festival.<sup>30</sup> Beyond illustrating the joy and the liveliness of young female recruits, it uses femininity to conceal the violence inherent to the military and to alleviate any worries regarding the violence they might pursue and experience. Concurrently, this picture functions as a recruitment tool to attract further Diaspora Jews to the IDF (and Israel), and as an emotional technique through which viewers are invited to express regret and sorrow for the possible loss of these young and playful Israeli women during alleged confrontations with unruly and radicalised Palestinian freedom fighters. The investigation of the repertoire of emotions that accompanies digital military representations indicates that media technology puts forward a gendered Israeli military image. This representation confines local and international criticism against the IDF’s violence against Palestinians. It offers viewers an attractive military representation that conceals violence behind illustrations of ‘youthfulness, life, normality, and playfulness’ while ‘the uniform and weapons themselves *appear* as harmless customs and toys’.<sup>31</sup> Therefore, by circulating this relaxed and joyful military representation, social media permits the IDF to extract military personnel from the complexity of the Israel/Palestine conflict by disguising the violence that is intrinsic to military service, and by circulating an attractive military image that appeals to local and international audiences.

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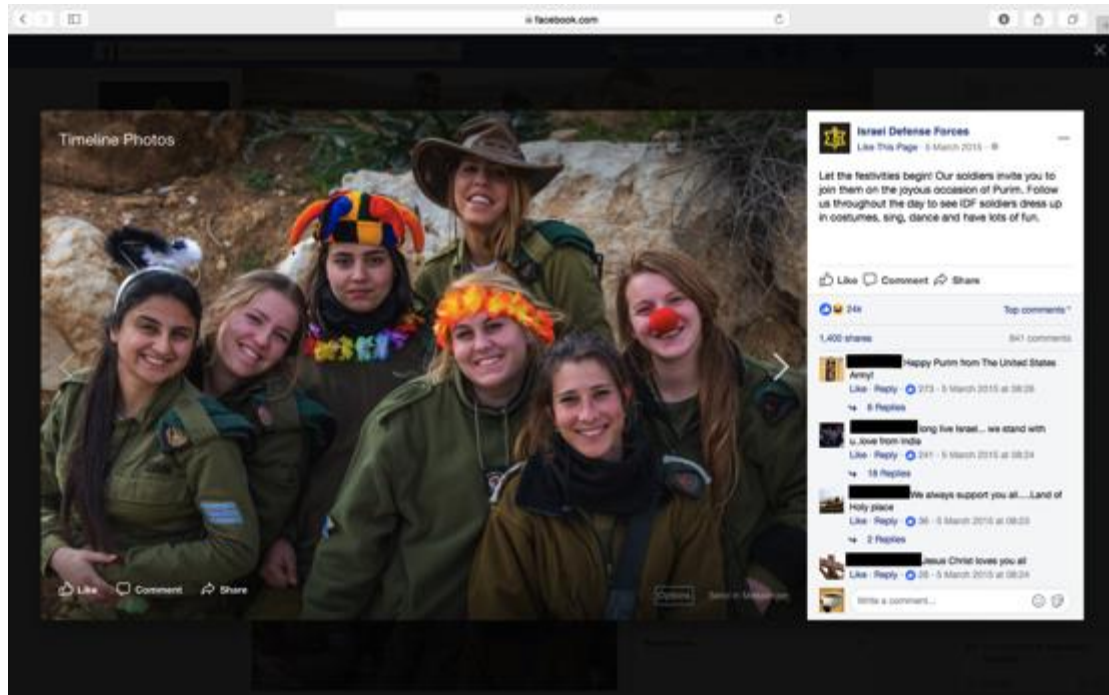
<sup>28</sup> Pedwell, *Affective Relations*, p. xi.

<sup>29</sup> Basham, *War, Identity and the Liberal State*, p. 9.

<sup>30</sup> The IDF Spokesperson’s Unit, ‘Timeline Photos’, *The IDF’s Official Facebook Page*, 5 March 2015. Available at:

<https://www.facebook.com/idfonline/photos/a.250335824989295.62131.125249070831305/943812422308295/?type=3&theater> [Accessed 30 July 2017].

<sup>31</sup> Hochberg, G. Z. *Visual Occupations: Violence and Visibility in a Conflict Zone* (Durham, NC and London, Duke University Press, 2015), [emphasis in original] p. 11.



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**Figure 1** Servicewomen Celebrating Purim

The analysis of this picture invites further justification for the choice to study the productive power of emotions through a feminist lens. As the discussion about the Israeli servicewomen's (self-)representation on social media shows, the (Israeli) military is a gendered institution. The complexity of the Israeli military service under conditions of compulsory conscription requires the study of the social practices through which the gendered identity of the military is (re)produced at the intersection between the military and the civil spheres. Due to their interest in power relations of domination and subordination, feminist scholars study the role of gendered structures of masculinity and femininity in justifying war and violence. This project focuses on the role of a diverse individual and social practices in constructing the Israeli military's gendered representation that conceals, justifies, and downplays the IDF's violence against Palestinians. Relatedly, feminist scholars scrutinise the intersection between race, gender, class, religion, and ethnicity in examining (in)security in international politics.<sup>32</sup> In this regard, Peterson and True caution that 'gender infuses all our identities so that race, age, class, ethnicity, ability and nationality are also gender specific

<sup>32</sup> Tickner, J. A. 'Feminism meets International Relations: some methodological issues', in *Feminist Methodologies for International Relations*, edited by Brooke A. Ackerly, Maria Stern, and Jacqui True (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 23-4.

identities'.<sup>33</sup> This research shows the cultivation of an idealised military image depends on the marginalisation of Palestinians. Therefore, a feminist approach on war and conflict exposes the hierarchical order of security in the Israel/Palestine conflict, according to which the security of a dominant group depends on the insecurity of other vulnerable groups and on their unequal power relations.<sup>34</sup> Although examining the hierarchies that define relations between the Israeli military forces and Palestinian civilians, this thesis returns at times to the gendered, classed, racialised, ethnic, and religious configuration of the IDF in order to highlight the reverberation of its multifaceted identity in the military's violent interactions with the Palestinian population.

This study also embraces the feminist focus on personal experiences of war, conflict, and violence insofar as individuals 'are embedded in, and constituted by, historically unequal political, economic, and social structures'.<sup>35</sup> Feminist scholars argue that in order to understand the unequal power relations that mark individual lives one has to challenge the discrete separation of levels of analysis in International Relations by relating individual experience to (gendered) structures of inequality.<sup>36</sup> The thesis focuses on the production, modification, and fragmentation of the Israeli and Palestinian subjectivities. Although the production of subjectivity depends on language, discourse, and representation in making bodies meaningful, feminist authors stress that within these structures of meaning 'there can be agency, in the sense that people can accept, resist or counter constructions of gendered identities, and be empowered or disempowered by them'.<sup>37</sup> In this regard, feminist approaches favour the study of marginalised voices in international politics in order to challenge hegemonic discourses, to expose the power asymmetry that characterises war, conflict, and violence, and to show that alternative forms of existence and identification exist beyond the prevailing ones.<sup>38</sup> Therefore, feminist scholars examine the unfolding of power and

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<sup>33</sup> Peterson, V. S. and True, J. '“New Times” and New Conversations', in *The “Man” Question in International Relations*, edited by Marysia Zalewski and Jane Parpart (Boulder, CO, Westview Press, 1998), p. 16.

<sup>34</sup> Tickner, 'Feminism meets International Relations', pp. 31-2.

<sup>35</sup> Tickner, 'Feminism meets International Relations', pp. 24-5.

<sup>36</sup> Tickner, J. A. 'You Just Don't Understand: Troubled Engagements between Feminists and IR Theorists', *International Studies Quarterly*, 41 (1997) p. 626.

<sup>37</sup> Ramazanoğlu, C. and Holland, J. *Feminist Methodologies: Challenges and Choices* (London, Sage Publications, 2002), p. 153.

<sup>38</sup> Wibben, A. T. R. *Feminist Security Studies: A narrative approach* (London and New York, Routledge, 2011), p. 110.

resistance in the social world in order to revise the conceptualisation of international politics and to question the narratives, symbols, and images that recreate conditions of war, violence, and conflict.<sup>39</sup> Similarly, this research interrogates the practices through which the belief that the ‘IDF is the most moral army in the world’ is contested by Israeli and Palestinian subjects alike. It investigates the practices through which Israeli citizen-soldiers challenge this idealised military representation during their socialisation in the military culture or through activism for the purposes of conflict resolution. Moreover, the thesis explores the construction of Palestinian subjectivity within and beyond the confines of the Israel/Palestine conflict. It highlights the social practices through which the Israeli military, political, and public figures assign Palestinians the perpetrator position in order to construct a flawless Israeli military image. Equally, this study examines the Palestinian efforts and challenges in circulating their narrative of loss and pain for the purposes of ending the cycle of violence and harm that characterises the Israel/Palestine conflict.

Finally, yet significantly, feminist scholars are interested in the relation between emotions and violence in their study of war and conflict. They provide intense accounts of the horrendous personal experience of living through and in the aftermath of warfare. For instance, Carolyn Nordstrom and Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian study women’s experiences of violence during the civil war in Mozambique and respectively, within the Israel/Palestine conflict.<sup>40</sup> Due to their focus on marginalised voices, feminist authors have turned mostly towards women’s voices and their embodied experiences in order to expose intense experiences of war, conflict, and violence beyond the clinical language of war strategy and tactics. Other scholars study the embodied experiences of military personnel across different historical time periods and in a variety of geopolitical settings across the Western and non-Western world.<sup>41</sup> For

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<sup>39</sup> Ackerly, B. and True, J. *Doing Feminist Research in Political and Social Science* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 246.

<sup>40</sup> Sharoni, ‘Homefront as battlefield’, pp. 107-22; Nordstrom, C. *A Different Kind of War Story* (Philadelphia, PA, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997); Shalhoub-Kevorkian, *Militarization and Violence against Women*; Sharoni, S. *Gender and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: The Politics of Women’s Resistance* (Syracuse, NY, Syracuse University Press, 1995).

<sup>41</sup> Kronsell, A. and Svedberg, E. *Making Gender, Making War: Violence, Military and Peacekeeping Practices* (New York and London, Routledge, 2012); Baaz Eriksson, M. and Stern, M. *Sexual Violence as a Weapon of War?: Perceptions, Prescriptions, Problems in the Congo and Beyond* (London and New York, Zed Books, 2013); Baaz Erikson, M. and Stern, M. ‘Why Do Soldiers Rape? Masculinity, Violence, and Sexuality in the Armed Forces in the Congo (DRC)’, *International Studies Quarterly*, 53 (2009) pp. 495-518; Wilcox, V. ‘Weeping tears of blood’: Exploring Italian soldiers’ emotions in the First World War’, *Modern Italy*, 17 (2012) pp. 171-84.

instance, Erella Grassiani and James Ron have emphasised the complexity of the affective dispositions that mark the Israeli military service and its aftermath, and have stressed the deterministic relation between military forces' anger, fear, rage, tiredness, stress and the enactment of violence against civilians and non-combatants.<sup>42</sup>

Inspired by the literature that studies the relation between emotions and military violence, the project intervenes in the study of the political role of emotions in the Israel/Palestine conflict by proposing a re-evaluation of the causal link between emotions and violence. It builds on feminist and cultural approaches that study the role of emotions in fostering political exclusion, social division and cultural distinction in order to highlight the role of emotions in rationalising, excusing, and downplaying the IDF's violence against Palestinians. With an interest in the productive power of emotions in the Israel/Palestine conflict, this research is informed by the theoretical insights forwarded by feminist scholars and cultural theorists like Judith Butler, Sara Ahmed, Lauren Berlant, Ann Cvetkovich, Claire Hemmings, or Carolyn Pedwell.<sup>43</sup> They study the fluidity, ambivalence, and complexity of emotions and their political trajectories in the social world. Suspicious of the progressive role of emotions in social affairs, these authors believe emotions carry the potential to sanction and reinforce hierarchies, divisions, differences, harm, violence, and insecurity. While arguing that emotions have political and social trajectories that mask power inequalities, they are interested in emotions as sites of 'governance and regulation' and in their embeddedness in relations of power.<sup>44</sup> Building on their insights, this project studies the role of emotions in cultivating the Israeli military subjectivity, scrutinises the affective responses and readings elicited by the dissemination of violent episodes in the public sphere, and maps out the emotions recorded, circulated, and provoked by the distribution of Israeli military (self-) representations to local and Western audiences. Therefore, the thesis shows that compassion, empathy, solidarity, pain, loss, mourning,

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<sup>42</sup> Grassiani, E. *Soldiering Under Occupation: Moral Numbing among Israeli Conscripts during the Al-Aqsa Intifada* (New York and Oxford, Berghahn Books, 2013); Ron, J. 'Savage Restraint: Israel, Palestine and the Dialectics of Legal Repression', *Social Problems*, 47 (2000) pp. 445-72.

<sup>43</sup> Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*; Ahmed, 'Affective Economies', pp. 117-39; Ahmed, 'The Skin of the Community', pp. 95-111; Berlant, L. 'Intimacy: A Special Issue', *Critical Inquiry*, 24 (1998) pp. 281-88; Berlant, L. *The Female Complaint: The Unfinished Business of Sentimentality in American Culture* (Durham, NC and London, Duke University Press, 2008); Butler, J. *Prearious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (London and New York, Verso, 2004); Butler, J. *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable* (London and New York, Verso, 2009); Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings*; Hemmings, C. 'Invoking Affect: Cultural theory and the ontological turn', *Cultural Studies*, 19 (2005) pp. 548-67.

<sup>44</sup> Pedwell, *Affective Relations*, p. 14.

grief, disgust or aversion sanction the enactment of violence, reinforce the affective boundaries that characterise the social relations between Israeli Jews and Palestinians, and downplay the IDF's violence against Palestinians and its consequences for Israeli Jews and Palestinians alike.

### *Methods*

The project draws upon a diversity of empirical material and an eclecticism of methods in order to trace the social practices that construct the Israeli military subjectivity. It employs a content analysis approach in order to engage with various empirical sources, from expert interviews, policy documents, human rights reports to social media websites and popular culture references for the purposes of interrogating the dominant representations of the Israel/Palestine conflict, which are circulated to Western and local audiences.

First-hand observation in the form of a field trip to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories has contributed to outlining the main areas of inquiry. During eight weeks spent in and between Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and Bethlehem, eleven semi-structured interviews were performed with educational officers at pre-military academies in Israel, with human rights attorneys at Israeli human rights organisations, and with Israeli veterans and Palestinian human rights activists. They were coupled with innumerable informal conversations with Palestinians and Israelis whose lives are touched by conflict and violence. In addition, this project collected data through other corollary methods such as participant observation at pre-military academies in Israel and at Israeli and Palestinian human rights organisations in order to gather information regarding their activities, or through a variety of trips within the West Bank, sometimes accompanied by Palestinian civilians, in order to witness daily life under the occupation. The field trip was supposed to be followed by another one, in order to perform further interviews at Israeli pre-military academies and with other Israeli and Palestinian human rights attorneys. Yet, due to logistical reasons and after a careful risk assessment of the security situation in the region in late 2015 and early 2016, it was decided to turn towards alternative ways of collecting data for the project. As a consequence, the scope of the project broadened and the interviews pursued have served as a guiding material rather than as the core method of the thesis. Initially, this project aimed to provide a representation of the contemporary Israeli military



subjectivity through narratives of military recruitment, service, and its aftermath. However, the development of this research showed the importance of situating personalised representations of war within the power structures that define them. By studying not only the emotions embedded in individualised illustrations of war but also the emotions circulated and provoked by these images, the thesis shows embodied narratives of war may reinforce the hegemonic subjectivities, trajectories, and discourses that sustain war and violence in the Israel/Palestine conflict.

This research responds to Cynthia Enloe's invitation to conduct one's research with 'feminist curiosity' while 'listening carefully, digging deep, developing a long attention span, [yet] being ready to be surprised'.<sup>45</sup> Therefore, it complements and enriches the ethnographic material collected through the content and visual analysis of media accounts, activist material, human rights reports, popular culture representations, and social media references. Carol Cohn has argued for the assemblage and the juxtaposition of a wide range of empirical material when investigating the layers, threads, and dissonances that inform the (gendered) construction and representation of American national security in military and public discourse.<sup>46</sup> Similarly to Cohn, this research follows an interdisciplinary route in order to explore the justification and exoneration of the violence pursued by the Israeli military personnel against Palestinians. It explores aesthetic military representations, pedagogical military practices, rhetorical engagements with the IDF's violence against Palestinians, and forensic, bureaucratic, and commemoration practices that involve Israeli and Palestinian dead bodies alike in order to unearth emotions that inform hierarchies of subjectivity, visibility, and accountability that characterise the Israel/Palestine conflict.

Nonetheless, this empirical material does not always make explicit references to the role of emotions in cultivating military subjectivity or in contributing to the creation of hierarchies that shape the Israel/Palestine conflict. Therefore, the thesis follows Annica Kronsell's method to ' "reading" what is not written, or what "is between the lines", or what is expressed as symbols and in procedures' ' in places,

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<sup>45</sup> Enloe, C. *The Curious Feminist: Searching for Women in a New Age of Empire* (Berkeley, CA, University of California Press, 2004), p. 3.

<sup>46</sup> Cohn, C. 'Motives and methods: using multi-sited ethnography to study US national security discourses', in *Feminist Methodologies for International Relations*, edited by Brooke A. Ackerly, Maria Stern, and Jacqui True (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 93.

narratives, practices, and (self-)representations.<sup>47</sup> Taking a cue from Kronsell's method, this research explores the explicit and implicit ways in which emotions imbue practices of subjectivity formation, contribute to social relations of enmity and antagonism in the Israel/Palestine conflict, and are instrumental in concealing and depoliticising violence against Palestinians. Thus the project is informed by Roland Bliker and Emma Hutchison's belief that the study of the role of emotions in international politics requires a 'type of scholarly and political sensibility that could conceptualise the influence of emotions even when and where it is not immediately apparent'.<sup>48</sup>

Feminist scholarship asks researchers to be self-reflective about politics and power and to pay attention to the relations between themselves, and the subject(s) researched and engaged throughout their intellectual journey.<sup>49</sup> During conversations at pre-military academies, both a sense of distrust and a need to repeat the obvious prevailed. Signalling a noticeable reluctance to discuss with a researcher based in a Western country, male and female staff members seemed guarded in their interviews and preferred to recall and to refer to material already available in the public sphere. Nevertheless, their insistence on the IDF's standard of morality and the efforts of the military to construct soldiering subjectivity by cultivating an affective connection between the individual and the Israeli society has helped this project to study the role of emotions in crafting the Israeli military figure. Furthermore, conversations with human rights activists also informed this project's aim to study the reluctance of the Israeli society to condemn the military for its abuses against Palestinians, and to interrogate the reduced investigation, sentencing, and conviction of military personnel guilty of violently assaulting Palestinian civilians. Lastly, conversations with local Israeli Jews and Palestinians occurred throughout the entire period of research. Most Israeli Jews interviewed identified themselves with the Israeli political left and condemned the current status quo regarding the Israel/Palestine conflict. Palestinians shared stories regarding life under the occupation, and questioned the Israeli and Palestinian political establishments alike for the current situation in the region.

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<sup>47</sup> Kronsell, A. 'Methods for studying silence: gender analysis in institutions of hegemonic masculinity', in *Feminist Methodologies for International Relations*, edited by Brooke A. Ackerly, Maria Stern, and Jacqui True (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 109.

<sup>48</sup> Bleiker, R. and Hutchison, E. 'Fear no more: emotions and world politics', *Review of International Studies*, 34 (2008) p. 128.

<sup>49</sup> Wibben, *Feminist Security Studies*, p. 18.

Nevertheless, encounters with Palestinians recalled the privileges of movement, citizenship, nationality, and financial stability that a Western researcher possesses. Palestinian voices were not only approached with these significant caveats in mind but also throughout the writing stages of this project. Rather than *adding* their voices to the thesis, this research focuses on the ways in which Palestinians appear and disappear from the Israeli imaginary yet highlights their active contestation of the stereotypical representations assigned to them.

The eclecticism of methods and the material used in this research examines the gendered and racialised practices through which violence against Palestinians is justified and interrogates the Israeli societal and military tolerance for the IDF's violence against Palestinians. To this end, the thesis studies the emotions embodied, circulated, and elicited by Israeli (self-)representations disseminated by themselves or by the Israeli military, by the institutions affiliated with the military or with the state, or by local and international actors engaged in the Israel/Palestine conflict. In this regard, the project draws on (self-)images of war, conflict, and violence in order to criticise hierarchies of visibility, accountability, and subjectivity that mark and mask the Israel/Palestine conflict. Consequently, it highlights the importance of studying not only the construction but also the dislocation of these hierarchies.

### ***Limitations***

A number of methodological limitations apply to this research project. The interviews were pursued in English due to the relative proficiency demonstrated by staff members at both human rights organisations and at pre-military academies. Human rights organisations count on English speaking professionals in order to reach Western audiences and to invite action on behalf of Palestinians and against the occupation. Staff members at pre-military academies rely on English speaking professionals in order to design educational programmes that support the integration of Diaspora Jews in the military, and in order to create programmes of collaboration with educational military staff from Western countries. However, due to the fact that interviews were pursued in a non-native language, meaning could have been lost throughout the interviewing process or might have lead to occasional misinterpretation. Although all necessary effort has been pursued during fieldwork in order to clarify any misunderstanding or

confusion, this possibility has remained a constant issue throughout the interviewing process, the transcription of the material, and the drafting stages of the project.

Furthermore, access to subjects-participants represented a continuous challenge throughout fieldwork in the region. The educational profile of pre-military academies divides between secular and religious ones. Understandably, religious pre-military academies are less open towards meeting (Western) researchers and information regarding their functioning has been gleaned through their online presence on Internet websites, in the media, and in reports published by Israeli civil associations that criticise the growing influence of religious nationalism in Israel. Few scholars have accessed their pedagogical activities. Their insights offer additional material for the research purposes of this project.<sup>50</sup> Although this thesis has developed at a time of growing national religious influence over the military and the Israeli state, it does not specifically address the role of religion in the Israeli military. Since both scholars and journalists have already provided rich accounts of the growing role that religion plays in the IDF, this project addresses the power struggles between secular and religious pre-military academies in shaping the pedagogical activities of the IDF's Education and Youth Corps.<sup>51</sup> Despite the complex socio-political atmosphere that reverberates in their functioning, secular pre-military academies that pursue a didactic programme based on universal and multicultural values are highly regarded by the IDF's Education and Youth Corps, and their activities are important in constituting the Israeli military subjectivity. Two secular pre-military academies allowed the interviewing of their staff members: *BINA – The Jewish Movement for Social Change* (Tel Aviv) and *Beit Morasha of Jerusalem: The Center for Advanced Judaic Studies and Leadership* (Jerusalem).<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Eastwood, J. 'Meaningful Service': Pedagogy at Israeli pre-military academies and the ethics of militarism', *European Journal of International Relations*, 22 (2016) pp. 671-95; Lebel, U. 'Settling the Military: the pre-military academies revolution and the creation of a new security epistemic community – the Militarization of Judea and Samaria', *Israel Affairs*, 21 (2015) pp. 361-90.

<sup>51</sup> Cohen, S. A. 'From Integration to Segregation: The Role of Religion in the IDF', *Armed Forces & Society*, 25 (1999) pp. 387-405; Levy, Y. 'The Theocratization of the Israeli Military', *Armed Forces & Society*, 40 (2014) pp. 269-294; Levy, Y. 'Religious Authorities in the Military and Civilian Control: The Case of the Israeli Defense Forces', *Politics and Society*, 44 (2016) pp. 305-332; Williams, D. 'Insight: In Israeli military, a growing orthodoxy'. *Reuters*, 5 March 2012. Available at: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/03/05/us-israel-religion-idf-idUSTRE8240G720120305> [Accessed 30 July 2017].

<sup>52</sup> BINA – The Jewish Movement for Social Change. Available at: <https://bina.org.il/en/> [Accessed 30 July 2017]; Beit Morasha of Jerusalem: The Center for Advanced Judaic Studies and Leadership. Available at: <http://www.bmj.org.il/en> [Accessed 30 July 2017].

In addition, the project studies local and international organisations affiliated with the left that advocate for a just political order for Israelis and Palestinians alike. However, the project does not address the politicisation of human rights discourse in the Israel/Palestine conflict. For example, Nicola Perugini and Neve Gordon provide an extensive analysis of the efforts pursued by the Israeli human rights organisations sponsored by the state and the Jewish settler movement to politicise humanitarian discourses in order to sustain the Israeli domination and military occupation.<sup>53</sup> In contrast, Lori Allen has studied the role of human rights actors in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and argues the politicisation of their activities has encouraged Palestinians to question both local power dynamics and the Western humanitarian intervention in the region.<sup>54</sup> Finally, yet significantly, Sophia Stamatopoulous-Robbins, Gada Mahrouse, and Fiona Wright claim that international and local left wing activism poses significant political challenges because it reproduces a gendered and racialised discourse that imagines Palestinians as helpless individuals, who are defeated and crushed by their fate.<sup>55</sup> Despite the political complexity that underpins activism against war, violence, and human rights, this research is driven by the normative assumption that a joint Israeli-Palestinian grassroots movement permits the contestation of the current conflict resolution stalemate.

Finally, the project studies the Israeli forces' violence against Palestinians and the social practices through which violence is concealed, condoned, and downplayed for the exoneration of the Israeli military personnel and their accountability at the societal and military levels. Yet significantly, it leaves out a number of aspects worth addressing in further research. The thesis does neither address Palestinian violence against the Israeli forces and civilians nor studies the security collaboration between Israeli security forces and Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.<sup>56</sup> These

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<sup>53</sup> Perugini, N. and Gordon, N. *The Human Right To Dominate* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2015).

<sup>54</sup> Allen, L. *The Rise and Fall of Human Rights: Cynicism and Politics in Occupied Palestine* (Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press, 2013).

<sup>55</sup> Mahrouse, G. A. *Conflicted Commitments: Race, Privilege and Power in Solidarity Activism* (Montreal, McGill – Queen's University Press, 2014); Stamatopoulou-Robbins, S. 'The Joys and Dangers of Solidarity in Palestine: Prosthetic Engagement in an Age of Reparations', *CR: The New Centennial Review*, 8 (2008) pp. 111-60; Wright, F. 'Palestine, my love: The ethico-politics of love and mourning in Jewish Israeli solidarity activism', *American Ethnologist*, 43 (2016) pp. 130-43.

<sup>56</sup> Abdallah, H. 'Palestinians protest over PA-Israel security ties'. *Al Jazeera*, 14 March 2017. Available at: <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/03/palestinians-denounce-pa-israel-security-coordination-170313103710942.html> [Accessed 19 September 2017]; Amrov, S. and Tartir, A. 'Subcontracting Repression in the West Bank and Gaza'. *The New York Times*, 26 November 2014.

aspects merit a comprehensive study on their own, especially having in mind contemporary developments in the region. Criticising the occupation from legal, moral, and political points of view, this research focuses less on the numbers of violent episodes or in adjudicating between who is right and who is wrong during such episodes. Rather, it interrogates the Israeli military and civil tolerance for the IDF's violence and the confined attempts to hold them accountable for their violent behaviour in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

## **Contribution to Knowledge**

The project offers a threefold contribution to the literature. First, by investigating the productive role of emotions in the Israel/Palestine conflict, the project puts forward a methodological and theoretical caveat concerning the political role of emotions in conflict, war, and violence. Shaul Kimhi and Shifra Sagi, Erella Grassiani or Matthew Zagor argue fear, boredom, tiredness, and anger determine the Israeli military to act violently against Palestinian civilians and to morally disengage from their responsibilities and duties under international law.<sup>57</sup> Although personal experiences of military service are a significant area of research that highlights the complexity of soldiering under the occupation, this thesis interrogates the political implications of circulating such an explanation for the IDF's confined accountability for the violence pursued against Palestinians. Explicitly, this examination of military violence risks mitigating the Israeli military's accountability for their actions both at the individual and collective levels while shifting the individual responsibility onto the military and the political apparatus of the occupation. In contrast, this thesis questions the causal relation between emotions and violence, and argues that emotions may, equally importantly, excuse, justify, and downplay the Israeli citizen-soldiers' violence against Palestinians. If ethnographic investigations of the Israeli military life focus on the breadth of emotions that military forces experience during their service (what emotions are), this project studies the political function and implications of emotions (what they do and what are emotions for) in the context of the Israel/Palestine conflict.

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Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/27/opinion/subcontracting-repression-in-the-west-bank-and-gaza.html?mcubz=1&mcubz=1> [Accessed 19 September 2017].

<sup>57</sup> Grassiani, *Soldiering Under Occupation*; Kimhi, S. and Sagi, S. 'Moral justifications and feelings of adjustment to military law-enforcement situation: the case of Israeli soldiers serving at army roadblocks', *Mind & Society*, 7 (2008) pp. 177-91; Zagor, M. ' "I Am the Law!" – Perspectives of Legality and Illegality in the Israeli Army', *Israel Law Review*, 43 (2011) pp. 551-89.

Far from being the only answer for the Israeli tolerance for the IDF's violence against Palestinians, in this research, emotions are the problem that invites investigation and critical thinking. By studying the political trajectories of emotions embodied, distributed, and provoked by (self-)representations of conflict, violence, and (in)security, this thesis focuses on the prioritisation of emotions in cultivating military subjectivity, in their rhetorical instrumentality, in their political and social materialisation, and in their role in sustaining and disrupting dominant political orders. Despite referring specifically to the violence that takes place between the Israeli military forces and Palestinian civilians, this project advances a methodological roadmap for studying the confined accountability of other Western militaries for the violence pursued in other non-Western parts of the world. The thesis concludes by arguing the study of the productive role of emotions could be qualified by marrying governmentality studies with the scholarship on emotions. It suggests treating emotions as social and cultural practices, techniques, and modalities of governing the conduct of local and international audiences towards the Israeli military for the purposes of cultivating affinity towards the IDF, and respectively, hostility and opposition towards Palestinians. Therefore, through the study of the productive power of emotions, this project shows that emotions are part and parcel of power relations that nurture violence, conflict, and war in the Middle East.

Second, the project contributes to feminist investigations of the Israeli military and its gendered practices of occupation. The feminist literature that studies the Israeli military criticises the sexualisation and objectification of women's participation in the military and deplors the socio-economic, political, and cultural subordination of women in the Israeli society due to their unequal access to military service.<sup>58</sup> Furthermore, the Israeli feminist literature studies the militarisation of the Israeli society by underlining the links between manhood, masculinity, and violence.<sup>59</sup> This body of scholarship proposes an essentialist perspective on violence based on the causal link between masculinity and violence therefore carrying a limited explanatory power for the purposes of this project. In contrast, this research claims the militarisation of the

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<sup>58</sup> Levin, D. S. '“You're Always First a Girl”: Emerging Adult Women, Gender, and Sexuality in the Israeli Army', *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 26 (2011) pp. 3-29; Sasson-Levy, O. 'Feminism and Military Gender Practices: Israeli Women Soldiers in “Masculine” Roles', *Sociological Inquiry*, 73 (2003) pp. 440-65.

<sup>59</sup> Klein, U. '“Our Best Boys”: The Gendered Nature of Civil-Military Relations in Israel', *Men and Masculinities*, 2 (1999) pp. 47-65; Sasson-Levy, O. 'Individual Bodies, Collective State Interests: The Case of Israeli Combat Soldiers', *Men and Masculinities*, 10 (2008) pp. 296-321.

Israeli society takes place through a more nuanced process than the conventional association between violence and a martial military physical training. It studies military subjectivity beyond military personnel's violent behaviour and physical training and investigates the pedagogical, aesthetic, rhetorical, commemoration, legal, bureaucratic, and forensic practices that nurture and cultivate the Israeli military persona. Crafting military subjectivity takes place not only during but also before and in the aftermath of military service in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, especially since the Israeli military personnel travel between their civilian identity and reserve duty most of their adult life. Moreover, military subjectivity is cultivated through other social practices such as aesthetic representations of soldiering circulated on social media, forensic and commemoration practices through which the body of the Israeli citizen-soldier is provided with the utmost material and symbolic care, or rhetorical practices through which Israeli military, political, and public figures highlight the uniqueness and the benign nature of the Israeli troops.

Enriching the construction of the gendered identity of the IDF, the project argues didactic, aesthetic, rhetorical, bureaucratic, forensic, legal, and commemoration practices re-fashion the Israeli military identity by cultivating a professional, non-threatening, and humanitarian military figure. Traditionally, the IDF have celebrated the socio-cultural symbol of the *Sabra*. The *Sabras*, the first native Jews living in Israel, were the quintessence of the Zionist dream of reimagining the Israeli identity that entailed a detachment from the assumed passivity of Diaspora Jews who died in pogroms and during the Holocaust.<sup>60</sup> Specifically, the creation of Israel was accompanied by the crafting of a new Jew, the *Sabra*, who was envisaged as the 'prototype of the hardened, strong, hygienic, and resolutely masculine warrior'.<sup>61</sup> If the official narrative has celebrated this figure as the embodiment of the victory associated with the war of 1967, the testimonies of veterans that have served in the Six-Day War offer an alternative representation. *The Seventh Day: Soldiers' Talk About the Six-Day War*, one of the first Israeli anthologies of war experiences, is a collection of war stories recounted by a group of young kibbutzniks who had fought in the war of 1967. In the aftermath of the war, Avraham Shapira and Amos Oz met with war veterans and recorded their war experiences. In their audiotapes that were later transformed in a

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<sup>60</sup> Presner, T. S. *Muscular Judaism: The Jewish Body and the Politics of Regenerations* (London and New York, Routledge, 2007).

<sup>61</sup> Presner, *Muscular Judaism*, p. 17.



compendium of war confessions, young Sabras disclose the traumatic experience of war and their effort to cope with the chaos and the disorder of combat.<sup>62</sup> The image of a soldier who fought yet resents and feels remorse for his participation in violent acts gained a further dimension in the 1980s. The First Lebanon War (1982) was categorised as the first ‘war of choice’ and conscientious objectors and anti-war movements began to challenge the military. Furthermore, the media, critical of the military, started portraying the Israeli troops as ‘frightened, conflicted survivors’, who were unaware of their military purpose and who dreaded their prolonged stay in South Lebanon.<sup>63</sup> The security situation in the 1990s, characterised by a protracted conflict and critiques against the leitmotif of individual sacrifice for the wellbeing of the nation, cultivated the image of an anxious, powerless, and traumatised soldier, a representation featured largely in the media and popular culture.<sup>64</sup> Slowly, films and documentaries capitalised on the representation of a traumatised military figure. Studying film and documentaries produced in the aftermath of the Second Intifada, Raja Morag argues these cultural products capture the ‘perpetrator trauma’.<sup>65</sup> Showing a vulnerable and confused soldier, these creative productions focus on female and male military personnel that disclose the atrocities they have perpetuated, and insist on the guilt and the trauma soldiers experience in the aftermath of the violence enacted against Palestinians. Although Morag salutes these artistic expressions as a sign of socio-cultural maturity accompanied by the Israeli troops’ willingness to assume responsibility for their actions, some scholars and journalists criticise this military representation.<sup>66</sup> For example, the ‘perpetrator trauma’ leitmotif has become the main criticism against the activity of *Breaking the Silence*. Critics argue the image of a traumatised soldier portrays a conscientious and humane military figure that effaces Palestinian suffering by turning the conversation away from the Palestinian precarious existence under the

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<sup>62</sup> Shapira, A. *The Seventh Day: Soldiers’ Talk About the Six-Day War* (Middlesex, UK, Penguin Books, 1971).

<sup>63</sup> Rosman, E. and Israeli, Z. ‘From ‘Rambo’ to ‘sitting ducks’ and back again: the Israeli soldier in the media’, *Israel Affairs*, 21 (2015) p. 122.

<sup>64</sup> Rosman and Israeli, ‘From ‘Rambo’ to ‘sitting ducks’’, pp. 121-2.

<sup>65</sup> Morag, R. *Waltzing with Bashir: Perpetrator Trauma and Cinema* (London and New York, I. B. Tauris, 2013).

<sup>66</sup> Morag, R. ‘Radical contextuality: Major trends in Israeli documentary second intifada cinema’, *Studies in Documentary Film*, 6 (2012) p. 259.

occupation and towards the Israeli citizen-soldiers' soul searching experiences during and in the aftermath of their military service.<sup>67</sup>

Against these images, this project argues local and international audiences witness the emergence of a new Israeli military image – a professional, non-threatening, and humanitarian military figure. Supported by the IDF's growing access to media technology, one observers not only the Israeli military occupation of the digital media as Kuntsman and Stein eloquently have argued in their work on the IDF's reliance on new technology, but also the emergence of a new Israeli military subjectivity that reduces the growing local and international criticism regarding the Israeli military's violence against Palestinians.<sup>68</sup> Specifically, this novel image works through, yet ultimately, effaces any identity markers such as race, gender, class, ethnicity, and religion by cultivating a 'tough and tender' image of the Israeli military that ultimately alleviates local and international criticism.<sup>69</sup> Far from feminising the IDF, this (self-)representation provides the Israeli military with an appearance of faultlessness, equips it with the belief in the justness of its action, and conceals any violence the military personnel might pursue under the guise of an attractive, beautiful yet strong symbolic representation. This positive military image, the project concludes, hinders the strengthening of a conscientious objectors movement and of other left wing Israeli organisations that criticise the Israeli military and state authorities for their tolerance for the IDF's violence against Palestinians.

Equally significant, this benevolent and humane military figure confines international criticism against the Israeli military by situating the IDF alongside other Western militaries that imagine themselves as forces for good through the blending of humanitarian operations and combat missions. Eyal Weizman has already investigated the growing discourse that blends humanitarianism with military interventional practices when discussing cases such as the war in Bosnia, the war in Iraq (2003) or the

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<sup>67</sup> Lambert, L. '#Palestine/// How Should We Read the Israeli Soldiers' Testimonies from "Breaking the Silence?"'. *The Funambulist*, 5 May 2015. Available at: <http://thefunambulist.net/2015/05/05/palestine-how-should-we-read-the-israeli-soldiers-testimonies-from-break-the-silence/> [Accessed 30 July 2017].

<sup>68</sup> Kuntsman, A. and Stein, R. L. *Digital Militarism: Israel's Occupation in the Social Media Age* (Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press, 2015).

<sup>69</sup> Niva, S. 'Tough and Tender: New World Order Masculinity and the Gulf War', in *The "Man" Question in International Relations*, edited by Marysia Zalewski and Jane Parpart (Boulder, CO, Westview Press, 1998), pp. 109-28.

Israeli military operations in the Gaza Strip.<sup>70</sup> The thesis enriches Weizman's approach and argues the cultivation of an impeccable Israeli military image, which resembles to other Western forces, enables the creation of a fictive affective kinship between the Israeli military, local, and international audiences. Through this new representation, the Israeli military constructs an image that permits the IDF to associate themselves with other Western militaries and to situate themselves within the Western security alliance of fighting terror. The image of a professional, non-threatening, and humanitarian citizen-soldier is not effacing the Sabra figure, nor the image of a remorseful, conflicted, and scared soldier. Coexisting and competing with them, this novel military representation is the product of the contemporary socio-political dynamic of the Israel/Palestine conflict, that is characterised by the IDF's reliance on modern technology, by the growing number of human rights actors and journalists in the region, and by the increasing international indignation regarding the Israeli military and the Israeli occupation of Palestinians.

Third, the project contributes to the literature that studies the confined success of the Israeli left wing activism in eliciting change in the Israeli society. A small number of authors address the refusal of the Israeli society to criticise the military or to resist the occupation. They study the role of conscientious objectors in the Israeli society and the efforts of the Israeli Jews political activists against the occupation. For example, Ruth Linn believes the Israeli public opinion and the military tend to ignore conscientious objectors. In her study, the author reveals the Israeli conscientious objectors are challenged by the society's 'refusal to know' about the Israeli forces' violence against Palestinians thus determining the former to craft criticism against the occupation in a narrow manner in order to avoid accusations of lack of patriotism.<sup>71</sup> Similarly, in *Refusenik!: Israel's Soldiers of Conscience*, the moderate left wing novelist Yizhar Smilansky criticises the refuseniks for being vocal only during the performance of their annual reserve duty.<sup>72</sup> The novelist challenges recruits to fight the political and military leadership 'throughout the other eleven months of the year when the citizen-soldier is free to attack, to raise hell, to recruit others for the great national

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<sup>70</sup> Weizman, E. *The Least of All Possible Evils: Humanitarian Violence from Arendt to Gaza* (London, Verso, 2012).

<sup>71</sup> Linn, R. 'Soldiers with Conscience Never Die – They are Just Ignored by their Society. Moral Disobedience in the Israel Defense Forces', *Journal of Military Ethics*, 1 (2002) pp. 57-76.

<sup>72</sup> Weinstein, M. and Smilansky, Y. 'The refusenik answers the writer', in *Refusenik!: Israel's Soldiers of Conscience*, edited by Peretz Kidron (London and New York, Zed Books, 2004), p. 43.

refusal'.<sup>73</sup> Moreover, Katherine Natanel argues that the Israeli organisations that are affiliated with the left demonstrate a passive approach towards activism against the occupation while the activists' lethargic and apathetic attitude towards anti-colonial crusading contributes to the sustenance of the Israeli domination of Palestinians.<sup>74</sup> This body of literature recalls the hostile, right wing, and nationalist political environment in which left wing activists activate and condemns the latter's lack of boldness in criticising the occupation and in rallying on Palestinians' behalf. Although these scholars offer a valid criticism of the Israeli political environment, this thesis shows the Israeli military is not only well aware of the impact of local and international activism on the Israeli military, but it is also actively engaged in restraining the impact of dissent. The constitution of a professional, non-threatening, and humanitarian military image indicates the IDF's effort to conceal the violence that is inherent in military service with the aim to cultivate public support and trust in the military, and to moderate local (and international) criticism against the military and the occupation.

## Project Structure

The first chapter presents the theoretical framework that guides this research project. It brings together Michel Foucault's concept of the *regime of truth* with Judith Butler's *frames of war* in order to map out the pedagogical, aesthetic, rhetorical, commemoration, forensic, legal, and respectively, bureaucratic practices through which the professional, non-threatening, and humanitarian military image is constructed and sustained as means to deter criticism against the IDF and its violent behaviour.<sup>75</sup> With an interest in the political role of emotions in the Israel/Palestine conflict, the chapter builds on feminist and cultural studies interested in studying emotions, violence, and division. It uses Sara Ahmed's cultural politics of emotions in order to complement Butler's investigation of the regimes of mourning, loss and grievability that justify violence for the purposes of mapping out the repertoire of emotions that nurture the civil and military tolerance for the IDF's violent behaviour against Palestinians.<sup>76</sup> In

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<sup>73</sup> Weinstein and Smilanski, 'The refusenik answers the writer', p. 43.

<sup>74</sup> Natanel, K. *Sustaining Conflict: Apathy and Domination in Israel-Palestine* (Oakland, CA, University of California Press, 2016).

<sup>75</sup> Butler, *Frames of War*; Foucault, M. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York, Vintage Books, 1995); Foucault, M. *The History of Sexuality. Volume 1: An Introduction* (New York, Pantheon Books, 1978).

<sup>76</sup> Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*.

this regard, this research shows there is a gamut of emotions (doubt, pain, disgust, suspicion, revulsion, empathy or compassion), that nurtures and is nurtured by gendered and racialised structures of domination, privilege, and power that sanction, conceal, and depoliticise violence against Palestinians. Lastly, the chapter notes the importance of studying the embodied experiences of subjects within and beyond the power structures that shape their social actions. Since hierarchies that shape subjectivity are temporary, contingent, and open to contestation, the thesis enriches Foucault's insights on subjectivity with Erving Goffman's study of institutional *underlife*, and reveals practices, instances, and events through which the IDF's idealised military figure is altered, moderated, and dislocated.<sup>77</sup>

The second chapter analyses the cultivation of the Israeli military subjectivity by scrutinising the didactic practices through which the IDF's Education and Youth Corps constructs a professional, non-threatening, and compassionate soldiering figure. Influenced by the power struggle between secular and religious actors to shape military culture and subjectivity, the Israeli pedagogical military practices rely on emotions in order to cultivate the Israeli military subjectivity. For instance, the IDF's Education and Youth Corps organises trips to museums or to historical sights across Israel, workshops that introduce recruits to military and Jewish ethics during war and conflict, lectures about Zionism, talks about the Israel/Palestine conflict, or seminars about contemporary socio-political affairs in Israel. These pedagogical activities invite the Israeli young men and women to craft military subjectivity through an emotional engagement with the ideas, symbols, and narratives presented by themselves and their instructors/guides during military didactic programmes. The chapter shows the Israeli military uses these pedagogical practices in order to work with and through recruits' emotions in order to imbue them with a sense of loyalty, a feeling of righteousness regarding military service, and a sentiment of devotion towards the military and the society. Presenting military service as a self-fulfilling practice of personal development that equips recruits with virtuous qualities that serve their civil and military lives alike, the IDF conceals the violence that is inherent in military service, and imagines the cultivation of a benign and compassionate military figure. This romanticised military

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<sup>77</sup> Goffman, E. *Asylums: Essays on the social situation of mental patients and other inmates* (Garden City, NY, Anchor Books, 1961); Goffman, E. 'The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life', in *Contemporary Sociological Theory*, edited by Craig Calhoun, Joseph Gerteis, James Moody, Steven Pfaff and Indermohan Virk (Malden, MA, Blackwell Publishing, 2002), pp. 46-61.

image equips recruits with a sense of moral superiority by imagining the Israeli military personnel as sensitive individuals that are affected by and concerned with Palestinian lives under the occupation. The chapter argues the cultivation and the presentation of military service as a self-development practice is important for deterring local and international criticism against the Israeli military's violence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

The third chapter explores the IDF Spokesperson's Unit's activity on social media. It investigates the IDF's online photo archive that constitutes the military's official Facebook account. Through the content analysis of these pictures, this chapter shows the Israeli military uses social media in order to cultivate and disseminate a happy, cosmopolitan, and humanitarian military subjectivity. Addressing both local and international audiences, these aesthetic practices present military service as a playful activity, that offers thrilling opportunities and moments of relaxation, and as an occasion to help Palestinians or people from abroad that find themselves in distressful situations. Similar to the pedagogical activities that introduce recruits to the Israeli military life and culture, the IDF Spokesperson's Unit cultivates a romanticised military subjectivity that shields the Israeli forces from accountability for the violence enacted in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. This image appeals to both local and Western audiences insofar as it situates the Israeli forces alongside other Western troops that are engaged in combat and humanitarian missions alike. Through this appealing military representation, the IDF constrain the possibility to interpret military forces' violence outside the confines of self-defence. The dissemination of an attractive, likeable, and modern military subjectivity invites local and international kinship and affinity towards military personnel and respectively, the condemnation of Palestinians who are constituted as threatening for these beautiful and young Israeli servicemen and women.

The fourth chapter examines the debates, controversies, and ambivalences provoked by the circulation of visual representations of the Israeli forces' violence against Palestinians. It investigates the rhetorical engagement with three episodes, which took place across the West Bank, and which showed the Israeli military and security forces harming, harassing, or killing Palestinian children and teenagers. Distributed in the local and international public sphere, these photographs and video recordings generated passionate discussions about the IDF's violent behaviour in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, concerning the ubiquity of cameras and human rights activists in the region, and regarding the Israeli forces' leeway to attack Palestinians at

their own discretion. By examining the rhetorical engagement with these episodes of violence, the project maps out the emotional discursive practices through which Israeli servicemen and women, Israeli political and military authorities, members of the civil society, and segments of the Israeli population defend, justify, and downplay the military personnel's violence against the Palestinian youth. Through expressions of doubt and suspicion concerning the authenticity of these video recordings, declarations of solidarity with the Israeli military personnel that were accused of harming Palestinians, and through discursive labelling of Palestinians as fearsome and dangerous figures, the Israeli military, political, and public figures imagine a vulnerable and benign soldiering persona. This image shifts the Israeli military's responsibility for the violence pursued against Palestinians from the former to the latter. In this respect, the chapter indicates that visual representations of war and conflict are subjected to affective interpretations and debates that circulate doubt, suspicion, or disbelief towards Palestinians and empathy, solidarity, and support for the Israeli military personnel. By mapping out the passionate debates that accompany these images of violence, it cautions against interpreting visual practices solely as progressive instruments to contest violence, conflict, and war, and shows that visual representations might reinforce division and harm in the Israel/Palestine conflict.

The fifth chapter investigates the commemoration and forensic practices through which the Israeli and Palestinian bodies are recovered, handled, buried, and commemorated in the aftermath of their violent interaction. It argues commemoration and forensic practices reinforce the heroic and sacrificial representation of the Israeli military, which enacts violence in order to defend the individual and collective Israeli Jewish body. The exceptionality of the Israeli military figure is strengthened through the forensic engagement with dead bodies within the Israel/Palestine conflict. Medical authorities indicate the utmost care and respect for the Israeli servicemen and women who have died, yet show disregard towards Palestinian dead bodies. Imbued with religious symbolism regarding the sanctity of the Jewish body, these practices constitute a sacred, impeccable, and distinctive Israeli soldiering figure. They reinforce the exceptionality and the flawlessness of the Israeli military subject, whose heroic status confines its representation as a figure capable of enacting violence against Palestinians. Moreover, this chapter shows that Israeli and Palestinians alike attempt to contest this romanticised military representation that confines the possibility to recognise Palestinian pain and loss within the context of the Israel/Palestine conflict.

Whereas local human rights organisations attempt to organise joint events in order to commemorate loss on both sides of the conflict, local Palestinians living in East Jerusalem encounter legal and bureaucratic difficulties in burying and honouring their dead relatives. Therefore, the chapter shows that mourning, pain, loss, grief, pain, animosity, and aversion hinder conflict resolution, and reinforce the affective divisions that characterise the Israel/Palestine conflict. The thesis concludes by highlighting the political implications of circulating a professional, non-threatening, and humanitarian military figure to local and international audiences.



## Chapter 1: The Politics of Emotions and Violence within Civil-Military Relations in Israel

*'We see soldiers as our sons. In Israel, it is part of our collective ethos. We don't see soldiers as robot-like lines of buzz cuts and uniforms, but as the beautiful children that we have collectively given birth to and cared for.'*<sup>1</sup>

The Israeli public perception towards the IDF is positive and most of the Israeli youth fulfil their compulsory military service in spite of the growing local and international criticism against the Israeli military. Roni Tiargan-Orr and Meytal Eran-Jona, who work at the IDF's Behavioural Sciences Center, have surveyed the Israeli public opinion towards the military between 2001 and 2010. They concluded that the Israeli society's trust in the IDF has remained stable across times despite criticism against the military's violence against Palestinians.<sup>2</sup> Although the study could indicate bias due to authors' affiliation with the IDF, their findings show that critical voices have a moderate influence on the public's perception of the Israeli military. Similarly, in 2016, the media reported that the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics found that the IDF are the most trusted institution in Israel. According to the survey, 82% of respondents expressed confidence in the Israeli military forces. Unsurprisingly, the same report showed 92% of the Israeli Jews, and respectively, 32% of the Arab Israelis trust the military.<sup>3</sup> In this regard, journalists, activists, and scholars alike deplore the continuous support and trust in the Israeli military despite the growing incriminatory evidence that illustrates its widespread violence against Palestinians.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Eetta Prince-Gibson cited in Breger, S. 'Elor Azaria is not my son'. *Momentum*, 24 February 2017. Available at: <http://www.momentmag.com/elor-azaria-is-not-my-son/> [Accessed 19 September 2017].

<sup>2</sup> Tiargan-Orr, R. and Eran-Jona, M. 'The Israeli Public's Perception of the IDF: Stability and Change', *Armed Forces & Society*, 42 (2016) pp. 324-43.

<sup>3</sup> The Times of Israel Staff, 'Israelis trust the IDF, are skeptical of politicians – survey'. *The Times of Israel*, 10 July 2015. Available at: <http://www.timesofisrael.com/israelis-trust-the-idf-are-skeptical-of-politicians-survey/> [Accessed 1 September 2017].

<sup>4</sup> Oren, A. 'The Truth About the Israel Defense Forces, 'The World's Most Moral Army' '. *Haaretz*, 3 April 2016. Available at: <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.712428> [Accessed 1 September 2017]; Yesh Din, 'Law Enforcement on Israeli Soldiers Suspected of Harming Palestinians' (Tel Aviv, Yesh Din, 2017). Available at: <https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/files.yesh-din.org/767+נתונים+מצה+מברר+2016/YeshDin++Data+1.17++English.pdf> [Accessed 30 July 2017].

Furthermore, Yagil Levy argues that the IDF have avoided the emergence of a motivation crisis. Although the Israeli youth is obliged to perform a compulsory military service and an annual reserve duty, recruits occasionally refuse to perform their military service due to political or socio-economic reasons.<sup>5</sup> The Israeli military have made significant efforts to accommodate draftees' needs and grievances. For instance, the IDF have increased recruits' financial remuneration and have accepted their reluctance to serve in politically contested missions in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.<sup>6</sup> The continuous trust and support for the Israeli military coupled with the IDF's increasing effort to address local criticism indicate that the Israeli military enjoys and is interested in crafting a positive image in order to strengthen civil-military relations in Israel. In this regard, the IDF's Chief of Staff, Gadi Eisenkot, argued in 2016 that one of the greatest threats to the Israeli military is the erosion of the public trust in the IDF.<sup>7</sup>

The civil, military, and political tolerance for the IDF's violence against Palestinians relates to the positive perception towards the Israeli military. This is illustrated by a violent episode that took place in Hebron, whose public debate reverberated in the local and international media. On March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016, Sergeant Elor Azaria, a combat medic in the Shimshon Battalion (Kfir Brigade) shot in the head Abdel Fattah al-Sharif. Together with another assailant, Ramzi al-Kasrawi, al-Sharif had previously attacked an Israeli soldier and wounded him lightly. Lying on the ground, al-Sharif had already been incapacitated by the Israeli forces when the sergeant shot him.<sup>8</sup> The combat medic was arrested immediately after the shooting and a trial in front of the military court ensued. At the beginning of January 2017, Azaria was convicted for manslaughter, and in February 2017, he was sentenced to eighteenth months in prison, twelve months on probation, and a demotion in rank.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Levy, Y. 'Is There a Motivation Crisis in Military Recruitment in Israel?', *Israel Affairs*, 15 (2009) pp. 135-58.

<sup>6</sup> Levy, 'Is There a Motivation Crisis?', pp. 135-58.

<sup>7</sup> Ravid, B. 'Chief of Staff Eisenkot: Greatest Threat to the IDF is Loss of Public Trust'. *Haaretz*, 26 July 2016. Available at: <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/premium-1.733429> [Accessed 1 September 2017].

<sup>8</sup> Gross, J. A. and The Times of Israel Staff, 'Soldier moderately hurt in Hebron stabbing; attackers killed'. *The Times of Israel*, 24 March 2016. Available at: <http://www.timesofisrael.com/israeli-soldier-stabbed-moderately-injured-in-hebron/> [Accessed 28 July 2017].

<sup>9</sup> Fisher, I. 'Elor Azaria, Israeli Soldier Who Killed Wounded Assailant, Gets 18 Months in Prison'. *The New York Times*, 21 February 2017. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/21/world/middleeast/elor-azaria-israel-sentence.html> [Accessed 28 July 2017].

This episode indicated the prevalent support that the military enjoys despite the circulation of incriminatory evidence that shows the IDF's violence against Palestinians. Political figures affiliated with the Israeli left and center argued the Hebron episode denoted a decline in the IDF's morality while right wing politicians argued for safeguarding the Israeli troops' lives at the detriment of the Palestinian attackers' ones.<sup>10</sup> Various political actors, including the Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, called for pardoning Azaria. Furthermore, the public opinion and the Israeli society were reserved in condemning the combat medic. In Tel Aviv, Azaria's supporters organised a rally attended by 2,000 people, who called for his release and hailed him as a hero.<sup>11</sup> Facebook groups circulated profile pictures with messages of support for the combat medic.<sup>12</sup> A supermarket sold shopping bags with his figure and some children dressed as Azaria during the Purim festival.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, the support for the combat medic was apparent in a number of opinion polls. Around half of those interviewed condemned the sergeant's arrest and supported the killing of assailants who attack Israeli civilians and military personnel.<sup>14</sup> In the aftermath of his conviction, polls suggested that almost seventy percent of Israeli Jews supported the pardoning of the combat medic.<sup>15</sup> Finally, yet significantly, Imad Abu Shamsyeh, the activist that filmed and disseminated the violent episode, received death threats, his house was attacked with stones, and his photo was uploaded on right wing websites together with calls to murder him and his family.<sup>16</sup> The affective debates that surrounded Azaria's case

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<sup>10</sup> Lazaroff, T., Lappin, Y., Stern, G. and Hoffman, S. 'Soldier arrested for shooting subdued terrorist after Hebron attack'. *The Jerusalem Post*, 24 March 2016. Available at: <http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/VIDEO-IDF-probes-soldier-who-shot-dead-subdued-Palestinian-terrorist-449094> [Accessed 28 July 2017].

<sup>11</sup> Sterman, A. and Gross, J. A. 'Tel Aviv rally for Hebron shooter draws fewer than expected'. *The Times of Israel*, 19 April 2016. Available at: <http://www.timesofisrael.com/tel-aviv-rally-for-hebron-shooter-draws-fewer-than-expected/> [Accessed 28 July 2017].

<sup>12</sup> Goldman, L. 'Israel Rallies Around 'Killer' Soldier'. *The Daily Beast*, 4 April 2016. Available at: <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2016/04/04/israel-rallies-around-killer-soldier.html> [Accessed 28 July 2017].

<sup>13</sup> Haaretz Staff, 'This Purim, Some Israeli Kids Will Dress Up as Hebron Shooter'. *Haaretz*, 1 March 2017. Available at: <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.774212> [Accessed 28 July 2017]; Ofir, J. 'Israeli supermarket chain glorifies army killer on grocery bag'. *Mondoweiss*, 6 February 2017. Available at: <http://mondoweiss.net/2017/02/israeli-supermarket-glorifies/> [Accessed 28 July 2017].

<sup>14</sup> Baroud, R. 'The Balancing Act is Over: What Elor Azaria Taught Us about Israel'. *Counterpunch*, 19 January 2017. Available at: <http://www.counterpunch.org/2017/01/19/the-balancing-act-is-over-what-elor-azaria-taught-us-about-israel/> [Accessed 28 July 2017].

<sup>15</sup> Mackey, R. 'Most Israelis Want Pardon for Soldier Who Executed Wounded Palestinian Suspect'. *The Intercept*, 6 January 2017. Available at: <https://theintercept.com/2017/01/05/israelis-want-soldier-executed-wounded-palestinian-suspect-camera-go-free/> [Accessed 28 July 2017].

<sup>16</sup> Hass, A. 'Cameraman in Hebron Shooting: Threats Continuing, Azaria's Supporters Came to My House'. *Haaretz*, 5 January 2017. Available at: <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.763050> [Accessed 28 July 2017].

illustrate that, despite the circulation of incriminatory evidence, the Israeli society fosters a relatively stable positive attitude towards the IDF. Equally, the emotional investment in the military nurtured by a variety of Israeli individual and collective figures show the role of emotions in justifying, sanctioning, and downplaying the IDF's violence against Palestinians. This chapter highlights that the tolerance for the Israeli military's violent behaviour in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip is informed by the emergence of a professional, non-threatening, and humanitarian military figure. This image, that played an important role in constituting Azaria as a vulnerable military figure, is constructed at the intersection between the civil and military spheres. Its prevalence within civil-military relations in Israel carries serious political implication for the Israel/Palestine conflict because this image enhances support for the Israeli military, confines criticism against its violent practices, and sanctions the IDF's widespread violence against Palestinians.

In order to support this claim, the chapter argues that the IDF's positive soldierly image – a professional, non-threatening, and humanitarian military – represents an *affective frame of soldiering* that nurtures the civil, military, and political tolerance for the IDF's violence against Palestinians by justifying and depoliticising the military's violent behaviour in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. For the purposes of this project, depoliticisation is defined as an 'ongoing, always incomplete processes by which the political, structural nature of a given issue is disguised, and, therefore, (...) the potential for and necessity of political moves to counter that issue are to some degree obscured'.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, it claims that the emotions that arise from this *affective frame of soldiering* reveal gendered and racialised readings of Palestinians and Israeli Jewish military bodies that determine affinity for the latter and animosity towards the former thus moderating the IDF's accountability for the violence pursued against Palestinians. Similarly, Carole Nagengast warns that violence may be 'tolerated or encouraged by states in order to create, justify, excuse, explain, or enforce hierarchies of difference or relations of inequality'.<sup>18</sup>

The chapter divides in two sections with the following one blending Michel Foucault's insights regarding a *regime of truth* with Judith Butler's *frames of war*. It

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<sup>17</sup> Gray, H. 'The Geopolitics of Intimacy and the Intimacies of Geopolitics: Combat Deployment, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and Domestic Abuse in the British Military', *Feminist Studies*, 42 (2016) p. 157.

<sup>18</sup> Nagengast, C. 'Violence, Terror, and the Crisis of the State', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 23 (1994) p. 114.

highlights the IDF's benign soldiering figure represents a discursive system that defines the emotional relation between the Israeli society and the military thus nurturing the public, political, and military tolerance for the IDF's violence against Palestinians. Furthermore, it introduces Sarah Ahmed's remarks regarding the cultural politics of emotions in order to underline the role of emotions in constructing the Israeli positive military image as an *affective frame of soldiering* that invites support for the IDF, and respectively, hostility towards Palestinians thus justifying the military's violence in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.<sup>19</sup> The final section discusses the construction of military subjectivity within the context of this *affective frame* and shows that the Israeli citizen-soldiers appropriate, rehearse, contest, or trouble the military culture within which they are socialised. It emphasises that military subjectivity is constituted through a negotiation between individual desires, views, ideas, and the broader socio-political context in which they are embedded. To this end, it broadens Michel Foucault's discussions about power and subjectivity with Erving Goffman's dramaturgic theory.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, the chapter insists emotions define the socialisation of the Israeli recruits in the military culture and stresses that 'we should never assume that soldiers agree with the state policies they are tasked with enforcing nor should we assume complete separations between "official" ideologies of the state and vernacular logics'.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, the constitution of the Israeli military subjectivity indicates that 'not only are emotions central to subjectification and meaning-making, but they also cannot be dissociated from the materiality of bodies, whose very signification or "readability" hangs on [the] emotional meaning' of the Palestinian and Israeli Jewish bodies alike.<sup>22</sup>

## **The Affective Frame of Israeli Soldiering**

### ***Regime of Truth/Frames of War***

The chapter makes the case that the image of a professional, non-threatening, and humanitarian military reinforces a positive attitude towards the IDF and leniency for the Israeli military personnel's violence against Palestinians. Due to its political,

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<sup>19</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*; Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*; Butler, *Frames of War*; Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*.

<sup>20</sup> Goffman, *Asylums*; Goffman, 'The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life'.

<sup>21</sup> Wall, T. 'Philanthropic Soldiers, Practical Orientalism, and the Occupation of Iraq', *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*, 18 (2011) p. 485.

<sup>22</sup> D'Aoust, A.-M. 'Ties that Bind? Engaging Emotions, Governmentality and Neoliberalism: Introduction to the Special Issue', *Global Society*, 28 (2014) p. 271.

social, and military significance, this romanticised military image represents a *regime of truth/frame of war* that defines civil-military relations in Israel, that cultivates the emotional links between the civil and military sphere, and that moderates the IDF's accountability for the violence enacted in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Michel Foucault believes every society is characterised by a regime of truth that includes the modalities through which a particular truth is accepted or rejected, incorporates the instruments through which truth is determined, and features the techniques through which individuals are granted social capital to say and to be credited with saying true statements. From this perspective, a regime of truth is defined through the lens that:

‘Each society has its régime of truth, its ‘general politics’ of truth: that is, the type of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; [and] the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true’.<sup>23</sup>

Truth refers less to certainty, accuracy, precision or veracity. It signifies what counts as true and what is the political role of truth in a particular society. To this end, a society rarely faces ‘a battle on ‘behalf of’ the truth but (...) a battle about the status of truth and the economic and political role it plays’ in it.<sup>24</sup> There are a few criteria that define a regime of truth. It is produced by a diversity of institutions, carries a techno-scientific trait, and corresponds to political demands from a particular society. Truth circulates under diverse forms and through a multiplicity of venues in order to be widely diffused and consumed. Nevertheless, its production is confined to the power apparatuses that exist in a society be it army, media or educational institutions. Lastly, it is likely that truth is caught in struggles of power and domination in that society.<sup>25</sup>

This chapter departs from Foucault's insights by showing that the construction of a regime of truth encompasses a diversity of actors and social practices apart from the media, the military, or other educational institutions. Azaria's case has revealed the

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<sup>23</sup> Foucault, ‘Truth and Power’, p. 131.

<sup>24</sup> Foucault, ‘Truth and Power’, p. 132.

<sup>25</sup> Foucault, ‘Truth and Power’, pp. 131-2.

permeability between civil-military relations and the role of a variety of political, public, or individual actors in presenting the sergeant as a victim who deserves leniency and support despite his violent actions. Through their discursive practices, individual and collective Israeli actors tried to establish his innocence and vulnerability as a discursive system that would organise individual and collective attitudes towards the combat medic and, by extension, towards the Israeli military. Furthermore, the reverberation of this case in the public sphere, from public demonstrations on Azaria's behalf to his use as an aesthetic symbol during the Purim festival, indicate the variety of practices that constitute and reinforce the IDF's positive military image as a dominant discursive system within the Israeli society. Therefore, this chapter stresses that the Israeli benign military figure is constituted at the intersection between civil-military relations through a gamut of practices and a diversity of actors. Due to its prevalence and circulation between the civil and military spheres, this image levies on civil-military relations as a discursive system that governs individual and collective emotions, attitudes, desires, and views towards the IDF. Similarly, Lorna Weir highlights that the concept of the regime of truth demands examination beyond its confessional/techno-scientific features since truth gains different forms and means of expression in the contemporary world. Truth practices and manifestations emerge at different historical moments in time, and gain multiple forms of expression in different areas such as politics, governance or common culture.<sup>26</sup>

Two branches of the Israeli military carry a significant influence in cultivating a romanticised Israeli military image and in distributing it within the civil and military spheres. Through educational practices, the IDF's Education and Youth Corps presents military service as an opportunity to develop one's individual and professional skills, which are important for being a good citizen-soldier that both builds and defends the Israeli nation.<sup>27</sup> The IDF Spokesperson's Unit strengthens this positive image by using social media to circulate the image of a happy, multicultural, and humanitarian military subject.<sup>28</sup> It also cultivates and disseminates grief, pain, and mourning through online military obituaries that praise the remarkable qualities of the Israeli servicemen and

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<sup>26</sup> Wier, L. 'The Concept of Truth Regime', *The Canadian Journal of Sociology/Cahiers canadiens de sociologie*, 33 (2008) pp. 367-9.

<sup>27</sup> The IDF Spokesperson's Unit, 'Education and Youth Corps', *IDF Blog*, Available at: <https://www.idfblog.com/about-the-idf/idf-units/education-corps/> [Accessed 5 June 2017].

<sup>28</sup> The IDF Spokesperson's Unit, *The IDF's Official Facebook Page*. Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/idfonline/> [Accessed 25 June 2017].

women. These affective commemoration practices remind the Israeli and international public (and the Jewish Diaspora) of the bodily sacrifice made by extraordinary Israeli forces in order to defend Israel.<sup>29</sup> Both the IDF's Education and Youth Corps and the IDF Spokesperson's Unit forward an appealing military image that aims to enhance the Israeli recruits' desire to join the military, and to deter criticism against the IDF's violence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Likewise, various institutions affiliated with the state contribute to the construction of a flawless Israeli military subjectivity. Pre-military academies support the activity of the IDF's Education and Youth Corps. By organising field trips through Israel or by equipping the Israeli recruits with knowledge about military and Jewish ethics, pre-military academies remind young Israeli men and women of their duty to contribute to nation building and to defend Israel's collective body.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, two institutions affiliated with the state, ZAKA (Disaster Victim Identification) and the Israeli Institute of Forensic Medicine construct an impeccable military subjectivity.<sup>31</sup> These institutions conduct medical and forensic practices on Israeli Jewish and Palestinian bodies. Their activities are guided by a symbolic discourse that invites the utmost care for the sacred body of the Israeli citizen-soldier and the exclusion of the (contaminating) Palestinian body from the Israeli body politic.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, the Israeli Supreme Court's decisions hinder the burying and mourning of Palestinian bodies from East Jerusalem in Israel thus indicating the reluctance of the Israeli public and authorities to accept Palestinian narratives of mourning and loss.<sup>33</sup>

Finally, yet significantly, a number of individual actors contribute to the strengthening of a benign military figure. The passionate debates provoked by the Azaria episode showed military and political authorities, public figures, or Israeli

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<sup>29</sup> The IDF Spokesperson's Unit, 'In Memoriam', *The IDF Blog*. Available at: <https://www.idfblog.com/in-memoriam/#> [Accessed 17 February 2016].

<sup>30</sup> Pfeffer, A. 'A Wise Move'. *Haaretz*, 7 January 2017. Available at: <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/a-wise-move-1.335745> [Accessed 25 June 2017].

<sup>31</sup> ZAKA, *How ZAKA began*. Available at: [http://www.zaka.us/about/How\\_ZAKA\\_began](http://www.zaka.us/about/How_ZAKA_began) [Accessed 10 July 2017]; Ministry of Health, *National Center of Forensic Medicine (Abu Kabir)*. Available at: <https://www.health.gov.il/English/MinistryUnits/HealthDivision/MedicalAdministration/forensic/Pages/default.aspx> [Accessed 25 June 2017].

<sup>32</sup> Wilcox, L. *Bodies of Violence: Theorizing Embodied Subjects in International Relations* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 93-7; Weiss, M. 'Others within Us: Collective Identity, Positioning, and Displacement', in *The Shadow Side of Fieldwork: Exploring the Blurred Boundaries between Ethnography and Life*, edited by Athena McLean and Annette Leibing (Malden, MA, Blackwell Publishing, 2007), pp. 185-203.

<sup>33</sup> Shalhoub-Kevorkian, N. 'Criminality in Spaces of Death: The Palestinian Case Study', *The British Journal of Criminology*, 54 (2014) pp. 38-52.



citizen-soldiers reinterpret and justify the IDF's violence against Palestinians. Through their discursive practices, they imagine the Israeli military subject as a vulnerable and defenceless individual and present Palestinians as dangerous individuals that harm Israeli citizen-soldiers. This antagonistic representation is enhanced by these actors' expressions of solidarity, support, and empathy for the Israeli citizen-soldiers, and respectively, suspicion, hate, fear, and animosity towards Palestinians. Therefore, a broader examination of the variety of the actors and social practices through which the idealised military subjectivity is constructed shows that 'truth [regarding the IDF's violence against Palestinians] is not so much hidden as partially revealed in measured and calculated unveilings that blur truth and falsity'.<sup>34</sup> Through its imposition and circulation as a *regime of truth* regarding the IDF within the Israeli society, the professional, non-threatening, and humanitarian military figure nurtures the civil, military, and political tolerance for the IDF's violence against Palestinians, and enables the legitimisation, reinterpretation, and concealment of violence for the purposes of moderating the military's accountability. The variety of practices and actors that reinforce the IDF's benign image reveals that the constitution of the Israeli military subjectivity depends on the 'operation [of] an entire machinery for producing true discourses concerning it' that sanctions, rationalises, and disguises the military's violent behaviour against Palestinians.<sup>35</sup>

The role of this positive military image in inviting affinity with the IDF and opposition to Palestinians indicates that emotions, affective dispositions, passionate engagements, and affective investments are part and parcel of the constitution of the Israeli military's benign soldiering figure as a defining feature of civil-military relations in Israel. In this regard, the emergence of this positive military image shows that 'the "truths" [about the IDF's violence against Palestinians] are dependent on emotions, on how they move subjects, and how they attach or stick subjects together in forms of social adherence and coherence'.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, the emotions that constitute the Israeli professional, non-threatening, and humanitarian military figure as a discursive system reveal affinity with the IDF and respectively, hostility against Palestinians. They

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<sup>34</sup> Fischer, M. M. J. 'Epilogue: To Live with What Would Otherwise Be Unendurable: Return(s) to Subjectivities', in *Subjectivity: Ethnographic Investigations*, edited by João Biehl, Byron Good, and Arthur Kleinman (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, University California Press, 2007), p. 440.

<sup>35</sup> Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, p. 69.

<sup>36</sup> Ahmed, S. 'The Politics of fear in the making of worlds', *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 16 (2003) p. 383.

distinguish between who should be included and who should be excluded from the Israeli body politic. By imposing affective boundaries within the Israel/Palestine conflict, this romanticised military figure restricts criticism against the IDF's violence against Palestinians, moderates the military forces' accountability regarding their violent behaviour in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and enhances the leniency for military personnel during their investigation, prosecution, and condemnation for their violent practices.

The role of emotions in constituting a benign military image for the purposes of justifying violence within the Israel/Palestine conflict recalls Judith Butler's perspective on the *frames of war*, which highlights that a discursive system that characterises a society enables particular affective dispositions towards the socio-political events that implicate it. By studying the instrumentalisation of technology, senses, and war photography for the purposes of justifying violence, the author believes that '[a] frame [of war] works both to preclude certain kinds of questions, certain kinds of historical inquiries, and to function as a moral justification for retaliation'.<sup>37</sup> This approach comes with the warning that 'efforts to control the visual and narrative dimensions of war delimit public discourse by establishing and disposing the sensuous parameters of reality itself – including what can be seen and what can be heard'.<sup>38</sup> In this respect, a frame of war imposes a hierarchical political order by distinguishing between who should and who should not be grieved, between who is a victim and who is a perpetrator, between who should be included and who should be excluded from the Israeli public sphere and body politic.

This chapter enriches Butler's approach on the role of emotions in sanctioning violence by highlighting there is a variety of practices that constitute the (affective) frames that justify it. Originally, *frames of war* refer to the use of visual, and to a lesser extent, of bureaucratic practices in legitimising violence. In contrast, this chapter shows that didactic military practices, rhetorical practices, commemoration practices, and legal practices are part and parcel of the (affective) frames of war that justify violence in the Israel/Palestine conflict. Equally significant, the engagement with the repertoire of emotions that constitute a romanticised Israeli military subjectivity for the purposes of justifying violence requires a deeper understanding of the role of emotions in the

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<sup>37</sup> Butler, *Frames of War*, p. xiii.

<sup>38</sup> Butler, *Frames of War*, pp. xi-xii.

social world. Nonetheless, Butler's work does not provide a conceptual toolkit to study the role of emotions in sanctioning war, violence, and conflict despite discussing the politicised nature of regimes of visibility and sayable in acting with and upon senses in justifying violence. Rather, the investigation of the frames of war is directed towards the development of ethical grounds for recognising the equal vulnerability and humanity of individuals.<sup>39</sup>

Sara Ahmed's theory of *affective economies* strengthens the significance of the *frame of war* in political affairs through its suggestions that emotions circulate in the public sphere and they differentiate between bodies, communities, and subjects.<sup>40</sup> It highlights that, through their movement and accumulation, emotions determine orientation towards some bodies and away from other bodies. Nevertheless, difference and division is informed by historical and symbolical affective dispositions that define social interactions between subjects, objects, and bodies. Since social relations are marked by affective encounters, emotions do not emerge solely from the spatial proximity of bodies but also from the images, narratives, symbols, and histories that nurture these interactions.<sup>41</sup> In this respect, emotions should not only be perceived as psychological states of mind but also as 'social and cultural practices' that align subjects with each others and against some others.<sup>42</sup> Since emotions constitute the boundaries of a political community, they identify and differentiate between 'those that *can be* loved, those that *can be* grieved, that is, by constituting some other as the legitimate objects of emotion [while disavowing others]'.<sup>43</sup> Consequently, Ahmed's research investigates the productive power of emotions by blending emotions, language, and bodies with intersections between race, gender, class, sexuality and nation.<sup>44</sup> The concept of *affective economies* reinforces the argument that 'politics [in the Middle East] revolves around what can be seen, felt, sensed' while affective dispositions produce Palestinian and Israeli Jewish subjects in antagonistic terms for the purposes of legitimising and depoliticising the IDF's violence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Butler, *Frames of War*, pp. 165-84.

<sup>40</sup> Ahmed, 'Affective Economies', pp. 117-39.

<sup>41</sup> Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*.

<sup>42</sup> Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, p. 9.

<sup>43</sup> Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, [emphasis in original] p. 191.

<sup>44</sup> Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*.

<sup>45</sup> McLagan, M. and McKee, Y. 'Introduction', in *Sensible Politics: The Visual Culture of Nongovernmental Activism*, edited by Meg McLagan and Yates McKee (New York, Zone Books, 2012), p. 1.

### *Emotions, Difference, and Violence*

The professional, non-threatening, and humanitarian military figure invites affinity with the IDF and hostility towards Palestinians. It indicates the role of emotions in producing the boundaries, divisions, and differences that justify war, violence, and conflict within the Middle East. Constituted through didactic, aesthetic, rhetorical, forensic, commemoration, legal, and bureaucratic practices that embody, circulate, and elicits emotions, this benign military figure sustains the affective ties between the military and the society, nurtures tolerance towards the IDF's violence against Palestinians, and cultivates trust in and a positive attitude towards the Israeli military. The role of emotions in constituting this figure shows that although 'emotions do not positively reside in a subject or figure, they still work to bind [Israeli] subjects together' because they 'they align individuals with communities – or bodily space with social space – through the very intensity of their attachments'.<sup>46</sup> However, the constitution of this affective bond between Israeli citizen-soldiers, the military, and the society involves as well the cultivation of hostility and opposition between Israeli Jews and Palestinians since emotions 'align some subjects with some others and against other others'.<sup>47</sup> In this regard, emotions determines identification with a group, a community, or a nation by 'moving [us] towards and away from others and objects that we feel are causing us pleasure or pain'.<sup>48</sup>

The constitution of a benign military subjectivity is informed by social practices that constitute 'specific [Israeli] bodies, lives and forms of life (...) as lovable, grievable and available to the normative culture of affective engagement' while Palestinians are 'transformed into objects of hate and aversion'.<sup>49</sup> Since individual and collective identification with the Israeli nation takes place through affective dispositions such as hate, love, anger, or solidarity, emotional investment in a collective body involves the exclusion of and violence against Palestinians that are considered as threatening to a community. Therefore, the study of the affective dispositions and engagements through which the Israeli and Palestinian subjectivities are constituted for

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<sup>46</sup> Ahmed, 'Affective Economies', [emphasis in original] p. 119.

<sup>47</sup> Ahmed, 'Affective Economies', [emphasis in original] p. 117.

<sup>48</sup> Ahmed, 'Communities that Feel', p. 16.

<sup>49</sup> Athanasiou, A., Hantzaroula, P. and Yannakopoulos, K. 'Towards a New Epistemology: The "Affective Turn"', *Historein*, 8 (2008) p. 7.

the purposes of justifying the IDF's violence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories recall that

‘emotions are complicit in a normative violence that circumscribes who or what can appear as a recognizable human subject. Emotions in this respect do not refer to a particular state or disposition but are part of an exclusionary process that produces certain subjects to the detriment of others, re-inscribing the boundary between the human and the non-human, the loved and the unloved, and the terrorized and the terrorist’.<sup>50</sup>

The role of emotions in constructing antagonistic Israeli Jewish and Palestinian subjectivities is revealed through a variety of Israeli (self-)images circulated in the public sphere from policy documents, to newspapers and social media representations. In this regard, the examination of the emotionality of different forms of texts – their capacity to both perform and provoke emotions – is important for studying the productive power of emotions in the Israel/Palestine conflict. For instance, Adi Kuntsman suggests that the growing presence of digital media in contemporary lives and its daily use require the investigation of the circulation of feelings, affect, and emotional estates in and between online and offline public spheres.<sup>51</sup> Emotions are not only embedded within their (online) representations but, equally significant, they move between online and offline sites because ‘feelings and affective states can *reverberate* in and out of cyberspace, intensified (or muffled) and transformed through digital circulation and repetition’.<sup>52</sup> Their circulation and accumulation create ‘*communities of feeling* and as well as *objects and subjects of feeling*: love, hate, mourning or nostalgia’.<sup>53</sup> The movement and intensification of emotions becomes ‘a prism through which various discourses of the [Israel/Palestine] conflict and notions of politics, victimhood and humanness can be mapped and documented’.<sup>54</sup> Therefore, emotions

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<sup>50</sup> Åhäll, L. and Gregory, T. A. ‘Security, emotions, affect’, *Critical Studies on Security*, 1 (2013) p. 117.

<sup>51</sup> Kuntsman, A. ‘Introduction: Affective Fabrics of Digital Cultures’, in *Digital Cultures and the Politics of Emotion: Feelings, Affect and Technological Change*, edited by Athina Karatzogianni and Adi Kuntsman (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 1-17.

<sup>52</sup> Kuntsman, ‘Introduction’, [emphasis in original] p. 1.

<sup>53</sup> Kuntsman, ‘Introduction’, [emphasis in original] p. 6.

<sup>54</sup> Kuntsman, A. ‘Webs of hate in diasporic cyberspaces: the Gaza War in the Russian-language blogosphere’, *Media, War & Conflict*, 3 (2010) p. 311.

constitute boundaries, division, and difference in the Middle East because they ‘can sometimes transgress violent regimes, but it can also reinforce and appropriate existing racial, national and colonial formations’.<sup>55</sup>

This chapter broadens Kuntsman’s insights regarding the circulation of emotions in a variety of online and offline spaces. It shows a diversity of social practices, apart from the Israeli military online media representation, circulates, embodies, and provokes emotions in order to impose affective boundaries within the Israel/Palestine conflict. For example, military pedagogical practices such as field trips, workshops, or lectures work through the Israeli recruits’ emotions in order to instil in them devotion and commitment towards building and defending the Israeli nation.<sup>56</sup> Forensic practices cultivate and disseminate respect and veneration towards the Israeli Jewish body and respectively, disgust and aversion towards the Palestinian one.<sup>57</sup> Rhetorical practices nurture distrust, fear, hate, and disbelief towards the Palestinian pain, and respectively, solidarity, compassion, and empathy for the Israeli military forces. Commemoration practices highlight the grief and pain regarding the death of Israeli citizen-soldiers and invite support for the military for present and future violent actions against Palestinians.<sup>58</sup> The role of these practices in promoting kinship with the IDF and hostility towards Palestinians show that emotions are ‘*embodying* and productive of shifting demarcations along lines of race, gender, and sexuality’.<sup>59</sup> They determine affective readings that differentiate between Israeli Jews and Palestinians and sanction the enactment of violence. In this regard, Ahmed highlights that ‘affective responses are readings that not only create the borders between selves and others’ but also attach subjects with emotional meaning and value through that separation.<sup>60</sup>

The prevalence of emotions in constituting subjectivities by imposing racialised and gendered readings of the Israeli Jewish and Palestinian bodies determines the continuous tolerance for the IDF’s violence against Palestinians, and the dominance

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<sup>55</sup> Kuntsman, ‘Webs of hate’, p. 311.

<sup>56</sup> Blau, U. ‘Inside the IDF, a Clash Over Israeli-Jewish Identity’. *Haaretz*, 10 May 2012. Available at: <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/inside-the-idf-a-clash-over-israeli-jewish-identity.premium-1.429450> [Accessed 5 June 2017].

<sup>57</sup> Ben Porat, I. ‘ZAKA Clarifies: We Treat Jewish Victims Before Terrorists’. *Arutz Sheva: Israeli News*, 15 October 2015. Available at: <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/201934#.Vs3S0sel1Z0> [Accessed 10 July 2017].

<sup>58</sup> Weiss, M. ‘“We Are All One Bereaved Family”: Personal Loss and Collective Memory in Israeli Society’, *Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, 14 (1998) pp. 178-92.

<sup>59</sup> Wilcox, *Bodies of Violence*, [emphasis in original] p. 204.

<sup>60</sup> Ahmed, ‘Communities that Feel’, p. 13.

of a positive view and attitude towards the Israeli military. Similarly, Claire Hemmings cautions there are ‘affective responses that strengthen rather than challenge a dominant social order’.<sup>61</sup> As a consequence, the strong affective investment in Israel’s benign military figure that underpins the reluctance to investigate, prosecute, and condemn the IDF’s violent behaviour shows that affect and emotions are not always contingent with ethics and morality. As Natalie Kouri-Towe believes,

‘affect offers us a language for thinking about how injustices are perpetuated and circulated, that do not simply dismiss these moments as “bad” or “evil” but instead attends to how these kinds of intensities also lead to the production of privileged and hegemonic subjectivities’.<sup>62</sup>

The role of emotions in mobilising gendered and racialised differences in the Israel/Palestine conflict show that ‘violence is not only something that is done to an already established body – rather, various forms of violence are part and parcel of the production of the various bodies that are subjected to violence’.<sup>63</sup> Therefore, the study the IDF’s violence against Palestinians takes account of ‘how bodies are killed and injured, but also formed, re-formed, gendered, and racialized through the bodily relations of war’ in the Israel/Palestine conflict.<sup>64</sup> This approach highlights that educational, aesthetic, rhetorical, forensic, legal, bureaucratic, and commemoration practices constitute not only the Israeli Jewish military subjectivities but also Palestinian ones through affective ‘cultural memories and shared social norms that have marked them as dangerous’.<sup>65</sup> These affective readings ‘strengthen the notion that they [Palestinians] are a group that should be approached with caution’, if not with violence thus reinforcing the affective boundaries that mark the Israel/Palestine conflict and that legitimise the Israeli forces’ violence against Palestinians.<sup>66</sup> Therefore, political, military, and public leniency for the IDF’s violence against Palestinians is generated by

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<sup>61</sup> Hemmings, ‘Invoking Affect’, p. 551.

<sup>62</sup> Kouri-Towe, N. ‘Textured Activism: Affect Theory and Transformational Politics in Transnational Queer Palestine – Solidarity Activism’, *Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture and Social Justice*, 37 (2015) p. 32.

<sup>63</sup> Wilcox, *Bodies of Violence*, p. 15.

<sup>64</sup> Wilcox, *Bodies of Violence*, p. 3.

<sup>65</sup> Gregory, T. and Åhäll, L. ‘Introduction: Mapping emotions, politics and war’, in *Emotions, Politics and War*, edited by Linda Åhäll and Thomas Gregory (London and New York, Routledge, 2015), p. 4.

<sup>66</sup> Gregory and Åhäll, ‘Introduction: Mapping emotions’, p. 4.

‘history and power’ whereas ‘violence and the feelings that animate it are products of history and social relations that have marginalized’ Palestinian bodies against Israeli Jewish ones.<sup>67</sup>

The productive power of emotions shows the professional, non-threatening, and humanitarian military figure functions as an *affective frame of soldiering* that nurtures tolerance for the IDF’s violence against Palestinians by sanctioning, neutralising, and downplaying injury, harm, and aggression in the Israel/Palestine conflict. This benign military image defines civil-military relations in Israel, governs the emotions, views, ideas, beliefs, and dispositions towards the IDF, and moderates the military’s accountability for the violence enacted against Palestinians. As social constructs that delineate between Israeli Jewish and Palestinian bodies and subjects, ‘emotions cannot be uncoupled from relations of power that characterise and permeate the social [and political] field’ that defines the Middle East conflict.<sup>68</sup> In this respect, the study of the tolerance for the IDF’s violence against Palestinians takes into account the way in which the Israeli Jewish and Palestinian subjectivities are constituted through

‘[the] discursive density around issues of sentiments and their subversive tendencies, around “private” feelings, “public moods,” and their political consequences, around the racial distribution of sensibilities, around assessments of affective dispositions and their beneficent and dangerous political effects [in the Israel/Palestine conflict]’.<sup>69</sup>

### **Affective Military Subjectivity**

Affective military subjectivity examines the role of emotions in constituting the professional, non-threatening, and humanitarian military figure through practices of military socialisation. It refers to recruits’ emotional investment in the military culture to which they are introduced and captures their readiness to reiterate, contest, and alter the Israeli military culture. Since emotions are socio-cultural and relational practices that describ[e] ‘relationships between individuals and institutions, ideas or ideology,

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<sup>67</sup> Petersen, J. *Murder, the Media and the Politics of Public Feelings: Remembering Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN, Indiana University Press, 2011), pp. 153-4.

<sup>68</sup> D’Aoust, ‘Ties that Bind?’, p. 271.

<sup>69</sup> Stoler, A. L. ‘Affective States’, in *A Companion to the Anthropology of Politics*, edited by David Nugent and Joan Vincent (Malden, MA and Oxford, Blackwell Publishing, 2004), p. 5.



and social structures’, emotional relations between the Israeli citizen-soldiers and their military ‘are not given but political; they must be learned and can be contested’.<sup>70</sup> As socio-cultural and relational practices, emotions show that the Israeli military ‘subject is passionately attached to the norms on which it depends and against which it might rebel – in an endless spiral of subjection and subjectivation, resignification and subversion, and power and pleasure’.<sup>71</sup> Therefore, the study of the role of emotions in cultivating the Israeli military subjectivity departs from Foucauldian-inspired studies of subjectivity that downplays the role of emotions in constituting military subjects.

Michel Foucault’s investigation of military subjectivity focuses on the disciplinary techniques – training, drilling, and confinement to barracks – that are used in order to graft the soldiers’ bodies with the necessary skills, aptitudes, and abilities to carry out violent tasks at the highest standards.<sup>72</sup> Both an object and a subject of disciplinary power, the soldier’s body is ‘subjected, used, transformed and improved’ in order to serve the wellbeing of the society.<sup>73</sup> Furthermore, subjectivity is produced not only through disciplinary techniques but also through self-governing practices through which subjects engage in order to act as expected from them.<sup>74</sup> In this respect, disciplinary power classifies ‘the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognize and which others have to recognize in him’.<sup>75</sup> To this end, subjectivity dovetails between two definitions: ‘subject to someone else by control and dependence; and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to’.<sup>76</sup> According to Foucault, military subjectivity is produced through disciplinary practices that are grafted on subjects and that ultimately require them to engage in self-discipline practices under the continuous gaze of authority. Taking a cue from Foucauldian investigations of military subjectivity, Orna Sasson-Levy shows that physical instruction is part and parcel of the Israeli recruits’ socialisation in the Israeli military culture and equips them with the bodily and psychological strength to conduct successful military missions. As a consequence, combat instruction in the Israeli military reinforces gendered assumptions

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<sup>70</sup> Petersen, *Murder, the Media and the Politics of Public Feelings*, p. 14.

<sup>71</sup> Athanasiou et al. ‘Towards a New Epistemology’, p. 14.

<sup>72</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 135.

<sup>73</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 136.

<sup>74</sup> Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, pp. 67-42.

<sup>75</sup> Foucault, M. ‘The Subject and Power’, *Critical Inquiry*, 8 (1982) p. 781.

<sup>76</sup> Foucault, ‘The Subject and Power’, p. 781.

of masculinity, teaches emotional restraint, and consolidates recruits' antagonistic views regarding the Israel/Palestine conflict.<sup>77</sup>

This chapter extends Foucault's insights regarding military instruction in Israel and highlights that the power that imposes on the Israeli military subject is exercised and reproduced through emotions. It shows that military subjectivity is cultivated not only through physical training as the scholar highlights, but also through pedagogical programmes that insist on shaping military ethos through lectures, trips, workshops or seminars. Within this context, emotions play a significant role in didactic military practices insofar as they invite recruits to work with and through their emotions in order to cultivate military subjectivity. Pedagogical practices permit recruits to acquire knowledge regarding military and Jewish ethics, concerning the history of the Israel/Palestine conflict, or about contemporary socio-political problems such the precarious situation of African immigrants in Israel.<sup>78</sup> These educational programmes involve visits to Yad Vashem, the Holocaust memorial site, in order to mourn the loss of Jewish life and to express sorrow for the Holocaust tragedy.<sup>79</sup> They are important for strengthening recruits' desire to contribute to nation building and to defend Israel. Some other activities invite the Israeli recruits to openly discuss the affective dispositions and experiences that characterise their military service in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.<sup>80</sup> Since educational practices invite the Israeli recruits to work with and through their emotions of loyalty, devotion, sorrow, pain, fear, or hate, they represent (self-) governing disciplinary techniques of constituting military subjectivity. Servicemen and women rely on their emotional experiences in order to acquire skills, views, and ideas for the purposes of (self-)cultivating a remarkable civilian and military subjectivity. Therefore, an emphasis on the role of emotions in the Israeli military socialisation practices challenges the assumptions that emotional restraint is quintessential in crafting military subjectivity. On the contrary, emotions constitute the Israeli military subjectivity insofar as military socialisation becomes a practice of naming, interpreting, managing, negotiating, and thinking about emotions.

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<sup>77</sup> Sasson-Levy, 'Individual Bodies, Collective State Interests', pp. 296-321.

<sup>78</sup> Blau, 'Inside the IDF'.

<sup>79</sup> The IDF Spokesperson's Unit, 'The soldier-guides of the Holocaust Museum Yad Vashem', *IDF Blog*, 29 April 2014. Available at: <https://www.idfblog.com/blog/2014/04/29/soldier-guides-holocaust-museum-yad-vashem/> [Accessed 5 June 2017].

<sup>80</sup> Beit Morasha of Jerusaem: The Center for Advanced Judaic Studies and Leadership, *Identity and Purpose: Jewish Values in the Military*. Available at: [http://www.bmj.org.il/inner\\_en/26](http://www.bmj.org.il/inner_en/26) [Accessed 5 June 2017].

The Israeli military forces learn, appropriate, rehearse, trouble, or change the military culture in which they are embedded. Servicemen and women appropriate and perform the Israeli military culture by consenting to military's use and circulation of their names and photos in order to create a playful, cosmopolitan, and humanitarian military image on social media for the purposes of public consumption.<sup>81</sup> Moreover, recruits use social media in order to alter the Israeli military culture by using the online public sphere as means to defend their violent actions and to invite solidarity and support for the Israeli military personnel in the aftermath of the disclosure of their violent behaviour against Palestinians. In this respect, the growing access of the Israeli recruits to social media determine military commanders to rethink the relation between the military and respectively, digital culture.<sup>82</sup> Educational practices that introduce recruits to the Israeli military ethos show that young Israeli recruits may question the absence of Palestinian figures and narratives during the lectures that accompany field trips in Jerusalem.<sup>83</sup> Furthermore, the Israeli pedagogical military practices show that recruits actively contest the sacrificial narratives that accompany military service by disrespecting their commanders or by avoiding to join military combat positions. Finally, yet significantly, former Israeli troops, veterans or bereaved Israeli citizen-soldiers contest the affective boundaries that characterise the Israel/Palestine conflict for the purposes of conflict by calling for the recognition of Palestinian narratives of war, violence, pain, and loss.<sup>84</sup> Therefore, the variety of practices through which the Israeli recruits appropriate, perform, and alter the Israeli military culture shows that 'power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free. By this we mean individuals or collective subjects who are faced with a field of possibilities in which several ways of behaving, several reactions and diverse compartments, may be realized'.<sup>85</sup> In this respect, the social context in which the Israeli military subjects and their practices are embedded serves both as a reservoir and as an outcome of those practices. Military subjects do not operate in a deterministic manner since social

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<sup>81</sup> The IDF Spokesperson's Unit, *The IDF's Official Facebook Page*.

<sup>82</sup> Stein, R. L. and Kuntsman, A. 'Selfie Militarism'. *London Review of Books Blog*, 23 May 2004. Available at: <https://www.lrb.co.uk/blog/2014/05/23/rebecca-l-stein/selfie-militarism-2/> [23 September 2017].

<sup>83</sup> Ir Amim, 'Shady Dealings in Silwan' (Jerusalem, Ir Amim, 2009). Available at: <http://www.ir-amim.org.il/sites/default/files/Silwanreporteng.pdf> [Accessed 5 June 2017].

<sup>84</sup> Hartman, B. 'Moti Fogel attends TA ceremony with Israelis, Palestinians'. *The Jerusalem Post*, 9 May 2011. Available at: <http://www.jpost.com/National-News/Moti-Fogel-attends-TA-ceremony-with-Israelis-Palestinians> [Accessed 23 September 2017].

<sup>85</sup> Foucault, 'The Subject and Power', p. 790.

practices are both informed by and constitute the social context in which they are embedded. While stressing that bodies are subjected to particular historical and social processes, the Israeli military subjects are more than passive entities awaiting inscription. To this end,

‘the [military] subject is at once a product and an agent of history; an agent of knowing as much as of action. Modes of subjection are indeed determined by the vagaries of the state, family and community hierarchies. Yet subjectivity is not just the outcome of social control or the unconscious; it also provides the ground for subjects to think through their circumstances and *to feel* through their contradictions’.<sup>86</sup>

The Israeli military subjectivity is constructed at the intersection between respecting the weight of authority, accepting one’s position in the socio-political order, and reinterpreting and appropriating the social, political, and military context in which the subject is embedded. Although servicemen and women might distance themselves from the military culture in which they are socialised, this process does not involve a fundamental contestation insofar as ‘the personal and the moral framing (...) of experience deriv[e] from the military subculture in which he [or she] functions’.<sup>87</sup> Therefore, ‘the beliefs, goals, values, and ethical codes which characterize that [military] subculture’ constitute a psychological, educational, and affective reservoir through which the Israeli recruits relate to military service, recount their experiences of military service, justify the enactment of violence, or alter the military culture within which they rooted.<sup>88</sup> In this respect, the chapter highlights that the Israeli military ‘subjectivity does not merely speak as resistance, nor is it simply spoken (or silenced) by power’ relations that envisage the military as a professional, non-threatening, and

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<sup>86</sup> Biehl, J., Good, B. and Kleinman, A. ‘Introduction: Rethinking Subjectivity’, in *Subjectivity: Ethnographic Investigations*, edited by João Biehl, Byron Good, and Arthur Kleinman (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, University California Press, 2007), [emphasis added] p. 14.

<sup>87</sup> Rosenberg, S. D. ‘The Threshold of Thrill: Life Stories in the Skies over Southeast Asia’, in *Gendering War Talk*, edited by Miriam G. Cooke and Angela Woollacott (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 47.

<sup>88</sup> Rosenberg, ‘The Threshold of Thrill’, p. 47.

humanitarian institution.<sup>89</sup> This approach is similar to Erving Goffman's argument that individuals are embedded in a particular social situation do not act in an automatic manner neither are they detached from the wider societal context in which they are embedded.<sup>90</sup> His research regarding the *underlife* of 'total institutions' is particularly insightful for the study of military subjectivity insofar as it shows that, although confined to particular contexts, individuals manoeuvre through the social rules that are imposed on them by completely or partially challenging the symbolic order in which they are situated.<sup>91</sup> Goffman regarded asylums, hospitals, prisons, and other similar establishments as *total institutions*. These are 'defined as a place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals, cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time, together lead an enclosed, formally administered round of life'.<sup>92</sup> This definition echoes the characteristics of a military insofar recruits spend a considerable amount of time with their peers, are confined to their barracks, and are subjected to their superiors' orders and instructions for the purposes of achieving their tasks. In his work, the author dwelled extensively on the ways in which both inmates and staff members depart from fixed and scripted patterns of behaviours in order to show that every institution hosts an *underlife*, the assembly of social practices that do not conform to official expectations of behaviour in an organisation.

This research draws upon and extends Goffman's insights regarding the possibility of actors to manoeuvre within the social context in which they are embedded and highlights that affective dispositions, emotional investments, and embodied experiences reveal the processes through which military recruits accept, reiterate, modify, and contest the military culture in which they are socialised. It envisages the Israeli soldiering figure as an affective military subjectivity that is constituted through embodied experiences, emotional links between citizen-subjects and the military, and the affective perceptions regarding military subjectivity in Israel. In this regard, the constitution of a professional, non-threatening, and humanitarian military figure relates individual and bodily experiences with the power structures that define military service

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<sup>89</sup> Biehl, J., Good, B. and Kleinman, A. 'Life Technologies', in *Subjectivity: Ethnographic Investigations*, edited by João Biehl, Byron Good, and Arthur Kleinman (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, University of California Press, 2007), p. 349.

<sup>90</sup> Goffman, 'The Presentation of Self', pp. 51-65.

<sup>91</sup> Goffman, *Asylums*, pp. 89-105.

<sup>92</sup> Goffman, *Asylums*, p. xiii.

by emphasising that ‘emotions as clues about the ways that structural violence operates and shapes political subjectivities’ in the Israel/Palestine conflict.<sup>93</sup>

The Israeli recruits’ readiness to appropriate and perform the official military narrative according to which the IDF is professional, non-threatening, and humanitarian figure reveals the political implications of circulating personalised military representations within the context of the Israel/Palestine conflict. The distribution of individualised military representations is important both for the internal dynamic of the military and for securing sympathy towards and consent with IDF’s (violent) practices. Similarly, Ahmed cautions that ‘when emotions are seen as only personal, or about the person and how they feel, then the systematic nature of their effects is concealed’.<sup>94</sup> Therefore, the examination of embodied representations of military subjectivity and their circulation in the local and international sphere permits the understanding of ‘the continued seductions of war for those [Israeli citizen-subjects] who practise it’.<sup>95</sup> For instance, the IDF use social media in order to circulate pictures with young male or female recruits while having fun, laughing, relaxing, and performing humanitarian actions. Through an intimate introduction to military service through the lens of digital military representations, the IDF indicate that military service is a pleasant and rewarding activity, and show their readiness to permit recruits to keep in touch with their closed ones. Therefore, the circulation of individualised representations of military service enables the Israeli military to appeal to the attractive nature of military service in order to foster support, appreciation, and respect for their practices while silencing criticism against their war fighting roles and their presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Despite that the IDF’s use of social media in order to invite support for the Israeli military shows that ‘emotions are often institutionalised, incorporated and, eventually, deeply embedded in the processes and structures of world politics’, the military personnel negotiate the construction of their subjectivity by troubling and altering the military culture within which they are socialised.<sup>96</sup> Since emotions reveal ‘links between the subjective and the cultural, individual and social, self and other, inside and outside’, the constitution the Israeli military subjectivity

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<sup>93</sup> Philipose, L. ‘The Politics of Pain and the End of Empire’, *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 9 (2007) pp. 63-4.

<sup>94</sup> Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, p. 198.

<sup>95</sup> Dyvik, S. L. ‘Valhalla Rising’: Gender, embodiment and experience in military memoirs’, *Security Dialogue*, 47 (2016) [emphasis in original] p. 135.

<sup>96</sup> Crawford, N. C. ‘Preface’, in *Emotions, Politics and War*, edited by Linda Åhäll and Thomas Gregory (London and New York, Routledge, 2015), p. xx.

shows recruits manoeuvre between their affective investment in idealised representations of military subjectivity, and their passionate efforts to question the socialisation processes within which they are embedded.<sup>97</sup>

## Conclusion

With a focus on the productive power of emotions in the Israel/Palestine conflict, the chapter builds on feminist investigations of war, violence, and emotions. It argues the professional, non-threatening, and humanitarian military figure represents an *affective frame of soldiering* that informs tolerance for the IDF's violence against Palestinians by sanctioning, concealing, and depoliticising the military's violent behaviour in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. It shows military subjectivity is constructed through a variety of social practices (educational, aesthetic, rhetorical, commemoration, forensic, legal and respectively, bureaucratic ones) that embody, disseminate, and invite emotions for the purposes of constituting a romanticised military (self-)image. This benign military (self-)representation defines the Israeli civil-military relations and governs the Israeli citizen-soldiers' emotions, attitudes, ideas, views, and desires towards the military. Due to its role in nurturing trust in and a positive public perception towards the IDF, this idealised military subjectivity confines the investigation, prosecution, and condemnation of the Israeli forces' violent behaviour in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In order to support this claim, Michel Foucault's remarks regarding *regimes of truth* are reinforced with Judith Butler's insights concerning *frames of war* in order to show a romanticised military figure defines civil-military relations in Israel by sustaining an emotional link between the society and the military. Within this context, this idealised military representation permits the manifestation of violence as 'justifiable ways of warring', enables the shifting of responsibilities between Israeli Jews and Palestinians, allows the downplaying of the political implications of violence, and naturalises the harmful manifestation of violence.<sup>98</sup> Therefore, the chapter highlights certain Israeli institutions, actors, and figures possess social and political capital to define the dominant socio-political order of the Israeli society. They construct and disseminate a

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<sup>97</sup> Koivunen, A. 'Preface: The Affective Turn?', in *Conference Proceedings for Affective Encounters: Rethinking Embodiment in Feminist Media Studies*, edited by Anu Koivunen and Susanna Paasonen (Turku, Estonia, University of Turku, 2001), p. 8.

<sup>98</sup> Sylvester, C. *War as Experience: Contributions from international relations and feminist analysis* (London and New York, Routledge, 2013), p. 80.

romanticised military subjectivity by imposing ‘hierarchies of credibility’ that ‘are undoing facile distinctions between reliable and conjured information, between fact and fantasy, between mad paranoia and political reality’ regarding the Israeli military’s violence against Palestinians.<sup>99</sup>

Furthermore, this positive military figure nurtures tolerance towards the IDF’s violence against Palestinians by securing affinity for the Israeli military and respectively, hostility towards Palestinians. Sara Ahmed’s remarks that emotions define exclusion from and belonging to a particular political community highlight the claim that Israel’s idealised military image is constructed through emotional readings of Palestinian and Israeli Jewish subjects. These affective engagements envisage the Israeli Jewish and Palestinian bodies through racialised and gendered hierarchies that legitimise the Israeli military’s violence against Palestinians. In this respect, the chapter stresses that emotions are ‘entangled with discourse, meaning making, and practice’, and imbue bodies with emotional readings by distinguishing between who should be admired, mourned, desired and who should be opposed, feared, and excluded from the Israeli socio-political order.<sup>100</sup>

Finally, yet significantly, this chapter emphasises that the Israeli military ‘subject is both formative and forming’ and ‘it both embraces and resist the norms that subject it’.<sup>101</sup> While detaching from a traditional understanding of military subjectivity in terms of self-restraint, it emphasises that emotions define military socialisation processes and presents the constitution of a professional, non-threatening, and humanitarian military figure as an affective military subjectivity. It shows that feelings, affective dispositions, and emotional attachments that underline the socialisation of citizen-subjects in the Israeli military culture reveal a complex relation between recruits and the military, a link that involves acceptance, reiteration, and alteration of the military ethos. The following chapter studies the pedagogical practices pursued by the IDF’s Education and Youth Corps and by its affiliated institutions in order to craft the Israeli military subjectivity. Influenced by the power struggle between secular and religious actors to shape military education, didactic activities work with and through

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<sup>99</sup> Stoler, A. L. *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2009), p. 49.

<sup>100</sup> McConville, A., McCreanor, T., Wetherell, A. and Moewaka Barnes, H. ‘Imagining an emotional nation: the print media and Anzac Day commemoration in Aotearoa New Zealand’, *Media, Culture & Society*, 39 (2017) p. 100.

<sup>101</sup> Athanasiou et al. ‘Towards a New Epistemology’, p. 14.



recruits' affective dispositions for the purposes of envisaging military service as an opportunity to develop remarkable skills that serve their civil and military lives alike. In this regard, military education constitutes an idealised Israeli military subject by presenting military service as a medium of becoming a proficient, competent, and skilled citizen-soldier.

## **Chapter 2: From *Yad Vashem* to Serving at the Checkpoint: Military Education in Israel**

Military education plays an important role in the socio-construction of the Israeli military. The IDF's Education and Youth Corps spearheads the didactic activities that socialise military personnel in the Israeli military culture. Founded in 1957, the Education and Youth Corps emerged from the pre-state military units, Haganah, Palmach, and Irgun. Each of them had officers that were tasked with shaping unit members' morale and political consciousness.<sup>1</sup> The Education and Youth Corps organises workshops or seminars for commanders, prepares activities for the incorporation of minorities and immigrants in the Israeli military and society, or coordinates the organisation of seminars concerning the history of the IDF.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, it designs an array of pedagogical practices and activities meant to enhance the attachment of the Israeli military personnel to the Israeli state, and to teach them Israeli Jewish and universal values, norms, and beliefs that should serve their military and civilian identities alike. These didactic practices are important for the socialisation of recruits in the Israeli military culture because the IDF do not see any difference between inculcating values through pedagogical practices, educating citizens, and carrying combat operations. Avner Shalev, a former head of the Publishing Branch of the Education and Youth Corps, and later a chief officer for the Education and Youth Corps, stresses the significance of the Israeli military service in the following manner:

‘The soldier needs a sense of purpose, which arouses in him the willingness to fight, and the willingness to give his most precious thing – his life...[E]ducation is aimed to bring the soldier to willingness, which means a willing decision, resulted from knowing and identifying with the purpose’.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Perko, F. M. ‘Education, Socialization, and Development of National Identity: The American Common School and Israel Defense Forces in Transnational Perspective’, *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies*, 21 (2003) p. 109.

<sup>2</sup> The IDF Spokesperson's Unit, ‘Education and Youth Corps’, *IDF Blog*.

<sup>3</sup> Avner Shalev quoted in Nets-Zehngut, R. ‘The Israeli Army's Official Memory of the 1948 Palestinian Exodus, 1949-2004’, *War in History*, 22 (2015) p. 218.

This chapter examines the pedagogical practices pursued by the IDF's Education and Youth Corps in order to socialise (future) military personnel in the Israeli military culture. It argues didactic practices such as seminars about the Israeli Jewish identity, lectures about Zionism and social responsibility, sessions about military ethics, or field trips to historical sites, Jerusalem or Tel Aviv encourage the Israeli (future) recruits to work with and through their emotions in order to create a virtuous military subjectivity. Influenced by the competition between secular and religious voices in shaping military ethos, these pedagogical practices nurture an exemplary military subjectivity that sustains the belief that the IDF is 'the most moral army in the world', and restricts the possibility to hold the Israeli military personnel accountable for their violent behaviour against Palestinians.

There is an emerging interest in the pedagogical practices through which young men and women are socialised in the Israeli military culture. For instance, James Eastwood argues didactic practices through which the Israeli (future) recruits are taught military ethics cultivate the IDF's militaristic ethos, which reinforces aggressiveness, violence, and harm against Palestinians.<sup>4</sup> Udi Lebel suggests the Israeli military educational programmes are heavily influenced by religious authorities and expresses concerns regarding the possible emergence of a theocratic Israeli military.<sup>5</sup> The chapter builds on this literature and claims pedagogical practices contribute to the emergence of an Israeli military subjectivity that limits criticism against the IDF's violent practices, and that shields the Israeli military personnel from accountability for their violent behaviour against Palestinians. With a focus on the importance of emotions in shaping military subjectivity, it shows the IDF is constructed through pedagogical practices that invite the Israeli recruits to work with and through their affective dispositions in order to become exemplary citizen-soldiers. Didactic military practices nurture an idealised military subjectivity that is characterised by heroism, vulnerability, and care for the self and others while envisaging military service as an opportunity of personal growth that equips recruits with competences that serve both their military and civilian careers. Nevertheless, the cultivation and circulation of this romanticised military image carries significant consequences for the Israel/Palestine conflict. It contributes to the emergence of a narrative that denies Palestinian history and suffering,

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<sup>4</sup> Eastwood, 'Meaningful Service': Pedagogy at Israeli pre-military academies', pp. 671-95.

<sup>5</sup> Lebel, 'Settling the Military', pp. 361-90.

and elevates the exemplary and irreproachable qualities of the Israeli military personnel at the detriment of Palestinians, who are considered the source of the Israeli forces' violent behaviour in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.<sup>6</sup> The constitution and distribution of this idealised military figure between civil and military spheres limits criticism against the Israeli military personnel's violent practices, and masks their violent behaviour under the guise of exceptionality, recklessness, and ordinary breaches of military discipline.

The chapter is organised in three sections with the first studying a number of pedagogical practices through which the Education and Youth Corps teaches history and memory to the Israeli recruits. These didactic practices work with recruits' affective dispositions of devotion, patriotism, and readiness to defend the Israeli collective body in order to cultivate an affective connection between the Israeli military personnel and the State of Israel. The following section continues the study of the efforts pursued by the Israeli military to enhance the affective attachment between recruits and the state by presenting the pedagogical practices organised by *BINA: The Jewish Movement for Social Change* (hereafter *BINA*). This is a secular pre-military academy that offers educational programmes to the (future) Israeli military personnel under the umbrella of the IDF's Education and Youth Corps. Its educational activities aim to endow the Israeli recruits with a pluralistic understanding of the Israeli Jewish identity. The final section reinforces the presentation of military service as a practice of personal development by examining the pedagogical practices pursued by *Beit Morasha of Jerusalem: The Center for Advanced Judaic Studies and Leadership* (hereafter *Beit Morasha*). This pre-military academy offers ethical military training to the Israeli units engaged in urban operations in the West Bank. The chapter concludes by arguing the cultivation and dissemination of a virtuous military subjectivity confines the investigation, prosecution, and condemnation of the IDF's violent behaviour against Palestinians and intervenes in the Israel/Palestine conflict by denying Palestinians a connection with land, by situating them in the position of a fearsome enemy, and by imagining them as objects of the Israeli forces' compassion.

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<sup>6</sup> Grassiani, E. 'Moral othering at the checkpoint: The case of Israeli soldiers and Palestinian civilians', *Critique of Anthropology*, 35 (2015) pp. 373-88.

## Teaching Memory and History in the IDF

A number of activities that fall under the umbrella of the IDF's Education and Youth Corps are outsourced to civilian institutions, associations and organisations with significant implications for the Israel/Palestine conflict and the education of the Israeli citizen-soldiers. The Education and Youth Corps collaborates with state institutions like Yad Vashem (The Holocaust Remembrance Authority), with Yitzhak Rabin Center or with military museums that function under the authority of the Ministry of Defence in order to conduct pedagogical activities for military units and future recruits.<sup>7</sup> For instance, thousands of soldiers visit Yad Vashem every year in order to learn about the Holocaust and about the history of the Jewish people. Visits to the Holocaust remembrance site (re)create a community of feeling between the Israeli soldier-citizens, and remind them of their responsibility to defend the Israeli Jewish nation in order to avoid the reiteration of the painful Jewish past. Sergeant Roni Tzach, a soldier-guide that conducts tours for military units at Yad Vashem, observes tours for Israeli recruits enhance the emotional link between citizen-soldiers and the Israeli Jewish nation. Thus visits at the Holocaust remembrance site:

*'[C]onnect soldiers to the history of their nation. The moment soldiers understand what happened in the past, their feelings to protect the nation strengthen. The connection between the soldiers and Yad Vashem is not always innate – some have little connection to the Holocaust – but at the moment they see their history, they are reminded of their duty'.<sup>8</sup>*

The experiential trips to Yad Vashem represent an affective memory practice that enables military personnel to be 'transported from the present to an earlier time through sight, smell, perception of their own bodies and the touching of certain objects' while being physically and emotionally present at the Holocaust memorial site.<sup>9</sup> Sergeant Tal Hagey's description of the significance of visiting the Hall of Names highlights the significance of the affective experience of visiting the Holocaust

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<sup>7</sup> Blau, 'Inside the IDF'.

<sup>8</sup> Sergeant Roni Tzach quoted in the IDF Spokesperson's Unit, 'The soldier-guides of the Holocaust Museum'.

<sup>9</sup> Sepúlveda dos Santos, M. 'Museums and Memory: The Enchanted Modernity', *Journal for Cultural Research*, 7 (2003) p. 37.

memorial: ‘All the names and the details of all the people who were murdered are inside that hall. The gallery is painful but extends responsibility to all those who have been there. It’s the place that *touches me the most*’.<sup>10</sup> These words recall that memory is a political project that informs collective identity and that works through emotions in order to recreate and transform the present. Likewise, Susan Sontag argues that:

‘Collective memory is not a remembering but a stipulating: that *this* is important, and this is the story about how it happened, with the pictures that lock the story in our minds. Ideologies create substantiating archives of images, representative images, which encapsulate common ideas of significance and trigger predictable thoughts, feelings’.<sup>11</sup>

These visits insist on the collective memory of Israel in order to reiterate the soldier-citizens’ responsibility for defending Israel. The affective significance of Yad Vashem is related not only to its presentation as a landscape of memorialisation, but also to its role in reminding recruits that the Holocaust informed the creation of the state they should serve, defend, and possibly sacrifice for. Purposely, visits at the Holocaust remembrance site provide citizen-soldiers with ‘an understanding of what happened in the past by artificially causing insecurity in the present’.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, visits at Yad Vashem invite service personnel to think about himself or herself

‘as a *potential* victim, not an actual one. It is that request that enables the possibility of a transformation, of action to prevent future Holocausts. The model works by activating the expression of empathy in the present, rather than for past victims. Rather than offering an unrealistic claim to experience the past or, even more simply, information about the past, this model provides a glimpse into

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<sup>10</sup> Sergeant Tal Hagey quoted in the IDF Spokesperson’s Unit, ‘The soldier-guides of the Holocaust Museum’ [emphasis added].

<sup>11</sup> Sontag, S. *Regarding the Pain of Others* (New York, Picador, 2004), [emphasis in original] p. 86.

<sup>12</sup> Sepúlveda dos Santos, ‘Museums and Memory’, p. 38.

ongoing grief. The past is not, therefore, disconnected from present'.<sup>13</sup>

Through its pedagogical purpose in encouraging the Israeli servicemen and women to think of themselves as victims, Yad Vashem shows that 'as part of educational system (...) museums are not just places where emotions have been controlled: they have become institutions specialized in promoting certain types of emotion'.<sup>14</sup> However, the prevalence of the collective memory of the Holocaust in Israel situates Palestinians behind an emotional barrier that perpetuates conflict in the Middle East. The former Knesset Speaker, Avraham Burg, bitterly remarks that:

'Few people in Israel are willing to try to perceive reality through a different set of conceptual lenses other than those of extermination and defensive isolation. Few are willing to try on the glasses of understanding and of hope for dialogue. Instead, the question is always: Is a second Shoah on the way?'.<sup>15</sup>

Burg's words liken the antagonism between Israeli Jews and Palestinians with the profound psychological legacy of the Holocaust in Israel. Nevertheless, a variety of other emotional, social, and political constraints prevent the majority of Israelis from acknowledging Palestinians and their history. The helplessness of the Diaspora Jews in front of the Nazi genocide, the Arab resistance to Jewish emigration in the 1930s, the myth of the David and Goliath or the discourses that liken Israel's Arab enemies with Adolf Hitler hinder the Israeli recognition of Palestinian narratives of war, loss, and violence.<sup>16</sup> These historical and political symbols echo during the continuous cycle of mutual harm and violence between Israeli Jews and Palestinians, and have contributed to presenting any threat as a new Holocaust in the Israeli socio-political narrative. More significantly, Ruth Linn has studied the role of the Holocaust symbol in cultivating

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<sup>13</sup> Witcomb, A. 'Remembering the dead by affecting the living: the case of a miniature model of Treblinka', in *Museum Materialities: Objects, Engagements, Interpretations*, edited by Sandra H. Dudley (London and New York, Routledge, 2010), [emphasis in original] p. 47.

<sup>14</sup> Sepúlveda dos Santos, 'Museums and Memory', p. 37.

<sup>15</sup> Burg, A. 'Holocaust's unholy hold'. *Los Angeles Times*, 16 November 2008. Available at: <http://www.latimes.com/la-oe-burg16-2008nov16-story.html> [Accessed 5 June 2017].

<sup>16</sup> Fierke, K. M. 'Who is my neighbour? Memories of the Holocaust/*al Nakba* and a global ethic of care', *European Journal of International Relations*, 20 (2014) pp. 787-809.

military subjectivity and shows the Israeli soldiers resort to its collective memory in weighing on their consent or refusal to serve in the IDF. Some Israeli soldiers and officers express their concern about dying in vain during combat by likening this possible event to the image of the passive Diaspora Jew that died during the Holocaust. Other soldiers draw parallels between their experiences in Lebanon and life in the extermination camps. Some others have refused to serve in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip by associating military service with guarding camps in Poland.<sup>17</sup> Soldiers' references to the Holocaust that accompany personal narratives of military service and the experiential visits organised by the Education and Youth Corps show the Holocaust functions as a symbolic and affective archive that helps the Israeli military personnel to negotiate, perform, and validate their military service.

Nonetheless, the role of the Education and Youth Corps in educating the Israeli citizen-soldiers came under attack in 2012, in the aftermath of an investigation pursued by journalists from the newspaper *Haaretz*.<sup>18</sup> They discovered this unit cooperates not only with state institutions but also with right wing, religious organisations such as Ir David Foundation – Elad (which advocates the building of settlements in Silwan – a neighbourhood located in East Jerusalem in the proximity of the Old City) or Ascent (established in Safed in order to reconnect people with the Jewish spiritual experience).<sup>19</sup> Ascent of Safed, founded in 1983, pursues a vast amount of activities in three languages: Hebrew, English and Russian. It conducts hikes, Kabbalistic studies and meditations or hosts Shabbat dinners. This organisation proudly emphasises that 'the latest addition is seminars (...) tailored specially to the needs of Israeli soldiers, *at the request of the IDF itself!* [emphasis in original]'.<sup>20</sup> Ir David – Elad Foundation was established in 1986 by a former commander of an elite military unit in order to safeguard, promote, and disseminate the legacy of the biblical past of the City of David. According to the website of the Foundation, its 'educational programming geared towards Israeli students, adults and soldiers reconnects them with their history and heritage'.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Linn, R. 'Holocaust Metaphors and Symbols in the Moral Dilemmas of Contemporary Israeli Soldiers', *Metaphor and Symbolic Activity*, 6 (1991) pp. 61-86.

<sup>18</sup> Blau, 'Inside the IDF'.

<sup>19</sup> Ir David (City of David) Foundation, *The Ir David Foundation*. Available at: <http://www.cityof david.org.il/en/The-Ir-David-Foundation> [Accessed 5 June 2017]; Ascent, *Ascent Today*. Available at: <http://ascentofsafed.com/cgi-bin/ascent.cgi?Name=Hostel> [Accessed 5 June 2017].

<sup>20</sup> Ascent, *Ascent Today*.

<sup>21</sup> Ir David (City of David) Foundation, *About Ir David Foundation*.



Ir Amim (City of Peoples), a left wing non-profit organisation that promotes socio-economic, political, and cultural equality amongst all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, discovered that Ir David – Elad distorts the presentation of the history of the City of David by refusing to include insights regarding the Byzantine and the early Muslim periods when the city experienced a prosperous life.<sup>22</sup> One of the officers cited in Ir Amim’s report about Ir David – Elad’s activities disclosed that during his participation at a tour in Jerusalem, the guide ‘talked only about the Jewish narrative. They didn’t mention the Palestinian residents; as if they jumped over 2000 years of history’.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, one of the guides that conducts these tours for the Israeli military personnel stressed that ‘it is important for me to emphasize that we have to be here. On one of the tours I said that it was a village of terrorists and murderers until we settled here, and then an Arab neighbor started yelling at me’.<sup>24</sup> Another infantry officer that participated at a tour in Jerusalem disclosed that ‘when the discussion touched on Arabs – not necessarily even Palestinians – it was stopped’.<sup>25</sup> During other field trips organised by Ir David – Elad, soldiers are asked to observe the settlement of Silwan during their itinerary in Jerusalem. However, they are not told this is a site of continuous violent tension between Jewish settlers and Palestinian inhabitants.<sup>26</sup>

The involvement of Ir David – Elad in didactic military practices indicates the politicisation of military education in Israel and the efforts pursued by right wing religious organisations to define the Israeli forces’ relation with Israel and its history. The cooperation of the IDF’s Education and Youth Corps with organisations that promote nationalistic and religious views that exclude Palestinians contradicts the military’s official support for pluralism and shows its dislike for controversial topics that might lead to military dissent.<sup>27</sup> The field trips organised by Ir David – Elad resignify, naturalise, and de-historicise the Palestinian presence in and beyond Jerusalem thus equipping military personnel with a truncated historical knowledge that serves the conventional Israeli perspectives on the Israel/Palestine conflict. By presenting the Israeli military personnel with an abridged history of the region, institutions like Ir David – Elad deny the attachment of the Palestinian collective body

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<sup>22</sup> Ir Amim, ‘Shady Dealings in Silwan’.

<sup>23</sup> Ir Amim, ‘Shady Dealings in Silwan’, p. 29.

<sup>24</sup> Ir Amim, ‘Shady Dealings in Silwan’, p. 29.

<sup>25</sup> Infantry officer quoted in Blau, ‘Inside the IDF’.

<sup>26</sup> Blau, ‘Inside the IDF’.

<sup>27</sup> Haaretz Editorial, ‘The Education of the Settlers’ Army’. *Haaretz*, 6 June 2013. Available at: <http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/premium-1.528063> [Accessed 2 September 2017].

to the region and try to ‘affect [citizen-soldiers’] chains of associations of memory related to who legitimately “belongs” and “does not belong” in and to the land’.<sup>28</sup> In this regard, the pedagogical military practices that erase Palestinian narrative and subjectivity illustrate the significance of memory in constituting the Israeli military subjectivity that serves both as an instrument for national building and a tool for national defence. The use of memory in constituting the Israeli soldiering figure shows that:

‘social groups construct their own images of the world by constantly shaping and reshaping versions of the past. This process defines groups and enables them to create boundaries that separate them from other groups that share different memories of the past, or perhaps, different interpretations of the same occurrences’.<sup>29</sup>

Furthermore, the efforts pursued by Ir David – Elad to equip the Israeli servicemen and women with a Jewish narrative represents an encouragement for them to cultivate affiliation and attachment towards *Eretz Israel*, the biblical, religious, historical, and cultural name for the Land of Israel. The endowment of servicemen and women with Jewish values, narratives, and principles is important for the IDF because the Israeli military is perceived as the army of the Jewish people. The ‘Spirit of IDF’, a document distributed to recruits and discussed at length during their training, is a brief summary of the Israeli military principles, values, and beliefs. It also represents the moral compass that should guide the Israeli military personnel’s behaviour during their service. Among values such as ‘Comradeship’, ‘Purity of arms’, ‘Discipline’, or ‘Professionalism’, the document emphasises three main principles that should guide recruits’ behaviour: ‘Defense of the State, its Citizens and Residents’, ‘Patriotism and Loyalty to the State’, and ‘Human Dignity’.<sup>30</sup> Within this document, ‘Patriotism and Loyalty to the State’ requires the Israeli recruits to recognise that military ‘service in the IDF is based on patriotism and on commitment and devotion to the State of Israel –

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<sup>28</sup> Curti, G. H. ‘From a wall of bodies to a body of walls: Politics of affect | Politics of memory | Politics of war’, *Emotion, Space and Society*, 1 (2008) p. 110.

<sup>29</sup> Neiger, M., Meyers, O. and Zandberg, E. ‘On *Media Memory*: Editors’ Introduction’, in *On Media Memory: Collective Memory in a New Media Age*, edited by Motti Neiger, Oren Meyers and Eyal Zandberg (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 3.

<sup>30</sup> The IDF Spokesperson’s Unit, ‘Ten Fundamental Values: The Spirit of IDF’, *IDF Blog*, 2 November 2011, Available at: <https://www.idfblog.com/2011/11/02/the-spirit-of-the-idf/> [Accessed 5 June 2017].

a democratic state which is the national home of the Jewish people – and to its citizens and residents’.<sup>31</sup> Setting aside the tensions between presenting Israel as a Jewish and democratic state alike, the principle that asks recruits to show loyalty and to act with patriotism depends on equipping Israeli military personnel with a Jewish belief system and narrative.

Research shows the Israeli recruits are ready to accept and use the Jewish belief system and narrative in justifying military service thus indicating serious consequences for the Israel/Palestine conflict. Hanne Eggen Røslie has studied the Israeli forces’ narratives of military service and argues that some recruits rely on a Jewish narrative in order to recount their military experiences. For instance, they justify their presence in Bethlehem, Hebron, or Nablus on the basis of Jewish religious narratives that identify these places as rightfully belonging to the Israeli Jewish people.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, Nir Gazit’s examination of soldiers’ presence in Hebron shows the efforts pursued by the military to cultivate an affective relation between military personnel and the places in which they serve. According to this research, the Israeli soldiers explore the city of Hebron, during their first days of military service, in order to familiarise themselves with the area and to assert a *de facto* sovereignty over Hebron. Through their patrolling, soldiers are encouraged to develop an affective affiliation between themselves and Hebron, a city that, beyond its specific security needs, carries religious and political significance for Israel.<sup>33</sup> The infusion of military service with religious symbolism in order to cultivate the Israeli military personnel’s attachment towards *Eretz Israel* contradicts the military’s support for pluralism and multiculturalism, justifies the IDF’s presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories as a means to defend Israel’s land, and poses a significant threat in the eventuality of a conflict resolution in the region. Having to confront a possible departure from the Occupied Palestinian Territories, military personnel might refuse to follow orders by asserting their religious affiliation with the territories occupied.

Finally, yet significantly, the educational practices proposed by the IDF’s Education and Youth Corps equip recruits with a conventional and abridged narrative

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<sup>31</sup> The IDF Spokesperson’s Unit, ‘Ten Fundamental Values’.

<sup>32</sup> Røslie, H. E. ‘Where is the State of Israel? Testimonies from IDF Nachal soldiers on Israel’s territorial integrity’, *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 44 (2017) pp. 130-45.

<sup>33</sup> Gazit, N. ‘Social Agency, Spatial Practices, and Power: The Micro-foundations of Fragmented Sovereignty in the Occupied Territories’, *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, 22 (2009) p. 91.

regarding the Israel/Palestine conflict. Rafi Nets-Zehngut has investigated the publications disseminated between 1950s and 2000s to the Israeli military personnel. He concluded that the Israeli military has circulated material illustrating the Palestinian voluntary flight during the 1948 Nakba despite awareness that in various instances, Palestinians were expelled from their villages and houses by the IDF.<sup>34</sup> These findings highlight the production of a self-serving historical narrative as a means to shield the Israeli military from internal and external criticism and to cultivate among the Israeli recruits attachment, belonging, and patriotism towards the Israeli state. Criticising the practices of the Education and Youth Corps, Yagil Levy stresses the unit rarely appreciates post-Zionist critical accounts and highlights that, during tours in Jerusalem, ‘[t]he army does not take officers to Deir Yassin [in West Jerusalem, a site of a massacre of civilians by Jewish forces in 1948], or to Arab villages whose inhabitants were expelled and then repopulated by Jews’.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, he deplores that a ‘visit to the Etzion Bloc allows a stop at a [West Bank] settlement which enjoys relatively broad public support, but of course nothing is said about the local Palestinians’.<sup>36</sup>

The didactic activities organised by the Education and Youth Corps cultivate an affective connection between the military personnel and the Israeli Jewish nation that enhances their desire and readiness to defend Israel. A reiteration of the importance of the Holocaust in the history of Israel, an abridged historical discourse regarding the Israel/Palestine conflict, and religious symbolism show the Israeli military pedagogical practices carry important implications for the Middle East conflict. The pedagogical practices that teach history and memory imbue the Israeli recruits and military personnel with a historical and socio-cultural narrative that denies Palestinian attachment to the land, positions them as aliens, and defends the justness of the Israeli rhetoric regarding the Israel/Palestine conflict. The Education and Youth Corps complements its educational practices by collaborating with the Israeli pre-military academies tasked with organising seminars, lectures, and field trips through which (future) recruits and military personnel cultivate their Israeli Jewish identities as part of their military ethos.

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<sup>34</sup> Nets-Zehngut, ‘The Israeli Army’s Official Memory’, p. 221.

<sup>35</sup> Blau, ‘Inside the IDF’.

<sup>36</sup> Blau, ‘Inside the IDF’.

## **BINA's Struggle for Recognition: Teaching Pluralism in the Military amid National Religious Influence**

The Israeli pre-military academies prepare high school students for military service in a similar way with military academies in the United States of America. By attending these institutions, young Israeli men and women defer their military service for twelve to eighteen months to pursue a preparatory programme that entails physical and intellectual training during which they enhance their cultural heritage knowledge, pursue combat preparation, and attend seminars about history and military ethics.<sup>37</sup> Pre-military academies are categorised according to their profile: secular (emphasising pluralism), religious (highlighting the study of the Torah) and respectively, mixed ones (bringing together religious and non-religious students). At the time of writing, there were twenty-four mixed and secular pre-military academies and twenty-two religious ones.<sup>38</sup> In spite of their eclectic profile, all pre-military academies endeavor to contribute to the integration of recruits in the military and to enhance their socio-cultural and military skills in order to serve the Israeli society as exemplary citizens and soldiers.

The pedagogical activities pursued by pre-military academies reflect the beliefs of the Education and Youth Corps that military service should endow recruits with national values and skills to debate and reflect upon the society and the world in which they live. Among the array of pre-military academies that collaborate with the Education and Youth Corp, *Beit Morasha* and *BINA* occupy very significant places. First, both institutions advance pluralist and inclusive vision through the blending of Jewish and multicultural values. Second, they distinguish themselves from their religious counterparts and stress the importance of listening to a multiplicity of voices during their seminars and workshops. Third, these pre-military academies offer educational programmes both to the Israeli future recruits and active military personnel. Finally, yet significantly, both organisations pride themselves for their unique features and contribution to the educational activities pursued by the Israeli military personnel. *BINA* claims to be the only organisation that offers educational programmes for majors in the IDF, whereas *Beit Morasha of Jerusalem* has supported the military in drafting 'Identity and Purpose – Israel Defense Forces'. This is the core document that provides

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<sup>37</sup> Lebel, 'Settling the Military', pp. 365-66.

<sup>38</sup> Eastwood, 'Meaningful Service': Pedagogy at Israeli pre-military academies', pp. 677-9.

the Education and Youth Corps with guidelines for designing military pedagogical activities. This section studies the functioning of *BINA* and its struggle to assert authority against religious pre-military academies, and the final one investigates the ethical pedagogical activities offered by *Beit Morasha*.

### ***Pluralism, Social Responsibility, and Valuable Professional Skills at BINA***

*BINA* presents itself as a socio-cultural space that promotes dialogue and pluralism regarding the Israeli Jewish identity. It emerged in the aftermath of Yitzhak Rabin's assassination, an event that indicated a growing societal division in Israel.<sup>39</sup> A staff member associated *BINA*'s establishment, and its interest in developing educational programmes for the (future) Israeli military personnel, with the secular Israeli Jews' disenchantment with military service:

‘There was a feeling in the army twenty years ago, there was a sense that secular Israelis became disconnected from their purpose: “Why am I here?”, “Why I am defending this country?”, “Why I am defending the Jewish people?”, “Why am I defending the Jewish state?”, “What does it mean to be Jewish?”, “What does it mean to be a Jewish State?”’.<sup>40</sup>

The disillusionment with military service is associated with the Ashkenazi Jews' relative reluctance to serve in the IDF. Ashkenazi Jews are Jews of European origin, who have emigrated from Jewish communities from Germany and the Central and Eastern Europe during the late 1800s and early 1900s. They have played an important role in the founding of Israel, have become the embodiment of the *Sabra* in the aftermath of the establishment of the Israeli state, and they are associated with the secular, liberal, middle and upper classes in Israel. Publicly presented as a ‘motivation crisis’, this disappointment with military service is rooted in the circumstances that surrounded the Yom Kippur War in 1973 and the First War in Lebanon in 1982, and has been accentuated throughout time by the military's prolonged stay in Southern

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<sup>39</sup> BINA: The Jewish Movement for Social Change, *About BINA*. Available at: <https://bina.org.il/en/about-bina/> [Accessed 5 June 2017].

<sup>40</sup> Public outreach staff member, BINA, May 2015.

Lebanon, by the Oslo Peace Process, and by the continued military occupation of Palestinian people. Equally significant, due to their privileged position in the Israeli society and to Israel's adjustment to the requirements of a market economy, Ashkenazi Jews have found other means of developing their professional careers that do not require them to perform their compulsory military service.<sup>41</sup> More significantly, Ashkenazi Jews privileged position has situated the Mizrahi Jews into a lower socio-economic and political condition. The latter origin from today's Iraq, Iran, Egypt, Algeria or Morocco and their emigration to Israel started in the aftermath of the Arab-Israeli War of the 1948, when they were either expelled or left voluntarily from their country of origin. Nevertheless, their integration in the Israeli society situated them in an inferior position partly because of the Zionist movement's roots in European and Enlightenment values that placed Ashkenazi Jews at the forefront of a civilising process in the Middle East. Confronted with this discourse, the arrival of the Mizrahi Jews was met with discrimination and intolerance, whose legacy continues today. They have been allocated housing on the margins of their communities, they have been relegated to performing low-skilled jobs, and have been assigned to less prestigious brigades or to performing menial tasks in the military.<sup>42</sup> Finally, yet significantly, the reluctance of the Ashkenazi Jews determined their Mizrahi counterparts to fill in the places vacated by the former, especially combat positions, for the purposes of enhancing their socio-economic perspectives.<sup>43</sup>

Witnessing the reluctance of the Ashkenazi Jews to serve in the military, Major General Elazar Stern, a former commander of the officer-training base (1993-96), played an important role in designing educational activities that would help servicemen and women to develop a sense of identity and to reconnect them with the purpose of military service. His argument was very simple:

‘A Jewish officer who disinclines to say ‘I’m proud to be a Jew, and cannot explain the reason for the pride he takes in [his identity] to his

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<sup>41</sup> Shafir, G. and Peled, Y. *Being Israeli: The Dynamic of Multiple Citizenship* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012).

<sup>42</sup> Shohat, E. ‘Sephardism in Israel: Zionism from the Standpoint of Its Jewish Victims’, *Social Text*, 19/20 (1988) pp. 1-35; Mehanger, T. ‘Mizrahi or Ashkenazi Jews: Israel’s Regime of Separation’. *Middle East Eye*, 18 July 2016. Available at: <http://www.middleeasteye.net/columns/mizrahi-or-ashkenazi-jews-israels-regime-separation-1999909256> [Accessed 7 September 2017].

<sup>43</sup> Levy, Y. ‘Social Convertibility and Militarism: Evaluations of the Development of Military-Society Relations in Israel in the Early 2001’, *Journal of Political and Military Sociology*, 31 (2003) pp. 71-96.

subordinates for at least 20 minutes will fail to win the war ... I have no doubt that it is our job to complement this by teaching them to be proud of their Jewish identity, even if sometimes it lacks religious faith'.<sup>44</sup>

Elazar believed Israeli officers are pivotal in strengthening the Israeli Jewish identity of their units insofar as they serve as examples whose beliefs and behaviours should be emulated by soldiers across the military. For him, the cultivation of an Israeli Jewish identity was more important than teaching officers military strategy. He adamantly stressed, 'I am not convinced that it is necessary to have read General von Clausewitz. Instead, I would teach poetry written by [Israeli poets] Rachel, Naomi Shemer and Alterman. They will have sufficient time to study Clausewitz'.<sup>45</sup> However, *BINA*'s staff members insist that the Israeli military is not only educating soldiers but also citizens who will contribute to the development of the Israeli society. This pre-military academy is committed to sustaining the IDF's role in nation building by equipping the Israeli recruits with a socio-cultural baggage that would enable citizen-soldiers to have a positive impact upon the Israeli society. *BINA* is aware nation building depends on nurturing an affective connection between the young recruits and the society they defend and live in:

'And it's important for the people, even when they leave the army, to feel a connection. We know the people who go into the army are young people who are going into all different positions in the Israeli society, and we want to influence them and how they approach the society, their Jewish identity, or their civil responsibility in the Israeli society'.<sup>46</sup>

Staff members at this pre-military academy are aware the military is the last public institution that can influence Israeli citizens due to its educational features.

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<sup>44</sup> Major General (Res.) Elazar Stern quoted in Libel, T. 'Constructing the Ideal Officer: Israeli Society and the IDF Officer School', in *Civil-Military Relations in Israel: Essays in Honor of Stuart A. Cohen*, edited by Elisheva Rosman-Stollman and Aharon Kampinsky (Lanham, MD and London, Lexington Books, 2014), p. 96.

<sup>45</sup> Major General (Res.) Elazar Stern quoted in Libel, 'Constructing the Ideal Officer', p. 97.

<sup>46</sup> Public outreach staff member, *BINA*, May 2015.



Specifically, influencing recruits represents a way to shape more broadly the Israeli society due to military personnel's continuous journey between their civilian and military lives. In this respect, *BINA* advances a pluralistic understanding of Judaism and Jewish values amongst its students by organising field trips to Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, and by designing various educational programmes that teach Zionism, Jewish identity, or societal values. It believes 'military ethos [functions] as a flexible text with multiple interpretations that can be deployed in the construction of a range of identities' that would serve the purposes of nation building and state defence in Israel.<sup>47</sup> For instance, *BINA* addresses young men and women through the 'Garin Nahal – military track' and through its pre-military programme. The pre-military programme either combines community service with military service or permits recruits to defer their military service in order to pursue educational activities that enhance their preparation for serving in the IDF.<sup>48</sup> A staff member from BINA explained that the pre-military program gathers

'young adults who get permission to defer army service and study with us. [The programme includes] three and a half day a week of studying Jewish sources, identity, leadership, Jewish values in the army, military ethics. In this manner [participants] grow a strong social, moral, and emotional preparation for serving in the army. This programme is funded in part by the Ministry of Defence and by the Ministry of Education'.<sup>49</sup>

Moreover, 'Garin Nahal – military track' permits Israeli young men and women to enhance their social responsibility ethos. It enables recruits to develop skills that would help them contribute to the wellbeing of the Israeli society by inviting young men and women to

'volunteer and study in underprivileged neighborhoods for a period of 6 months to one year and afterwards throughout their military

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<sup>47</sup> Levy, Y., Lomsky-Feder, E. and Harel, N. 'From "Obligatory Militarism" to "Contractual Militarism" – Competing Models of Citizenship', *Israel Studies*, 12 (2007) p. 143.

<sup>48</sup> Public outreach staff member, BINA, May 2015.

<sup>49</sup> Public outreach staff member, BINA, May 2015.

service (“garin nahal” military service). They engage in social action in the neighborhood and participate in weekly study sessions which expose participants to ancient and modern Jewish texts and issues of Jewish culture, Zionism, social justice and identity. This program fosters a Jewish context for understanding and grounding social action and nurtures young leaders with a stronger sense of both Jewish identity and social responsibility’.<sup>50</sup>

Finally, yet significantly, *BINA* organises seminars and workshop that advance a pluralistic understanding of Jewish values and the Israeli society for the purposes of educating unit commanders. It hopes to influence not only the IDF’s command level but also the soldiers from their unit. According to this pre-military academy,

‘service in the IDF represents a central and influential juncture in the lives of most Israelis which, to a great extent, shapes [the] Israeli society. *BINA* seeks to cultivate [a] discourse that fosters inquiry into the shared identity in Israeli society as well as contributing its perspective to the IDF’s soldiers understanding of Jewish identity through various formal and experiential educational activities. *BINA*’s programs are particularly focused on the command level: The understanding of officers’ awareness of and connection to Judaism as a rich expression of cultural identity in their own lives, can have a significant effect on the soldiers under their command, during their IDF service and in their lives after discharge’.<sup>51</sup>

*BINA*’s activities and guiding philosophy highlight the military’s continuous contribution to the process of nation building in Israel. They illustrate David Ben Gurion’s vision of ‘good citizenship’ for the purposes of building the State of Israel.<sup>52</sup> His view involved taking ‘root in the homeland, in the history of the nation, its culture

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<sup>50</sup> *BINA: The Jewish Movement for Social Change, Young Adults (Garin)*. Available at: <https://bina.org.il/en/social-action/young-adults-garin/> [Accessed 5 June 2017].

<sup>51</sup> *BINA: The Jewish Movement for Social Change, BINA’s Educational Programs in the IDF*. Available at: <https://bina.org.il/en/idf-programs/about-idf-programs/> [Accessed 5 June 2017].

<sup>52</sup> Yanai, N. ‘The Citizen as Pioneer: Ben-Gurion’s Concept of Citizenship’, *Israel Studies*, 1 (1996) p. 137.

and language, its creative efforts and the vision of its future'.<sup>53</sup> Thus the educational programmes of the Israeli military indicate that the IDF are a site of education that teaches young Israelis both to defend the state and to contribute to the realisation of the collective goals of the society.

The role of pre-military academies like *BINA* in inculcating values, beliefs, and ideas that would serve the Israeli military personnel in their civilian lives likens the IDF with other Western militaries who envisage military service as an opportunity for personal growth. This discourse represents not only a technique to attract further recruits to enrol in the military but also a means to enhance the public's support for the Israeli military. For instance, research shows that both Sweden and the United Kingdom pursue campaigns of military recruitment that portray the military as site of producing 'an enterprising soldier', according to which military service is a self-regulatory practice through which the military subject invests in his or her personal growth.<sup>54</sup> While any comparison between Israel with Sweden and respectively, the United Kingdom should take into account that the Israeli army is based on compulsory conscription, the British military is an all-volunteer force, and the Swedish government has decided to restore a partial compulsory conscription from January 2018, all three militaries share the belief that military service represents a social practice of personal development.<sup>55</sup>

The presentation of military service as a self-growth practice is important not only for the purposes of nation building but also for restricting Israelis' tendency to refuse or avoid military service. The decision of the Israeli military to present military service as a technique of personal growth relates to the IDF's concern regarding the Israeli Jews' refusal to serve in the military. The Israeli military has become open to a bargaining process during which recruits negotiate the features and restrictions of the military service they are to pursue. For instance, the IDF might permit recruits, who express moral objections, to serve in rear military positions or to avoid military service in politically contentious missions altogether. Furthermore, the military has become attentive to parents' grievances, has improved the conditions of military service, and

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<sup>53</sup> Yanai, 'The Citizen as Pioneer', p. 137.

<sup>54</sup> Strand, S. and Berndtsson, J. 'Recruiting the "enterprising soldier": military recruitment discourses in Sweden and the United Kingdom', *Critical Military Studies*, 1 (2015) pp. 233-48.

<sup>55</sup> Government Offices of Sweden, *Sweden Reactivates Conscription*. Available at: <http://www.government.se/articles/2017/03/re-activation-of-enrolment-and-the-conscription/> [Accessed 2 September 2017].

has increasingly permitted families to contact their children and unit commanders at their own convenience.<sup>56</sup>

The envisaging of military service as a practice of individual development has also increased recruits' desire to serve in elite combat units or in intelligence units because they offer the Israeli youth the possibility to access lucrative professional careers in their civilian lives. For example, high school students have perceived their participation at pre-military preparatory programmes such as *Gadna* (a five-day course coordinated by the Education and Youth Corps that prepares young Israelis for military service) as a waste of time because it cultivates the self-sacrifice model of soldiering and exposes the Israeli teenagers to the complexity of regular combat.<sup>57</sup> This military representation is hardly of interest for those young Israelis that seek admission in elite military units that might not require combat missions. Unsurprisingly, these high-school students refused to acquiesce to the military discipline imposed during this programme and openly defied their course leaders.<sup>58</sup> The changing nature of military service – from self-sacrifice to self-development – shows not only the Israeli recruits' possibility to shape the purpose and the image of the military according to their own interests, but also the readiness of the military to adjust itself to the grievances of its (future) members. Within this dynamic civil-military relation, *BINA* tries to meet recruits' interests to acquire skills that would serve them during their civilian lives. It provides them with the opportunity to acquire a set of competences and a socio-cultural baggage that maximises recruits' military and civilian potential alike. *BINA*'s emphasis on social responsibility and on the multicultural feature of the Israeli society cultivates a virtuous military subjectivity, which respects societal pluralism and heterogeneity, and is devoted to and cares for the Israeli society and state.

### ***BINA's Pluralism and the Emergence of a National Religious Soldiering Figure***

As a pluralistic military academy, *BINA* presents itself as a military educational alternative to the growing influence of the Military Rabbinate upon the IDF's educational activities. Until 2000s, the Military Rabbinate was in charge of administrative issues such as organising military funerals or the observation of dietary

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<sup>56</sup> Levy et al. 'From "Obligatory Militarism" to "Contractual Militarism"', pp. 127-34.

<sup>57</sup> Levy et al. 'From "Obligatory Militarism" to "Contractual Militarism"', pp. 138-9.

<sup>58</sup> Levy et al. 'From "Obligatory Militarism" to "Contractual Militarism"', p. 139.

laws in the military. Partly influenced by the disengagement from the Gaza Strip in 2005, the Military Rabbinate established the Jewish Awareness Branch and became involved in military educational programmes by organising tours and seminars for military personnel. As a consequence, secular voices in the military grew more and more worried regarding the influence of national religious authorities within the Israeli military.<sup>59</sup> The religious influence over the military materialised in a series of controversial episodes. The Military Rabbinate distributed to troops pamphlets justifying cruelty against the enemy serving in the Gaza Strip (2008-9).<sup>60</sup> Moreover, Colonel Ofer Winter was widely condemned by secular voices for his choice to prevent a female singer to entertain the Givati Brigade, and for his decision to circulate among his unit members a letter that assured the troops of their divine mission during the Israeli intervention in the Gaza Strip in 2014.<sup>61</sup> As a proof of the growing concern regarding the influence of religious authorities within the IDF, the media reported in 2016 that under the pressure of secular voices, the Jewish Awareness Branch was moved to the military's Personnel Wing in order to restrict the national religious impact on the military ethos.<sup>62</sup>

Staff members at *BINA* disclosed that it was not only difficult to engage Orthodox commanders during workshops, but also shared their frustration with the availability of state funds for religious pre-military academies at the detriment of the secular ones. Concerning teaching Orthodox commanders, an educational officer revealed:

‘For people in the army, it is not voluntarily to come here. So some of them are happily coming here and they want to study more about what we are doing here. Some of them object to what we do, and they don’t like what they hear, mostly Orthodox people. For lots of them

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<sup>59</sup> Blau, ‘Inside the IDF’.

<sup>60</sup> Karon, T. ‘Dissident Israeli Soldiers Turn a Harsh Light on the Gaza War’. *Time*, 16 July 2009. Available at: <http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1910820,00.html> [Accessed 2 September 2017].

<sup>61</sup> Times of Israel Staff, ‘IDF commander seeks God’s help to fight ‘blasphemous’ Gazans’. *The Times of Israel*, 12 April 2014. Available at: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-commander-calls-on-troops-to-fight-blasphemous-gazans/> [Accessed 2 September 2017]; Hovel, R. ‘Israeli Army Asked to Explain Why Female Singer Show Was Nixed’. *Haaretz*, 12 August 2014. Available at: <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.610168> [Accessed 2 September 2017].

<sup>62</sup> Lubell, M. ‘Power in the Holy Land: Israeli military struggles with rising influence of Religious-Zionists’. *Reuters*, 15 April 2016. Available at: <http://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/israel-military-religion/> [Accessed 5 June 2017].

it's the first time when they get to study about Judaism in a non-Orthodox way and that is difficult for them to listen to other perspectives. It's something new what they hear at BINA'.<sup>63</sup>

Since its establishment, *BINA* has fought for recognition and for financial resources because secular pre-military academies are not subsidised by the state as religious pre-military academies are. An educational officer highlighted that 'when we started doing our work with the Education and Youth Corps, there were mainly orthodox pre-military organisations working with the army. So we had to fight really hard to be legitimised by and work with them'.<sup>64</sup> *BINA*'s fight for recognition and for financial resources are interlinked since the Education and Youth Corps takes into account the financial cost of the programme offered by these institutions when signing a contract of collaboration. Budget limitations determine the Education and Youth Corps to collaborate mainly with religious institutions since their educational offer is less expensive due to the state subsidies that they receive. Writing for *Haaretz*, Or Kashti investigated the influence of religious pre-military academies in the military. In his article, former Education and Youth Corps officers expressed their dismay regarding the military's choice to work with religious institutions because 'the IDF insists that the organizations that want to work with find their own donors. This is why most of the activities are run by Orthodox groups, some of them bordering on missionary work'.<sup>65</sup> Another officer explicitly condemned the Education and Youth Corps for its choice to work with religious organisations: 'It's troubling that the IDF is willing to pay for tanks and food, but when it comes to education it's all based on contributions. Does anyone really believe Ir David's activities aren't ideological?'.<sup>66</sup> *BINA*'s efforts and continuous appeal for donations indicate a growing anxiety regarding the role of the religious authorities in the military, and show there is a competition between secular and religious voices in defining military ethos and subjectivity in Israel.

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<sup>63</sup> Educational officer, BINA, Tel Aviv, May 2015.

<sup>64</sup> Educational officer, BINA, Tel Aviv, May 2015.

<sup>65</sup> Former officer within the Education and Youth Corps quoted in Kashti, O. 'Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox groups dominate Israeli army's educational programs'. *Haaretz*, 15 May 2015. Available at: <https://bina.org.il/en/2174/> [Accessed 5 June 2017].

<sup>66</sup> Former officer within the Education and Youth Corps quoted in Kashti, 'Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox groups'.

The growing influence of the religious figures in the military is related as well with the secular Jews' disenchantment with military service. Noticing their reluctance to serve in the military, the IDF invited religious figures to persuade national religious Jews to enlist in the military and to fill in the spaces vacated by secular Jews. National religious actors seized the moment and saw the reluctance of secular Jews to serve as an opportunity to assert their own influence over the military and the society. By equipping recruits with religious beliefs and by providing them with a faith-based education, national religious figures perceived the establishment of religious pre-military academies as an opportunity to impact on the ethos of the military and on the overall Israeli society. Religious pre-military academies aim to prepare recruits to access the most coveted positions in the military and to reach leadership roles in the IDF therefore paving their way to access privileged positions in the Israeli society for having performed their service in key roles in the military.<sup>67</sup>

Religious pre-military academies teach recruits Zionism, Jewish and Israeli values, or military ethics yet infused with religious beliefs. Religious pre-military academies are successful in integrating the study of the Talmud and Torah with a military ethos that hails the importance of physical strength, leadership values, and individual contribution to the collective goals of the military and the society. Moreover, religious pre-military academies share with their secular counterparts an emphasis on personal growth as a means for (future) military personnel to acquire leadership positions in the military and the society.<sup>68</sup> By teaching (future) recruits faith-based values, religious pre-military academies actively encourage their students to enrol in units populated by secular Jews and to compete with their non-religious peers in order to climb the ranks of the military.<sup>69</sup> Udi Lebel believes religious pre-military academies cultivate a novel model of heroism and self-sacrifice, according to which bravery and courageousness are infused with spiritual beliefs. Secular Jews, largely of Ashkenazi origins, have traditionally represented a model of heroism based on the image of the 'New Jew/ess' who relinquished their religious belief in order to distance

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<sup>67</sup> Mualem, M. 'An inside look at IDF's 'faith-driven' warriors'. *Al-Monitor: The Pulse of the Middle East*, 12 August 2014. Available at: <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/en/originals/2014/08/israel-idf-army-religious-zionism-of-er-winter-ethos-god.html> [Accessed 5 June 2017].

<sup>68</sup> Lebel, U. 'The 'immunized integration' of Religious-Zionists within Israeli society: the pre-military academy as an institutional model', *Social Identities: Journal for the Study of Race, Nation and Culture*, 22 (2016) pp. 642-60.

<sup>69</sup> Lebel, 'Settling the Military', pp. 371-3.

himself/herself from the image of the Diaspora Jew.<sup>70</sup> In contrast, religious pre-military academies craft a military subjectivity that presents national religious recruits as morally superior to the liberal, non-religious, draft-dodgers Ashkenazi Jews and to the ultra-orthodox Jews who are largely exempted from military service. Criticising the emotional detachment of Ashkenazi Jews from their connection to the Israeli Jewish nation and their lack of commitment to defend the nation, religious pre-military academies cultivate a new heroic model that is devoted to Israel while its religious beliefs are rounded by ‘masculinity, militarism, and prowess’.<sup>71</sup>

A scene in Ron Leshem’s bestselling novel *Beaufort* demonstrates the appeal of the religious heroic model for the contemporary Israeli military personnel.<sup>72</sup> Real events and characters inspired the novel. Leshem wrote it after meeting a former officer who recounted the demanding nature of his military service in Southern Lebanon, and after performing detailed interviews with (former) military personnel regarding their personal military experiences.<sup>73</sup> The success of the novel shows its portrayal of military service has resonated with the Israeli public and indicates the latter’s interest to read, accept, and to a certain degree, to identify with personal and distressing narratives of military service. In this particular scene, the novel’s narrator, Liraz Librati, recounts his astonishment regarding Mickey Bayliss’s decision (a national religious soldier) to renounce to wearing the *kippa*. According to Librati, Bayliss was the poster child of the unit, who embodied the peculiar features of the new (religious) military heroic model proposed by the religious pre-military academies. Librati’s reflection, infused with admiration and respect, is worth quoting at length in order to offer a portrayal of the place that national religious soldiers seem to enjoy in the military:

‘He [Bayliss] was no fanatic, not bigoted or blind to other opinions and lifestyles, but we all saw him as the star of the religious Zionist world, our hope and pride. The knitted *kippa* guys of the religious Zionist camp had become the backbone of our brigade – in fact, of all

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<sup>70</sup> Lebel, ‘Settling the Military’, p. 372.

<sup>71</sup> Lebel, ‘Settling the Military’, p. 372.

<sup>72</sup> Leshem, R. *Beaufort* (London, Vintage Books, 2009).

<sup>73</sup> Peleg, Y. ‘*Beaufort* the Book, *Beaufort* the Film: Israeli Militarism under Attack’, in *Narratives of Dissent: War in Contemporary Arts and Culture*, edited by Rachel S. Harris and Ranen Omer-Sherman (Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 2013), pp. 336-7; Hoffman, J. ‘Besieged’. *The New York Times*, 9 March 2008. Available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/09/books/review/Hoffman-t.html?mcubz=1> [Accessed 3 September 2017].



the Infantry brigades. They were the best fighters and were growing in numbers and strength. They were a new generation, not like their settler fathers, not anything that the state religious schools had produced in the past. They dressed like us and wore their hair like us, they talked like us, liked the same films, the same music. They knew how to party like the best of us. They didn't even always have a *kippa* on their heads. They were determined not to be prejudiced against, told that they weren't good enough, or didn't keep the commandments strictly enough to call themselves as card carrying members of the religious Zionist club. They call themselves 'pocket-*kippa* boys' and some of them screw as many girls as we do. Really, I swear it, this generation actually fucks, because they know how to bend their religious obligations since those rules are no longer the centre of their lives. But when it comes to loving the Land of Israel, patriotism, to sacrifice, even to friendship, they're the best, the most 'religious' of all us, and often the most extreme. With body building too, nobody can compete with their enthusiasm and determination to succeed. Sometimes it seemed as though to be one of them, part of that perfect world was the sexiest thing possible; those boys were the army's most popular brand name'.<sup>74</sup>

Librati's extensive portrayal shows national religious military personnel embody a new model of heroism by revitalising the mythical heroic figure of the 'New Jew' – self-sacrifice, toughness, camaraderie – yet imbuing it with religious symbolism. Despite carrying religious beliefs, these new national religious fighters are the military's finest examples of virtuosity, physical strength, erotic appeal, patriotism, devotion, fearlessness, and determination. Librati's fascination with national religious Jews discloses they are less inclined to follow the religious commandments in a strict manner, yet they rely on religious symbolism in order to build and defend the nation in an exemplary way. Similarly to secular Jews, national religious soldiers perceive military service as an opportunity for personal development that would give them the possibility to shape the military and the society according to their beliefs. In fact,

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<sup>74</sup> Leshem, *Beaufort*, pp. 57-58.

Bayliss's decision to renounce to wearing the *kippa* is related to his perceived personal failure to use military service as a means to become a virtuous citizen-soldier. According to Librati,

'[h]e [Bayliss] no longer had the spiritual willpower, didn't feel strong enough, wasn't worthy of representing us. And if he wasn't worthy, then there was no need for him to continue wearing the *kippa*. On the contrary, he said he would be putting the religious Zionists to shame if he kept it on'.<sup>75</sup>

Bayliss feels he has disappointed himself and the religious Zionist movement due to his belief that military service is morally corrupting religious men and women. In retrospect, he believes he has failed to become an example of virtuosity for his peers:

'I could try to become more religious, improve myself, be less despicable, strengthen my resolve. But I don't have the spiritual fortitude to spend time doing it, work out what really happening to me. Not me, I am not strong enough, not up to the challenge. I set myself a mission and failed'.<sup>76</sup>

Upon hearing Bayliss's explanation, Librati acknowledges that military service is likely to challenge national religious' conservative beliefs:

'It wasn't easy to stay religious, to keep the commandments, in our squad. I'd seen it often enough: good guys cutting corners. On the Sabbath, smoking a cigarette they claimed had been lit by someone else. On a holy day, keeping one eye on the television they insisted had been turned on by someone else. In the end, they're even watching porn videos'.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Leshem, *Beaufort*, p. 57.

<sup>76</sup> Leshem, *Beaufort*, p. 62.

<sup>77</sup> Leshem, *Beaufort*, p. 56.

By portraying the place of national religious servicemen and women in the Israeli military, Leshem's scene shows the potential discrepancy between the idealised military figure circulated by the Military Rabbinate and pre-military academies, and the reality of military service (combat) since the latter might weaken the national religious soldiers' belief system rather than improve it. Similarly, Udi Lebel found that the Israeli servicemen and women, although educated at religious pre-military academies, are likely to guide themselves according to universal values in performing their military service, to display secular beliefs, and to rarely ask their rabbis for advice during their military service.<sup>78</sup> More significantly, media and scholars are suspicious about the potential of national religious soldiers to transform the Israeli military and society. For instance, Maayan Lubell and Yagil Levy show that national religious Jews make up ten per cent of the combat force, and respectively, ten per cent of the total of the Israeli population therefore they carry little possibility to impose their ideology upon the Israeli society and military alike.<sup>79</sup>

Pre-military academies try to define military service and the meaning of the Israeli Jewish identity for the purposes of influencing both the military and the society by proposing either a pluralist or a religious model of military ethos. By cultivating an exemplary and virtuous military subjectivity, both pluralistic and religious pre-military academies present military service as an appealing social practice that is first and foremost a site of personal growth that prepares military personnel to contribute to the collective goals of the military and society. However, the envisaging of military service as a self-fulfilment practice carries significant implications for the (future) citizen-soldiers. Specifically, the presentation of military service as a means of personal development conceals the violence that is inherent in military service and provides further justification for war and conflict. By presenting military service as a personal growth practice, pre-academies fail to recognise the physical and the psychological damage that the Israeli young men and women might experience once confronted with the reality of military service in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Equally significant, this representation of military service conceals the violence enacted by the Israeli military personnel against Palestinians. In this respect, the cultivation of a virtuous military subjectivity 'attribute[s] an inherent value and irreproachability to [the

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<sup>78</sup> Lebel, 'The 'immunized integration' of Religious-Zionists within Israeli society', pp. 656-7.

<sup>79</sup> Lubell, 'Power in the Holy Land'; Levy, 'Religious Authorities in the Military', p. 312.

Israeli] soldiers and the military, and prevent[s] them from being fully evaluated in connection with what they do – which remains, in significant part, war fighting’.<sup>80</sup> Therefore, the cultivation of a virtuous military subjectivity does not only strengthen the belief that the ‘IDF is the most moral army in the world’, but it also masks the injury, harm, and violence that accompany soldiering life. Furthermore, the cultivation of an exemplary military subjectivity enhances the Israeli public support for the military and confines criticism against its violent practices. In this respect, *BINA*’s pedagogical practices and its comparison with national religious institutions indicate that pre-military academies cultivate an affective connection between recruits and the Israeli society by insisting that military service is a stepping stone in recruits’ lives and is an opportunity to develop skills that would serve their individual growth.

These insights show that it is easy to exaggerate the influence of national religious figures on the Israeli military since the general military command remains largely secular and the civilian control of the military is stable. However, there are serious political implications concerning the association of military service and the Israel/Palestine conflict with religious symbolism. A religious narrative envisages Palestinians as enemies of God and complicates a possible resolution of the Israel/Palestine conflict since military personnel, driven by ideology and faith, could refuse to evacuate settlements if required to do so.<sup>81</sup> Nonetheless, didactic practices pursued by pre-military academies influence the Israel/Palestine conflict beyond their religious symbolism. The following section studies *Beit Morasha*, a pre-military academy from Jerusalem that conducts ‘experiential seminars’ during which military personnel discuss the ethical and moral baggage that should guide their behaviour in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. It argues the constitution of an ethical military subjectivity intervenes in the Middle East conflict by presenting the Israeli military personnel as morally superior to Palestinians and by justifying violence against Palestinians as a self-defence practice of the vulnerable Israeli individual and collective body.

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<sup>80</sup> Tidy, J. ‘Forces Sauces and Eggs for Soldiers: food, nostalgia, and the rehabilitation of the British military’, *Critical Military Studies*, 1 (2015) p. 230.

<sup>81</sup> Levy, ‘Religious Authorities in the Military’, pp. 314-8.

## Beit Morasha of Jerusalem: Teaching Military Ethics

*Beit Morasha* is a pluralistic pre-military academy that leads a number of activities that promote leadership, Jewish ethics, and Israeli Jewish identity. Its most valuable programme is ‘Identity and Purpose: Jewish Values in the Military’.<sup>82</sup> According to its website, this educational activity

‘has reached over 230,000 IDF officers and soldiers to date, deepening their knowledge of Jewish history, tradition and values; challenging their assumptions about war, peace, coexistence and identity; and revitalizing their identification with Jewish values and ethics’.<sup>83</sup>

This organisation prides itself for providing the Education and Youth Corps with one of its most important documents. In 2002, the founder and President of the institute, Professor Benjamin Ish-Shalom, drafted the ‘Identity and Purpose – Israel Defense Forces’ document. According to a staff member at *Beit Morasha*,

‘a lot of people come to get his [Benjamin Ish-Shalom’s] advice about education, [about] topics of identity, Jewish, Israeli, multicultural identity here in Israel. Twelve years ago, the head of the army, [Moshe] ‘Boogie’ Ya’alon, that now is the Minister of Defence, asked Professor Benjamin Ish-Shalom to write the philosophy of the army. So this document, since twelve years ago, has become the official paper the Education Corps runs the programmes with. They [Education and Youth Corps] asked us not only to write it but also to work with them and to create programmes for soldiers and units according to this vision.’<sup>84</sup>

This document is available in the public realm and carefully stresses that:

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<sup>82</sup> Beit Morasha: The Center for Advanced Judaic Studies and Leadership, *About Beit Morasha*. Available at: [http://www.bmj.org.il/inner\\_en/23](http://www.bmj.org.il/inner_en/23) [Accessed 5 June 2017].

<sup>83</sup> Beit Morasha of Jerusalem: The Center for Advanced Judaic Studies and Leadership, *Identity and Purpose*.

<sup>84</sup> Educational officer, Beit Morasha of Jerusalem, Jerusalem, May 2015.

‘ “A nation that builds an army in turn builds a nation” – As a result of the make-up of the IDF, the nature of military service, the duration of service, and the place that the IDF holds in public consciousness, military service has a formative impact on the personalities, attitudes, and behaviors of the IDF soldiers and commanders. Accordingly, the army is one of the institutions that influence the nature of Israeli society and the State of Israel. Young people serve in the IDF at a critical stage in their lives, which impacts their development as people and as citizens of the State’.<sup>85</sup>

Informed by this document, the thrust of the activities coordinated by *Beit Morasha* is represented by ‘experiential workshops’ and seminars on ethical conduct during combat operations. The trademark of their institutional activity is a workshop entitled ‘Ethical Drills’, that addresses the military personnel that serve in West Bank. These military training sessions are described as following:

‘The premise of the Ethical Drills program is that soldiers need “ethical target practice” no less than they need “military target practice.” The Ethical Drills focus on ethical dilemmas that emerge during the course of the IDF service and take place within the IDF units. The program utilizes experiential education techniques and the Beit Morasha staff prepares the unit commanders to create programs of intervention that are tailored to the needs of their units. Following this preparatory stage, the unit commanders implement the program in the field. The Ethical Drills ha[ve] now become standard operating procedure for companies that are charged with patrolling civilian areas as well as checkpoints in sensitive areas in Judea and Samaria’.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> The IDF’s Education and Youth Corps, *Identity and Purpose – Israel Defense Forces*. Available at: [http://www.chinuch.aka.idf.il/SIP\\_STORAGE/files/1/1621.pdf](http://www.chinuch.aka.idf.il/SIP_STORAGE/files/1/1621.pdf) [Accessed 5 June 2017].

<sup>86</sup> Beit Morasha: The Center for Advanced Judaic Studies and Leadership, *Identity and Purpose: Jewish Values in the Military*.

‘Ethical Drills’ help soldiers to manage their private feelings, to assess their affective states, and to develop emotional control skills. An official video produced by *Beit Morasha* and disseminated on the YouTube social platform offers a first-hand experience into the organisation of ethical drills. In this recording, a few paratroopers discuss with the workshop convenor about their emotions and the perils of serving in the occupied West Bank. The workshop leader asks paratroopers to voice their concerns and opinions about the complexity of their military service by having to negotiate between obedience to their superiors and independent thinking when conducting a mission. One participant at the workshop highlights the moral dilemma that he experiences when returning fire towards a building that houses both suspects and non-combatants while facing the possibility to harm the latter. Another paratrooper expresses unequivocal support for restraining emotions and for respecting the ‘Purity of Arms’ principle. Other participants express their frustration of seeing and reprimanding fellow soldiers that destroy the personal belongings of Palestinians, and recount their shame in arresting a suspect in front of his family. Finally, a paratrooper stresses the need to block any emotions of rage and fury when arresting a suspect.<sup>87</sup> The activities conducted by *Beit Morasha* and its involvement in ethical training nuance Orna Sasson-Levy’s argument that processes of training and military socialisation fail to address the moral and the political consequences of the Israeli militaristic ethos. She denounces the IDF’s attempts to construct military service as a masculine rite of passage since they confine soldiers’ opportunity to question military service.<sup>88</sup>

In contrast to Sasson-Levy, this chapter argues that ethical drills are less about controlling emotions and *rather* about crafting citizen-soldiers’ subjectivity to experience *appropriate* emotions. The YouTube video shows the Israeli military situates emotions at the center of the training of the Israeli recruits thus favouring the production of a military subject that works through his or her emotions in order to perform one’s military responsibilities in an exemplary way. By working with and through affective dispositions, ‘Ethical Drills’ craft a military subject that is aware of his/her responsibilities, talks about his/her military experience, and recognises his/her obligation to act and to determine his/her peers to act in a responsible manner. The

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<sup>87</sup> Beit Morasha of Jerusalem: The Center for Advanced Judaic Studies and Leadership, ‘Ethical Training in the IDF’ (Published 11 August 2014). Available at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jyhjLpue-u0> [Accessed 19 June 2016].

<sup>88</sup> Sasson-Levy, ‘Individual Bodies, Collective State Interests’, pp. 296-321.

cultivation of military subjectivity through workshops represents a military practice through which troops are equipped not only with ‘the ability to control [their] emotions, [but also] to experience the ‘appropriate’ emotions at different times and places’.<sup>89</sup> These experiential seminars expose the Israeli military personnel to a process of self-formation through which they learn to act in a virtuous and appropriate manner. They recall Alasdair MacIntyre’s view regarding virtues since ‘dispositions not only to act in particular ways, but also to *feel* in particular ways. To act virtuously is not to act against inclination; it is to act from inclination formed by the cultivation of the virtues. Moral education is an ‘*éducation sentimentale*’.<sup>90</sup>

More significantly, the (affective) moral education of the Israeli military personnel carries serious political implications. Affective practices of military education both enhance one’s military skills and contribute to the positioning of the military recruit in the role of a moral(ising) subject when confronting Palestinian civilians. Beit Morasha’s video shows the Israeli military subject from the standpoint of the witness that holds universal and humanistic values, who is the only one that understands difficult situations, and who is able to ‘mark out the terrain of what is good and what is evil’.<sup>91</sup> Equally, ‘Ethical Drills’ contribute to the reconstruction of an antagonistic narrative between the Israeli military personnel and Palestinian civilians by presenting the latter as a source of soldiers’ inappropriate feelings during their military service. In this regard, ‘Ethical Drills’ echo Sara Ahmed remarks that the experience of pain functions through the attribution of feelings to others since ‘those who ‘are ‘other’ to me or us, or those that threaten to make us other, remain the source of bad feeling’.<sup>92</sup>

A staff member from *Beit Morasha* insisted that ‘Ethical Drills’ are very important for preparing military personnel insofar as they are experiential practices that imbue recruits with the values of the Israeli military:

‘When they [soldiers] come to us for the workshop, sometimes it’s the first time when they talk about these things [ethical dilemmas]

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<sup>89</sup> Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, p. 3.

<sup>90</sup> MacIntyre, A. *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (Notre Dame, IN, University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), [emphasis added] p. 149.

<sup>91</sup> Razaack, S. H. ‘Stealing the Pain of Others: Reflections on Canadian Humanitarian Responses’, *The Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies*, 29 (2007) p. 381.

<sup>92</sup> Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, pp. 3-4.



with the unit and the commander. The most difficult thing is that there is no right and wrong answer. But I can tell you, as someone who was in the army: the army and the commanders know what is right and they work with values'.<sup>93</sup>

When asked for further explanations about the *values* that Israeli soldiers carry with them during military service in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the educational instructor stressed that the Israeli military personnel are prepared and expected to perform a 'meaningful service'. The staff member characterised the significance of military service in Israel in the following way:

'Values' refer to values in war and how values help soldiers perform as a team during the mission. This means that soldiers learn the values of being a soldier in a particular unit, in a particular situation, in a particular country. One is religious and one is not religious. One is a Muslim and one can be a Christian. One is a Jew. You have to understand that military service is never only about myself. It is about my team, and then about the community, then about my country and then about the world too. The Israeli army is not only the army of Israel but it is the army of the Jewish nation from all around the world. If someone gets hurt for instance in Nepal, the Israeli army goes there and helps. That's the Israeli army! One of the purposes of going to Nepal is not because we think we are the best ones there but because we want to show our soldiers here the significance [of military service].<sup>94</sup>

Similarly, Brigadier-General Eran Niv stresses the importance of enhancing recruits' desire to invest in their military service, and highlights the necessity to equip them with the belief they contribute to the wellbeing of the Israeli collective body. Discussing the challenges that the Israeli military experiences in 2017, Niv believes that:

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<sup>93</sup> Educational officer, Beit Morasha of Jerusalem, Jerusalem, May 2015.

<sup>94</sup> Educational officer, Beit Morasha of Jerusalem, Jerusalem, May 2015.

‘The soldier must understand that he’s doing something meaningful, something that makes a contribution – not wasting his time. I want him to have a challenge that he must invest all his energy in to meet and to build an environment that he’ll want to belong to’.<sup>95</sup>

The characterisation of ‘meaningful service’ shows the military is not only a site that trains military personnel, but also an institution in which (future) recruits are educated to develop themselves in order to make a positive contribution to the Israeli society and the world. Staff members at *Beit Morasha* highlight the importance of organising didactic activities that permit the (future) Israeli military personnel to work with themselves in order to become exemplary and virtuous citizen-soldiers. According to this pre-military academy, the pedagogical military practices teach recruits to celebrate pluralism and remind them of the importance of the *tikkun olam* principle. Accordingly, the Jewish nation is envisaged as ‘a light for nations’ while military personnel are sent to perform humanitarian tasks around the world in order to help others. As a consequence, the emphasis on IDF’s interest in the wellbeing of those that find themselves in difficult situations constrains local and international criticism against the Israeli military and its violent practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

*Beit Morasha* stresses that caring for those less fortunate applies also within the context of the Israel/Palestine. For instance, the educational officer insisted on the moral dilemmas that the Israeli forces experience while manning checkpoints when they encounter Palestinians that need to cross to Israel for medical reasons:

‘What do you do when you see a pregnant woman that needs to go to the hospital and you close the gate [checkpoint]? What do you do? The commander told you that there is a terrorist threat and you need to close the gate? And she needs to go to the hospital here in Israel!’.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Brigadier-General Eran Niv quoted in Harel, A. ‘The Israeli Army’s New War: Ensuring It Has Enough Quality Combat Troops’. *Haaretz*, 2 May 2017. Available at: <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.786748> [Accessed 5 June 2017].

<sup>96</sup> Educational officer, Beit Morasha of Jerusalem, Jerusalem, May 2015.

The soldiers' moral dilemmas that depict Palestinians as subjects that depend on the Israeli forces' assistance show that the constitution of ethical subjectivity envisages the IDF as a benign presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. However, the Israeli military subjects' expressions of compassion for Palestinians and their readiness to help them disregard the IDF's fundamental role in imposing a regulatory, arbitrary, and harsh system of checkpoints that restricts the Palestinians' movement within the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Elizabeth Spelman denounces feelings of compassion and pity insofar as 'feeling for others in their suffering can simply be a way of asserting authority over them to the extent that such feeling leaves no room for them to have a view about what their suffering means, or what the most appropriated response to it is'.<sup>97</sup> Thus IDF's feelings of compassion and their moral dilemmas directs the conversation towards military forces' anguished experiences during military service in the West Bank and away from Palestinians' precarious lives under the occupation. Likewise, Sherene Razack stresses that expressions of compassion represent a dangerous narrative because they involve 'stealing the pain of others'.<sup>98</sup> Informed by Susan Sontag's oft-quoted phrase 'regarding the pain of others', Razack recalls that the theft of pain 'is an act supported by a racial logic and underpinned by a material system of white privilege'.<sup>99</sup> The insistence on the IDF's difficult experience of military service constitutes them as morally superior to Palestinians. In this regard, conversations about the Israeli moral dilemmas of military service during pedagogical military practices represent 'an expression of privilege (...) which ultimately only perpetuate their self-centered experience of [the Israeli] society without seriously compromising this hierarchical structure'.<sup>100</sup>

The feeling of moral superiority that constructs ethical subjectivity is reinforced through the presentation of Palestinians as despicable individuals that hide in civilian houses and whose children are future terrorists:

'If you go inside a house... usually terrorists go where kids are in order to hide. Terrorists do that! Kids grow up as terrorists. I am not sure, but almost positive. They hate us. They want to kill us! They

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<sup>97</sup> Spelman, E. V. *Fruits of Sorrow: Framing Our Attention to Suffering* (Boston, MA, Beacon Press, 1997), p. 70.

<sup>98</sup> Razack, 'Stealing the Pain of Others', pp. 375-94.

<sup>99</sup> Razack, 'Stealing the Pain of Others', p. 389.

<sup>100</sup> Lambert, '#Palestine/// How Should We Read the Israeli Soldiers' Testimonies'.

want to kill me! They would do anything to kill... even the kids [are involved]. They throw stones and cocktails Molotov. Let's not call them terrorists, but dangerous civilians!'.<sup>101</sup>

The presentation of children as enemies and as future criminals is a recurring theme in the Israeli public discourse beginning with the First Intifada, when children and young Palestinians threw stones at the Israeli soldiers.<sup>102</sup> Through this kind of discursive practices, Palestinian children are denied both the position of the victim and the premise of innocence that is generally associated with the notion of childhood.<sup>103</sup> Without denying the potential harm that stone throwing has against the Israeli military forces, Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian argues the Israeli 'state's security discourse and law enforcement regime constructs each Palestinian child as a "potential terrorist" ' thus permitting the securitisation of children as potential threats.<sup>104</sup> Therefore, the construction of the Israeli military subjectivity depends on the constitution of an antagonistic representation that envisages Palestinians (including children) as enemies that disregard the value of life.

Finally, yet significantly, the insistence on fear, anxiety, and exposure to Palestinian threat during military service at checkpoints and during house arrests and searches shows the role of emotions in constituting the Israeli military forces as vulnerable figures. This (self-)representation of defencelessness is important for the justification of violence against Palestinians because the discourse of

'fear works to create a sense of being overwhelmed: rather than being contained in an object, fear is intensified by the impossibility of containment. If the others who are feared "pass by," then the others might pass their way into the community, and could be anywhere and everywhere'.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Educational officer, Beit Morasha of Jerusalem, Jerusalem, May 2015.

<sup>102</sup> Brocklehurst, H. *Who's Afraid of Children?: Children, Conflict and International Relations* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2006), p. 34.

<sup>103</sup> Brocklehurst, *Who's Afraid of Children?*, p. 14.

<sup>104</sup> Shalhoub-Kevorkian, N. 'Stolen childhood: Palestinian children and the structure of genocidal dispossession', *Settler Colonial Studies*, 6 (2016) p. 143.

<sup>105</sup> Ahmed, 'Affective Economies', p. 124

This pervasive vulnerability infuses civil-military relations in Israel and imposes an emotional reading of the Palestinian and Israeli Jewish bodies that present the former as vulnerable and the latter as fearsome. The discourse of vulnerability constructs both the Israeli military individual and collective bodies because vulnerability ‘spreads outwards from the soldier to the persons and institutions linked to him in the form a sense of risk and endangerment, as a sort of productive contamination’ therefore this pervasive discourse of vulnerability enhances the public support for the military and their tolerance for the IDF’s violence against Palestinians.<sup>106</sup> Since the Israeli military forces might not be able to tell the difference between who is and who is not dangerous whereas Palestinians might pass unnoticed and unremarked, military personnel ‘keep looking for signs of difference and justif[y] violent forms of intrusion into the bodies of others’.<sup>107</sup> Therefore, the presentation of Palestinians as threatening subjects, and the inability to distinguish between a genuine motive and a deceptive reason of passing through checkpoints determine the reading of Palestinian bodies ‘in advance of their arrival’ as potential ‘cause of an injury to the [Israeli] national [and individual] body’.<sup>108</sup> By presenting social encounters between the Israeli citizen-soldiers and Palestinians through the lens of the emotions that accompany them, the pre-military academies present violence as a self-defence endeavour thus concealing the political complexity of the IDF’s presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. In this way, the IDF strengthens the public’s trust in the Israeli military, and confines the investigation, prosecution, and condemnation of the Israeli forces’ violent behaviour against Palestinians.

The constitution of the Israeli military subjectivity shows the importance of emotions in sanctioning, concealing, and depoliticising the IDF’s violence against Palestinians. The pedagogical practices pursued at *Beit Morasha* indicate that military subjectivity is constituted through the circulation and imposition of fear, anxiety, compassion or moral superiority on different Israeli Jewish and Palestinians figures through the alignment of some subjects with others and against some others across ‘relationships of difference and displacement’.<sup>109</sup> In *Beit Morasha*’s imaginary, the Israeli military subject is imbued with affective dispositions that envisage it as ethically

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<sup>106</sup> MacLeish, K. T. *Making War at Fort Hood: Life and Uncertainty in a Military Community* (Princeton and Oxford, Princeton University Press, 2013), pp. 16-17.

<sup>107</sup> Ahmed, ‘Affective Economies’, p. 122.

<sup>108</sup> Ahmed, ‘Affective Economies’, p.122.

<sup>109</sup> Ahmed, ‘Affective Economies’, p. 119.

and morally superior. Palestinians are the source of Israeli forces' physical and moral vulnerability since they threaten the lives of Israeli military personnel and their desire to practice universal values. The Israeli military personnel are committed to humanitarian values during their military service and to act with compassion but they cannot trust the Palestinians' good-willing nature due to their alleged proneness to violence.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter explores the role of emotions in educational activities that nurture the Israeli military subjectivity and presents the actors, institutions, and the discourses that shape the socio-cultural, historical, and military background of the Israeli forces. It highlights emotions play an important role in processes of military socialisation and in concealing, justifying, and depoliticising the IDF's violence against Palestinians. Didactic programmes work with and through the emotions of military recruits and personnel in order to determine them to *acquire* and *feel* certain dispositions towards the military and the society. Military socialisation through emotional education shows that pedagogical programmes shape the affective and bodily dispositions of the Israeli military personnel by equipping them with an emotional repertoire that helps them to decide how to approach military service, its aims, and its challenges. The examination of didactic practices through which the Israeli military personnel learn the history of Israel and of the Israel/Palestine conflict, develop an awareness of the Israeli Jewish identity, and acquire ethical knowledge in order to perform their military service in an exemplary way indicates the IDF insist on cultivating a virtuous individual and collective military image. This representation provides a romanticised view on the Israeli military service by envisaging the servicemen and women as exemplary citizen-soldiers that care for themselves, for the others, and for the wellbeing of those further away who are less fortunate than themselves. The examination of the role of emotions in cultivating military subjectivity indicates the cultivation and dissemination of a novel military subjectivity that blends heroism, vulnerability, and devotion to Israel with humanitarian behaviour towards Palestinians and foreigners that need aid. Therefore, through its emphasis on 'values of self-realization', the IDF nurture and circulate a new

military ‘ethos based on professionalism, rationality, achievement, and nurturing the body and soul’.<sup>110</sup>

However, recruits do not always consent to the official narrative cultivated and disseminated by the Education and Youth Corps and by its affiliated institutions thus showing that ‘the body [of the soldier] is not just clay for social forces to mold, it is a dynamic system of its own with its own energy and drives’.<sup>111</sup> Episodes during which the (future) Israeli military personnel question the abridged narratives forwarded by tour guides in Jerusalem, disobey and criticise course leaders’ pedagogical practices, question the role of religious discourse in the military or determine the military to pay attention to their personal grievances show the readiness of recruits to alter, modify, and question the Israeli socialisation processes. The educational practices that ask the Israeli servicemen and women to work through their emotions in order to develop an outstanding military persona highlight that ‘subjectivity and identification emerge and are reconfigured through affective relations. How we belong, and how we desire to belong, are not fixed notions in space and time’.<sup>112</sup> The socialisation of the Israeli military personnel is a dynamic process through which they negotiate military subjectivity at the intersection between their personal background and their exposure to official military narratives. Therefore, the constitution of the Israeli military subjectivity shows recruits

‘are clearly not only passive victims to the relations of rule to which they are subjected. They chose alternatives and act within (and even peek beyond?) the conditions of possibility that governing discourses define and that material circumstances dictate. In short, human beings surely exercise agency and enjoy some extent of freedom. Yet, they are also (self-)governed in the very exercising of the freedoms that they enjoy’.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Levy et al. ‘From “Obligatory Militarism” to “Contractual Militarism”’, p. 142.

<sup>111</sup> Gray, C. H. ‘Posthuman Soldiers in Postmodern War’, *Body and Society*, 9 (2003) p. 220.

<sup>112</sup> Kouri-Towe, ‘Textured Activism’, p. 28.

<sup>113</sup> Stern, M., Hellberg, S. and Hansson, S. ‘Studying the agency of being governed?: An introduction’, in *Studying the Agency of Being Governed*, edited by Stina Hansson, Sofie Hellberg and Maria Stern (London & New York, Routledge, 2015), p. 1.

The readiness to the Israeli military personnel to question the military culture in which they are socialised illustrates the political implications of promoting and disseminating a virtuous military image within the geopolitical complexity of the Israel/Palestine conflict. By cultivating and circulating the image of an exemplary citizen-soldier, the IDF constrain the possibility to hold the Israeli military personnel accountable for their violent practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The Israeli (future) recruits are offered abridged version of history that disregards Palestinian history and their contemporary ramifications. This allows the Israeli military to reiterate the image of a defensive army and to dismiss post-Zionist perspectives regarding the Israel/Palestine conflict. Equally significant, the pedagogical activities coordinated by the Education and Youth Corps craft the image of a soldier who carries appropriate ethical baggage to perform his or her tasks in an exemplary way when meeting Palestinian civilians. Implicitly, this representation conceals the violence that is inherent to military service, masks the purpose of the Israeli military's presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, elevates its moral standing, and deflects criticism against the military personnel's violent behaviour. The following chapter continues the study of the cultivation of the Israeli military subjectivity at the intersection between civil and military spheres. It investigates the (self-)representations of virtuous Israeli servicemen and women on social media. The survey of the emotions captured, circulated, and provoked by the (self-) representations of servicemen and women in the digital sphere shows the IDF's official Facebook account disseminates the image of a tough yet compassionate and gentle military figure. This digital illustration of military subjectivity addresses both local and international audiences and has serious political implications for the Israel/Palestine conflict. It highlights the impeccability of the Israeli military at the detriment of a fearsome and vile Palestinians, and reduces internal and external criticism against the military by likening the IDF with other Western militaries engaged in the global alliance against radical forces. Through this representation, the complexity of the Israel/Palestine conflict is moderated and the Palestinian population grievances are ignored while the Israeli military maintains an irreproachable individual and collective image.



### **Chapter 3: Digital Camouflage: A Happy, Cosmopolitan, and Humanitarian Military**

*There is only one truth. IDF soldiers, our sons and our daughters, are the most moral and cutest in the world.*<sup>1</sup>

Passing through a checkpoint, together with friends, in their way to a picnic venue outside Ramallah, Raja Shehadeh describes their interaction with Israeli soldiers as following:

‘The female Israeli soldiers wore tight khaki trousers, the low waist emphasizing the contours of their hips, and were bedecked with mobile phones. They looked at us through their dark sunglasses, giving orders with their hands while exchanging flirty looks and sexual innuendos with the male soldiers, with whom they conversed in loud Hebrew. To them we were mere specks on the terrain that belonged exclusively to them and they could move us around with a flick of their little finger like pieces on a chequerboard. They lived in their own world, operating the highly technical security apparatus that they seemed to believe entitled them to an exclusive place in the advanced modern world’.<sup>2</sup>

This description provides a fascinating representation of the modern Israeli military subjectivity and a bitter assessment of the socio-political reality of the Israel/Palestine conflict. Informed by Shehadeh’s description of contemporary soldiering that combines femininity, masculinity, desire, power, and technology, this chapter studies the Israeli military (self-)representations on social media. Taking a cue from Adi Kuntsman’s belief that ‘digital media technologies (...) can be objects,

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<sup>1</sup> Nir Barkat quoted in Harel, A. ‘Why the Israeli Army is Dropping Its Controversial Hannibal Directive’. *Haaretz*, 3 July 2016. Available at: <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.728355> [Accessed 25 June 2017].

<sup>2</sup> Shehadeh, R. *Occupation Diaries* (London, Profile Books, 2013), pp. 1-2.

mediators and repositories of affect', it argues the Israeli digital military (self-)images represent aesthetic practices that embody, disseminate, and elicit emotions in order to craft a happy, cosmopolitan, and humanitarian military subjectivity. Engaging embodied emotions and emotional readings of the Israeli military bodies alike, these military (self-)representations nurture the conviction that the 'IDF is the most moral army in the world' and shield the Israeli forces from accountability for their violent behaviour against Palestinians. Specifically, the Israeli military (self-)images on social media craft a positive soldiering representation showing that military service is not an unpleasant activity. Rather, it gives military personnel the opportunity to develop their skills and to provide humanitarian help to Palestinians and to other populations that find themselves under distress. Inevitably, the impeccability of the Israeli military subjectivity is contrasted with the gendered and racialised representations of Palestinians as violent, vile, and threatening (young) men who are willing to sacrifice their lives in order to kill Israeli citizen-soldiers. Therefore, the IDF use social media in order to disseminate an idealised military image that justifies the military's violence against Palestinians, and that dismisses violent acts as breaches of military discipline, as reckless instances of violence, or as unfortunate events that take place during military service.

This chapter divides in four sections in order to examine the role of emotions embedded, circulated, and provoked by the IDF's digital (self-)images for the purposes of cultivating a happy, cosmopolitan, and humanitarian military figure. The first one studies the two-fold purpose of the Israeli military's use of social media. It highlights social media is not only a public relations tool for the purposes of cultivating a positive military image, but it is also a social space in which the Israeli military personnel constitute their subjectivities by rehearsing the IDF's benign representation for the purposes of inviting affinity with the Israeli military. The second section examines the (self-)representations that envisage military service as a peaceful and enjoyable activity that permits recruits to travel across the land that they protect. The following one addresses the symbolism through which digital (self-) images present military service along a symbolic continuum ranging from toughness and proficiency to gentleness and attractiveness. Through a varied representation of masculinity and femininity, the military's digital presence moderates concerns regarding the militarisation of the Israeli society by imagining a strong and competent yet kind and gentle military subject. The fourth section shows the IDF insist on representing themselves as an institutional site

that gives military personnel, irrespective of their gender, ethnicity, class, or religion, the opportunity to develop their skills in order to excel in their military and civilian careers. Images that show Israeli servicemen and women who help Palestinians, who follow humanitarian laws during military interventions in the Gaza Strip, and who provide humanitarian aid in Nepal or Japan round the IDF's professional military image and reinforce its admirable characteristics. The chapter concludes the IDF's Facebook account represents an affective social space through which the Israeli military cultivates affinity between the IDF, local, and international audiences. The Israeli military takes advantage of digital technology in order to craft and circulate a romanticised military subjectivity that moderates criticism against its violent practices, and that constrains the possibility to hold the IDF accountable for their violent behaviour against Palestinian civilians.

## **Social Media: A Public Relation Tool and a Space for Constituting Military Subjectivity**

Social media gives the IDF the opportunity to cultivate and disseminate a positive military image by inviting recruits to perform an idealised military figure that constrains the investigation, prosecution, and condemnation of the Israeli forces for their violent behaviour against Palestinians. Nevertheless, the Israeli military's choice to maintain a presence on social media is not peculiar to Israel's defence forces. The British, the American, and the Canadian armies host a growing presence on social media.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the Swedish military sanctioned the publication of military blogs ('milblogs') authored by military personnel who depict everyday life in the military, and linked them to the official website of the Swedish defence forces.<sup>4</sup> The military's use of social media suggests the increasing efforts made by defence forces to align themselves with modern technological developments, to build a positive domestic image, to foster public support for its existence, and to appeal to the public for the

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<sup>3</sup> The Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces, *The Official Instagram Account of the Canadian Army / Compte Instagram Officiel de l'Armée Canadienne*. Available at: <https://www.instagram.com/armeednarmy/> [Accessed 25 June 2017]; United States Department of Defense, *The Official Instagram Account of the American Army*. Available at: <https://www.instagram.com/usarmy/> [Accessed 25 June 2017]; United Kingdom Ministry of Defence, *The Official Instagram Account of the British Army*. Available at: <https://www.instagram.com/britisharmy/> [Accessed 25 June 2017].

<sup>4</sup> Hellman, M. 'Milblogs and soldier representations of the Afghanistan War: The case of Sweden', *Media, War & Conflict*, 9 (2016) pp. 48-9.

purposes of recruiting new volunteers. Finally, yet significantly, social media troubles the separation between different private and public spaces that soldiers' bodies belong to. It rearticulates organisational and social hierarchies in the military, and restructures the links between the military, the wider public, and the society as a whole.

The IDF's official Facebook account was launched in 2011 and it is linked to the IDF's Instagram account thus sharing most of the pictures. However, the former social media website offers a richer insight into the configuration of military service in Israel and into the way in which Palestinians are represented in the Israeli official military narrative.<sup>5</sup> Oren Golan and Eyal Ben-Ari's argue the IDF's Official Blog functions as its official website that addresses a varied audience including Israeli English speakers, members of the Jewish Diaspora, and potential Jewish immigrants.<sup>6</sup> Catering to a similar audience, the IDF's Facebook account targets especially young social media users. Updated almost daily, it is managed by the IDF Spokesperson's Unit and represents an online image archive that collects military self-portraits, images of military training, graduation or active duty, pictures of landscape, images of soldiers with their loved ones, photos depicting interactions with Palestinians, and tributes to fallen soldiers or to civilians killed by Palestinian assailants. These aesthetic (self-)representations are sometimes accompanied by servicemen and women's personal reflections regarding their role in the military and the significance of military service in their lives. Moreover, in the 'comment' sections, these pictures gather messages of support and condemnation alike from local and international audiences in a variety of languages. The presence of messages of condemnation could be interpreted in a number of ways, from the lack of enough manpower to oversee the IDF's Facebook account to the Spokesperson's Unit mindfulness that an overly clean military image leads to further accusations against the Israeli military. Interestingly, this unit invites the Israeli military personnel to contribute to this account by uploading private pictures. This practice transforms military forces in subjects and objects of the gaze of the camera, and in producers, and consumers of the photos they upload on social media.

Ayelet Kohn has investigated the (self-)representations of the Israeli military personnel on Instagram, and the comparison between official and private military (self-

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<sup>5</sup> Stein, R. L. 'StateTube: Anthropological Reflections on Social Media and the Israeli State', *Anthropological Quarterly*, 85 (2012) p. 905.

<sup>6</sup> Golan, O. and Ben-Ari, E. 'Armed Forces, Cyberspace, and Global Images: The Official Website of the Israeli Defense Forces 2007-2015', *Armed Forces & Society* [online first] (2016) p. 8.

)images on social media has showed the readiness of the Israeli recruits to consent and conform to the official military narrative. The survey of the Israeli forces' representations of nature and military weaponry in the digital sphere shows these (self-)images symbolise individual and collective binding tools that build solidarity between recruits and the Israeli military.<sup>7</sup> The chapter broadens Kohn's evaluation of the IDF's use of social media by addressing the role of emotions in constituting military subjectivity, and by examining the political role of circulating embodied representations of military subjectivity within the political context of the Israel/Palestine conflict.

Social media represents a virtual space in which the Israeli military personnel constitute and imagine their military subjectivities by circulating embodied experiences for the purposes of public consumption. Representations of Israeli servicemen and women reflect 'the digital mundane in military life' because 'social media and smartphone technologies within the military offer a unique environment in which to investigate the ways in which individuals position themselves within certain axes of institutional and cultural identities'.<sup>8</sup> On social media, the Israeli servicemen and women perform the institutional and cultural identity of the military by inhabiting and evoking ideas, values, beliefs, and assumptions that characterise the military institution. To this end, the IDF's digital (self-)representation show that emotions are part and parcel of the production of individual and collective military identity. Similarly, Bleiker and Hutchison remark that personal affective experiences relate to the broader power relations that characterise political life:

'Emotions help us make sense of ourselves, and situate us in relation to others and the world that surrounds us. They frame forms of personal and social understanding, and are thus inclinations that lead individuals to locate their identity within a wider collective'.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Kohn, A. 'Instagram as a naturalized propaganda tool: The Israel Defence Forces Web site and phenomenon of shared values', *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, 23 (2017) pp. 197-213.

<sup>8</sup> Maltby, S. and Thornham, H. 'The digital mundane: social media and the military', *Media, Culture & Society*, 38 (2016) p. 1153.

<sup>9</sup> Bleiker and Hutchison, 'Fear no more', p. 123.

Nevertheless, the digital representation of Israeli soldiering contains a caveat. It represents a top-down, formal representation of military life that leaves out opposing and contrasting narratives. The IDF Spokesperson's Unit enjoys the prerogative to select, disseminate, or forge pictures in order to construct a positive Israeli military image. Therefore, the IDF's social media accounts represent a unique instance of 'hybridized participatory media productions, because they are produced and disseminated by a dominant military institution, using hegemonic images and narratives, yet are defined and visually presented as vernacular by the[ir] creators'.<sup>10</sup> Rather than assessing the power of the Israeli servicemen and women to shape the image of the Israeli military or examining the presence or absence of agency when discussing these (self-)representations, the chapter focuses on the ways in which agency is prioritised and reproduced in digital (self-)images in order to cultivate an exemplary military subjectivity. In this respect, the examination of the Israeli military's digital (self-)representations offer 'only speculative access to the interior life of the subject' yet it is important to note that the Israeli 'photographic [military] images speak volumes about the cultural context in which they were created'.<sup>11</sup>

Equally significant, the readiness of the Israeli recruits to acquiesce to and support the official discourses cultivated by the IDF must not be ignored. For instance, Eyal Ben-Ari and Liora Sion show that civilians do not perceive Israel's long tradition of compulsory conscription as a burden. Instead, reserve military service represents an opportunity of release from civilian responsibilities, a chance to reconnect with old friends, or an occasion to prove oneself through thrilling and risk-taking military practices.<sup>12</sup> Relatedly, the taking and uploading of military (self-) representations on the IDF's Facebook account should not only be read as a military duty, but also as an indication of the Israeli military personnel's support for and contribution to the official military narrative. Despite that photos circulated on the IDF's official social media account could raise issues of authenticity, they are legitimate instruments for introducing viewers to the social, political, and symbolic order that defines the Israeli military culture. Therefore, this chapter situates digital (self-)images of military service

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<sup>10</sup> Smith, C. M. and McDonald, K. M. 'The Mundane to the Memorial: Circulating and Deliberating the War in Iraq Through Vernacular Soldier-Produced Videos', *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 28 (2011) p. 303.

<sup>11</sup> Adelman, R. A. 'Sold(i)ering Masculinity Photographing the Coalition's Male Soldiers', *Men and Masculinities*, 11 (2009) p. 268.

<sup>12</sup> Sion, L. and Ben-Ari, E. 'Imagined Masculinity: Body, Sexuality, and Family among Israeli Military Reserves', *Symbolic Interaction*, 32 (2009) pp. 29-32.

within the broader power relations that define the Israel/Palestine, and assesses the political consequences of circulating embodied representations of military subjectivity within the political context of this conflict. It shows the Israeli military's aesthetic representations on social media reflect 'processes of identity production' that introduce observers to the 'discursive nature of [military] "experience" ' and to the 'the politics of its construction'.<sup>13</sup> Thus the IDF's digital (self-)representations provide insights with regard to the socio-political and historical processes that constitute the Israeli military subjectivity by recalling that 'it is not individuals who have experience, but subjects who are constituted through experience'.<sup>14</sup>

The distribution of personalised representations of the Israeli military service carries significant implications for the Israel/Palestine conflict. They restrict local and international dissent against the military and the occupation, and confine the investigation, prosecution, and condemnation of the IDF's violence against Palestinians. Moreover, the representation of 'an idealized [Israeli military] image, from which historical and political details, trauma or violence are stripped away' depoliticise the Israel/Palestine conflict and denies the precariousness of Palestinian lives under the occupation.<sup>15</sup> The circulation of a happy, cosmopolitan, and humanitarian military presents the Israeli military personnel as ordinary, young individuals who seem incapable of harming anyone. These youthful and joyful (self-) representations reiterate the military personnel's vulnerability and enhance, in advance, the sorrow for their possible death when confronting Palestinians. In addition, this positive military representation combines combat missions with humanitarian practices thus likening the IDF with other Western militaries that regard themselves as forces for good that are engaged in the global alliance against terrorism. Therefore, the distribution of the Israeli personalised representations of military service on social media cultivate an emotional link between civil and military spheres for the purposes of downplaying and concealing the IDF's violence against Palestinians.

The constitution of the Israeli benign military figure on social media that nurtures local and international affinity with the IDF shows the happy, cosmopolitan, and humanitarian military figure functions as 'an affective vector' that organises views,

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<sup>13</sup> Scott, J. W. 'Experience', in *Feminists Theorize the Political*, edited by Judith Butler and Joan W. Scott (New York, Routledge, 1992), p. 37.

<sup>14</sup> Scott, 'Experience', p. 26.

<sup>15</sup> Sakamoto, R. 'Mobilizing Affect for Collective War Memory', *Cultural Studies*, 29 (2015) p. 166.

desires, and attitudes of empathy and support for the military.<sup>16</sup> Digital military (self-)representations allow audiences to emotionally engage with the Israeli servicemen and women by inviting the former to express sympathy for the military. The investigation of the role of social media in building a sympathetic link indicate that individualised military images evacuate violence from military service by ‘collapsing the political and the personal into a world of public intimacy’ in order to cultivate consent for the IDF’s violent practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, personalised representations of Israeli soldiering reduce the intelligibility of the Israel/Palestine conflict to the intimate experiences of military service by effacing the power structures that sanction military violence and that mask its instrumentality in occupying the Palestinian people. They direct the conversation towards Israeli individual experiences of military service and away from the Palestinian experience of living under the occupation. Moreover, these images invite those that view, comment, and circulate these digital images to situate themselves in the position of the Israeli military personnel, and to imagine them solely as victims of the political and military system that sustains the occupation. In this regard, the Israeli digital (self-)representations on social media show that,

‘the filtration of war through soldiers’ feelings leads to a process of humanization that reduces the entire apparatus of war to the ‘ordinary’ character and the good intentions of the soldier. As such, emotions do not open the road to a critical understanding of war only because they feed collective fear (as the literature on emotions rightly explains), but also because emotions anchors war in the banality of human feelings’.<sup>18</sup>

The following section studies the personalised representations of the Israeli military subjectivity by examining the symbolism through which military service is constituted as an opportunity of release from the civilian responsibilities and as an occasion to travel across the land that deserves protection.

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<sup>16</sup> Sakamoto, ‘Mobilizing Affect’, p. 169.

<sup>17</sup> Berlant, L. *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City: Essays on Sex and Citizenship* (Durham, NC and London, Duke University Press, 1997), p. 1.

<sup>18</sup> Pomarède, J. ‘Normalizing violence through front-line stories: the case of *American Sniper*’, *Critical Military Studies* [advanced online publication] (2016) p. 7.



## Happy and Relaxed Servicemen and Women

It is noteworthy that some pictures posted on the IDF's Facebook account show young male and female soldiers who smile to the camera thus indicating, wittingly or unwittingly, that military service is an exciting, rewarding, and enjoyable activity. These images present Israeli military forces that exude happiness while illustrating core values of the military such as brotherhood in arms, camaraderie, and unity. For instance, the graduates of the Naval Officers course shared a group photo showing an all-male group of recruits forming a circle and smiling. One of the graduates disclosed his thoughts on finishing the course: 'When we are at sea we depend on each other; brotherhood and unity are key for our success'.<sup>19</sup> Another picture, without any caption, shows a group of servicemen posing with their weapons and an Israeli flag. They are dressed in their military uniforms and have paint on their faces suggesting they are preparing for or have finished a military drill.<sup>20</sup> Whereas these (self-)representations provide a traditional illustration of military service since the camera focuses on conventional group pictures, other pictures depict camaraderie and brotherhood in a novel way by incorporating features that characterise (self-) representation on social media. Celebrating the interlinkage between camaraderie and unity with equality between sexes, Captain Teo Hiablochnik, an Operations Branch Officer in the Home Front Command, posted a selfie taken together with her cheerful peers, that is accompanied by the following caption: 'I always get excited to see the new male and female soldiers. They don't hesitate to show their love for the state and their commitment to Israel's security and the security of its citizens'.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> The IDF Spokesperson's Unit, 'Timeline Photos', *The IDF's Official Facebook Page*, 11 March 2016, Available at:

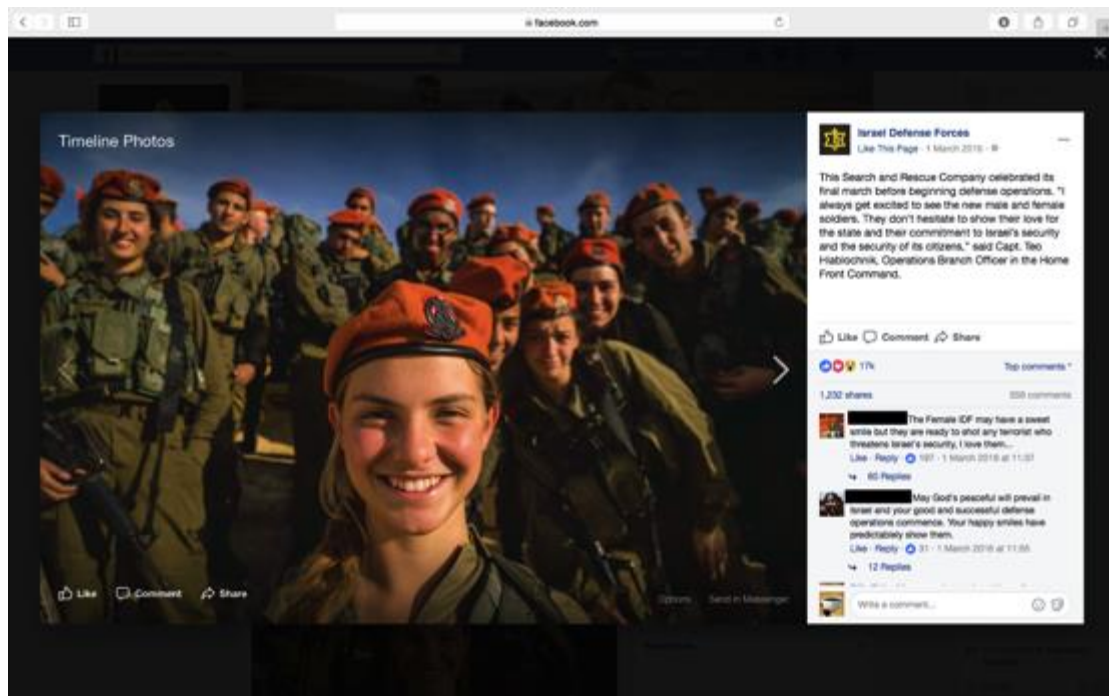
<https://www.facebook.com/idfonline/photos/a.250335824989295.62131.125249070831305/1125365027486366/?type=3&theater> [Accessed 25 June 2017].

<sup>20</sup> The IDF Spokesperson's Unit, 'Timeline Photos', *The IDF's Official Facebook Page*, 26 July 2016, Available at:

<https://www.facebook.com/idfonline/photos/a.250335824989295.62131.125249070831305/1212587092097492/?type=3&theater> [Accessed 25 June 2017].

<sup>21</sup> The IDF Spokesperson's Unit, 'Timeline Photos', *The IDF's Official Facebook Page*, 1 March 2016, Available at:

<https://www.facebook.com/idfonline/photos/a.250335824989295.62131.125249070831305/1118355284854007/?type=3&theater> [Accessed 25 June 2017].



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**Figure 2** Captain Theo Hiabochnik's Group Selfie

Similarly, a picture shows a mixed group of service men and women smiling, waving they hands, showing the 'victory' sign or their tongue to the photographer, while one servicewoman adopts a seductive pose for the camera. This aesthetic representation contests the traditional image of military forces by depicting them in a relaxed, humorous, and playful way thus indicating the growing links between youth, military, and respectively, digital culture. The readiness of the Israeli 'soldiers [to] perform not only in front of the camera, but apparently even *for* the camera, often in playful, intimate, and humorous ways' suggests the IDF aim to present military service in favourable terms in order to restrict dissenting practices.<sup>22</sup> These joyful and funny representations of military service permit recruits to reveal their individual characteristics, moderate the compulsory nature of military duty, and show that military enrolment does not cease the recruits' relation with their civilian universe. The apparent readiness of the Israeli military to circulate images with casual representations of military service illustrates the IDF's awareness that civilian support for the military

<sup>22</sup> Andén-Papadopoulos, K. 'US Soldiers Imagining the Iraq War on YouTube', *Popular Communication: The International Journal of Media and Culture*, 7 (2009) [emphasis in original] p. 22.

depends on the permeability between civil and military relations and on allowing military personnel to leave their imprint on the military culture.

Furthermore, the infiltration of the digital culture in the military refashions the ideas of unity and brotherhood in arms by crafting the image of military service as a funny and amusing social experience. A number of pictures present military personnel enjoying themselves while re-enacting (famous) film scenes, dressing up for the Purim festival, or receiving the visit of pop culture icons. For example, one picture shows three soldiers re-enacting a scene from the famous franchise film *Star Wars*. The caption of the picture celebrates the release of the most recent part, 'Episode VII: The Force Awakens: Today is the day. #ForceAwakens #StarWars'.<sup>23</sup> Another photo presents four female servicewomen who have posed for a picture while using the Snapchat app (that allows sending filtered pictures to a network of friends). It presents them dressed for winter accompanied by a snowman icon and the well-known line from the animated film *Frozen*: 'The COLD never bothered me anyway!'. Significantly, the caption of the picture hints at the playfulness of military service yet indicates the objectification of female soldiers: 'A cold and cute snap from our soldiers up north'.<sup>24</sup> Another picture disseminated on the IDF's Instagram account shows two soldiers enjoying their spare time while playing soccer. Its caption reads: 'Across #Israel, our #soldiers find time to take a #break and enjoy their #weekend. A little #soccer anyone?'.<sup>25</sup> By forwarding pictures that illustrate moments of relaxation and respite, the IDF show that military life is marked by less intense moments during which servicemen and women 'are alleviating boredom, releasing stress, and confirming their camaraderie'.<sup>26</sup> Humour is important for the lives of the military forces insofar as jokes and banter contribute to the creation of a feeling of closeness and solidify their social bonds, which are necessary for the cohesion of the unit. An atmosphere of relaxation, joy, brotherhood, and harmony defines the Israeli military. Due to Israeli citizen-

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<sup>23</sup> The IDF Spokesperson's Unit, 'Timeline Photos', *The IDF's Official Facebook Page*, 17 December 2015, Available at:

<https://www.facebook.com/idfonline/photos/a.250335824989295.62131.125249070831305/1077790362243833/?type=3&theater> [Accessed 25 June 2017].

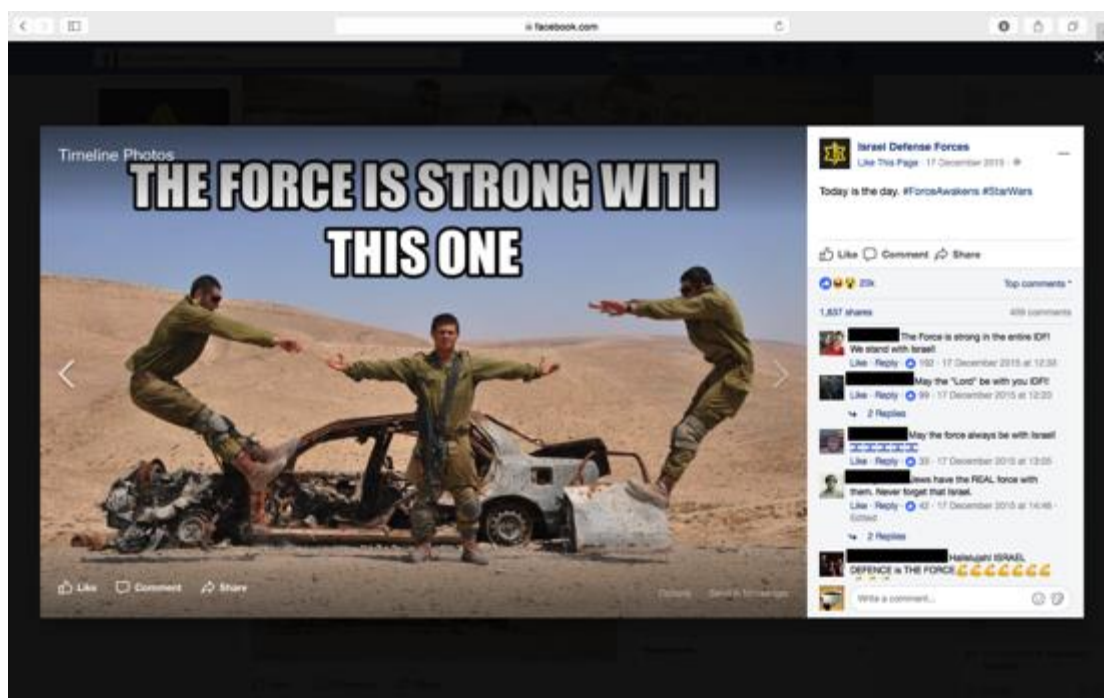
<sup>24</sup> The IDF Spokesperson's Unit, 'Timeline Photos', *The IDF's Official Facebook Page*, 26 January 2016, Available at:

<https://www.facebook.com/idfonline/photos/a.250335824989295.62131.125249070831305/1099566383399564/?type=3&theater> [Accessed 25 June 2017].

<sup>25</sup> The IDF Spokesperson's Unit, *The IDF's Official Instagram Page*. Available at: <https://www.instagram.com/p/yz8pEfDPvw/?hl=en> [Accessed 25 June 2017].

<sup>26</sup> Kennedy, L. 'Soldiers' photography: visualising the war in Iraq', *Review of International Studies*, 35 (2009) p. 828.

soldiers' continuous transition between the civil and military spheres and the military's reliance on reserve troops, the IDF favour an atmosphere of informality that preserves a 'feel good' atmosphere for the purposes of easing the burden associated with obligatory conscription.<sup>27</sup>



© The IDF Spokesperson's Unit

**Figure 3** Soldiers Re-enact a Star Wars Scene

Nevertheless, the intertwining between military and popular culture references enables the IDF to conceal the violence of military service. Specifically, popular culture references such as *Frozen* or *Star Wars* (a violent film nonetheless) envisage military duty, war, and conflict as pleasurable and entertaining activities. Roger Stahl cautions against the interweaving between military and entertainment because these practices 'control public opinion by distancing, distracting, and disengaging the citizen from the realities of the war'.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, the IDF's (self-) representations permit local and international audiences 'to plug in to the [Israeli] military publicity machine, not only through new media technologies but also through rhetorics that portray war as a "battlefield playground" '.<sup>29</sup> The representation of the Israeli military service as a

<sup>27</sup> Sion and Ben-Ari, 'Imagined Masculinity', p. 24.

<sup>28</sup> Stahl, R. *Militainment, Inc.: War, Media, and Popular Culture* (New York & London, Routledge, 2010), p. 3.

<sup>29</sup> Stahl, *Militainment, Inc*, pp. 6 & 16.

playful activity moderates the sacrifice of soldiers, conceals the violence to which they are exposed and to which they expose others, and obscures the suffering of the Palestinian civilians that are caught in the middle of conflict and war. Images that show the Israeli servicemen and women re-enacting famous scenes from films or while having fun with their peers ‘tend to downplay the militarized nature of the soldier’ by accentuating ‘instead the soldiers’ youth, playfulness, sexiness, and livelihood’.<sup>30</sup> Through these cheerful digital military (self-) images, the IDF disseminate a positive and carefree soldiering image that disconnects the military from its violent practices, and moderates criticism against the militarisation of the Israeli society and against the military personnel’s violence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Juxtaposed with the stereotypical image of a malevolent Palestinian young man (and woman) that throws stones and attacks citizens and military personnel with knives or guns, these positive aesthetic representations enhance the vulnerability of the military service and limits the possibility to hold the IDF accountable for their violent behaviour. If violent episodes occur, a benign military image permits the justification of any kind of violence against Palestinians as self-defence, allows for imagining the Israeli military personnel as innocent victims, and enables shifting the responsibility of violence on Palestinians by assuming the latter are despicable individuals who harm young, beautiful, and happy citizen-soldiers.

Finally, yet significantly, (self-)images of Israeli soldiering in the middle of nature and pictures with military personnel that gaze at the landscape that rests in front of their eyes reinforce the representation of military service as an enjoyable activity. These aesthetic representations associate military service with tranquillity, relaxation, and reflection. Some pictures show Israeli servicemen and women carrying or being covered with the Israeli flag while gazing over an empty valley.<sup>31</sup> These photos recall the symbolism of the pioneers, the first Jews that arrived in today’s Israel in order to cultivate, settle, and defend the land. This representation is linked with the well-rehearsed narrative according to which this is an empty land without people that waits

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<sup>30</sup> Hochberg, *Visual Occupations*, p. 12.

<sup>31</sup> The IDF Spokesperson’s Unit, ‘Timeline Photos’, *The IDF’s Official Facebook Page*, 26 August 2016, Available at:

<https://www.facebook.com/idfonline/photos/a.250335824989295.62131.125249070831305/1236295473059987/?type=3&theater> [Accessed 25 June 2017]; The IDF Spokesperson’s Unit, ‘Timeline Photos’, *The IDF’s Official Facebook Page*, 7 August 2015, Available at:

<https://www.facebook.com/idfonline/photos/a.250335824989295.62131.125249070831305/1018061248216745/?type=3&theater> [Accessed 25 June 2017].

to be settled.<sup>32</sup> Equally significant, Aylet Kohn emphasises that ‘photographing a landscape is an act of claiming ownership’ because the soldier-photographer ‘claims a piece of landscape, demarks it, and shares it with others’.<sup>33</sup> Linking ownership of and admiration for the beauty of the nature, these pictures have a strong ideological significance. They represent unity between the soldier and the nature, and emphasise the symbolic and physical possession of the land depicted. Through these picturesque representations, military service becomes an opportunity to see and travel across the (occupied Palestinian) land thus generating ‘new cartographies of leisure rather than violence, thereby fictively denuding the occupation of its violence’.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, Liam Kennedy recalls that pictures of landscape that present soldiers admiring or photographing nature denote the ‘imperial gaze of a victorious, occupying force’.<sup>35</sup> Through the intersection of the touristic gaze with the occupying one, the image of the Israeli soldier-tourist normalises the occupation, elides its violence, and sustains the official narrative about the occupation that envisages the Israeli military as a non-threatening presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

The illustration of military service as a pleasant activity that allows for moments of playfulness and opportunity to know one’s land represents an aesthetic technique through which the Israeli military detaches itself from the violence that is inherent in military service. This image carries implications for the way in which local and international audiences perceive the Israeli military. It moderates the compulsory feature of military service by addressing the local public and the Jewish Diaspora alike. The circulation of a benign military representation constructs military duty less as a gruelling activity and more as a tranquil and enjoyable one that permits recruits to know the land they inhabit and defend. This image appeases recruits’ and their families’ fears regarding the injuries (even the death) that young men and women might experience during military service. Moreover, the representation of joyful, happy, and relaxed military personnel encourage those that access the IDF’s Facebook account to regret, in advance, the possible loss of these young and cheerful men and women in combat. Therefore, the circulation of a positive military image on social media enables the

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<sup>32</sup> Weissbrod, L. *Israeli Identity: In Search of a Successor to the Pioneer, Tsabar and Settler* (London, Frank Cass, 2002).

<sup>33</sup> Kohn, ‘Instagram as a naturalized propaganda tool’, pp. 204-5.

<sup>34</sup> Stein, R. L. ‘#StolenHomes: Israeli Tourism and/ as Military Occupation in Historical Perspective’, *American Quarterly*, 68 (2016) p. 551.

<sup>35</sup> Kennedy, ‘Soldiers’ photography’, p. 826.

cultivation of an affective link between the IDF and the local and international audiences that view these digital representations. Implicitly, these aesthetic practices encourage those that navigate the IDF's social media account to identify with the Israeli military, to sanction the legitimacy of the Israeli narrative regarding the Israel/Palestine conflict, and to condemn Palestinians for their readiness to injure young, happy, and harmless Israeli citizen-soldiers.

## **Gender Roles in the Israeli Military**

### ***Strong, Loving, and Protective Servicemen***

The pictures circulated on social media provide a contemporary representation of the figure of the 'New Jew', the cultural archetype of the Zionist movement. This image is informed by discourses of nationalism, colonialism, race, militarism, and Social Darwinism that emerged at the end of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century. The 'New Jew' symbol represents the incarnation of the Zionist leaders' belief that the process of nation building necessitated the rejuvenation of the Jewish individual and collective body as a remedy for the physical, psychical, and spiritual ailments of the Diaspora Jew.<sup>36</sup> Its heroism, military masculinity, and fearlessness were grafted upon the body of the *Sabras*, the first generation of native Jews who were born between 1930s and 1940s. They were the representative figures of the Six-Day War in 1967 and were celebrated for their courage, toughness, self-sacrifice, and dedication to defend the State of Israel during this war.<sup>37</sup> More significantly, the image of the 'new muscular Jew' represents both a model of emulation for Israeli citizen-soldiers, and a political symbol that imposes a hierarchical view regarding the Israeli socio-political order by reinforcing 'the racialized dream of the New Jew's superiority over his Arab enemy'.<sup>38</sup>

The Israeli military (self-)representations evoke the *Sabra's* bravery, vigour, and masculinity in order to show the IDF provide exciting and thrilling moments during which recruits are expected to demonstrate their physical and mental strength. Thus pictures with Israeli male recruits that are engaged in exciting experiences such as parachuting or flying jets recall that 'militaries (...) are quintessential sites of

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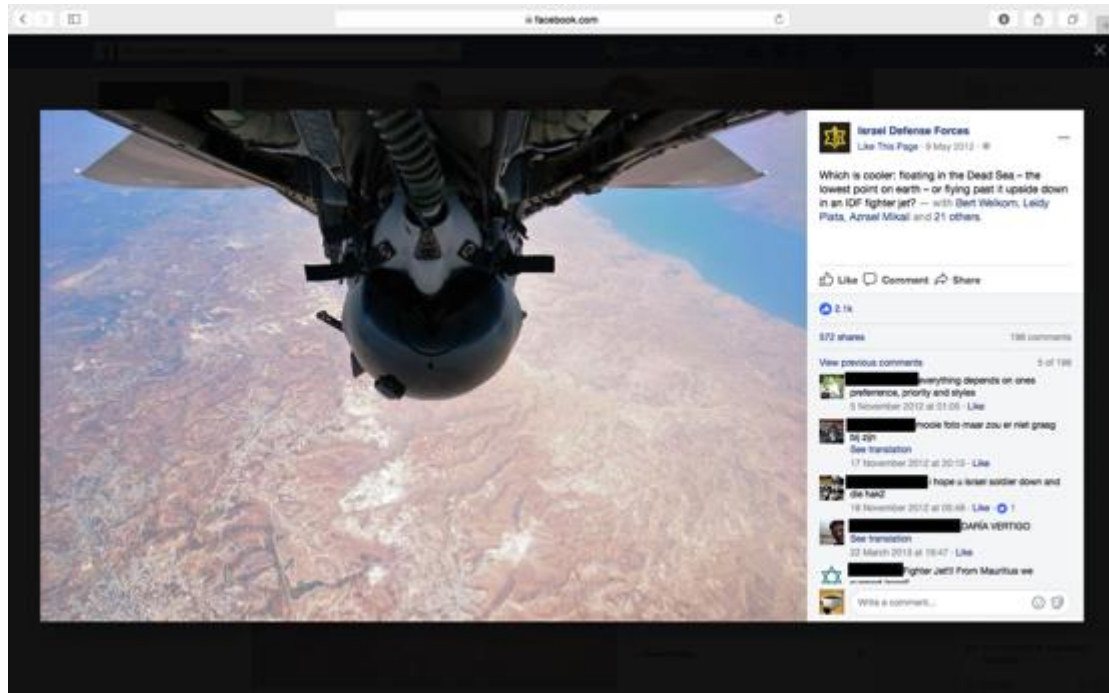
<sup>36</sup> Saposnik, A. B. 'Exorcising the "Angel of National Death" – National and Individual Death (and Rebirth) in Zionist Palestine', *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, 95 (2005) p. 560.

<sup>37</sup> Weiss, M. *The Chosen Body: The Politics of the Body in Israeli Society* (Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press, 2002), pp. 23-6.

<sup>38</sup> Kuntsman, A. 'The Soldier and the Terrorist: Sexy Nationalism, Queer Violence', *Sexualities*, 11 (2008) p. 155.



hypermasculinity’.<sup>39</sup> For instance, a picture illustrates servicemen (and servicewomen) practicing shooting, while another one shows a group of young Israeli males climbing ropes for the purposes of physical training.<sup>40</sup> Another photo presents a pilot taking a selfie while jetting upside down above the Dead Sea. The caption of the picture appeals to those that view it by rhetorically asking: ‘Which is cooler: floating in the Dead Sea – the lowest point on earth – or flying past it upside down in an IDF fighter jet?’.<sup>41</sup>



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**Figure 4 Flying Above the Dead Sea**

Lastly, through the representation of tanks performing a military drill in the Golan Heights, the caption of a picture encourages recruits’ desire to join the military: ‘Don’t you wish you could be there? IDF tank operators sum up their training period

<sup>39</sup> Peterson, V. S. ‘Gender Identities, Ideologies, and Practices in the Context of War and Militarism’, in *Gender, War, and Militarism: Feminist Perspectives*, edited by Laura Sjoberg and Sandra Via (Santa Barbara, CA, ABC-CLIO Press, 2010), p. 23.

<sup>40</sup> The IDF Spokesperson’s Unit, ‘Timeline Photos’, *The IDF’s Official Facebook Page*, 19 June 2015, Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/idfonline/photos/a.250335824989295.62131.125249070831305/995689470453923/?type=3&theater> [Accessed 25 June 2017]; The IDF Spokesperson’s Unit, ‘Timeline Photos’, *The IDF’s Official Facebook Page*, 16 May 2015, Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/idfonline/photos/a.250335824989295.62131.125249070831305/979296115426592/?type=3&theater> [Accessed 25 June 2017].

<sup>41</sup> The IDF Spokesperson’s Unit, ‘Timeline Photos’, *The IDF’s Official Facebook Page*, 9 May 2012, Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/idfonline/photos/a.250335824989295.62131.125249070831305/405542582801951/?type=3&theater> [Accessed 25 June 2017].



with an exercise in the Golan Heights. Who wouldn't want to ride with these guys?'.<sup>42</sup> These pictures recall the link between masculinity and war fighting as a rite of passage that transforms boys into men. The circulation of the traditional image of military masculinity is important for the IDF in order to nurture the fantasies of the Israeli young recruits who might be eager to enjoy the thrills of military service. These aesthetic representations envisage the Israeli military service as a site of 'adventure and challenge – a modern analogue to frontier masculinity – that allow[s] a man to test his physical and mental abilities'.<sup>43</sup> Therefore, representations of hypermasculinity help the IDF to disseminate a myth of invincibility, force, and victory over Palestinian enemies by showing that

'success in war is presumed to demand a constellation of qualities long considered the exclusive province of men: superior physical strength, incomparable male bonding, heroic risk taking, extremes of violence, and readiness to sacrifice one's life for the cause'.<sup>44</sup>

Furthermore, the Israeli representations of servicemen show that military masculinity is not fixed but contingent, and takes multiple forms, shapes, and representations concomitantly. The image of a strong and courageous male figure that tests himself is complemented by representations of soft masculinity in which Israeli male soldiers appear together with their families, especially spouses and children. For instance, a picture shows Private Ziv Shetrit before his draft in the Golani Brigade. Dressed in civilian clothes, he is hugging his wife and gazing at his baby boy.<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, a picture posted on Instagram is accompanied by Major Irad's reflection on the relation between fatherhood and military service with the occasion of Father's Day. Irad's words stress the role of the husband and father as a patriarchal figure who is respected even throughout his absence: 'The definition of #fatherhood as a military

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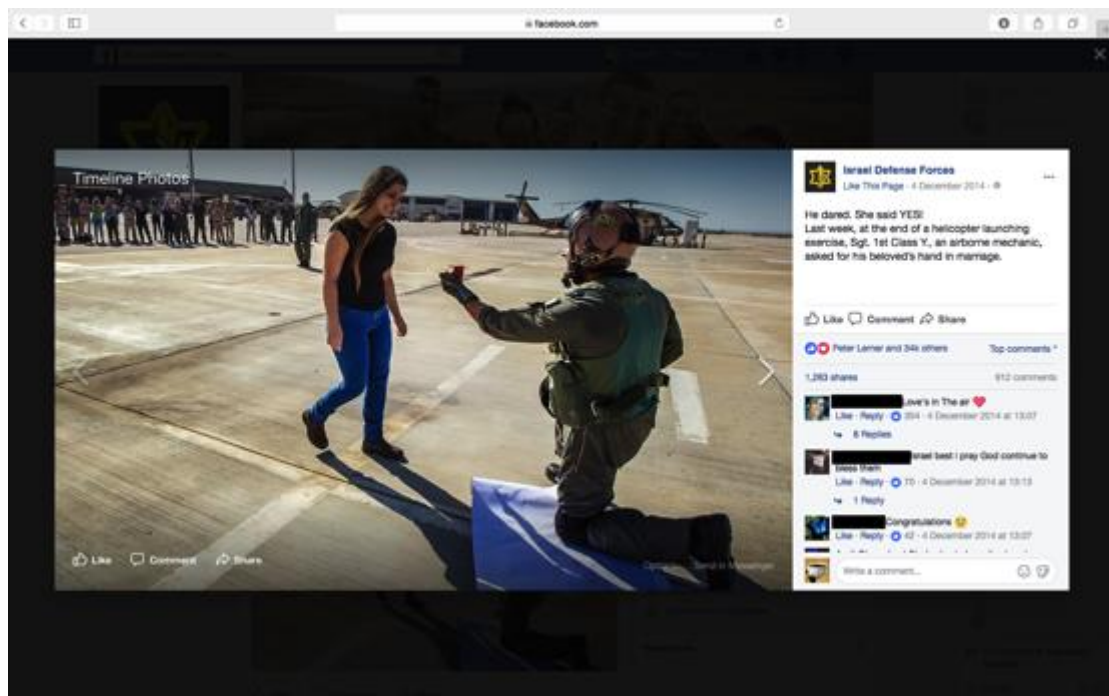
<sup>42</sup> The IDF Spokesperson's Unit, 'Timeline Photos', *The IDF's Official Facebook Page*, 14 March 2012, Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/idfonline/photos/a.250335824989295.62131.125249070831305/367054856650724/?type=3&theater> [Accessed 25 June 2017].

<sup>43</sup> Brown, M. T. *Enlisting Masculinity: The Construction of Gender in US Military Recruiting Advertising during the All-Volunteer Force* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 6.

<sup>44</sup> Peterson, 'Gender Identities, Ideologies, and Practices', p. 23.

<sup>45</sup> The IDF Spokesperson's Unit, 'Timeline Photos', *The IDF's Official Facebook Page*, 21 July 2013, Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/idfonline/photos/a.250335824989295.62131.125249070831305/597055436983997/?type=3&theater> [Accessed 25 June 2017].

person is not how much you are physically #home, but about the #quality of your presence. Being a good #father means that my presence is still felt even when I'm away from home'.<sup>46</sup> Finally, some posts on social media celebrate the image of the future husband or father by forwarding pictures that depict marriage proposals. For example, a picture shows Sergeant First Class Y. proposing to his fiancée on the tarmac after a helicopter exercise. Pictured kneeling, he is offering an engagement ring to his future wife who is walking towards him while beaming with happiness.<sup>47</sup>



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**Figure 5** Sergeant First Class Y.'s Marriage Proposal

The representation of (heterosexual) families in these pictures 'calls on the traditional theme of the masculine protector that has historically motivated men to fight'.<sup>48</sup> The pictures that present the Israeli military servicemen coming home and meeting with their loved ones evoke idealised images of home, family, and community,

<sup>46</sup> The IDF Spokesperson's Unit, *The IDF's Official Instagram Page*. Available at: [https://www.instagram.com/p/BG1q7ApjPp-/?taken-by=israel\\_defense\\_forces&hl=en](https://www.instagram.com/p/BG1q7ApjPp-/?taken-by=israel_defense_forces&hl=en) [Accessed 25 June 2017].

<sup>47</sup> The IDF Spokesperson's Unit, 'Timeline Photos', *The IDF's Official Facebook Page*, 4 December 2014, Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/idfonline/photos/a.250335824989295.62131.125249070831305/895058623850342/?type=3&theater> [Accessed 25 June 2017].

<sup>48</sup> Brown, *Enlisting Masculinity*, p. 144.

highlight the (potential) bodily sacrifice of the Israeli military figure, and suggest the emotional sacrifice of families and households who worry about their loved one's safety.<sup>49</sup> Within the confines of this gendered representation of the military that celebrates the Israeli soldier as a protective figure, women appear in supporting roles as mothers, wives, and fiancées. Take, for instance, a picture that celebrates Mother's Day by showing a male recruit who kisses and hugs his mother. The caption celebrates the permanent links between mothers and children and highlights the significant role that mothers play in the their sons' lives:

'They watched over us as we learned to tie our shoelaces, cross the street, read and write. They cheered us on at our first soccer game. They offered a warm shoulder and a home-cooked meal on our first weekend back from basic training. Today, on International Mother's Day, we salute all of our mothers for their unconditional love and support'.<sup>50</sup>

The presentation of the Israeli male forces as protecting their families and loved ones echo Elshtain's gendered representation of warfare as 'just warriors' that protect 'beautiful souls'.<sup>51</sup> These pictures envisage the Israeli servicemen as 'just warrior [who] are men of valour, protecting their homes, families, and homeland through warfare justly pursued', while spouses, mothers, and fiancées appear as 'beautiful souls [who] are pure, naïve women who need protection and whose needs motivate men's war'.<sup>52</sup> In this context, the digital illustrations of fathers that protect their families through war fighting 'domesticate' the Israeli servicemen. Although almost always dressed in military uniform, the Israeli serviceman is less an individual that uses force and more a father, a husband, or a son. Therefore, the tropes of war,

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<sup>49</sup> Silvestri, L. 'Surprise homecomings and vicarious sacrifices', *Media, War & Conflict*, 6 (2013) p. 105.

<sup>50</sup> The IDF Spokesperson's Unit, 'Timeline Photos', *The IDF's Official Facebook Page*, 10 May 2015, Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/idfonline/photos/a.250335824989295.62131.125249070831305/976835279006009/?type=3&theater> [Accessed 25 June 2017].

<sup>51</sup> Elshtain, J. B. 'On Beautiful Souls, Just Warriors and Feminist Consciousness', *Women's Studies International Forum*, 5 (1982) pp. 341-48.

<sup>52</sup> Sjoberg, L. 'Gendering the Empire's Soldiers: Gender Ideologies, the U.S. Military, and the "War on Terror"', in *Gender, War, and Militarism: Feminist Perspectives*, edited by Laura Sjoberg and Sandra Via (Santa Barbara, CA, ABC-CLIO Press, 2010), p. 209.

conflict, and violence that accompany the image of Israeli servicemen are overshadowed by ‘apolitical, sentimental, patriarchal family values that function as modes of collective identification among civil spectators’.<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, these aesthetic military representations invite their viewers ‘to identify emotionally with the onscreen family’ and to create a sense of affinity with their military and civilian lives.<sup>54</sup> By encouraging identification with the families represented in these pictures, the IDF cultivate local and international support for their military practices and justify violent actions in the name of defending these happy and close-knit families against the Palestinian threat.

Nonetheless, the absence of non-heterosexual families in these digital representations of the Israeli military is intriguing. The IDF present themselves as an inclusive military that successfully accommodates the LGBTQ recruits. For instance, in 2015, the Israeli military announced a change of policy that would permit same-sex couples to avoid a simultaneous reserve duty due to child-rearing responsibilities.<sup>55</sup> Moreover, the IDF revealed that they would not discriminate between same-sex couples and heterosexual couples with regard to either military pensions or bereavement military benefits.<sup>56</sup> In spite of adopting a law in 1993 that forbade discrimination against the LGBTQ forces and being one of the first militaries that ended restrictions against openly gay forces, media reports indicate that the Israeli military personnel identifying as gay or lesbian are more likely to experience physical and verbal abuse during military service than their heterosexual peers.<sup>57</sup> More significantly, the representation of the IDF as a progressive military determined local and international voices to accuse Israel of pinkwashing, a practice of presenting itself as a liberal,

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<sup>53</sup> Silvestri, ‘Surprise homecomings’, pp. 101-2.

<sup>54</sup> Silvestri, ‘Surprise homecomings’, p. 102.

<sup>55</sup> IDF Blog, *New IDF Policy Supports Equality for Same-Sex Parents*. Available at: <https://www.idfblog.com/2015/06/11/new-idf-policy-supports-equality-sex-parents/> [Accessed 5 September 2017].

<sup>56</sup> Times of Israel Staff, ‘Ya’alon: No difference between bereaved same-sex, heterosexual families’. *The Times of Israel*, 9 May 2016. Available at: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/yaalon-no-difference-between-bereaved-same-sex-heterosexual-partners/> [Accessed 5 September 2017].

<sup>57</sup> The Huffington Post Staff, ‘Gay Pride Month: Israel Defence Facebook Photo Stirs Controversy’. *The Huffington Post*, 11 June 2012. Available at: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/06/11/gay-pride-israel-defense-forces-photo\\_n\\_1587666.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/06/11/gay-pride-israel-defense-forces-photo_n_1587666.html) [Accessed 5 September 2017]; Pfeffer, A. ‘Gay and Lesbian IDF Soldiers Complain of Widespread Sexual Harassment’. *Haaretz*, 16 August 2011. Available at: <http://www.haaretz.com/gay-and-lesbian-idf-soldiers-complain-of-widespread-sexual-harassment-1.378810> [Accessed 5 September 2017].

LGBTQ-friendly country for the purposes of deterring criticism against its violent military practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.<sup>58</sup>

### ***Competent, Domestic, and Beautiful Servicewomen***

The IDF's Facebook account puts forward other images of femininity beyond the figure of the supportive mother, wife, and fiancée. Some pictures present professional servicewomen that serve as trailblazers for their peers or as career servicewomen that are happily blending military and domestic duties. Sergeant Elinoa, a combat soldier at the Sinai border, symbolises the archetype of a 'professional, gender-neutral' servicewoman who is integrated in the military and who is valued for her skills, competences, and abilities.<sup>59</sup> The caption of her picture does not betray any gender stereotypes: 'Being a soldier is about taking an oath to protect your people. That's what we do'.<sup>60</sup> Another photo shows Corporal Einav Karmi, a combat soldier in the Caracal Battalion (infantry combat battalion composed of servicemen and women alike). Pictured smiling, she reflects on the significance of serving as a female combat soldier: 'I think every woman should turn the challenges in her life into experiences that will guide her. Let's break the glass ceiling, so that women around the world will be able to pass through it'.<sup>61</sup> Relatedly, these aesthetic representations of servicewomen celebrate their role as trailblazers for future generations and praise their path-breaking success. For instance, a picture reveals the appointment of the first female naval commander, Captain Or Cohen. Part of the campaign #inspiringwomen, that celebrates the role and status of women in the Israeli military, Captain Cohen declares: 'I am excited and thankful to have this opportunity. As a female officer in the IDF, I believe

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<sup>58</sup> Schulman, S. 'Israel and 'Pinkwashing' '. *The New York Times*, 22 November 2011. Available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/23/opinion/pinkwashing-and-israels-use-of-gays-as-a-messaging-tool.html?mcubz=1> [Accessed 5 September 2017]; Schulman, S. 'A Documentary Guide to Pinkwashing'. *The Huffington Post*, 6 December 2011. Available at: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/sarah-schulman/israel-pinkwashing\\_b\\_1132369.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/sarah-schulman/israel-pinkwashing_b_1132369.html) [Accessed 5 September 2017].

<sup>59</sup> Stachowitsch, S. 'Professional Soldier, Weak Victim, Patriotic Heroine: Gender Ideologies in Debates on Women's Military Integration in the US', *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 15 (2013) p. 163.

<sup>60</sup> The IDF Spokesperson's Unit, 'Timeline Photos', *The IDF's Official Facebook Page*, 3 September 2016, Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/idfonline/photos/a.250335824989295.62131.125249070831305/1243613092328225/?type=3&theater> [Accessed 25 June 2017].

<sup>61</sup> The IDF Spokesperson's Unit, 'Timeline Photos', *The IDF's Official Facebook Page*, 28 June 2015, Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/idfonline/photos/a.250335824989295.62131.125249070831305/1000017890021081/?type=3&theater> [Accessed 25 June 2017].

in incorporating women in significant combat roles'.<sup>62</sup> Likewise, Major Oshrat Bachar's picture was distributed on social media in order to celebrate her accomplishment as the first woman leading a combat battalion.<sup>63</sup> The representations of 'token women' allow the Israeli military to present itself as a progressive institution and to dismiss any criticism against gender equality issues within the IDF. However, there is a suspicion that any representation that celebrates gender equality in military institutions carries the potential to masculinise women and to reinforce 'the masculine givens of militaristic systems that restrict and repress many other women and devalue modes of behavior associated with femininity'.<sup>64</sup>

Notwithstanding this scepticism, it is important to recognise the pictures circulated on the IDF's Facebook account deflect this criticism by presenting the IDF as an institution that does not impede women from carrying traditional roles such as mothering and raising a family. For example, the caption of a photo that shows a servicewoman hugging her daughter illustrates the possibility of weaving military career with one's domestic duties: '34% of our female career soldiers are mothers! Join us in saluting the dedicated moms who choose to raise a family while defending the State of Israel'.<sup>65</sup> This picture nuances the 'idealized model of femininity: pure, dutiful and maternal' by showing the Israeli military gives servicewomen the possibility to pursue a successful military career without threatening their personal lives.<sup>66</sup> Furthermore, in the Israeli military, being a mother is part and parcel of one's military subjectivity and provides further qualification and justification for performing one's service in an exemplary manner. A picture with Lieutenant Colonel Doctor Orly Weinstein highlights the links between her maternal figure and military persona. Presented while caring for a young girl left wounded and orphaned in the aftermath of

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<sup>62</sup> The IDF Spokesperson's Unit, 'Timeline Photos', *The IDF's Official Facebook Page*, 27 November 2014, Available at:

<https://www.facebook.com/idfonline/photos/a.250335824989295.62131.125249070831305/891488234207381/?type=3&theater> [Accessed 25 June 2017].

<sup>63</sup> The IDF Spokesperson's Unit, 'Timeline Photos', *The IDF's Official Facebook Page*, 4 January 2014, Available at:

<https://www.facebook.com/idfonline/photos/a.250335824989295.62131.125249070831305/701391233217083/?type=3&theater> [Accessed 25 June 2017].

<sup>64</sup> Jacoby, T. A. 'Fighting in the Feminine: The Dilemmas of Combat Women in Israel', in *Gender, War, and Militarism: Feminist Perspectives*, edited by Laura Sjoberg and Sandra Via (Santa Barbara, CA, ABC-CLIO Press, 2010), p. 82.

<sup>65</sup> The IDF Spokesperson's Unit, 'Timeline Photos', *The IDF's Official Facebook Page*, 8 May 2016, Available at:

<https://www.facebook.com/idfonline/photos/a.250335824989295.62131.125249070831305/1164684080221127/?type=3&theater> [Accessed 25 June 2017].

<sup>66</sup> Peterson, 'Gender Identities, Ideologies, and Practices', p. 22.



the 2011 earthquake in Japan, Weinstein reflects that ‘as a mother, doctor, and commander in the IDF, it was my duty to save lives’.<sup>67</sup>



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**Figure 6** Lieutenant Colonel Doctor Orly Weinstein Caring For a Japanese Girl

Other pictures inadvertently objectify and sexualise women in the Israeli military. For instance, a picture posted on the IDF’s Instagram account shows a servicewoman signalling an F-16 to take off. The camera focuses on the figure of the woman and foregrounds her bodily shape. The caption of the Instagram picture reads: ‘Shining through the night, this #IDF signalwoman guides an F-16 to the runway for some #nighttime training! @israeliairforce’.<sup>68</sup> This picture embodies the ‘male gaze’ trope, that implies a relation of power according to which the masculine viewer is powerful or empowered and the female viewed is powerless thus being subjected to the power of the male figure. The objectification of women in the IDF is clear in yet another

<sup>67</sup> The IDF Spokesperson’s Unit, ‘Timeline Photos’, *The IDF’s Official Facebook Page*, 11 March 2013, Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/idfonline/photos/a.250335824989295.62131.125249070831305/542429622446579/?type=3&theater> [Accessed 25 June 2017].

<sup>68</sup> The IDF Spokesperson’s Unit, *The IDF’s Official Instagram Page*. Available at: <https://www.instagram.com/p/4o3FrPDPm9/?hl=en> [Accessed 20 January 2017].

picture in which a servicewoman with face paint is photographed while smiling. The caption of the picture reads: ‘Our secret weapon’.<sup>69</sup>

The sexualisation of female recruits is a long-standing practice in the Israeli military institution. Chava Brownfield-Stein has investigated early representations of women in the military and found that the Israeli military relies on a practice of ‘erotic militarization’.<sup>70</sup> This practice demands the circulation of sexualised images of servicewomen in order to deepen the appeal of military service and to foster the celebration of military norms and values in the Israeli society. The objectification of the Israeli servicewomen shows they ‘were constructed culturally as a modernist attraction and as a romantic attraction. Through them, hegemonic representations of the military were created as objects of desire, and military space appeared desirable’ for young Israeli men and women alike.<sup>71</sup> Thus the representation of the Israeli servicewomen as visual icons normalises the military in the Israeli society since it ‘manages to simultaneously hide militarization behind a mask of feminine tropes – a light, pretty, and sexy version of war meant to conceal the violence these soldiers take part in’.<sup>72</sup> Finally, yet relatedly, the femininity of servicewomen is manipulated in order to serve military objectives. For instance, the caption of a picture with Lieutenant Ada stresses that the Islamic State fighters are afraid of being defeated by women because this ‘completely contradicts their radical beliefs’.<sup>73</sup> Therefore, the diverse representation of servicewomen on social media shows the Israeli female military personnel ‘face conflicting expectations and manipulations of their femininity, masculinity, and sexuality’.<sup>74</sup> It also indicates that the Israeli military is defined by a ‘double standard, where women are required to exhibit the capabilities and the traits

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<sup>69</sup> The IDF Spokesperson’s Unit, ‘Timeline Pictures’, *The IDF’s Official Facebook Page*, 17 October 2012. Available at:

<https://www.facebook.com/idfonline/photos/a.250335824989295.62131.125249070831305/476096599079882/?type=3&theater> [Accessed 20 January 2017].

<sup>70</sup> Brownfield-Stein, C. ‘Visual Representations of IDF Women Soldiers and “Civil-Militarism” in Israel’, in *Militarism and Israeli Society*, edited by Gabriel Sheffer and Oren Barak (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN, Indiana University Press, 2010), pp. 304-28.

<sup>71</sup> Brownfield-Stein, ‘Visual Representations of IDF Women Soldiers’, p. 323.

<sup>72</sup> Hochberg, *Visual Occupations*, p. 11.

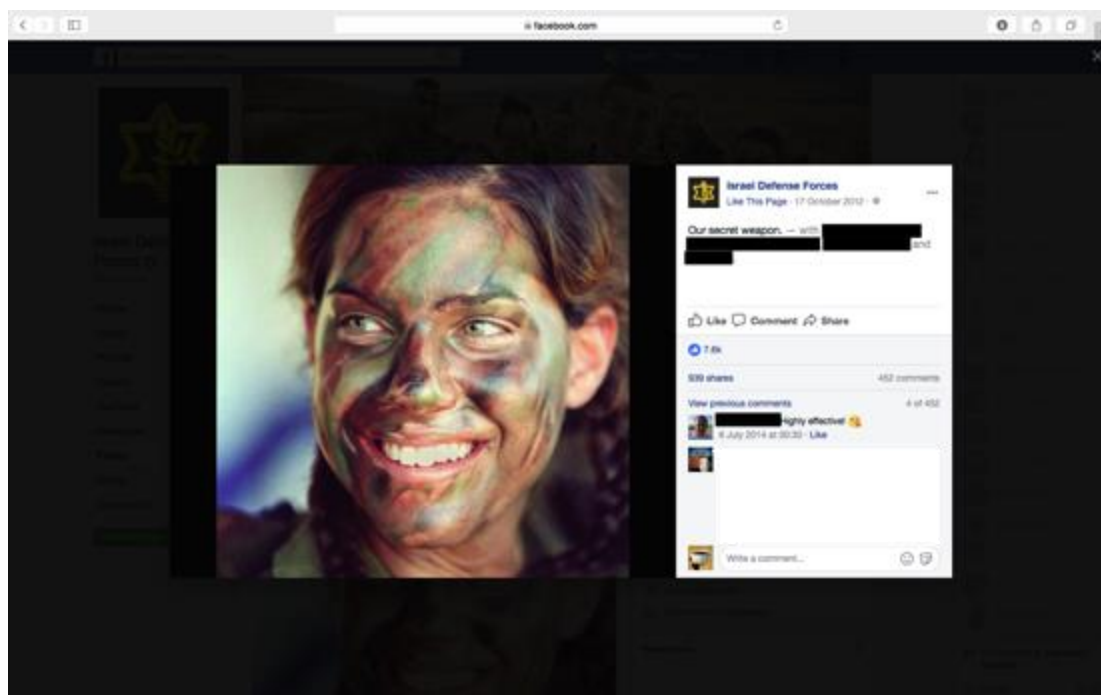
<sup>73</sup> The IDF Spokesperson’s Unit, ‘Timeline Photos’, *The IDF’s Official Facebook Page*, 17 November 2015, Available at:

<https://www.facebook.com/idfonline/photos/a.250335824989295.62131.125249070831305/1063958986960304/?type=3&theater> [Accessed 25 June 2017].

<sup>74</sup> Peterson, ‘Gender Identities, Ideologies, and Practices’, p. 24.



associated with masculinity while maintaining [a] feminine appearance', features, and social identities.<sup>75</sup>



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**Figure 7** The IDF's Secret Weapon

The gendered representation of the Israeli military shows the efforts pursued by the IDF to present themselves as an appealing institution. (Self-)representations of servicemen and women on social media transform the soldiering persona in an 'object of desire, not merely as a subject imposing violence' in order to enhance the motivation of the Israeli recruits to serve.<sup>76</sup> By presenting the Israeli servicemen and women alongside a continuum from toughness to gentleness, these aesthetic practices envision the IDF as an institution that accommodates recruits' eclectic needs, fantasies, and desires. The military celebrates the traditional heroic and protective military figure in order to appeal to those recruits who are drawn to the symbolism of self-sacrifice and who are ready to give their lives to protect the Israeli body politic. This heroic image is important for the Israeli local audience and for the Jewish Diaspora alike in order to

<sup>75</sup> Via, S. 'Gender, Militarism, and Globalization: Soldiers for Hire and Hegemonic Masculinity', in *Gender, War, and Militarism: Feminist Perspectives*, edited by Laura Sjoberg and Sandra Via (Santa Barbara, CA, ABC-CLIO Press, 2010), p. 44.

<sup>76</sup> Crane-Seeber, J. P. 'Sexy warriors: the politics and pleasures of submission to the state', *Critical Military Studies*, 2 (2016) p. 41.

reassure them of the IDF's power to defend Israel. This is significant insofar as the Jewish Diaspora sees Israel as their second home, as a site of security in a hostile world, and as an important actor that would help Jews living outside Israel.<sup>77</sup> Relatedly, these digital (self-)representations remind the Israeli citizen-soldiers that military service is an opportunity to test their abilities, and to prove their determination and strength. Aimed especially at male recruits, the pictures that objectify female military personnel, and that present military service as a thrilling opportunity to demonstrate one's physical and mental capacities moderate the compulsory nature of military service and craft it as an attractive activity. These aesthetic practices transform military service into an appealing endeavour that extracts recruits from their mundane life and that exposes them to new physical, mental, and possibly sexual experiences. However, the presentation of military service as a desirable activity conceals not only the violence that is inherent in military service, but it also exposes 'the role of desire, in sustaining and reinforcing the dominant material-discursive assemblages of masculinity and war' that justify the enactment of violence against Palestinians in order to protect and defend Israel.<sup>78</sup>

Furthermore, this gendered (self-)image of the military that illustrates servicemen and women with their families indicates the military's effort to mitigate worries regarding the burden of military service with respect to recruits' private lives. The circulation of photos that depicts the Israeli forces' personal lives show the military's acknowledgement and implicit responsibility to care for its servicemen and women. In this regard, the IDF temper the demanding nature of the compulsory nature of military service by showing they accommodate individual needs. Therefore, family responsibilities should not be seen as an impediment to performing one's military duty. Moreover, by acknowledging the importance of family in recruits' lives, these digital representations encourage families, and the broader public, to support the Israeli military personnel. For the IDF, it is important to present themselves as an appealing institution both in terms of its stimulating activities and in terms of accommodating family needs. This increases the readiness of recruits to serve, especially in combat positions where the risk for one's life is higher than when performing one's military service in auxiliary positions.

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<sup>77</sup> Golan and Ben-Ari, 'Armed Forces, Cyberspace, and Global Images', p. 10.

<sup>78</sup> Basham, *War, Identity and the Liberal State*, p. 62.

Finally, yet significantly, the representation of military service along a continuum of toughness, virtuosity, gentleness, and desirability evacuates the harm and injury that characterise military service and detaches recruits from the reality of military service. This idealised representation of military service conceals the injuries the Israeli military personnel might experience or perform against Palestinians, and moderates criticism against the military since the IDF present themselves as an institution that is attentive to recruits' needs and desires. Therefore, the image of a tough and caring, competent, and attractive serviceman or woman detaches the IDF from their involvement in the Israel/Palestine conflict, and from its contribution to the occupation of Palestinians. The following section complements the presentation of Israeli military service as an appealing practice. It shows the IDF imagine themselves as a multicultural, professional, and humanitarian military that cares for the individual growth of its personnel, and that is ready to help both Palestinians and those populations from afar that need aid.

## **A Multicultural, Professional, and Humanitarian Military**

### ***An Equal Opportunity Military***

The pictures distributed on social media construct the Israeli military as a multicultural institution that celebrates equality and diversity across race, gender, class, ethnicity, or religion, despite its occasional yet alarming objectification of women. This is reflected in the social media campaign '#idfdiversityweek' (2015), when the IDF's Facebook account circulated photos of servicemen and women who shared their stories of moving to Israel. Having immigrated from Chicago in 1995, Captain Gur Green expressed his admiration for the Israeli military for giving servicemen and women the opportunity to grow as individuals: 'The IDF is a place where equality is an important value and where each individual can utilize their skills to advance and succeed wherever they may serve'.<sup>79</sup> Likewise, Private Sevilla left Cuba in order to build a new life in Israel: 'Joining the IDF is the first step of the life I want to have here'.<sup>80</sup> Other

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<sup>79</sup> The IDF Spokesperson's Unit, 'Timeline Photos', *The IDF's Official Facebook Page*, 26 February 2015, Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/idfonline/photos/a.250335824989295.62131.125249070831305/940446102644927/?type=3&theater> [Accessed 25 June 2017].

<sup>80</sup> The IDF Spokesperson's Unit, 'Timeline Photos', *The IDF's Official Facebook Page*, 28 October 2014, Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/idfonline/photos/a.250335824989295.62131.125249070831305/875860789103459/?type=3&theater> [Accessed 25 June 2017].

pictures present stories of Ethiopian Jews that were brought to Israel during Operation Moses (evacuation of Ethiopian Jews in 1984) or Operation Solomon (evacuation of Ethiopian Jews in 1991).<sup>81</sup> For example, a photo shows a beaming Sergeant Major Moti posing in front of an aircraft. Rescued as a child, he is proud to serve as an aircraft painter for a Hercules airplane, similar to the one that has brought him to Israel: 'It's closing an emotional circle. I'm proud to serve in the Air Force and proud to be working with this special plane'.<sup>82</sup> The multicultural configuration of the military is captured by Sergeant Fhadi Kurani's picture and its message: 'In our battalion, there is no difference between Bedouins, Christian, Jews or Muslims. We all eat together, sleep together and celebrate together'.<sup>83</sup> These pictures evoke a sense of belonging and construct a narrative through which all soldier-citizens, irrespective of their roots, belong to the same military and nation.

Even though the IDF are officially embracing and promoting multiculturalism, research shows immigrants' integration in Israel is flawed insofar as it reinforces class and ethnic divisions within the military and society. For instance, a comparison between military experiences of middle-class Jews (Ashkenazi Jews) and of lower-class Jews (Mizrahi Jews) shows the former enjoy allocation in elite units, while the latter group is marginalised and is relegated to performing menial and lower-ranking jobs during their military service.<sup>84</sup> Likewise, Dana Kachtan's analysis of two brigades (Golani and respectively, the Paratroopers Brigade) shows the Israeli recruits produce, maintain, and reiterate ethnic and class differences through their behaviour, actions, and the ways in which they perceive their participation in the military.<sup>85</sup> Furthermore, Russian Jews' personal narratives of military service show they are keen on questioning the native

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<sup>81</sup> Ministry of Aliyah and Immigrant Absorption, 'Feeling Israel', *Operation Moses*. Available at: <http://www.moia.gov.il/English/FeelingIsrael/AboutIsrael/Pages/mivtzaMoshe.aspx> [Accessed 25 June 2017]; Ministry of Aliyah and Immigrant Absorption, 'Feeling Israel', *Operation Solomon*. Available at: <http://www.moia.gov.il/English/FeelingIsrael/AboutIsrael/Pages/mivtzaShlomo.aspx> [Accessed 25 June 2017].

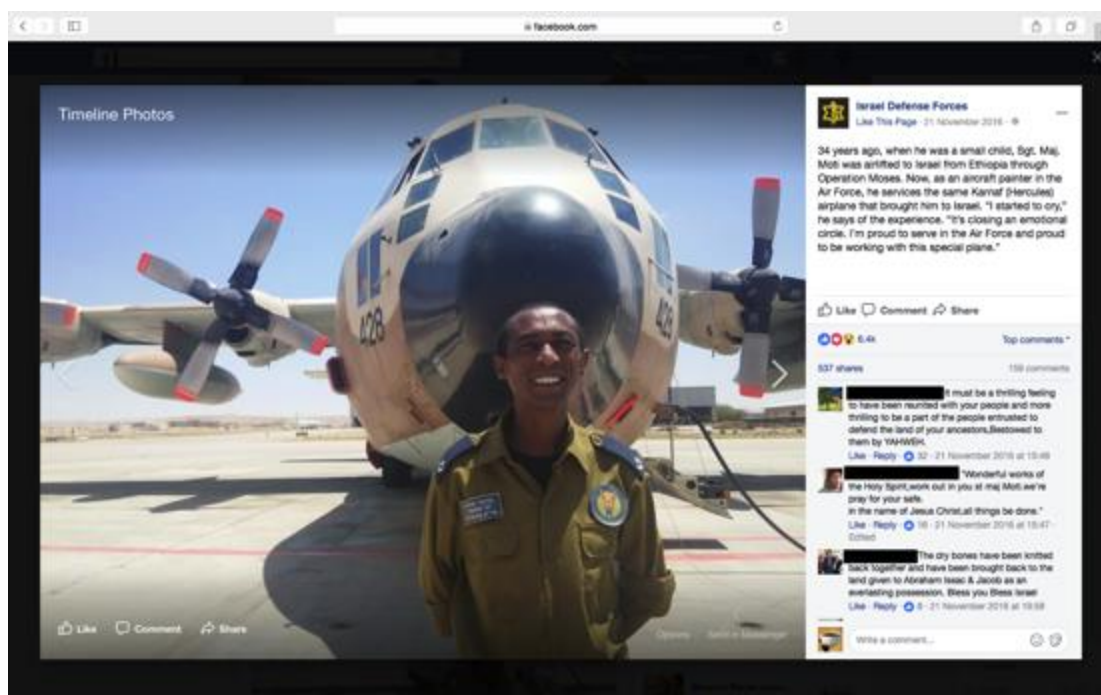
<sup>82</sup> The IDF Spokesperson's Unit, 'Timeline Photos', *The IDF's Official Facebook Page*, 21 November 2016, Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/idfonline/photos/a.250335824989295.62131.125249070831305/1314707665218767/?type=3&theater> [Accessed 25 June 2017].

<sup>83</sup> The IDF Spokesperson's Unit, 'Timeline Photos', *The IDF's Official Facebook Page*, 24 December 2015, Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/idfonline/photos/a.250335824989295.62131.125249070831305/1081569088532627/?type=3&theater> [Accessed 25 June 2017].

<sup>84</sup> Levy, G. and Sasson-Levy, O. 'Militarized Socialization, Military Service, and Class Reproduction: The Experiences of Israeli Soldiers', *Sociological Perspective*, 51 (2008) pp. 349-74.

<sup>85</sup> Kachtan, D. 'The Construction of Ethnic Identity in the Military – From the Bottom Up', *Israel Studies*, 17 (2012) pp. 150-75.

born Israeli Jews' approach to military service, and to criticise the easiness with which they yield to the Israeli state narrative regarding military service and the Israel/Palestine conflict.<sup>86</sup> Other Russian immigrants find it difficult to develop a network of friendship in the military, deplore their relegation to office work, and are at pains to feel any national or patriotic attachment to the army. Instead, they prefer to focus on economic and social benefits that result from being recruited in the military.<sup>87</sup>



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**Figure 8 Sergeant Major Moti and His Aircraft**

Nevertheless, the presentation of military as an equal opportunity organisation is important for the Israeli military and the society since it envisages Israel as an enlightened and civilised actor that serves as an example for other states at the regional and global levels. The IDF appear as an institution that provides opportunities for servicemen and women to express their cultural differences and to contribute to the Israeli society. This idealised representation is important both for recruiting further Diaspora Jews to the IDF and for deflecting criticism against its violent presence in the

<sup>86</sup> Lomsky-Feder, E. and Rapoport, T. 'Juggling Models of Masculinity: Russian-Jewish Immigrants in the Israeli Army', *Sociological Inquiry*, 73 (2003) pp. 114-37.

<sup>87</sup> Eisikovits, R. A. 'Intercultural Learning among Russian Immigrant Recruits in the Israeli Army', *Armed Forces & Society*, 32 (2006) pp. 292-306.

Occupied Palestinian Territories. Therefore, the presentation of the military as an inclusive organisation permits Israel to present itself ‘as a modern, democratic and *normal* society – a society dedicated to prosperity and life that faces an enemy with a so-called passion for death’.<sup>88</sup> Through this artificial image, the IDF adopt an exemplary and morally superior feature in order to limit dissent against military personnel while encouraging the condemnation of hostility against Palestinians who are believed to hold contradictory values, beliefs, and ideas.

Moreover, the IDF’s (self-)representation as a tolerant and multicultural institution depends on presenting military service as an opportunity for self-realization. This is an image that normalises violence and contributes to the militarisation of the Israeli society. For instance, Corporal Colin, who posed for a traditional military portrait, reflects upon the responsibilities of being a commander:

‘Being a commander is something that has really affected me. It made me see the army from both points of view, the soldier’s and the commander’s. For the year to come, I hope I will be a better commander to better help my soldiers in need, and maybe even coach others to be more caring and professional commanders’.<sup>89</sup>

Likewise, First Sergeant Orr posted a selfie while reflecting on the skills he learnt during the Deputy course, abilities that will serve him in the future: ‘I learned how to be authoritative, resolve conflicts, and lead a team. Those qualities will stay with me forever’.<sup>90</sup> Lastly, Lieutenant Amir reveals the personal satisfaction of serving in a commanding position. Dressed in his pilot uniform, in an illustration that reminds of Tom Cruise’s iconic role in *Top Gun*, Lieutenant Amir discloses that ‘even when my soldiers fail or make mistakes, I don’t leave them. They start out low and get to a high place, both professionally and personally. That’s what I love about this job – that I get

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<sup>88</sup> Hochberg, *Visual Occupations*, [emphasis in original] p. 10.

<sup>89</sup> The IDF Spokesperson’s Unit, ‘Timeline Photos’, *The IDF’s Official Facebook Page*, 22 October 2016, Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/idfonline/photos/a.250335824989295.62131.125249070831305/1286778401345027/?type=3&theater> [Accessed 25 June 2017].

<sup>90</sup> The IDF Spokesperson’s Unit, ‘Timeline Photos’, *The IDF’s Official Facebook Page*, 8 October 2016, Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/idfonline/photos/a.250335824989295.62131.125249070831305/1273186839370850/?type=3&theater> [Accessed 25 June 2017].



to help in the development of my soldiers'.<sup>91</sup> This representation of military service contributes to the militarisation of the Israeli society and to the normalisation of violence among the Israeli citizen-soldiers by concealing the inescapable reality of military service – physical and mental injury that might accompany the Israeli military personnel throughout their lives. In this regard, the presentation of military service as a practice of individual growth enables the 'potential use of lethal force [to] appear [as] rational and desirable to young individuals'.<sup>92</sup> Moreover, the illustration of military service as an opportunity for personal development enhances young recruits' desire to join the IDF, and nurtures the Israeli public's support for the military and its practices by presenting military service as a useful endeavour for advancing the Israeli recruits' professional careers. Likewise, Victoria Basham believes that the presentation of military service as a means of individual growth 'promote[s] popular support for war by presenting the military, its practices, and its personnel as socially and economically productive' thus concealing the violence that is inherent in military service.<sup>93</sup> Nevertheless, the presentation of military service as a self-realisation practice carries significant implications for the Israel/Palestine conflict. It conceals the harm that the Israeli military personnel might enact therefore constraining the Israeli public's dissent against the military and encouraging the cultivation of a positive attitude towards the IDF. This romanticised military representation strengthens the affective boundaries that characterise the Israel/Palestine conflict by contrasting between the Israeli military's professionalism and the assumed image of vile, suspicious, and violence-prone Palestinians. Through this antagonistic representation, the IDF strengthen the official narratives according to which Israeli military's violence against Palestinians is pursued solely for self-defence purposes.

### ***A Benign Military***

The positive image of the Israeli military is reinforced by the presentation of military personnel that carry humanitarian missions in countries affected by natural or

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<sup>91</sup> The IDF Spokesperson's Unit, 'Timeline Photos', *The IDF's Official Facebook Page*, 16 July 2016, Available at:

<https://www.facebook.com/idfonline/photos/a.250335824989295.62131.125249070831305/1206374772718724/?type=3&theater> [Accessed 25 June 2017].

<sup>92</sup> Strand and Berndtsson, 'Recruiting the "enterprising soldier"', p. 241.

<sup>93</sup> Basham, V. M. 'Raising an Army: The Geopolitics of Militarizing the Lives of Working Class Boys in an Age of Austerity', *International Political Sociology*, 10 (2016) p. 259.

man-made disasters. The IDF's Facebook account shows pictures with Israeli servicemen and women that travelled to Nepal, Haiti, or Japan in the aftermath of their respective natural catastrophes in order to help their populations to rebuild their lives. For instance, a picture shows Colonel Doctor Tarif Bader holding a baby in his arms while its caption praises his professional achievements for having led rescue and humanitarian missions in Syria, Nepal, and Haiti.<sup>94</sup> Other photos present the IDF delivering aid or searching for survivors in the aftermath of the earthquake in Nepal.<sup>95</sup> This aesthetic representation enhances local and international support for the military by enabling 'the discursive construction of the [Israeli] soldier as an ordinary rather than an exceptional professional engaged in aid and reconstruction work as much as in combat situations and fighting insurgency'.<sup>96</sup> This image carries significant political implications. It reassures the Israeli public of the strength of the military to defend the Israeli nation, and guarantees the international community that the IDF are heroes and moral forces that are committed to helping those less fortunate rather than harming them. Aesthetic representations that present the humanitarian role of the IDF are 'reconstituting them as a matter of private affect and morality, thus naturalizing their existence as a normal, even laudable, aspect of the overall social order'.<sup>97</sup> Therefore, the (self-)representation of the Israeli military as compassionate extracts the military personnel from the geopolitical complexity of the Israel/Palestine conflict, and situates them alongside other Western forces that pursue humanitarian and combat missions alike.

Furthermore, the humanitarian image of the Israeli military positions the Israeli servicemen and women collectively and individually against Palestinians. The constitution of the Israeli military personnel as humanitarian forces creates further distance between Israeli recruits and Palestinians by presenting the former as

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<sup>94</sup> The IDF Spokesperson's Unit, 'Timeline Photos', *The IDF's Official Facebook Page*, 17 July 2016, Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/idfonline/photos/a.250335824989295.62131.125249070831305/1206821996007335/?type=3&theater> [Accessed 25 June 2017].

<sup>95</sup> The IDF Spokesperson's Unit, 'Timeline Photos', *The IDF's Official Facebook Page*, 29 April 2015, Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/idfonline/photos/a.250335824989295.62131.125249070831305/972857062737164/?type=3&theater> [Accessed 6 September 2017]; The IDF Spokesperson's Unit, 'Timeline Photos', *The IDF's Official Facebook Page*, 30 April 2015, Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/idfonline/photos/a.250335824989295.62131.125249070831305/972328546123349/?type=3&theater> [Accessed 7 September 2017].

<sup>96</sup> Hellman, 'Milblogs and soldier representations of the Afghanistan War', p. 45.

<sup>97</sup> Millar, K. M. ' 'They need our help': Non-governmental organizations and the subjectifying dynamics of the military as social cause', *Media, War & Conflict*, 9 (2016) p. 14.



responsible, altruistic, and caring military figures during their military service in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. For instance, during the military intervention in the Gaza Strip in 2014, the IDF used access to digital technology in order to stress its commitment to humanitarian laws during military operations. Under the ‘Just so you know’ campaign that circulated on social media, the IDF’s official Facebook page distributed a series of pictograms with messages as the following: ‘During the 2014 Israel-Gaza Conflict, the IDF warned the civilian population in Gaza of impending strikes in order to give them time to evacuate the area. The majority of missile fired by Hamas were directed at Israeli civilians’.<sup>98</sup> Likewise, another pictogram indicated that the IDF pursued this military intervention according to the requirements of international law: ‘Before the 2014 Israel-Gaza Conflict, the IDF approved all potential targets with a Military Advocate-General officer in order to confirm their legality. Hamas disregarded international law and fired most of its missiles at Israeli population centers’.<sup>99</sup> Finally, another picture circulated on social media, during the Operation Protective Edge in 2014, showed aid parcels accompanied by the following message: ‘Hamas forces Palestinian civilians to suffer. Hamas is responsible for the humanitarian situation in Gaza’ while stressing that it ‘deprived Palestinian citizens of vital humanitarian aid’ by breaking the ceasefire on August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014.<sup>100</sup> The representation of the Israeli forces as a military that respects humanitarian values, and that shames Hamas for their contempt for human life and for their threatening potential to international security situate the Israeli servicemen and women along other Western forces who are imagined as leading a just fight against a greater evil. For instance, Simon Dalby stresses that Western forces ‘are key figures of the post September 11th era, physically securing the West, and simultaneously securing its identity as the repository of virtue against barbaric threats to civilization’.<sup>101</sup> Although there are

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<sup>98</sup> The IDF Spokesperson’s Unit, ‘Timeline Photos’, *The IDF’s Official Facebook Page*, 8 August 2015, Available at:

<https://www.facebook.com/idfonline/photos/a.250335824989295.62131.125249070831305/1018585678164302/?type=3&theater> [Accessed 25 June 2017].

<sup>99</sup> The IDF Spokesperson’s Unit, ‘Timeline Photos’, *The IDF’s Official Facebook Page*, 25 July 2015, Available at:

<https://www.facebook.com/idfonline/photos/a.250335824989295.62131.125249070831305/1012277465461790/?type=3&theater> [Accessed 25 June 2017].

<sup>100</sup> The IDF Spokesperson’s Unit, ‘Timeline Photos’, *The IDF’s Official Facebook Page*, 2 August 2014, Available at:

<https://www.facebook.com/idfonline/photos/a.250335824989295.62131.125249070831305/826311440725061/?type=3&theater> [Accessed 25 June 2017].

<sup>101</sup> Dalby, S. ‘Warrior geopolitics: Gladiator, Black Hawk Down and The Kingdom Of Heaven’, *Political Geography*, 27 (2008) p. 440.

geopolitical nuances that situate the Israeli military in a different syntax of violence and conflict – mandatory conscription, occupation, political deadlock concerning peace progress, and Hamas actorness – the IDF draw on similar Western discourses and practices of security that characterise the post-9/11 socio-political order. Through its imaginary resemblance to the Western militaries, the IDF present themselves as an actor that protects and defends the Western collective values and security for the purposes of gaining international sympathy for its practices. For example, the IDF’s official Facebook page distributes a series of pictures in which the Israeli defence forces are performing joint training sessions with other Western troops in order to indicate the IDF’s readiness to be involved in international alliances against radical threats.<sup>102</sup>

Other aesthetic representations show the Israeli military personnel as goodhearted individuals who help, care, and save Palestinians that experience difficult circumstances. A series of pictures shows medical officers caring for a Palestinian baby under the gaze of their mother.<sup>103</sup> Another photo presents a couple of soldiers from Kfir Brigade helping a Palestinian ambulance caught in the snowstorm. The message that accompanies the picture distributed on Facebook reads: ‘A Palestinian ambulance carrying a very sick woman was stuck in the snow. Luckily, soldiers from the Kfir Brigade were there to help. In the chaos of the snowstorm, the IDF never lost track of its values. Share if you think the world should know’.<sup>104</sup> Lastly, another picture shows Israeli servicemen and women cooperating with Palestinian paramedics to help a young

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<sup>102</sup> The IDF Spokesperson’s Unit, ‘Timeline Photos’, *The IDF’s Official Facebook Page*, 31 May 2015, Available at:

<https://www.facebook.com/idfonline/photos/a.250335824989295.62131.125249070831305/986418044714399/?type=3&theater> [Accessed 25 June 2017]; The IDF Spokesperson’s Unit, ‘Timeline Photos’, *The IDF’s Official Facebook Page*, 14 July 2015, Available at:

<https://www.facebook.com/idfonline/photos/a.250335824989295.62131.125249070831305/1007187882637415/?type=3&theater> [Accessed 25 June 2017].

<sup>103</sup> The IDF Spokesperson’s Unit, ‘Timeline Photos’, *The IDF’s Official Facebook Page*, 15 June 2015, Available at:

<https://www.facebook.com/idfonline/photos/a.250335824989295.62131.125249070831305/993925247297012/?type=3&theater> [Accessed 25 June 2017]; The IDF Spokesperson’s Unit, ‘Timeline Photos’, *The IDF’s Official Facebook Page*, 15 June 2015, Available at:

<https://www.facebook.com/idfonline/photos/a.250335824989295.62131.125249070831305/993925177297019/?type=3&theater> [Accessed 25 June 2017]; The IDF Spokesperson’s Unit, ‘Timeline Photos’, *The IDF’s Official Facebook Page*, 15 June 2015, Available at:

<https://www.facebook.com/idfonline/photos/a.250335824989295.62131.125249070831305/993925310630339/?type=3&theater> [Accessed 25 June 2017].

<sup>104</sup> The IDF Spokesperson’s Unit, ‘Timeline Photos’, *The IDF’s Official Facebook Page*, 15 December 2013, Available at:

<https://www.facebook.com/idfonline/photos/a.250335824989295.62131.125249070831305/689375754418631/?type=3&theater> [Accessed 25 June 2017].

Palestinian man after being wounded in a car accident while a picture distributed on Instagram shows an Israeli soldier offering water to a Palestinian girl.<sup>105</sup>

The emphasis on the Israeli military personnel's kindness and sympathy for Palestinians discloses an Orientalising narrative that situates Palestinians in the position of victims who depend on the good willingness of the Israeli forces. Similarly, Sherene Razack has studied the (self-)representations of Canadian military personnel that served in Somalia and showed the saviour figure of Western peacekeepers reiterates national mythologies of racial superiority and discourses of advanced and civilised states.<sup>106</sup> Images in which Western militaries appear as if aiding victims of violence, war, and conflict reveal the former nurture 'a simplistic and colonial understanding of their role as being about helping those less fortunate, a charitable act that requires properly grateful recipients who must be seen as deserving'.<sup>107</sup> Carrying similar racialising features, the digital (self-)representations of the IDF as committed to helping Palestinians mobilise support for the Israeli forces and discourage criticism against their violent presence and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The images with the Israeli servicemen and women as kind-hearted and caring troops preclude a debate about their contribution and, in more general terms, Israel's contribution to Palestinians' suffering.

This criticism is far from implying that the Israeli servicemen and women are not likely to act in a moral manner, with restraint or trying to prevent their peers from acting in a violent way. Equally significant, this criticism does not dismiss that the Israeli military personnel face life-and-death situations and that Palestinians might threaten their lives. Rather, this chapter highlights the political power and danger of the narrative that imagines the Israeli military personnel as subjects that carry, display and act according to universal values and respect for human life. Imbued with moral superiority, this idealised military subjectivity negates Palestinians' hardship of living under the occupation and depicts them as subjects that depend on the Israeli servicemen and women's assistance in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Similarly, Erella

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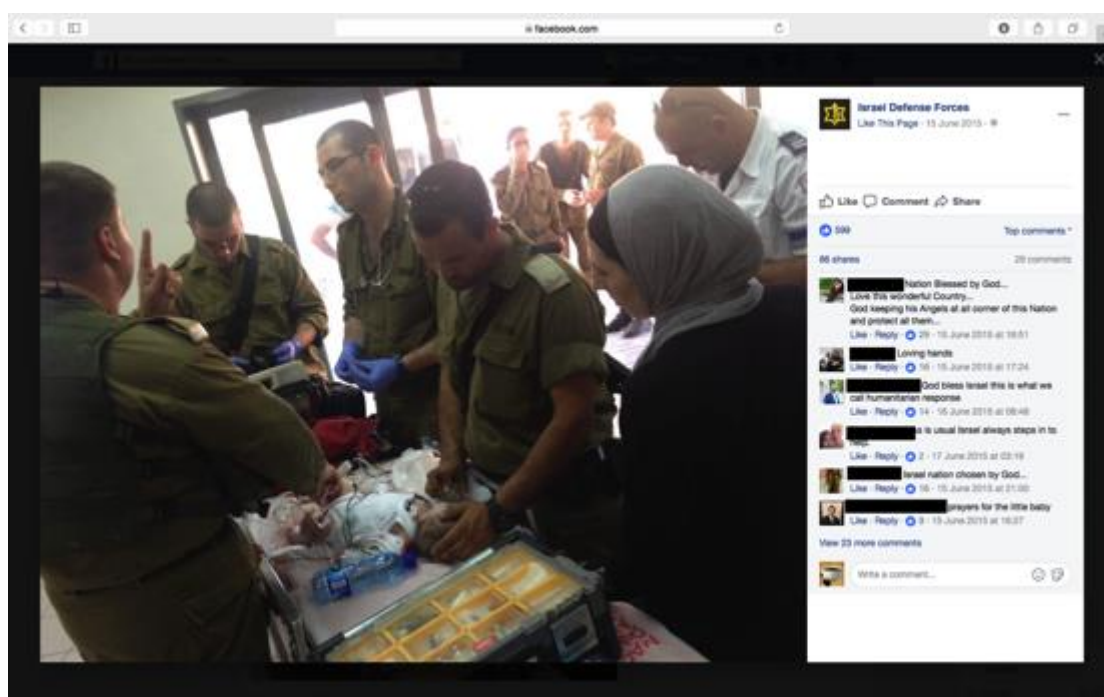
<sup>105</sup> The IDF Spokesperson's Unit, 'Timeline Photos', *The IDF's Official Facebook Page*, 19 June 2013, Available at:

<https://www.facebook.com/idfonline/photos/a.250335824989295.62131.125249070831305/583111165045091/?type=3&theater> [Accessed 25 June 2017]; The IDF Spokesperson's Unit, *The IDF's Official Instagram Page*. Available at: [https://www.instagram.com/p/bf8WE0DPuP/?taken-by=israel\\_defense\\_forces&hl=en](https://www.instagram.com/p/bf8WE0DPuP/?taken-by=israel_defense_forces&hl=en) [Accessed 25 June 2017].

<sup>106</sup> Razack, S. *Dark Threats and White Knights: The Somalia Affair, Peacekeeping, and the New Imperialism* (Toronto, Buffalo, NY and London, University of Toronto Press, 2004).

<sup>107</sup> Razack, *Dark Threats and White Knights*, p. 30.

Grassini's investigation of Israeli soldiers' practices of 'moral othering' indicates that discourses of competence, professional skills, and desire to keep checkpoints 'in order' function construct Palestinian civilians as inferior and hostile individuals that threaten soldiers' moral self-identity.<sup>108</sup> By presenting itself as a humanitarian military that aids Palestinians and that is part of a global alliance of fighting radical forces, the IDF do not only depoliticise and moderate the complexity of the Israel/Palestine conflict, but they also devalue Palestinian claims to suffering by implying, through a benevolent image, the innocence of the Israeli military personnel.



© The IDF's Spokesperson's Unit

**Figure 9 The IDF Provide Medical Help to a Palestinian Baby**

### ***Palestinians on the IDF's Facebook Account***

The construction of the IDF as a moral military institution is aided by the presentation of Palestinians as stereotypical villains that threaten and harm Israeli civilians and military personnel. A series of pictures shows young Palestinian males being recruited, trained, and indoctrinated by Hamas. Rather than disputing the source of and the authenticity of these pictures, this section concentrates on the political function of their distribution on the IDF's social media account. Allegedly, these

<sup>108</sup> Grassiani, 'Moral othering at the checkpoint', pp. 373-88.

photographs show Palestinian young boys waiting in a queue in front of masked men who are registering the boys' details thus giving the impression these young Palestinians are future Hamas recruits. Some pictures show Palestinian male youth maneuvering weapons while others present them performing a grueling physical training.<sup>109</sup> The distribution of pictures that show the greediness of Hamas to recruit young boys coupled with images of dangerous Palestinian youngsters articulate an imaginary that assumes the IDF have to confront a

‘dangerous enemy, bound by different (or absent) moral codes and rules of engagement, and possessed of (simultaneously) known yet unknowable capabilities and a lethal capacity for violence. Constructions of the enemy Other conform to the ideas predicted by the concept: he (always he) is strange, foreign, different, bestial, unjustified and vicious’.<sup>110</sup>

Likewise, Susan L. Carruthers highlights that contemporary representations of conflict are marked by an Orientalised and vilifying discourse of enemies within which ‘almost never do we see insurgents as anything other than spectral, kaffiyeh-clad figures, slung with machine guns and ammunition belts’.<sup>111</sup> Through this Orientalised perspective, the Israeli servicemen and women appear ‘in a moral and physical clash with an essentialised Palestinian body, designated primarily as terrorist and lacking

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<sup>109</sup> The IDF Spokesperson's Unit, 'Timeline Photos', *The IDF's Official Facebook Page*, 1 September 2015, Available at:

<https://www.facebook.com/idfonline/photos/a.250335824989295.62131.125249070831305/1029947690361434/?type=3&theater> [Accessed 25 June 2017]; The IDF Spokesperson's Unit, 'Timeline Photos', *The IDF's Official Facebook Page*, 1 September 2015, Available at:

<https://www.facebook.com/idfonline/photos/a.250335824989295.62131.125249070831305/1029947627028107/?type=3&theater> [Accessed 25 June 2017]; The IDF Spokesperson's Unit, 'Timeline Photos', *The IDF's Official Facebook Page*, 1 September 2015, Available at

<https://www.facebook.com/idfonline/photos/a.250335824989295.62131.125249070831305/1029947520361451/?type=3&theater> [Accessed 25 June 2017]; The IDF Spokesperson's Unit, 'Timeline Photos', *The IDF's Official Facebook Page*, 1 September 2015, Available at:

<https://www.facebook.com/idfonline/photos/a.250335824989295.62131.125249070831305/1029947303694806/?type=3&theater> [Accessed 25 June 2017].

<sup>110</sup> Woodward, R. and Jenkins, N. K. ‘This place isn't worth the left boot of one of our boys’: Geopolitics, militarism and memoirs of the Afghanistan war’, *Political Geography*, 31 (2012) p. 502.

<sup>111</sup> Carruthers, S. L. ‘Why can't we see insurgents? Enmity, Invisibility, and Counterinsurgency in Iraq and Afghanistan’, *Photography and Culture*, 8 (2015) p. 192.

moral values'.<sup>112</sup> This representation of Palestinian subjectivity is important for the formation of Israeli servicemen and women's moral(ising) subjectivities since the latter are cultivated through the exclusion and marginalisation of any possible identification with Palestinians. As Wilcox argues, 'in the subject's process of becoming [Israeli citizen-soldier's], it must attempt to delineate its body from others, and to create clear boundaries between the self's inside and outside'.<sup>113</sup> The vilification and the hypermasculinisation of the Palestinian body permit the reinforcement of the image of the 'tough and tender' Israeli serviceman or woman as someone that is enacting just violence in order to defend the security of the state.<sup>114</sup> Therefore, the cultivation of an antagonistic representation between the Israeli military personnel and Palestinians illustrate the significance of studying the gendered and racialised practices, symbols, and assumptions that justify the IDF's violence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

The (self-)representation of a cosmopolitan and humanitarian military personnel serves both the IDF's internal and external images since it envisages the military as a force for good that helps others rather than as an instrument of force deployment in combat operations. By likening the IDF with other Western militaries engaged in combat and humanitarian practices, this military (self-)image depoliticises the Israel/Palestine conflict, moderates its complexity, and curbs the representation of the Israeli military personnel as subjects responsible for enforcing the occupation of Palestinian territories and people. Therefore, the circulation of this idealised military subjectivity permits the IDF to reject military personnel's violence against Palestinians as a breach of military discipline or as an exceptional military behaviour that does not conform to the Israeli military's moral standards. Confronted with this multicultural and humanitarian (self-)representation and coupled with their illustration as radical freedom fighters, Palestinians' suffering under the occupation is not accepted in the Israeli public sphere since they are viewed as radical violent actors, as passive victims of radicalisation, or as victims of their political and military leaders. In this respect, the chapter highlights that the IDF's violence against Palestinians is informed by 'cultural practices and ideas, discourses, objects and materialities that shape the conditions of possibility in which violence takes place, but it is also animated by performances of

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<sup>112</sup> Sharim, Y. 'Choreographing Masculinity in Contemporary Israeli Culture', in *Choreographies of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Wars*, edited by Gay Morris and Jens Richard Giersdorf (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 149.

<sup>113</sup> Wilcox, *Bodies of Violence*, p. 9.

<sup>114</sup> Niva, 'Tough and Tender', pp. 109-28.

war and war preparedness in everyday life' such as military (self-)representations on social media.<sup>115</sup>

## Conclusion

This chapter explores the contemporary (self-)representation of Israeli military subjectivity on the IDF's official Facebook account. It claims these digital (self-)representations represent aesthetic practices that capture, circulate, and invite emotions for the purposes of constituting a romanticised joyful, multicultural, and humanitarian military figure that shields the IDF from criticism and accountability for their violent practices. The photos examined reveal the socio-cultural and political context that characterises the Israeli military culture since 'representations are not innocent, transparent, or true; they do not simply "reflect" reality. They help constitute it'.<sup>116</sup> With an awareness of the pitfalls of investigating the IDF's official representation on social media, the chapter focuses on the affective baggage of the symbols, figures, motifs, and patterns through which the Israeli romanticised military subjectivity is constructed and studies the political implications of disseminating this exemplary image to local and international audiences. To this end, it stresses the IDF's Facebook account functions as a social and affective space in which relations of difference and belonging, of solidarity and antagonism, of empathy and enmity are articulated and evoked for the purposes of moderating criticism against the Israeli military's violent practices. Therefore, by highlighting that pictures distributed on social media 'possess emotional power, which can contribute to defining and redefining public sentiment and perceptions', the chapter stresses that the circulation of embodied representations of Israeli military subjectivity depoliticises, conceals, and justifies the IDF's violence against Palestinians.<sup>117</sup>

First, the constitution of social media as an affective space indicates that personalised representations of the Israeli military service reinforce the perpetuation of violence within the Israel/Palestine conflict. Digital (self-)representations provide embodied portrayals of Israeli soldiering that are instrumental for disguising the

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<sup>115</sup> Basham, *War, Identity and the Liberal State*, p. 141.

<sup>116</sup> Taylor, D. 'Spectacular Bodies: Gender, Terror, and Argentina's "Dirty War"', in *Gendering War Talk*, edited by Miriam G. Cooke and Angela Woollacott (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 36.

<sup>117</sup> Hariman, R. and Lucaites, J. L. *No Caption Needed: Iconic Photographs, Public Culture, and Liberal Democracy* (Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 2007), p. 145.



violence of the occupation and for downplaying the public's criticism against the military and the militarisation of the Israeli society. Therefore, the image of a happy, young, and kind-hearted military 'neutralizes any critical sense as it de-contextualizes the violence of war' because it directs our attention to the personal lives of the Israeli men and women that are performing their military duty rather than towards criticising their reasons behind their participation in conflict, war, and violence.<sup>118</sup> Personalised representations of the Israeli military service normalise violence in the Israeli society by circulating photos that allow us 'to see things that we love to see: images of soldiers that are equally poignant and exciting, sutured into a narrative of military skill that represents (...) competency and superiority'.<sup>119</sup> Nevertheless, the seductive power of military profiles conceals the violence enacted or experienced by the Israeli servicemen and women since online 'seduction counts on appearances, but that does not mean it cannot have real consequences. What is 'just for fun' for some people becomes deadly serious for others'.<sup>120</sup> Through personalised representation of military service, the IDF's Facebook account invites social media users to think about the Israeli military personnel as vulnerable and innocent victims and to implicitly disregard their instrumentality in maintaining the occupation.

Second, the constitution of the IDF's social media account as an affective space shows the military's efforts to cultivate support for its practices and to elicit hostility towards Palestinians. The IDF's Facebook account distributes romanticised descriptions of military subjectivity, and photos that vilify Palestinians by constructing them as dangerous and fearsome individuals. Therefore, these digital self-representations allow the IDF to disguise violence against Palestinians as a self-defence endeavour and to deter criticism against the military's violent behaviour and presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. In this regard, the dissemination of military representations reinforces not only feelings of affinity and belonging regarding the IDF, but it also excludes those views that do not support the military. The IDF's digital (self-)representations illustrate Parry and Thumim's views regarding the role of military images in silencing criticism:

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<sup>118</sup> Pomarède, 'Normalizing violence through front-line stories', p. 16.

<sup>119</sup> Alderman, 'Sold(i)ering and Masculinity', p. 266.

<sup>120</sup> Rone, J. 'The Seducer's Net: Internet, Politics and Seduction', in *Digital Cultures and the Politics of Emotion: Feelings, Affect and Technological Change*, edited by Athina Karatzogianni and Adi Kuntsman (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 226.



‘The undeniable efforts to increase portrayals which encourage empathy with soldiers, veterans and their families might offer an attractive and affective notion of ‘who we are’ as a nation for some people (along with an opportunity for soldiers or veterans to self-identify in positive terms), but it can prompt unintended consequences as well: excluding those who would be politically resistant to what they see as a creeping militarisation or celebration of militarism’.<sup>121</sup>

The digital distribution of images with virtuous, cosmopolitan, and humanitarian military personnel is important for shaping civil-military relations in Israel insofar as it crafts consent for the military and limits criticism against the IDF’s violent practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Social media is important for the Israeli military because it constructs an emotional link between the Israeli society and the military, it strengthens the attractiveness, desirability, and fascination with military service, and its circulation of its idealised military representation reinforce the justness of the IDF’s presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Therefore, the chapter shows that the Israeli military plays an active role in enhancing the permeability of civil-military relations in Israel. The IDF use the happy, cosmopolitan, and humanitarian military figure in order to manage the continuous support for and the positive public perception of the Israeli military personnel. In this regard, the constitution of this romanticised military figure for the purposes of confining criticism shows the role of social media in expanding the disciplinary features of the Israeli military beyond its institutional confinement. The Israeli military’s astute use of digital technology in order to build kinship and affinity with the IDF shows that social media ensures that ‘some bodies are regulated and trained to fight wars’ while ‘other bodies are disciplined or “militarized” to support them’.<sup>122</sup> The following chapter continues the investigation of the social practices that construct and nurture a virtuous Israeli military subjectivity. It studies episodes of violent interaction between the Israeli military personnel and Palestinians, and maps out the emotions that accompany rhetorical practices through which the IDF’s violence against Palestinians is justified,

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<sup>121</sup> Parry, K. and Thumim, N. ‘ ‘When he’s in Afghanistan it’s like our world/his world’: mediating military experience’, *Media, Culture & Society*, 39 (2017) p. 32.

<sup>122</sup> Basham, ‘Raising an Army’, p. 270.

reinterpreted, and denied. The chapter examines both the emotions captured in narratives and representations of violence and their affective echoes and reverberations in the Israeli public sphere in order to reveal the role of a variety of actors, processes, and emotions in sustaining violence within the Israel/Palestine conflict.

## Chapter 4: Responses, Allegations, and Controversies About the IDF's Violence against Palestinians

*'They are after us when we are alive, and even when we are dead'.<sup>1</sup>*

This chapter studies the construction of military subjectivity in the public sphere by investigating responses, allegations, and controversies regarding violent episodes that took place between Palestinians and the Israeli military personnel. Military subjectivity is constructed not only through educational practices or through (self-)representations on social media. It is also constituted through the discursive moves through which the Israeli media, public figures, military, and political authorities, or citizen-soldiers present and engage with military practices in the public sphere. Similarly, Christina S. Jarvis's study of the construction of American masculinity during the Second World War indicates that bodies are 'historically and culturally located entities shaped not only by institutions such as schools, the military, and the media, but also by the fields that study them'.<sup>2</sup> By arguing that 'bodies exist in complex fields of cultural discourses and practices', the author examines the role of the American institutions in 'enculturat[ing] bodies through the creation of regulatory medical and social norms as well as through disciplinary techniques'.<sup>3</sup>

Since a myriad of discourses and practices shape and attach bodies with meanings, and implicitly, imbue them with subjectivity, this chapter engages with the rhetorical practices through which political and military authorities, journalists, Israeli citizen-soldiers or public figures construct the Israeli military and respectively, Palestinian subjectivities in the public sphere. Specifically, by studying the echoes and reactions to violent interactions between the Israeli military and Palestinians, it claims rhetorical practices are imbued with emotional meaning that enables the reinterpretation, justification, and depoliticisation of the IDF's violence against Palestinians.

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<sup>1</sup> Anonymous bereaved Palestinian widower quoted in Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 'Criminality in Spaces of Death', p. 49.

<sup>2</sup> Jarvis, C. S. *The Male Body at War: American Masculinity during World War II* (DeKalb, IL, Northern Illinois University Press, 2004), p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Jarvis, *The Male Body at War*, p. 7.

In order to develop this argument, the chapter examines the affective responses and passionate debates provoked by the circulation of visual representations showing the Israeli military personnel's violent behaviour against Palestinians. Corner and Parry stress that violations of military ethos and their reverberation in the public sphere provide insights about the social and political order within which the military functions.<sup>4</sup> In this regard, the study of the reluctance to investigate, prosecute, and condemn the IDF for their violence against Palestinians focuses not only on 'the initial news coverage, but [also on] the mediated public debates ignited by such events which offer key moments to explore the delineations of exceptionality, transgression, national identity, separateness and belonging in such expressions'.<sup>5</sup> The examination of the emotional engagement with visual representations of the IDF's violence against Palestinians shows that rhetorical practices that address the military's hostility against Palestinians capture, circulate, and elicit emotions that constitute a vulnerable and defenceless military subjectivity. This image informs the conviction that the 'IDF is the most moral army in the world', and nurtures the public, military, and political tolerance for the Israeli military's violence pursued in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

To this end, the chapter investigates three violent episodes that took place across the West Bank, and whose visual illustrations were distributed in the local and international public sphere. They were chosen because they garnered attention from both local and international audiences, and because they resonate with the growing humanitarian and scholarly concerns regarding the IDF's violence against Palestinian teenagers and children. For instance, authors like Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkin and human rights actors such as *Defence for Children International - Palestine* highlight the precarious existence of Palestinian children living under the occupation, and their exposure to military and judicial treatment that breaches their human rights.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Corner, J. and Parry, K. 'The media and the military: editorial', *Media, Culture & Society*, 39 (2017) pp. 3-10.

<sup>5</sup> Corner and Parry, 'The media and the military', p. 7.

<sup>6</sup> Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 'Stolen childhood', pp. 142-52; Shalhoub-Kevorkian, N. 'Palestinian Children as Tools for 'Legalized' State Violence', *borderlands: e-journal*, 13 (2014) pp. 1-24. Available at: [http://www.borderlands.net.au/Vol13No1\\_2014/shalhoub-kevorkian\\_children.pdf](http://www.borderlands.net.au/Vol13No1_2014/shalhoub-kevorkian_children.pdf) [Accessed 10 July 2017]; Defence for Children International – Palestine, 'No Way to Treat A Child: Palestinian Children in the Israeli Military Detention System' (Ramallah, Defence for Children International – Palestine, 2016), pp. 1-76. Available at: [https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/dcipalestine/pages/1527/attachments/original/1460665378/DCI\\_P\\_NWTTAC\\_Report\\_Final\\_April\\_2016.pdf?1460665378](https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/dcipalestine/pages/1527/attachments/original/1460665378/DCI_P_NWTTAC_Report_Final_April_2016.pdf?1460665378) [Accessed 21 July 2017].

The first episode examined in this chapter took place in Nabi Saleh, when an unnamed masked Israeli soldier, and armed with an assault rifle, was photographed keeping Mohammed Tamimi, an 11-year-old Palestinian boy, in a headlock. The pictures, showing Mohammed's female relatives trying to free him and to tear the soldier's mask, provoked outrage in the international media. In order to alleviate the international criticism against the IDF, the Israeli military and political authorities presented the Israeli soldier as a victim of the Palestinian aggressiveness while arguing that the teenager and his family had provoked the incident and consequently attacked him. The second one discusses a violent event that took place in Hebron. David Adamov, a soldier in the Nahal Brigade, was filmed cocking his rifle at a couple of Palestinian teenagers. When he was allegedly jailed for his behaviour, his peers, members of the Israeli public, and political and military figures rallied behind David and launched an online campaign of solidarity with him. The reactions to Adamov's violent behaviour were similar to the ones that accompanied the Nabi Saleh episode because they presented him as a defenceless victim who was provoked by the Palestinian youth to breach the military discipline. The final episode investigated here took place in Beitunia, near Ramallah. Cameras from a local shop filmed Ben Deri, an Israeli border policeman accompanied by military troops, while shooting at two teenagers with fire ammunition. The Israeli military and political reactions to the Beitunia episode were different from the first two cases of violence. Whereas the reactions to the first two episodes shifted the blame from the Israeli forces to the Palestinian teenagers, the events in Beitunia were presented as a fabricated episode of violence since a number of military, political, and public figures expressed suspicion regarding the reliability of the visual evidence circulated by the Palestinian shop owner.

The examination of these episodes of violence shows the reverberations and responses that accompanied these episodes of violence reinforce the affective boundaries that characterise the Israel/Palestine conflict by inviting sympathy, support, and compassion for Israeli Jewish citizen-soldiers and respectively, anger, doubt, fear, and aversion towards Palestinians. The circulation of emotions in the Israeli public sphere constitutes antagonistic subjectivities within the Israel/Palestine conflict while showing that Israeli and Palestinian 'bodies are neither stable in themselves nor in relations to other bodies, but rather are produced through their relations' with each

other.<sup>7</sup> The reiteration of this antagonism between Israeli Jews and Palestinians is important for the consolidation of the benign image of the IDF, for the strengthening of the public's positive perception of the Israeli military, and for the moderation of the IDF's accountability for the violence enacted in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Therefore, this chapter highlights that the tolerance for the Israeli military's violent behaviour against Palestinians is informed by 'the boundaries of who we can imagine to be close to, who is conceivable as lovable and mournable' while these relations 'are formed and maintained' through the affective representation of subjects in the public sphere.<sup>8</sup> Specifically, it insists the rhetorical engagement with the IDF's violence against Palestinians embodies, circulates, and elicits emotions that construct a vulnerable and defenceless military figure and imagine Palestinians as threatening and cunning individuals. This emotional investment in debates about the violent encounters between Israeli Jews and Palestinians indicates the role of rhetorical practices in reinforcing the exemplarity of the latter, and in restricting the possibility to perceive the Israeli military as enacting violence outside the confines of self-defence. The chapter concludes by highlighting the importance of studying violence in the Israel/Palestine conflict at the intersection of media, emotions, and visual representations, and cautions against envisaging the latter solely as driving forces behind progressive politics in war and conflict.

### **Nabi Saleh, West Bank: Mohammed Tamimi and the Masked Soldier**

In August 2015, in Nabi Saleh, in the West Bank, an Israeli soldier was photographed while trying to subdue a twelve-year-old Palestinian boy. The child, Mohammed Tamimi, was suspected of having thrown stones at the Israeli forces. One of the pictures of this event, available online, shows a masked soldier with one hand holding his weapon and with the other one holding the neck of the Palestinian boy. A closer look at the picture shows the Israeli soldier is in distress, not knowing how to act. In another one, the soldier is trying not only to overcome the Palestinian boy, but also to fight the women and men that came to help him, while fellow soldiers are watching rather than intervening. Finally, a photo shows the boy's sister, Ahed Tamimi,

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<sup>7</sup> Wilcox, *Bodies of Violence*, p. 15.

<sup>8</sup> Petersen, *Murder, the Media and the Politics of Public Feelings*, pp. 10-11.

biting the soldier's hand in an attempt to release her brother.<sup>9</sup> The incident in Nabi Saleh, recorded by a camera and disseminated in the public space, is one in the many that unfold across the West Bank and it hardly represents a novelty. The pictures circulated show the chaotic, the intimate, and the ludicrousness of the occupation while revealing the power asymmetry between the Israeli military personnel and Palestinian civilians.



© Reuters/Mohamad Torokan

**Figure 10 The Masked Soldier and Mohammed Tamimi**

The distribution of these pictures across local and international media is partly due to the fact that Nabi Saleh is a hotspot for Palestinian activism against the occupation. In Nabi Saleh, the Israeli military forces and Palestinians clash in a ritualised manner every Friday, when old and young, local and international activists protest the occupation while carrying flags, banners, and cameras. The protests are part of the Nabi Saleh Solidarity Campaign supported by international and local activists. Bassem Tamimi, Mohammed's father, initiated this campaign in 2009 in order to protest the building of Halamish (Neve Tzuf) settlement, and the settlers' appropriation

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<sup>9</sup> Beaumont, P. 'Nabi Saleh images illustrate changing asymmetry of Israeli-Palestinian conflict'. *The Guardian*, 1 September 2015. Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/01/nabi-saleh-images-illustrate-changing-asymmetry-of-israeli-palestinian-conflict> [Accessed 10 July 2017].

of the nearby water spring and respectively, of the private Palestinian land.<sup>10</sup> Considered a ‘prisoner of conscience’ by Amnesty International, Tamimi was arrested numerous times for his political activism. Moreover, his family’s activism is widely covered in the international media because it is at the forefront of the demonstrations against the occupation and against Jewish settlers’ appropriation of the water spring. His brother-in-law, Rushdie Tamimi, was killed during a demonstration and a teargas canister harmed another family member, Mustafa Tamimi.<sup>11</sup> Ahed, Mohammed’s sister, was pictured showing her fist to an Israeli soldier in 2012, a photo that determined the Turkish government to give her a bravery award and a smartphone as a prize.<sup>12</sup>

When he witnessed the violent episode examined in this chapter, Eric Cortellesa was attending for the first time a protest in Nabi Saleh. Writing for *The Times of Israel*, he describes these events in the following manner:

‘It was my first time at the weekly protest. For everyone else there, it was ritual. They greeted each other like members of a football team before taking the field. Once I arrived at the demonstrators’ rendezvous, I asked someone standing next to me what to expect from the impending protest. “We’ll start marching down the road, then the army will be waiting for us. Once we get to a certain point, they’ll start throwing tear gas at us, then kids will start throwing rocks at them on top of the hill,” he said. “And then it will go back and forth like that. And we’ll take lots of pictures,” he added’.<sup>13</sup>

Despite that Cortellesa’s description of the Nabi Saleh’s protests insists on the ritualised nature of protests in the West Bank, one should not disregard their political significance. For instance, Ben Ehrenreich stresses that Palestinians’ protests are important for contesting the occupation. In his description of a Friday protest in Nabi

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<sup>10</sup> Nabi Saleh Solidarity, *About*. Available at: <https://nabisalehsolidarity.wordpress.com/about/> [Accessed 10 July 2017].

<sup>11</sup> Beaumont, ‘Nabi Saleh images illustrate changing asymmetry of Israeli-Palestinian conflict’.

<sup>12</sup> Sherwood, H. ‘Children of the occupation: growing up in Palestine’. *The Guardian*, 8 February 2014. Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/feb/08/children-of-occupation-growing-up-in-palestine> [Accessed 10 July 2017].

<sup>13</sup> Cortellesa, E. ‘Watch: In Nabi Saleh, an all too predictable black eye for Israel’. *The Times of Israel*, 31 August 2015. Available at: <http://www.timesofisrael.com/in-nabi-saleh-an-all-too-predictable-black-eye-for-israel/> [Accessed 10 July 2017].



Saleh, other than the one examined in this section, Ehrenreich recounts a fleeting yet symbolic moment in which protesters, to security forces and settlers' dismay, reached the water spring thus causing Jewish settlers' physical and political unease. The description of the protest is worth quoting extensively:

‘As usual, Israeli Army jeeps were waiting below the spring. The four soldiers standing outside them looked confused – it seemed they hadn’t expected the protesters to make it so far. The villagers marched past them to the spring, where they surprised three settlers eating lunch in the shade, still wet from a dip in one of the pools. The kids raced past. The grown-ups filed in, chatting and smoking. More soldiers arrived in body armor, carrying rifles and grenade launchers. Four settlers appeared on the ledge above the spring, young men in sunglasses and jeans, one of them carrying an automatic rifle. Beside me, a sturdy, bald officer from the Israel Defense Forces argued with an Israeli protester. “I let you come,” the officer insisted. “Now you have to go.” The children piled onto the swing the settlers had built and swung furiously, singing. A young settler argued with the I.D.F. officer, insisting that he clear the protesters away. “What difference does 10 minutes make?” the officer said. “Every 10 seconds makes a difference,” the settler answered. But before their 10 minutes were up, one hour after they arrived, the villagers gathered the children and left as they had come, clapping and chanting, their defiance buoyed by joy. For the first time in two and a half years, they had made it to the spring’.<sup>14</sup>

This chapter shows that despite the growing awareness regarding the causes and the goals of Nabi Saleh’s protests, the presence of journalists and recording cameras may not always contest the dominant narratives that characterise the Israel/Palestine conflict. Referring to the episode with Mohammed Tamimi, Anshel Pfeffer highlights

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<sup>14</sup> Ehrenreich, B. ‘Is This Where the Third Intifada Will Start?’. *The New York Times*, 15 March 2013. Available at: [http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/17/magazine/is-this-where-the-third-intifada-will-start.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/17/magazine/is-this-where-the-third-intifada-will-start.html?_r=0) [Accessed 10 July 2017].

that images from the Occupied Palestinian Territories are continuously subjected to manipulative interpretations:

‘Right-wing apologists of course have been quick to brand this as another “Pallywood” production and pointed out that the Palestinian family are known “troublemakers” who routinely stage such scenes. No amount of PR and media management will make the occupation of another nation look good, regardless of whether you think this is all their fault and it’s not an occupation because, as Naftali Bennett says, a nation cannot be an occupier in its own land. If we’re not occupying territory, then we sure as hell are occupying another people, and at the end of the day Israel is doing a bad job of it because deep down the majority of Israelis know it’s wrong. They just haven’t found a way to get out of the headlock which makes them hope that we can just continue chucking the IDF at the problem and somehow, one day, it will go away’.<sup>15</sup>

Pfeffer expresses his dissatisfaction with the lack of Israel’s political will to solve the Middle East conflict and criticises the Israeli society’s continuous tolerance for the IDF violent behaviour in the West Bank. Furthermore, he cautions against the efforts of the right wing actors to present this episode as a staged event thus vilifying Palestinians and demeaning their resistance practices. His analysis gains significance in relation to the official responses generated by the circulation of the photographic evidence showing the Israeli serviceman harming Mohammed Tamimi. These reactions downplayed the soldier’s violence against the Palestinian boy by praising the restraint of the former and by situating the Israeli soldier in the position of the victim of a chaotic attack performed by women and children. For instance, the IDF’s Spokesperson described the episode in Nabi Saleh as following:

‘[A] violent disturbance of the peace [took place] in Nabi Saleh, in which Palestinians threw stones at [the] IDF forces that were in the

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<sup>15</sup> Pfeffer, A. ‘A Picture of A Headlock That’s Worth a Thousand Words’. *Haaretz*, 31 August 2015. Available at: <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.673673> [Accessed 10 July 2017].

place. The youth who was photographed was identified by the lookout force as a stone-thrower, and because of this it was decided to detain him. At the time of the arrest, a violent provocation by a number of Palestinians developed, including women and children. In light of the violent altercation, the commander decided not to go ahead with the detention'.<sup>16</sup>

Moreover, a senior officer from the IDF Central Command presented this violent episode as a tactical error by stressing that the soldier acted outside the rules of engagement that require two members of the military forces to apprehend a suspect. However, he underlined that the Nabi Saleh episode was an exceptional event in which the Israeli soldier showed restraint despite being attacked: 'One must not stake the national honor on one incident. It would have been legitimate for him to fire if he had felt that his life was in danger, and he preferred not to do so. He deserves praise for that'.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, the sanitised representation of the violent episode at Nabi Saleh denies the political motives behind these protests and ignores that Palestinian protests against the occupation target Jewish settlers' confiscation of land and water. More significantly, the IDF Spokesperson's press release shifts the victim/perpetrator identity between Mohammed Tamimi and the Israeli soldier that attacked him, and affirms univocally the boy's guilt despite testimonies that he had not thrown stones. Having witnessed the same events, the journalist Jonathan Pollack insisted that the Palestinian teenager was not throwing stones and that the Israeli military targeted him illegitimately.<sup>18</sup>

The circulation of visual representations concerning the Israeli military personnel's behaviour reminds local and international audiences of the violence and the power asymmetry that characterise interactions between Palestinians and military forces in the West Bank. Although these representations may disrupt the institutional narrative that cultivates a romanticised military image, they incite as well passionate debates about the vulnerability and helplessness of the Israeli forces during their

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<sup>16</sup> The IDF's Spokesperson quoted in Cohen, G. 'Palestinian Women, Children Stop IDF Soldier Detaining a Minor'. *Haaretz*, 28 August 2015. Available at: <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.673469> [Accessed 10 July 2017].

<sup>17</sup> Levinson, C. 'Senior IDF Officer: Nabi Saleh Incident Was a Mistake'. *Haaretz*, 8 September 2015. Available at: <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.675124> [Accessed 10 July 2017].

<sup>18</sup> Haaretz Staff, 'A Perfect Picture of the Occupation'. *Haaretz*, 31 August 2015. Available at: <http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/1.673691> [Accessed 10 July 2017].

military service. In this light, visual representations of violence permit the depoliticisation of the IDF's violence against Palestinians by directing the conversation towards the individual affective experiences of military personnel and away from the Palestinians' experiences under the occupation. Whereas most of the time journalists highlight the absurdity of the occupation by providing clichéd representations of Palestinian protests, military elites recognise soldiers' mistakes yet praise their self-control. In this regard, the interpretations of the Nabi Saleh episode provided by journalists and military figures alike downplay the political nature of the occupation by presenting protests as a ludic choreography or by reiterating the moral standard of the Israeli military personnel while serving under the occupation. In this context, affective debates focus on the threats to which the Israeli military personnel are exposed rather than on the violence enacted by the Israeli servicemen and women in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. This discursive move normalises the violence of the occupation by determining the interpretation of the IDF's violence against Palestinians as a self-defense endeavour in order to protect vulnerable Israeli Jewish citizen-soldiers.

Furthermore, this episode shows that the Israeli political figures rely on the symbolism of the vulnerable military figure in order to conceal the violence of the occupation and its consequences for Palestinians living in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. For instance, right wing political actors decried the failure of the military to protect the Israeli soldier. Israel's Minister of Culture and Sport, Miri Regev, called for changing the open-fire regulations in order to ensure the protection of the Israeli military personnel's lives: 'We need to decide immediately that a soldier that is attacked is permitted to return fire. Period. I call on the minister of security to put an end to the humiliation and change the open-fire regulations immediately!'.<sup>19</sup> Regev's words assign guilt to Mohammed Tamimi for attacking the Israeli soldier and reverse the victim/perpetrator identities in order to defend the right to kill even children that throw stones. Similarly, Avigdor Lieberman claimed this episode stained the reputation of the IDF as an instrument of security:

'We are talking about an incident which severely harms the deterrent capacity of the IDF. The pictures show a soldier being hit by

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<sup>19</sup> Miri Regev quoted in Beaumont, P. 'Nabi Saleh images illustrate changing asymmetry of Israel-Palestine conflict'.

Palestinian women and children and in the end giving up on the stone-thrower who started the whole incident, revealing weakness and helplessness'.<sup>20</sup>

Other voices blamed the Israeli left wing movement for manipulating the public's reaction to the Nabi Saleh episode and for endangering the Israeli soldier's life by disseminating this recording. Sergeant Benjamin Anthony, who heads *Our Soldiers Speak*, an organisation that brings Israeli forces to English-speaking university campuses in order to speak about their military experiences, reiterated a well-known accusation against the left wing non-governmental organisations for conducting campaigns that damage the prestige of the military: 'The left is so deeply entrenched in these efforts to undermine the activities of the IDF. They would say 'we want to protect Palestinian rights' but in that video they are clearly willing to place an Israeli soldier's life in mortal danger'.<sup>21</sup> In contrast, Sarit Michaeli, a spokesperson for the Israeli human rights organisation, *B'Tselem*, used this episode to stress that young Palestinians are subjected to a judicial regime that assigns criminal responsibility at a young age and that unlawfully discriminates between Israeli and Palestinian children if they are found guilty of throwing stones. She observed that:

'The video shows women trying to rescue a very young relative, barely over the age of the criminal responsibility, who is pinned down by an Israeli soldier. Technically, from the age of 12 both Israeli and Palestinian children can be arrested... but it's unheard of that an Israeli minor, a settler child throwing stones, would be arrested that way'.<sup>22</sup>

Sarit Michaeli's assessment recalls the most recent events concerning sentences that punish Palestinian stone-throwers. In 2014, the Israeli Knesset imposed

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<sup>20</sup> Avigdor Liberman quoted in Salem, H. 'Viral Video of Women Fighting Israeli Soldier Spotlights Harsh Treatment of Stone Throwers'. *Vice News*, 30 August 2015. Available at: <https://news.vice.com/article/viral-video-of-women-fighting-israeli-soldier-spotlights-harsh-treatment-of-stone-throwers> [Accessed 10 July 2017].

<sup>21</sup> Apfel, A. 'Following Nabi Saleh Attack, IDF Sergeant Condemns Radical Left-Wing Activists'. *Breaking Israel News*, 3 September 2015. Available at: <http://www.breakingisraelnews.com/48152/following-nabi-saleh-attack-idf-seargent-condemns-radical-left-wing-activists-idf/#MKFJkF6FuvwqKqeJ.97> [Accessed 10 July 2017].

<sup>22</sup> Sarit Michaeli quoted in Salem, 'Viral Video of Women Fighting Israeli Soldier'.

harsher regulation for punishing Palestinian children and youth that throw stones by stipulating that they could be imprisoned between ten to twenty years depending on whether the court can prove intent or not.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, in 2015, Benjamin Netanyahu's security cabinet relaxed the regulations according to which soldiers could use live ammunition during protests against Palestinians that throw stones and firebombs. Under new rules, soldiers could use live ammunition if they judge theirs or civilians' lives are under threat.<sup>24</sup>

The different interpretations about the Israeli soldier's behaviour in Nabi Saleh reveal the left-right cleavage of the Israeli political sphere. The right wing political elites portray the Israeli forces as victims of the military institution that fails to protect its troops or as victims of the Israeli leftist movements that lack patriotism and act against the interests of the state. Through these rhetorical practices, Palestinian children become (potential) enemies that are not only ready to harm the Israeli military personnel's bodies, but also their moral self-identity. Furthermore, the circulation of pictures representing the events that took place in Nabi Saleh carries an ambivalent outcome regarding their potential to question the dominant narratives that characterise the Israel/Palestine conflict. Both the pictures showing the violent episode in Nabi Saleh and the soldier's alleged emotions of restraint and vulnerability were mobilised by military and political elites in order to praise his behaviour, to dismiss his violent actions, and to call to reform the military institution in order to protect the IDF. In this context, Mohammed Tamimi's experience is used to reinstate the humanity of the Israeli soldier and to laud his self-control. These affective debates constrain Mohammed's possible innocence and his position as a victim since he was constructed as an enemy and his experience of violence was denied. In this respect, the violence against Mohammed Tamimi's evokes Sara Ahmed's argument that 'other claims of injury can only be excluded' only 'if "others" are not assumed to have "lives" that are "innocent"'.<sup>25</sup> The exclusion of Mohammed's pain strengthens and highlights the vulnerability and victimhood of Israeli military personnel at the expense of the Palestinian civilians despite their possible innocence. In this way, the IDF's violence

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<sup>23</sup> The Huffington Post Staff, 'Israel To Jail Stone-Throwers For Up To Twenty Years'. *The Huffington Post*, 21 July 2015. Available at: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/israel-jail-stone-throwers\\_us\\_55ae4992e4b0a9b9485271ca](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/israel-jail-stone-throwers_us_55ae4992e4b0a9b9485271ca) [Accessed 10 July 2017].

<sup>24</sup> Beaumont, P. 'Israel relaxes live-fire rules against Palestinian stone-throwers'. *The Guardian*, 25 September 2015. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/25/israel-live-ammunition-measures> [Accessed 10 July 2017].

<sup>25</sup> Ahmed, 'The Politics of fear', p. 385.

against Palestinians is downplayed, and the Israeli military personnel's vulnerability and restraint are used to highlight the exemplarity of the Israeli military and to envisage it as being exposed to Palestinians' violence, aggressions, and provocations. This discursive mechanism permits seeing Israeli servicemen and women as objects rather than subjects of violence therefore shielding them from their responsibility for the violence performed during their military service.

### **Hebron, West Bank: Solidarity With the Military on Social Media**

In April 2014, David Adamov, a soldier from the Nahal Brigade, became the quintessence of contemporary military soldiering in Israel by blending heroism and victimhood with the circulation of emotions on and beyond social media. *Youth Against Settlements*, an activist group that works in Hebron, filmed him cocking his assault rifle towards a Palestinian teenager, Saddam Abu Sanina. The video recording was distributed on the social media platform YouTube and showed Adamov threatening and loading his rifle while demanding the Palestinian youth to stop recording the incident.<sup>26</sup> When a message posted on social media suggested that Adamov was jailed for his actions, a campaign of support and solidarity for the Israeli soldier was launched on Facebook. It showed military personnel from elite units (with their faces covered in order to avoid reprimand), office workers during lunch breaks, and babies and pets with the message 'We are with David the Nahlavi'. The online social protest resulted in a Facebook page of support that gathered around 100,000 'likes' and through which the video of *Youth Against Settlements* was shared almost 7, 500 times on social media.<sup>27</sup> The success of the campaign on social media was predicated on collective solidarity as it assumed that David represents every member of the Israeli public or, at least, every Israeli that shared a message of support for him on social media.

The affective features of the online movement that supported Adamov show that 'social and cultural bonds of camaraderie that constitute modern militaries could be enhanced through social media practices (...) by creating a shared space where such

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<sup>26</sup> Ilan Ilan, 'David of Nahal' (Published 1 May 2014). Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b62V5mQoTzE> [Accessed 10 July 2017].

<sup>27</sup> Rudoren, J. 'Israeli Military Officials Caught Off Guard by a 'Digital Rebellion' '. *The New York Times*, 1 May 2014. Available at: [http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/02/world/middleeast/israeli-military-officials-caught-off-guard-by-a-digital-rebellion.html?partner=rss&emc=rss&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/02/world/middleeast/israeli-military-officials-caught-off-guard-by-a-digital-rebellion.html?partner=rss&emc=rss&_r=0) [Accessed 10 July 2017].

bonds can be maintained'.<sup>28</sup> Social media becomes a space in which Israeli servicemen and women build and sustain relations among themselves, with their families and friends, and with the wider public thus producing new types of social interaction and reimagining 'notions of privacy and community, intimacy, and solitude'.<sup>29</sup> Through the series of Facebook selfies and messages that were distributed in order to support Adamov, the Israeli military personnel reinforce the social bound between themselves and the wider public by inviting solidarity with David and the exoneration of his violent practices. In this respect, David's community of online supporters represents what Stephanie Baker calls a 'mediated crowd', which emerges through 'interactive online relationships enabled by new media technologies' that bring together 'aggrieved users into intense social relationships' that traverse online and offline spaces.<sup>30</sup> By benefiting of a network of support that links the online and the offline spheres, Adamov's wrongful deeds are pardoned insofar as the solidarity between military personnel and the public contributes to his representation as a victim. Therefore, the success of the Facebook campaign shows the role of social media in constituting 'an intimate public' that supported him.<sup>31</sup> Specifically, the cultivation of an affective connection between the Israeli civil and military spheres enabled Adamov's exoneration because social media functions 'as a porous, affective scene of identification among strangers that promises a certain experience of belonging and provides a complex of consolation, confirmation, discipline and discussion about how to live'.<sup>32</sup>

The 'David of Nahal' episode shows that social media, and Facebook in particular, represent an intimate virtual site of belonging and reiteration of the collective Israeli Jewish identity since the practices of solidarity that define this episode function as 'modes of attachment that make persons public and collective and that make collective scenes intimate spaces'.<sup>33</sup> Social media are conceived in terms of social relations because they function 'not only as conduits of information but also as creative forces, projecting and mapping the world and constructing (imagined) relationships among strangers, as well as [heightening] the more intimate sensations and feelings

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<sup>28</sup> Adey, P., Denney, D., Jensen, R., and Pinkerton, A. 'Blurred lines: intimacy, mobility, and the social military', *Critical Military Studies*, 2 (2016) p. 11.

<sup>29</sup> Adey et al. 'Blurred lines', p. 11.

<sup>30</sup> Baker, S. A. *Social Tragedy: The Power of Myth, Ritual, and Emotion in the New Media Ecology* (New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p. 143.

<sup>31</sup> Berlant, *The Female Complaint*, p. viii.

<sup>32</sup> Berlant, *The Female Complaint*, p. viii.

<sup>33</sup> Berlant, 'Intimacy', p. 288.



associated with those relationships'.<sup>34</sup> The dissemination of pictures and messages of support via Facebook enabled the construction of belonging and affinity between the Israeli public and the military. In this regard, the Israeli citizen-soldiers used social media to interpellate the Israeli public, who is thought to be touched by and moved by the difficult experience of military service, in order to express sympathy for David and to support him. Likewise, Alex Lambert believes that Facebook rearticulates distance and absence since it builds intimate connections between different people that might not share close ties otherwise.<sup>35</sup> In this way, social media encourages the building of (fictive) relations of proximity, belonging, and kinship that cultivate solidarity with the Israeli military yet forecloses conversations about Adamov's and the military's responsibility for the violence enacted against Palestinians. Therefore, through the power of social media to bring the intimacy of military service within the public sphere, the Facebook campaign mitigates the consequences of David Adamov's actions and invites public support and empathy with him. By cultivating support for Adamov, the campaign constitutes him as a victim of the military system that punishes soldiers and that does not acknowledge the chaos and the emotional intensity of performing one's military service in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Furthermore, Adamov's violence was depoliticised not only through the construction of a network of solidarity with him on social media, but also through official military and political responses to this episode. For example, the IDF responded by addressing the military personnel's use of social media rather than commenting on David's behaviour. For instance, the Chief of Staff, Lieutenant General Benny Gantz, expressed his dissatisfaction with the military personnel's digital dissent and argued that online protests challenge military ethics and discipline. He claimed this wave of online support for Adamov has

'raised issues of ethics in the military that we must deal with on every level. It is very important that we remember, and we say to our subordinates in a clear way, that Facebook is not an instrument of

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<sup>34</sup> Petersen, *Murder, the Media and the Politics of Public Feelings*, p. 10.

<sup>35</sup> Lambert, A. *Intimacy and Friendship on Facebook* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

command. It's here, and that is a fact, but it is not a substitute or even parallel to discourse between commanders and their soldiers'.<sup>36</sup>

Equally significant, the military clarified that David was sentenced to twenty days in prison for assaulting a superior rather than for the Hebron incident. In exchange, the media reported the Palestinian teenagers, who were threatened by Adamov, were arrested and interrogated about their confrontation with the Israeli soldier.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, right wing politicians joined the online campaign by declaring their support for David both on social networks and through public statements. Similarly to the Nabi Saleh episode, they declared their sympathy for the soldier who was vilified for his abuses, and highlighted his helplessness and the danger that he and other military personnel experience during their military service. Having served in the IDF's special units Sayeret Matkal and Maglan, the leader of the Jewish Home Party, Naftali Bennett, sympathised with David:

'I would have done the same as David the Nahal soldier. He did the right thing. Violence was directed at him. He was alone, surrounded by violent, provocative Arabs. He didn't shoot. He defended himself and those surrounding him and reasonably ended the incident'.<sup>38</sup>

These inflammatory remarks demarcate between who is guilty and who is innocent by offering unwavering support for David Adamov and by positioning him as a victim. Bennett continued by blaming left wing organisations for inciting this kind of events and emphasised that the left 'lives to smear IDF soldiers. If the photographers weren't there, the incident wouldn't have happened'.<sup>39</sup> Likewise, Uri Ariel, the Minister of Construction and Agriculture, stressed that left wing activism limits the potential of the Israeli military personnel to defend themselves: 'The reality in which

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<sup>36</sup> Lieutenant General Benny Gantz quoted in Rudoren, 'Israeli Military Officials Caught Off Guard by a 'Digital Rebellion' '.

<sup>37</sup> Beaumont, P. 'Israeli soldiers join online campaign in support of jailed 'David of Nahal' '. *The Guardian*, 1 May 2014. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/may/01/israeli-soldiers-online-campaign-support-jailed-david-nahal> [Accessed 10 July 2017].

<sup>38</sup> Naftali Bennett quoted in Harkov, L. 'Bennett on IDF soldier filmed in Hebron incident: 'I would have acted the same' '. *The Jerusalem Post*, 1 May 2014. Available at: <http://www.jpost.com/Defense/Bennett-on-IDF-soldier-filmed-in-Hebron-incident-I-would-have-acted-the-same-350987> [Accessed 10 July 2017].

<sup>39</sup> Naftali Bennett quoted in Harkov, 'Bennett on IDF soldier filmed in Hebron incident'.

soldiers have to absorb harm and humiliation on a daily basis without being able to respond, even when their lives are really in danger, because we're afraid of criticism, is intolerable'.<sup>40</sup> In contrast, left wing activists like Yehuda Shaul, one of the founders of veteran group *Breaking the Silence*, and Issa Amro, the founder of the *Youth Against Settlements* organisation, expressed their frustration with the affective responses provoked by this online campaign. Echoing Pfeffer who discussed the Nabi Saleh episode, Shaul voiced his disappointment with the failure of these episodes to generate a public debate about the IDF's abuses in the Occupied Palestinian Territories:

'If you really understand the story, these things are the norms, and not exceptions, because that's how you behave there, that's the reality of military occupation. If you're a real combat soldier, if you are on the ground, you know that this is the way things are, and sadly, we don't debate these things enough and we don't confront them enough'.<sup>41</sup>

Despite that his words normalise the IDF's violence in a subtle way, Shaul deplores the prevalence of the military's violent behaviour against Palestinians and their lack of accountability by criticising the apathy of the Israeli public regarding the IDF's pervasive violence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Likewise, Issa Amro expressed his concern with the socio-political situation that characterises the Israeli society. Amro disclosed that 'this for me is a disgusting campaign' insofar as it represents 'a sign that Israeli society is getting more aggressive and extreme'.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, Kuntsman and Stein believe the Israeli public and the military personnel's support for Adamov blends 'patriotic solidarity, the narrative of soldier victimhood, and military anxiety about the unfolding military age' in order to justify his behaviour.<sup>43</sup> Therefore, by launching, being involved in, and supporting an online campaign under the 'We are all David of Nahal' headline, the Israeli public and soldiers 'replayed a recurrent Israeli political narrative about the military occupation – namely, an inversion

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<sup>40</sup> Uri Ariel quoted in Harkov, 'Bennett on IDF soldier filmed in Hebron incident'.

<sup>41</sup> Yehuda Shaul quoted in Rudoren, 'Israeli Military Officials Caught Off Guard by a 'Digital Rebellion' '.

<sup>42</sup> Issa Amro quoted in Hebblethwaite, C. '#BBCTrending: Support for Israeli soldier who aimed gun at teen'. *BBC News*, 2 May 2014. Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/blogs-trending-27257590> [Accessed 10 July 2017].

<sup>43</sup> Kuntsman and Stein, *Digital Militarism*, pp. 82 & 85.

whereby the armed soldier, rather than the Palestinian civilian population, is figured as its chief victim'.<sup>44</sup> The cultivation of solidarity between the Israeli citizen-soldiers and Adamov (and implicitly, the military collective body) restricts the possibility to imagine the IDF as acting violently outside the boundaries of self-defence because it vilifies Palestinians and presents them as sources of danger.

The role of the 'David of Nahal' episode in reinforcing the affective boundaries between Israeli Jews and Palestinians is highlighted by the responses of solidarity and empathy that circulated on social networks, by the contribution of social media to bolstering nationalist feelings, and by its role in positing the Israeli military personnel as innocent victims of the occupation and of the military system. Similarly to the Nabi Saleh episode, the affective interpretations of the 'David of Nahal' episode reiterate the divisions that hinge on the Israeli politics across the political spectrum and remind of the power struggle between the left and right political figures in shaping the Israel/Palestine conflict narrative. Therefore, the study of the affective reverberations of the IDF's violence against Palestinians in the public sphere shows that 'public demonstrations of feeling are not merely authentic expressions of sentiment but also products of intense mediation by interested institutions and individuals'.<sup>45</sup> Since 'such demonstrations are constituted by (and constitutive of) relations of power', this episode shows the role of social media in circulating emotions that reject the position of Palestinians as victims, and that dismiss their precarious experience of living under the occupation.<sup>46</sup> Finally, by indicating the role of social media in disseminating emotional responses, this episode shows digital technology reshapes experiences of everyday militarism in the Israeli society by blurring the boundaries between the civil and military spheres. In this respect, the degree of support that Adamov enjoyed throughout the online campaign demonstrates the readiness of the Israeli public to disregard and to accept the Israeli military's violent behaviour against Palestinians. Therefore, expressions of solidarity and empathy with David indicate the Israeli public's subtle yet substantial consent for the military's violent behaviour in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Likewise, Ann Laura Stoler argues that consent is nurtured by an affective discourse that depends on 'shaping appropriate and reasoned affect, by directing affective judgments, by severing some affective bonds and establishing others, by

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<sup>44</sup> Kuntsman and Stein, *Digital Militarism*, p. 85.

<sup>45</sup> Petersen, *Murder, the Media and the Politics of Public Feelings*, p. 158.

<sup>46</sup> Petersen, *Murder, the Media and the Politics of Public Feelings*, p. 158.

adjudicating what constituted moral sentiments – in short, by educating the proper distribution of sentiments and desires'.<sup>47</sup> The role of social media in nurturing kinship and attachment between the military and civil spheres shows the Israeli public continuous support for the military and the relative acceptance of its violent practices downplay the IDF's violence against Palestinians and shield the military from its accountability. Equally significant, the solidarity with David Adamov, despite the visual evidence that incriminates him, raises questions regarding the power of alternative/dissenting voices and visual representations in questioning the positive image of the Israeli military.

### **Beitunia, West Bank: Doubting Palestinian Pain**

In 2014, a violent episode that took place in Beitunia illustrated the leniency that Israeli forces enjoy in the aftermath of their violent behaviour against Palestinians. During a demonstration that marked the Nakba Day in Beitunia, near Ramallah, an Israeli border policeman shot and killed the seventeen-year old teenager Nadeem Siam Nawara, and the sixteen-year old teenager Mohammad Mahmoud Odeh Abu Daher. The third victim, Mohammad Abdullah Hussein al-Azzeh, a fifteen-year old teenager, survived the attack.<sup>48</sup> *Defence for Children International – Palestine* distributed the recording of this episode, which provoked serious debates regarding the Israeli security forces' lack of individual and collective accountability for their violent behaviour in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Even though the IDF initially claimed that security forces used rubber bullets, tear gas, and stun grenades in order to disperse the demonstration attended by the three teenagers, the hospital officials from the Ramallah Medical Complex confirmed the teenagers were shot with live ammunition.<sup>49</sup> In November 2014, the IDF announced the border policeman, Ben Deri, who attacked the three boys, was arrested and charged with murder yet confined to house arrest. He was freed from house arrest in January 2017, after entering in a plea deal with the prosecution who lowered its charges from second-degree murder to negligent murder

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<sup>47</sup> Stoler, 'Affective States', p. 9.

<sup>48</sup> Defence for Children International – Palestine Staff, 'Israeli forces shoot and kill two Palestinian teens near Ramallah'. *Defence for Children International – Palestine*, 17 May 2014. Available at: [http://www.dci-palestine.org/israeli\\_forces\\_shoot\\_and\\_kill\\_two\\_palestinian\\_teens\\_near\\_ramallah](http://www.dci-palestine.org/israeli_forces_shoot_and_kill_two_palestinian_teens_near_ramallah) [Accessed 10 July 2017].

<sup>49</sup> Khouri, J., Levinson, C., Hasson, N. and Cohen, G. 'Two Palestinian Teens Killed at Nakba Day Protest in West Bank'. *Haaretz*, 15 May 2014. Available at: <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.590861> [Accessed 10 July 2017].

and aggravated assault charges.<sup>50</sup> Despite that the episode raises significant legal and political questions regarding Deri's arrest and plea deal, this section focuses on the affective debates provoked by the circulation of this footage in the public sphere.

This episode of violence shows affective interpretations of the violent encounter between military personnel and Palestinians deny the latter the position of victims. They indicate disbelief regarding the Palestinian pain and imagine them as cunning individuals that forge the violence they experience in order to falsely condemn the IDF for alleged violent behaviour. The security cameras of a carpentry shop recorded the moment in which the border policeman shot the boys. Furthermore, the shop owner, Faher Zayed, had witnessed the shooting and claimed the teenagers had not posed any threat to the Israeli soldiers and border policemen, and they had not thrown stones as it had been claimed by military officials.<sup>51</sup> However, a month later after declaring that the youth were illegally targeted, *Human Rights Watch* disclosed that the Israeli security forces harassed Faher Zayed due to his testimony. They accused him of having lied and fabricated evidence, and took Zayed for interrogation to the nearby Ofer prison. He described his questioning as following:

‘They told me that the video I gave to the press was fabricated, that everything I said and all my testimonies are a lie, that this is a serious violation of the law, and that I made the IDF look bad and caused a lot of problems. They told me the cameras need to be brought down within 24 hours.’<sup>52</sup>

Suspicion, accusations of staging death and of falsifying evidence surrounded the public debate regarding the injury and the death of the Palestinian teenagers. The

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<sup>50</sup> Williams, R. ‘Israeli border policeman arrested over shooting of Palestinian boy during West Bank protests’. *The Independent*, 12 November 2014. Available at:

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/israeli-border-policeman-arrested-over-shooting-of-palestinian-boy-during-west-bank-protests-9856294.html> [Accessed 10 July 2017];

Husseini, I. ‘How Israel has failed Palestinian victims’. *Al Jazeera*, 28 May 2017. Available at: <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/04/israel-failed-palestinian-victims-170419072021521.html> [Accessed 10 July 2017].

<sup>51</sup> Rudoren, J. ‘Video Renews Questions on Death of Young Palestinians’. *The New York Times*, 20 May 2014. Available at: [http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/21/world/middleeast/palestinian-teenagers-video.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/21/world/middleeast/palestinian-teenagers-video.html?_r=0) [Accessed 10 July 2017].

<sup>52</sup> Fahrer Zayed quoted in Human Rights Watch Staff, ‘Israel: Stop Threatening Witness to Killing’. *Human Rights Watch*, 19 June 2014. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/06/19/israel-stop-threatening-witness-killings> [Accessed 10 July 2017].

Israeli Minister of Defence at the time of the incident, Moshe Ya'alon, suggested the video recording was staged. Without having seen the actual recording, he declared that 'I've seen lots of films that were edited. This film I've not yet seen, but I know the system'.<sup>53</sup> An Israeli army spokesperson, Arye Shalimar, claimed that the 'film was edited and does not reflect the reality of the day in question, the violence. As part of our inquiry we have investigated whether there was live fire and we have not found that there was live fire'.<sup>54</sup> Likewise, the former Israeli ambassador to the United States of America, Michel Oren, expressed his doubt about the authenticity of the recording circulated by the *Defence for Children International – Palestine*: 'The way the bodies fall, the fact that there's no blood – someone who was hit in the back and a bullet has an exit wound, there is a tremendous amount of bleeding. There's no bleeding in the picture. There are many, many inconsistencies'.<sup>55</sup> Nonetheless, during the investigation, the prosecution found evidence that Deri had fired a live bullet. Eventually, he admitted firing a live bullet but in an unintentional manner since he did not know his firearm's magazine contained one.<sup>56</sup>

Assessing for *Haaretz* the official responses to the killings of the two teenagers, Hagai El-Ad deplored the missing of Palestinian suffering in the Israeli media: 'When it is not documented on video it interests almost no one, and when it is documented it is repressed as a conspiracy'.<sup>57</sup> His words echo Susan Sontag's belief that

'[i]mages offering evidence that contradicts cherished pieties are invariably dismissed as having been staged for the camera. To

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<sup>53</sup> Minister of Defence Moshe Ya'alon quoted in Times of Israel Staff and AFP, 'Ya'alon says troops in Nakba Day killings were in danger, acted as needed'. *The Times of Israel*, 20 May 2014. Available at: <http://www.timesofisrael.com/yaalon-says-troops-in-nakba-day-killings-were-in-danger-acted-as-needed/> [Accessed 10 July 2017].

<sup>54</sup> Arye Shalimar quoted in The Times of Israel Staff and AFP, 'Ya'alon says troops in Nakba Day killings were in danger'.

<sup>55</sup> Michel Oren quoted in Booth, W. and Eglash, R. 'Israeli officer arrested in fatal shooting of Palestinian teen caught on camera'. *The Washington Post*, 12 November 2014. Available at: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle\\_east/2014/11/12/3815b2b9-0296-42bd-848d-459b8d8f42c3\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/2014/11/12/3815b2b9-0296-42bd-848d-459b8d8f42c3_story.html) [Accessed 10 July 2017].

<sup>56</sup> Times of Israel Staff, 'Plea deal for border policeman who killed Palestinian protester'. *The Times of Israel*, 6 December 2016. Available at: <http://www.timesofisrael.com/plea-deal-for-border-policemen-who-killed-palestinian-protester/> [Accessed 10 July 2017].

<sup>57</sup> El-Ad, H. 'His Name was Nadim Nuwara'. *Haaretz*, 23 June 2014. Available at: <http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-1.600449> [Accessed 10 July 2017].

photographic corroboration of the atrocities committed by one's own side, the standard response is that the pictures are a fabrication'.<sup>58</sup>

Therefore, the continuous debate about the authenticity of the photos of Palestinian pain that circulate in the Israeli public sphere indicates a phenomenon of 'digital suspicion – a mode of suspicion directed against the digital image, articulated most prominent on social media, often in the language of amateur digital forensics (in charges of digital doctoring, Photoshop manipulation and so on).<sup>59</sup> Military figures, political elites, and ordinary citizens alike use suspicion both as a 'form of knowledge and an affective disposition – a way of securing their Zionist political claims and identities, and of producing the structures of feelings and community ties on which such claims depend'.<sup>60</sup> Through this discourse of digital suspicion, Palestinians are not only denied the position of victims, but they are also presented as fictive victims that damage the prestige and the reputation of the Israeli military. Palestinians appear as distrustful and as fabricating their own violent experiences. This is a subtle yet important narrative that shifts the blame from the Israeli perpetrators to the Palestinian victims insofar as the latter are represented as subjects that lack credibility. Similarly to the Nabi Saleh episode when the victim/perpetrator narrative was shifted between the Israeli soldier and Mohammed Tamimi, the Beitunia episode indicates that

'[v]isual symbolics of pain are the subject of fierce contestation. They are images not for the sake of imagery itself, but they assist in the conclusion of the narratives that come to be associated with the imagery. Images thus become part of the narrative – stabilization process that seeks to solidify stories that mobilize disparate and fragmented events into a matrix of meaning'.<sup>61</sup>

Specifically, the recording and pictures that show Nadeem and Mohammed's pain are used by the Israeli military and political elites to evacuate the boys' suffering and to present the Israeli security forces as victims of the Palestinian cunningness. The

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<sup>58</sup> Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, pp. 10-1.

<sup>59</sup> Kuntsman and Stein, *Digital Militarism*, p. 58.

<sup>60</sup> Kuntsman and Stein, *Digital Militarism*, pp. 58-9.

<sup>61</sup> Dauphinée, E. 'The Politics of the Body in Pain: Reading the Ethics of Imagery', *Security Dialogue*, 38 (2007) pp. 143-4.



debate about their authenticity shows that suspicion supports the exclusion of Palestinian narratives under the guise of unreliability and inaccuracy of information. In this regard, the interpretations of the Israeli military personnel's violence against Palestinians disclose a 'hierarchy of credibility' that depends on 'scales of trust that measur[e] what forms of witness, words and deeds, could be taken as reliably relevant'.<sup>62</sup> By challenging the trustworthiness of recordings of military violence, both the Israeli military and public figures vilify Palestinians and present them as individuals that are ready to forge their own violent experience in order to attract the attention of the international media and to stain the prestige of the Israeli military. Elaine Scarry's words express the political symbolism of doubting Palestinians' pain by recalling that 'to have great pain is to have *certainty*; to hear about pain is to have *doubt*'.<sup>63</sup> Likewise, Liz Philipose is more equivocal in her assessment by stressing that 'doubt is political, functioning to perpetuate existing hierarchies and inequalities'.<sup>64</sup> Doubting that Palestinians experience pain and suffering confines the possibility to recognise the Israeli policies and privileges that inflict and downplay the IDF's violence against Palestinians.

The investigation of the affective debates generated by visual representations of violence highlights the role emotions in sustaining the narratives that distinguish between Israeli Jews and Palestinians. Within the emotional narrative that marks the Israel/Palestine conflict, teenagers and children like Mohammed Tamimi, Saddam Abu Sanina, or Nadim Nawara experience a precarious situation. For Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian, the Israeli military's violent practices against children exemplify Israel's colonial settler practices within which their suffering is not only denied, but also through which Palestinian children are constituted 'as always already terrorist others who should be disciplined and violated'.<sup>65</sup> Specifically, violence against Palestinian children indicates the politics of fear deployed by the Israeli state apparatus in order to justify the military's violence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Similarly, Lauren Berlant cautions that 'fear is natural, but the objects that make you afraid emerge

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<sup>62</sup> Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain*, p. 23.

<sup>63</sup> Scarry, E. *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1985), [emphasis in original] p. 13.

<sup>64</sup> Philipose, 'The Politics of Pain', p. 65.

<sup>65</sup> Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 'Palestinian Children as Tools for 'Legalized' State Violence', p. 1.

historically'.<sup>66</sup>Therefore, the socio-construction of Palestinian children as objects of fear that are dangerous and that should be contained and disciplined are part and parcel of the production of Palestinians as racialised 'Others'. Sara Ahmed observes that the affective hierarchies that distinguish between bodies emerge at the intersection between fear and racism:

'[F]ear both envelops the bodies that feel it, as well as constructs those bodies as enveloped, as contained by it, as if it comes from outside and moves inward. In the encounter, fear does not bring the bodies together: it is not a shared feeling, but works to differentiate between white and black bodies'.<sup>67</sup>

The close relation between emotions and racialising discourses deepen the political significance of the affective responses that emerged in the aftermath of the dissemination of the episodes of violence investigated in this chapter. In this respect, the affective responses of solidarity, empathy, compassion for Israeli military personnel and respectively, suspicion against and the belittlement of Palestinian suffering show the image of the youth and children is shrouded in 'cultural fantasies' that distinguish between Palestinians and Israeli Jews.<sup>68</sup> These 'cultural fantasies' represent 'dominant racialised and gendered constructions that structure public intelligibilities, affective responses, frames of reception and interpretation' that eventually inform and justify the IDF's violence against Palestinians.<sup>69</sup> Therefore, cultural fantasies transform the Palestinian child or teenager in an alleged enemy that could be 'anywhere and anyone, as a ghostlike figure in the present, who gives (...) nightmares about the future, as an anticipated future of injury'.<sup>70</sup> The figure of the Palestinian enemy accumulates over time, gains affective value insofar as his or her figure is detached from a particular body and face. Since fear, anger, and anxiety cannot be associated with a particular Palestinian body as a source of injury, these emotions '*circulate in an economic sense,*

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<sup>66</sup> Seitz, D. 'On Citizenship and Optimism: Lauren Berlant, Interviewed by David K. Seitz'. *Society and Space*, 22 March 2013. Available at: <http://societyandspace.org/2013/03/22/on-citizenship-and-optimism/> [Accessed 10 July 2017].

<sup>67</sup> Ahmed, 'Affective Economies', p. 126.

<sup>68</sup> Ioanide, P. 'The Story of Abner Louima: Cultural Fantasies, Gendered Racial Violence, and the Ethical Witness', *Journal of Haitian Studies*, 13 (2007) p. 7.

<sup>69</sup> Ioanide, 'The Story of Abner Louima', pp. 7-8.

<sup>70</sup> Ahmed, 'Affective Economies', p. 123.

*working to differentiate some others from other others, a differentiation that is never “over” as it awaits for others who have not yet arrived*’.<sup>71</sup> In the Israel/Palestine conflict, fear (re)creates the boundaries between Israeli military personnel and Palestinian civilians by (re)producing the image of the Palestinian as an aggressive subject who is willing to resort to violence and to harm the Israeli citizen-soldiers. Through the accumulation and the circulation of fear, doubt, suspicion, and aversion against the threatening figure of the Palestinian subject, the Israeli military assumes ‘the young male is a metonym for Palestinian opposition and struggle against domination, the idea and symbols of which must be rooted out and silenced’.<sup>72</sup> Therefore, the passionate debates, emotional engagements, and affective reverberations concerning the IDF’s violence against Palestinians indicate the role of emotions in depending the hierarchies that define the Israel/Palestine conflict and that legitimise the Israeli military’s violence as a self-defence effort.

## **Conclusion**

The Nabi Saleh, Hebron, and respectively, Beitunia episode reveal the IDF’s widespread violence within the Occupied Palestinian Territories and disclose Palestinian youth and children’s precarious lives under the occupation. This chapter focuses on the affective echoes and interpretations generated by the circulation of images and narratives of violence in the local and international public sphere. Therefore, it highlights the role of the affective reactions and passionate debates generated by these episodes in upholding the divisions that characterise the Israel/Palestine conflict. Specifically, this chapter shows that affective interpretations of the violence that took place between Israeli military figures and Palestinian youth mobilise affinity, sympathy, solidarity, admiration for Israeli forces, and respectively, cultivate suspicion, doubt, fear, or hate towards Palestinians. These social relations of belonging and difference constitute the IDF’s benign image, strengthen the Israeli public’s positive perception of the Israeli military, and moderate the IDF’s accountability for the violence pursued in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

In order to illustrate the role of emotions in heightening the socio-political differences in the Israel/Palestine conflict, this chapter studies traditional and social

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<sup>71</sup> Ahmed, ‘Affective Economies’, [emphasis in original] p. 123.

<sup>72</sup> Peteet, J. ‘Male Gender and Rituals of Resistance in the Palestinian *Intifada*: A Cultural Politics of Violence’, *American Ethnologist*, 21 (1994) p. 36.

media as sites and means to ‘project or invite felt proximities, distances, desires, disgust, and disconnections’ regarding Palestinians and the Israeli military forces.<sup>73</sup> It explores an array of discursive practices and a varied group of public, political, and military actors in order to map out the affective responses through which the military forces are constructed as vulnerable subjects, as victims of the Israeli military institution, and as targets of Palestinians’ ill intents. Through these rhetorical moves, Palestinian experiences of violence are dismissed and Palestinians themselves are blamed for ‘posing’ as victims or are viewed as perpetrators that affect the physical and the moral integrity of the Israeli military personnel. By eliciting affective debates that highlight division and antagonism, these episodes show that emotional engagements with visual representations of violence shifts the victim/perpetrator/witness dynamic between the Israeli citizen-soldiers and Palestinians, foreclose conversations about the IDF’s widespread violence against Palestinians, and disavow its socio-political implications for Palestinians living under the occupation. Conversations regarding the IDF’s individual and collective responsibility for their violent behaviour are not only masked by discourses of victimhood and vulnerability, but they also indicate the readiness of the Israeli public to mobilise behind its military despite visual evidence showing the IDF’s violence against Palestinians. Finally, yet significantly, these episodes show that the Israeli military’s violence against Palestinians and its repetition is linked with the racialised narratives that portray and produce Palestinians as threatening and dangerous individuals. Therefore, by criticising the Israeli rhetorical engagement with visual representations of violence, this chapter shows that affective formations of race, history, politics, and cultural symbolism shape the construction of violent boundaries in the Israel/Palestine conflict, and legitimise and downplay the Israeli military’s violence against Palestinians.

The study of the IDF’s violence against Palestinians at the intersection between emotions, media, and visual evidence shows the political complexity of circulating visual representations of violence for the purposes of contesting war, harm, and injury. Despite that the Israeli military’s violence against Palestinians is a widespread phenomenon, these episodes caused passionate debates regarding the IDF’s violent behaviour due to the aesthetic, technological, and cultural frameworks within which these events occurred, are placed, and debated. In this respect, these episodes

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<sup>73</sup> Petersen, *Murder, the Media and the Politics of Public Feelings*, p. 12.

gained visibility due to the place in which they were situated, the actors that were involved in them, the time in which they occurred, or the techniques of dissemination that were used in order to circulate these episodes. Nabi Saleh is a site of resistance that gathers local and international activists and journalists therefore the ubiquity of cameras in this village permitted the recording and dissemination of this incident. The circulation of the 'David of Nahal' episode and its affective reverberations were caused by the dissemination of this video by a prominent human rights actor in the region (*Youth against Settlements*) and by the public and military personnel's readiness to participate in an online solidarity campaign in order to support David Adamov. Likewise, the recording with the episode in Beitunia was distributed by a well-known human rights organisation that has access to the media and is recognised by the international community as a reliable source. Moreover, this episode was recorded during a significant national political moment, the Nakba Day, when local and international journalists are likely to be attentive to the events that take place in the Occupied Palestinian Territories since they expect locals to clash with the Israeli military forces during protests against the occupation.

Nonetheless, this chapter shows that visual representations of violence do not always contest dominant discourses or hinder injury and harm in the Israel/Palestine conflict. The study of the affective echoes produced by photographs and recordings that illustrate the IDF's violence against Palestinians indicates that affective reverberations of visual representations moderate their potential to trouble prevailing discourses in the Israel/Palestine conflict. Therefore, the examination of representations of pain should take into account Susan Sontag's warning that pictures carry the potential, to 'objectify: they turn an event or a person into something that can be possessed'.<sup>74</sup> In this context, the circulation of pictures that emphasise human misery are problematic since 'in their [the photos] focus on the powerless', those that suffer are 'reduced to their powerlessness'.<sup>75</sup> This research enriches Sontag views by showing that the affective reverberations generated by the episodes surveyed in this chapter indicate not only the solidification of Palestinians in the position of victims, but also the rejection and the denial of Palestinian victimhood under the occupation. The chapter stresses the importance of studying the politicisation of images of violence since their circulation

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<sup>74</sup> Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, p. 81.

<sup>75</sup> Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, p. 78.

and their affective interpretation may indicate their ‘objectification toward the service of particular kinds of politics’.<sup>76</sup> Specifically, it shows the objectification of Palestinians is accompanied by the reinterpretation and appropriation of their pain through a variety of discourses and practices that rely on affective discourse that highlight hate, fear, suspicion, and animosity.

Therefore, the study of the affective boundaries that characterise the Israel/Palestine conflict invites the examination of the Israeli Jewish and Palestinian subjectivities by focusing on ‘whose emotions are visible/legible in public, and how these emotions are selectively associated with/attached to some bodies and not to others’.<sup>77</sup> Equally significant, this chapter indicates the importance of investigating the ‘outcomes of these emotions and attachments’ since they offer clues about the relation between the constitution of a benign military subjectivity, the public support for the IDF, and the political, military and public reluctance to condemn the military for their violent behaviour.<sup>78</sup> Through affective discourses that deny, doubt, and erase Palestinian pain, Israeli citizen-soldiers, military and political authorities, and public figures construct a military image of virtuosity and vulnerability that reinforces the IDF’s idealised representation. This figure strengthens the affective attachment between the military and the Israeli public despite the circulation of incriminatory evidence that shows the IDF’s violence against Palestinians. Within these boundaries, the Israeli military’s violent behaviour cannot be interpreted anything else apart from self-defence endeavours in order to protect the individual and the collective Israeli Jewish body. The following chapter continues the study of the role of emotions in heightening differences in the Israel/Palestine conflict by exploring the practices through which Israeli Jewish and Palestinian dead bodies are commemorated, handled, and recovered in the aftermath of a violent attack. It argues that commemoration, forensic, legal, and bureaucratic practices through which Israeli Jewish and Palestinian dead bodies are remembered, managed, and retrieved in the aftermath of violence reinforce the affective boundaries that characterise the Israel/Palestine conflict. These practices capture, circulate, and provoke grief, mourning, pain, loss, repulsion, and disgust that distinguish between the Israeli Jews and Palestinian dead bodies by

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<sup>76</sup> Dauphinée, ‘The Politics of the Body in Pain’, p. 140.

<sup>77</sup> Petersen, *Murder, the Media and the Politics of Public Feelings*, p. 15.

<sup>78</sup> Petersen, *Murder, the Media and the Politics of Public Feelings*, p. 15.

demanding the utmost care for the first ones and the exclusion of the latter from the Israeli socio-political order.

## **Chapter 5: *Heroes, Victims of Terror, and Enemies: Practices and Counter-practices of Commemoration, Mourning, and Recovery of Israeli and Palestinian Dead Bodies***

*'Dead soldiers don't talk. Here they do'.<sup>1</sup>*

### **Fieldwork Diary Entry**

#### **Wednesday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015: Remembrance Day (*Yom Hazikaron*) for the Fallen of Israel's Wars and for Terror Victims**

At 11 am, when a siren sounded across Israel, most of the Israeli Jews came to a standstill in order to honour the memory of the fallen soldiers and the victims of terror attacks. At that particular time, I was in Jerusalem, travelling with the light rail train, from the Ammunition Hill station to the Mount Herzl station. When the light rail stopped, passengers either stood up or stepped outside the train in order to observe a few moments of silence. I stood up as well from my seat while observing in a discreet manner the serious figures of the Israeli Jews, Palestinians, Israeli Arabs, tourists, or locals who were travelling with the light rail. As the light rail continued towards Mount Herzl, I noticed the numerous Israeli flags that adorned the streets and buildings of Jerusalem. More and more people boarded the train in order to go to the military cemetery in Mount Herzl. They were carrying flowers that undoubtedly would be laid down on the graves of their loved ones. Less than 30 minutes away, I arrived at the military cemetery together with hundreds of people who were making their way towards visiting the graves of their loved ones. As I entered the cemetery, I noticed that most of the tombs were patently adorned with fresh flowers, with pebbles (I would be later told in an informal conversation that putting small stones on graves symbolises the bonding between the living and the dead bodies thus showing that the memory of the deceased would never be forgotten), and with small Israeli flags with a narrow black ribbon attached to the latter. Interestingly enough, a one or two-page (A4 size) obituary was accompanying some graves therefore giving visitors the opportunity to read the

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<sup>1</sup> Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, p. 124.



biographical account of the fallen soldiers or victims of terror that were interred in those sites. As I walked through the slots allocated to different operations or wars, I witnessed civilians and soldiers visiting the graves of the fallen ones. Some were praying, others were silently arranging flowers on the graves. Some were singing and others were crying. Most of the people were gathered around the slots that commemorated recent operations in which the IDF had been involved: the Second Intifada or the previous military operations the Gaza Strip (Operation Cast Lead, 2008/9; Operation Pillar of Defence, 2012; Operation Protective Edge, 2014).

Inspired by these observations, the chapter examines affective repertoires that characterise rituals of memorialisation, commemoration, and recovery of the Israeli and Palestinian dead bodies in Israel. It shows the role of mourning, grief, loss, bereavement, and pain in justifying the IDF's violence against Palestinians and in reinforcing the affective boundaries that characterise the Israel/Palestine conflict. To this end, the chapter illustrates the role of state authorities, political and religious figures, medical experts, and civil actors in constructing the Israeli military subject as a 'heroic victim'. This image carries significant consequences for the Israel/Palestine conflict. It imposes emotional, bureaucratic, and legal complexities in commemorating Palestinian dead bodies, informs the justification of violence in the name of the security of the Israeli state, and hinders the process of accountability with regard to the IDF's violence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

In order to support this argument, the chapter divides in three sections, with the first one investigating a set of military obituaries published on the Israeli army's Official Blog in order to map out the defining features of the Israeli 'heroic victim' figure.<sup>2</sup> By presenting a conventional view regarding the Israeli military and its role in the Israeli society, these obituaries mourn the loss of heroic Israeli citizen-soldiers that have performed the ultimate patriotic sacrifice by giving their lives for the state. They conceal the violence that is part of military service. Through the description of unique, devoted, and talented servicemen and women, these obituaries envisage military deaths as tragic episodes. This aspect carries serious implications for the Israel/Palestine conflict. Resembling other Western (online) obituaries circulated in the public sphere, these official practices of commemoration extract the Israeli soldier-citizen from the

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<sup>2</sup> The IDF Spokesperson's Unit, 'In Memoriam', *The IDF Blog*.

specificity of the Israel/Palestine conflict, and invite local and international audiences to view the Israeli military personnel as any other Western troops engaged in fighting global threats. These aspects heighten the feeling of affinity between the IDF, the local and the international public that reads, shares, and circulates these obituaries. In this way, these obituaries invite those that view them to support the Israeli military and to express sorrow for the individual and collective loss of these men and women. Through this affective technique, the IDF depoliticise their involvement in the Israel/Palestine conflict and downplay the military's role in enforcing the occupation of Palestinians. The following section discusses the techniques through which the Israeli Institute of Forensic Medicine and ZAKA, a search-and-rescue ultra-Orthodox organisation that helps the Israeli authorities to address natural and man-made disasters in Israel, handle the Israeli citizen-soldiers' and respectively, Palestinians' living and dead bodies in the aftermath of a violent episode. It shows the Israeli forensic practices are imbued with Jewish religious values and construct a faultless and impeccable military subjectivity that reinforces the heroic yet benign nature of the Israeli military. This representation relies on a discourse according to which the Israeli Jewish (military) bodies are sacred, deserve the utmost care, and need to be separated and defended from Palestinian dangerous bodies. More significantly, the forensic practices through which the Palestinian and respectively, the Israeli Jewish bodies are handled cultivate disgust, aversion, and animosity against the former thus reinforcing the affective boundaries that characterise the Israel/Palestine conflict. The final section investigates Palestinian and Israeli joint efforts to challenge the hegemonic discourses of mourning, grief, and bereavement that favour Israeli Jews at the detriment of Palestinians and that sanction violence against the latter. It explores the challenges and the successes that non-governmental organisations like *Combatants for Peace* and *Parents Circle – Families Forum: Palestinian and Israeli Bereaved Families for Peace* experience while trying to organise joint commemoration events for Israeli and Palestinian victims during the Israeli Memorial Day.<sup>3</sup> The chapter concludes by highlighting the importance of studying the role of emotions in demarcating and differentiating between Israeli Jews and Palestinians, and by assessing the political implications of disseminating the 'heroic victim' military figure to local and international audiences.

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<sup>3</sup> Shmulovich, M. 'Remembering both sides on Yom Hazikaron'. *The Times of Israel*, 15 April 2013. Available at: <http://www.timesofisrael.com/remembering-both-sides-on-yom-hazikaron/> [Accessed 21 July 2017].

## **In Memoriam, 2015: Commemorating Heroes and Victims of Terror**

In 2015, the IDF decided to honour their fallen soldiers and victims of terror by creating an 'In Memoriam' webpage on the Official Blog of the Israeli military. A black and white page with shades of grey and the picture of a burning candle placed at the bottom of the page offers the following introductory message worth quoting extensively:

'In a country of over 8 million people, every family and every citizen is connected personally, in some way, to someone who lost his life. Today, the number of fallen stands at 23,320. We mourn their absence and we feel acutely the pain of our loss. We imagine the families they would have had, the homes they would have built, the grandchildren they would have given us. We talk to them, we feel that they are there – but we know that they can't talk back. Over the years, the pain dulls a little bit, but it never loses its power to affect us. Every year, on Yom HaZikaron (Israel's memorial day), Israel commemorates its fallen soldiers and victims of terror. To date, 23,320 people have been killed during active military duty. In Memoriam is a special project, meant to honor a small selection of fallen soldiers chosen at random, and to tell the stories of those who lost their lives defending the State of Israel. These tragedies are the result of the difficult reality Israel faces every day'.<sup>4</sup>

This paragraph captures the essence of the commemoration ethos that permeates the Israeli society and highlights the special relation between the Israeli society and its military. The reader is reminded of the number of the Israeli population and of the number of the Israeli fallen soldiers and victims of terror in order to accentuate the sadness and the loss that brings the Israeli society together. The paragraph encourages readers to imagine the dead soldiers' lives by picturing their failed opportunity to contribute demographically and materially to the Israeli collective body. Despite being dead, soldiers are kept alive in the hearts and minds of the Israeli citizens, aspect that is emphasised by the phrase 'we talk to them, we feel that they are

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<sup>4</sup> The IDF Spokesperson's Unit, 'In Memoriam', *The IDF Blog*.

there'. Since it is expected that the experience of bereavement and grief is likely to alleviate but not disappear in the future, the paragraph suggests the tragic and the unfortunate loss of these men and women. Finally, the paragraph asks readers to empathise with the Israeli military and society since the tragic end of these soldier-citizens is the outcome 'of the difficult reality Israel faces every day'.

Military troops have a duty and a right to legitimately kill their enemies in the name of defending the nation and in order to preserve the artificial boundaries of their community. Due to their task, military troops are afforded the utmost respect, and their (possible) military death expects absolute praise and celebration as a patriotic sacrifice. However, this view has always been subjected to contestation. For instance, the contested nature and legacy of the Vietnam War have raised questions regarding the ways in which the death of military personnel should be memorialised and preserved in the American public memory.<sup>5</sup> Israel, a state born out of war and which has been involved across times in both conventional and non-conventional military operations, puts significant emphasis on its fallen military figures in order to secure the Israeli public's continuous support for the IDF and to justify past and future actions in the name of the security of the state.<sup>6</sup> *In Memoriam* contributes to the ethos of commemoration of the Israeli citizen-soldiers yet its presence in the online sphere indicates that it addresses a wider local and international audience by introducing them to an idealised representation of the Israeli soldiering.

The webpage honors fallen soldiers and victims of terror that died between 1949 and 2015 and represents a collection of photographs that shows fifty-nine men, five women, and a twelve-year old boy smiling and wearing either their uniforms or their casual clothes. Each photograph is accompanied by a brief biography of the deceased individual. These obituaries follow a similar pattern despite the individualisation of each dead citizen-soldier and victim of terror through the presentation of a personal photograph, and occasional anecdotes provided by family members, acquaintances, or by unit commanders. They disclose the death age, the death cause, the educational trajectory and hobbies, the favorite mottos, the military career, and a brief description of the death cause (if known). Lastly, each obituary forwards

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<sup>5</sup> McMahon, R. 'Contested Memory: The Vietnam War and American Society, 1975-2001', *Diplomatic History*, 26 (2002) pp. 159-84.

<sup>6</sup> Aronoff, M. J. 'Wars as Catalysts of Political and Cultural Change', in *The Military and Militarism in the Israeli Society*, edited by Edna Lomsky-Feder and Eyal Ben-Ari (New York, State University of New York Press, 1999), p. 43.

information concerning the surviving family members and the place of burial of the dead citizen-soldier. The circulation of online obituaries for citizen-soldiers is far from being a practice specific to the Israeli military. Maja Zehfuss investigated the linguistic, symbolic, and political messages of the obituaries published online by the British Ministry of Defense in order to commemorate the military personnel who died during Operation TELIC in Iraq. She believes obituaries efface both the violence that is enacted against the military personnel and the violence pursued by the military since they insist on representing troops as having died of a tragic death.<sup>7</sup> Zehfuss's work is inspired by Judith Butler's view regarding the political role of obituaries: '[T]he obituary functions as the instrument by which grievability is publicly distributed. It is the means by which a life becomes, or fails to become, a publicly grievable life, an icon for national self-recognition, the means by which a life becomes noteworthy'.<sup>8</sup>

This chapter takes Zehfuss's and Butler's insights further and argues the Israeli online military obituaries constitute the military subject as a 'heroic victim', a representation that complicates the Israel/Palestine conflict because it confines local and international criticism regarding the IDF's violence against Palestinians. Specifically, this figure appeals to the local Israeli public insofar as it reiterates the traditional representation of military service as a site of heroism and sacrifice for the purposes of defending the nation. As a cleansed representation of military service in Israel, obituaries present the Israeli citizen-soldiers as gifted troops and accomplished citizens that were tragically killed during their military service. Furthermore, the 'heroic victim' figure appeals to an international audience by imagining the Israeli military as any other Western army engaged in fighting global threats. Therefore, these obituaries conceal the IDF's instrumental role in enforcing the Israeli occupation and their violence against Palestinians since the Israeli citizen-soldiers are imagined as heroic figures whose death is a sacrifice performed for the purposes of defending Israel and the wider international community against the global threat of terrorism.

To a certain extent, the obituaries published on the IDF's Blog resemble with the Israeli military (self-)representations on social media that were examined in the third chapter. They celebrate the (imagined) multicultural identity of the military, highlight the joyful and cheerful citizen-soldiers that serve in the IDF, and construct a

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<sup>7</sup> Zehfuss, M. 'Hierarchies of Grief and the Possibility of War: Remembering UK Fatalities in Iraq', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 38 (2009) pp. 419-40.

<sup>8</sup> Butler, *Precarious Life*, p. 34.

gendered military representation by imagining strong male figures and sweet servicewomen. However, these obituaries distinguish from the IDF's (self-) representations on Facebook insofar as they do not insist on presenting military service as a self-development practice. Rather, these obituaries highlight the exceptionality of each citizen-soldier and his or her unique contribution to their community, to the military, and to defending Israel. Specifically, they stress the courage and determination of the Israeli Jewish citizen-soldiers, highlight their devotion to and readiness to sacrifice for their community and Israel, and underline their remarkable individual and professional skills. These aspects represent the defining features of the Israeli 'heroic victim' figure, which is a representation that invites admiration for the Israeli troops' distinctive features and that provokes pain and sadness for their (tragic) death.

In order to reinforce the 'heroic victim' figure, most of these obituaries reflect characteristics that are associated with the cultural archetypes of the *Sabra* and the *pioneer*. The pioneer represents the quintessential figure of the pre-Israel period and the key symbol of the second immigration wave (1904-14 *aliyah*) in the Yishuv (pre-state community), while the Sabras represent the first generation of native-born Israelis that both resembled and distinguished from their pioneer parents. The pioneer would pursue manual labour in order to secure both personal and national redemption. According to pioneers' beliefs, physical labour through agriculture, vigour, secularism, love, and sacrifice for the settled land and for the collective body would bring about the emancipation of the Jew and a detachment from its bourgeois habits that characterised his or her life in the exile. Moreover, the Sabras became the symbolic figures of heroism, military masculinity, and combat success because it was believed their courage, sturdiness, and morality secured the victory of the Six-Day War (1967).<sup>9</sup> By reminding of the Sabra and the pioneer figures, these obituaries situate the Israeli military subject at the intersection between continuity and change, reiterate the significance of military service in Israel, and remind the current generation of Israeli citizen-soldiers of their responsibility to carry forward the legacy of their parents and grandparents.

Rooted in the Sabra and respectively, the pioneer figure, the image of the 'heroic victim' is constructed through an emphasis on the military personnel's devotion, love, and loyalty towards their local communities and Israel. For instance, First

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<sup>9</sup> Weiss, *The Chosen Body*, pp. 18-26.

Lieutenant Goldin, ‘attended together with his twin brother “Bnei Akiva” religious youth movement and over time, became counselors in the movement’.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, Sergeant First Class Eyal Tuvia Benin, who was killed by enemy fire during the Second War of Lebanon in 2006, ‘was very active in the Israeli scout movement, where he learned and strengthened the values that would shape his short life: leadership, camaraderie, and a strong love for Israel’.<sup>11</sup> Private Rivkah “Regina” Salzman is the perfect blend of the Sabra and the pioneer spirit since she has ‘made Aliyah to Israel with a youth group and settled in a kibbutz, Ein Ha’Horesh. She studied agriculture for a period of two and a half years, and afterwards became a farmer’.<sup>12</sup> As a member of the Palmach, Rivkah fought ‘with great courage and dedication’ but was ‘mortally wounded while defending her home’.<sup>13</sup>

Other obituaries stress the courage, the determination, and the readiness of these servicemen and women to sacrifice for Israel. For example, Private Levi Ismailov (Luba), who was killed during the early days of the Six-Day War in 1967, went to war without waiting for his call to duty: ‘On the eve of the Six-Day War, when he saw that his call to duty was delayed, he became impatient and prepared to head out by himself; and so, through courage and determination, he went out to fight in the Armored Corps’.<sup>14</sup> Others overcame their disabilities or injuries in order to serve the State and the people of Israel as best as they could therefore they are regarded as examples of emulation. Sergeant First Class Yossef Avnery’s ‘physical limitations did not stop him from completing basic training, and he was one of the soldiers who inspired others and helped boost morale’.<sup>15</sup> Finally, yet significantly, Shlomi Yirmiahu, who was killed during the Lebanon War in 2006, ‘suffered back problems but refused to hear about any change that might keep him away from his friends and his tank’.<sup>16</sup> Despite that these obituaries recall the physical disabilities that some of these fallen soldiers and

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<sup>10</sup> The IDF Spokesperson’s Unit, ‘In Memoriam – First Lieutenant Hadar Goldin’, *The IDF Blog*. Available at: <https://www.idfblog.com/in-memoriam/#Hadar%20Goldin> [Accessed 17 February 2016].

<sup>11</sup> The IDF Spokesperson’s Unit, ‘In Memoriam – Sergeant First Class Eyal Tuvia Benin’, *The IDF Blog*. Available at: <https://www.idfblog.com/in-memoriam/#Eyal-Benin> [Accessed 17 February 2016].

<sup>12</sup> The IDF Spokesperson’s Unit, ‘In Memoriam – Private Rivkah “Regina” Salzman’, *The IDF Blog*. Available at: <https://www.idfblog.com/in-memoriam/#Regina-Salzman> [Accessed 17 February 2016].

<sup>13</sup> The IDF Spokesperson’s Unit, ‘In Memoriam – Private Rivkah “Regina” Salzman’.

<sup>14</sup> The IDF Spokesperson’s Unit, ‘In Memoriam – Private Levi Ismailov (Luba)’, *The IDF Blog*. Available at: <https://www.idfblog.com/in-memoriam/#Levi-Ismailov> [Accessed 17 February 2016].

<sup>15</sup> The IDF Spokesperson’s Unit, ‘In Memoriam – Sergeant First Class Yossef Avnery’, *The IDF Blog*. Available at: <https://www.idfblog.com/in-memoriam/#Yossef-Avnery> [Accessed 17 February 2016].

<sup>16</sup> The IDF Spokesperson’s Unit, ‘In Memoriam – Shlomi Yirmiahu’, *The IDF Blog*. Available at: <https://www.idfblog.com/in-memoriam/#Shlomi-Yirmiahu> [Accessed 17 February 2016].

victims of terror have experienced during their lifetime, they highlight that health issues did not hinder the performance of military service in an exemplary manner. These stories of courage, willpower, and sacrifice are quintessential for cultivating the heroic nature of the Israeli military.

Invariably, the heroism of these soldier-citizens is highlighted through their presentation as gifted individuals who were endowed with the finest personal and professional characteristics. For instance, First Sergeant Sivan Bar-Nathan was ‘a natural leader’ who upon selection ‘to take the officer course (...) proved himself a distinguished soldier’.<sup>17</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Dolev Keidar, who was killed during an altercation with Hamas fighters during Operation Protective Edge in 2014,

‘was a very committed soldier, who was always there for his colleagues and the soldiers under his command. They describe him as a fearless leader, who was always the first soldier on the line and who was known for instilling confidence and motivation in his soldiers’.<sup>18</sup>

Furthermore, Sergeant Major Annan Kadur ‘carried out his duties above and beyond what was necessary and was described as professional, responsible and organized, an exemplary military man, admired by his superiors, subordinates and friends’.<sup>19</sup> Finally, yet significantly, the courage and competence of these token personalities were recognised by their peers and by the military. Sergeant Major Annan Kadur ‘was the Paratroopers Brigade’s nominee for the IDF Chief of Staff’s Excellency Award. The brigade decided that his parents and fiancée would receive the award in his name’.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, Sergeant First Class Isaac “Gadi” Ezra fell while helping others during the Second Intifada in Jenin. He ‘was posthumously decorated with a medal for

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<sup>17</sup> The IDF Spokesperson’s Unit, ‘In Memoriam – First Sergeant Sivan Bar-Nathan’, *The IDF Blog*. Available at: <https://www.idfblog.com/in-memoriam/#Sivan-Bar-Nathan> [Accessed 17 February 2016].

<sup>18</sup> The IDF Spokesperson’s Unit, ‘In Memoriam – Lieutenant Colonel Dolev Keidar’, *The IDF Blog*. Available at: <https://www.idfblog.com/in-memoriam/#Dolev%20Keidar> [Accessed 17 February 2016].

<sup>19</sup> The IDF Spokesperson’s Unit, ‘In Memoriam – Sergeant Major Annan Kadur’, *The IDF Blog*. Available at: <https://www.idfblog.com/in-memoriam/#Annan-Kadur> [Accessed 17 February 2016].

<sup>20</sup> The IDF Spokesperson’s Unit, ‘In Memoriam – Sergeant Major Annan Kadur’.



his exemplary display of camaraderie, courage and the bravery to risk his own life for others'.<sup>21</sup>

The talent, the distinctive skills, and the exceptional nature of these servicemen and women are reinforced by family members, unit commanders or by Israeli state officials who praise the qualities of these men and women. In their description of their loved ones or their colleagues, family members and military figures admire and highlight the bravery, the immortality, and the sacrifice proved by these fallen soldiers and victims of terror while performing their military duties. A letter sent by the Defense Minister reminds the serviceman's bereaved family that 'Second Lieutenant Mordechai Garidi gave his life for his country. He was an excellent soldier, a talented officer and a loyal friend who was liked by all'.<sup>22</sup> The collective loss that is expressed in these obituaries is captured in the powerful eulogy that Corporal Suheil Abazak is given in the wake of his death during the Kiryat Shmona massacre. His commander described Suheil in the following way:

'The best of our sons and soldiers. I imagined he would have a big future. Suheil was about to go to officers course, but unfortunately he was taken from us. Only his memory and his contribution were left, and they will accompany us forever as a living torch that will light our way day and night'.<sup>23</sup>

Likewise, Sergeant Shalom Silberman's family received the following letter from his commander: 'His heroism and bravery will forever be remembered in the history of our people and his name will forever be engraved in the soil and rocks of our country'.<sup>24</sup> Sergeant Moshe Kazmirachi's unit officer wrote a letter to his bereaved family stressing that Moshe's death was not meaningless: 'You belong to the glorious family of the Paratroopers who sacrificed many for the security of the people and the

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<sup>21</sup> The IDF Spokesperson's Unit, 'In Memoriam – Sergeant First Class Isaac "Gadi" Ezra', *The IDF Blog*. Available at: <https://www.idfblog.com/in-memoriam/#Gadi-Ezra> [Accessed 17 February 2016].

<sup>22</sup> The IDF Spokesperson's Unit, 'In Memoriam – Second Lieutenant Mordechai Garidi', *The IDF Blog*. Available at: <https://www.idfblog.com/in-memoriam/#Mordechai-Garidi> [Accessed 17 February 2016].

<sup>23</sup> The IDF Spokesperson's Unit, 'In Memoriam – Corporal Suheil Abazak', *The IDF Blog*. Available at: <https://www.idfblog.com/in-memoriam/#Suheil-Abazak> [Accessed 17 February 2016].

<sup>24</sup> The IDF Spokesperson's Unit, 'In Memoriam – Sergeant Shalom Silberman', *The IDF Blog*. Available at: <https://www.idfblog.com/in-memoriam/#Shalom-Silberman> [Accessed 17 February 2016].

country. We hope that thanks to your son and his brothers in arms, we will not know war anymore'.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, Shlomi Yimiahu's parents recalled the sacrifice that he performed for the State of Israel and stressed his eternal life: 'Your smile will be remembered forever. You will always be a hero'.<sup>26</sup>

The eternal youth that is attached to the memory of fallen soldiers and victims of terror is a common trope in describing the heroic military figure. For instance, George Mosse believes masculinity, youth, and war symbolise the regeneration of life: '[M]anhood was cast in the warrior image, symbolizing youth grown to maturity without losing its attributes of youthfulness'.<sup>27</sup> The author emphasises that in both World Wars 'youth and death were closely linked in that myth: youth as symbolic of manhood, virility, and energy, and death as not death at all but sacrifice and resurrection'.<sup>28</sup> In this regard, he concludes that 'the mythology of war: the fallen symbolized the triumph of youth'.<sup>29</sup> Concerning the IDF, the relation between youth, death, and war is captured in Israel's myth of the 'living-dead', a myth that attaches the Israeli heroes with immortality. The 'living-dead' figure is the citizen-soldier whose material and biological existence ended during military combat yet significantly, he or she are 'present and alive in the national collective consciousness'.<sup>30</sup> By and large, this is the aim of the Memorial Day in Israel, a day in which the thresholds between life and death, joy and sorrow are elided for the purposes of reproducing the myth of sacrifice according to which the Israeli citizen-soldiers died or had to die in order to prologue the life of the Israeli living body. Through annual commemoration and practices of remembrance, Israel endows its fallen soldiers and victims of terror with perennial life despite their material and biological death. Every soldier and victim of terror becomes a 'redemptive sacred figure' whose memory and sacrifice is both celebrated and mourned by subsequent generations.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> The IDF Spokesperson's Unit, 'In Memoriam – Sergeant Moshe Kazmirachi', *The IDF Blog*. Available at: <https://www.idfblog.com/in-memoriam/#Moshe-Kazmirachi> [Accessed 17 February 2016].

<sup>26</sup> The IDF Spokesperson's Unit, 'In Memoriam – Shlomi Yirmiah'.  
<sup>27</sup> Mosse, G. L. *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 72.

<sup>28</sup> Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, p. 73.

<sup>29</sup> Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, p. 73.

<sup>30</sup> Yosef, R. 'Spectacles of Pain: War, Masculinity and the Masochistic Fantasy in Amos Gitai's *Kippur*', *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies*, 24 (2005) p. 50.

<sup>31</sup> Marvin, C. and Ingle, D. W. *Blood Sacrifice and the Nation: Totem Rituals and the American Flag* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 69.

Moreover, the construction of the Israeli heroic figure as eternally young accentuates the feeling of loss and sadness that is captured by these obituaries. The sentiments of grief and pain are heightened through the representation of these servicemen and women as honest, responsible, and devoted family and community members. For example, Staff Sergeant Moshe Malko, who died during Operation Protective Edge in 2014, ‘helped pay his family’s bills and hoped to rise professionally in the army in order to financially support his family.’<sup>32</sup> Likewise, Private Benjamin “Benny” Bougadry, ‘killed during the first day of the Six Day War’, was famously a family man, always loyal to his parents and relatives, constantly helping out wherever he could’.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, Sergeant Major Kshaun is described as the perfect neighbor, ‘a very modest man, and pleasant, with an inner quiet and a smile on his face, who never did anything bad’.<sup>34</sup> Sergeant Moshe Kazmirachi’s school teacher reminded the attendance at the former’s funeral that Moshe will live forever in the hearts of those that knew him while rhetorically addressing to Moshe: ‘Your spirit floats around and is inside of us. All of your nicknames prove how sympathetic you were and how loved you were by your peers. Moshe, we will miss you!’.<sup>35</sup> The voices of family members and acquaintances that give a personal touch to the biography of the loved ones recall that bereaved families play an important role in Israel. They enjoy socio-economic benefits, and social and political capital to be involved in decision-making processes with respect to national practices of commemoration.<sup>36</sup>

The individualisation of these servicemen and women permits the reader to grasp the uniqueness of the personality of the deceased individual and to possibly identify with the stories read in the obituary. Likewise, Meira Weiss stresses that commemoration practices cultivate solidarity between the civil and the military spheres, while the public and the private intersect in order to form a ‘bereaved family’ that goes beyond socio-political differences in Israel.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, through their

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<sup>32</sup> The IDF Spokesperson’s Unit, ‘In Memoriam – Staff Sergeant Moshe Malko’, *The IDF Blog*. Available at: <https://www.idfblog.com/in-memoriam/#Moshe%20Malko> [Accessed 17 February 2016].

<sup>33</sup> The IDF Spokesperson’s Unit, ‘In Memoriam – Private Benjamin “Benny” Bougadry’, *The IDF Blog*. Available at: <https://www.idfblog.com/in-memoriam/#Benjamin-Bougadry> [Accessed 17 February 2016].

<sup>34</sup> The IDF Spokesperson’s Unit, ‘In Memoriam – Sergeant Major Bayhesain Kshaun’, *The IDF Blog*. Available at: <https://www.idfblog.com/in-memoriam/#Bayhesain%20Kshaun> [Accessed 17 February 2016].

<sup>35</sup> The IDF Spokesperson’s Unit, ‘In Memoriam – Sergeant Moshe Kazmirachi’.

<sup>36</sup> Weiss, *The Chosen Body*, pp. 75-8.

<sup>37</sup> Weiss, ‘“We Are All One Bereaved Family”’, p. 178.

circulation in the online sphere, these obituaries invite not only local audiences, but also international audiences to share and join the Israeli experience of loss and grief by being introduced to the men and women that serve Israel and defend its collective body. Finally, yet significantly, these obituaries create heroes that are important for strengthening the affinity between the military, the Israeli society, and the broader public that accesses them.

Notwithstanding the importance of these obituaries in enhancing the affective bond between the public and the military by constructing Israeli heroic figures, Judith Butler warns that practices of commemoration reinforce the enactment of violence. Since mourning determines ‘stoking nationalist fervor’ and replicates ‘the conditions of loss and victimization that come to justify a more or less permanent war’, these obituaries implicitly claim the Israeli troops’ victimhood and innocence and justify the enactment of violence, harm, and injury for the purposes of defending the Israeli Jewish individual and collective bodies.<sup>38</sup> In this respect, through their role in cultivating a devoted and irreplaceable military figure, these obituaries are reinterpreting the violence that is intrinsic in military service. They reiterate the tragic destiny of the Israeli young men and women and heighten their heroic nature because they imagine the Israeli troops as ‘forces [that] do not kill, but are killed’ while defending the Israeli Jewish individual and collective body.<sup>39</sup> For example, Sergeant – Major Bayhesain Kshaun was killed ‘following an infiltration of a terrorist cell near Kibbutz Nir Am’, Staff Sergeant Pavel Slutsker was ‘killed in battle after Palestinian terrorists infiltrated Israel’, or Staff Sergeant Dvir Emanuelov was ‘killed by terrorists in the Jabaliya refugee camp’.<sup>40</sup> These obituaries present a sanitised view on the enactment of violence in which the fallen soldiers are presented as victims of Palestinian attacks. Far from downplaying the individual and collective pain and grief regarding the loss of Israeli citizen-soldiers, or justifying the Palestinian enactment of violence, this criticism addresses the role of obituaries in reinterpreting the violence that characterises the military profession by presenting the Israeli troops as being exposed to and threatened by Palestinians’ violence.

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<sup>38</sup> Butler, *Precarious Life*, p. xix.

<sup>39</sup> Zehfuss, ‘Hierarchies of Grief and the Possibility of War’, p. 437.

<sup>40</sup> The IDF Spokesperson’s Unit, ‘In Memoriam – Sergeant Major Bayhesain Kshaun’; The IDF Spokesperson’s Unit, ‘In Memoriam – Staff Sergeant Dvir Emanuelov’, *The IDF Blog*. Available at: <https://www.idfblog.com/in-memoriam/#Dvir-Emanuelov> [Accessed 17 February 2016]; The IDF Spokesperson’s Unit, ‘In Memoriam – Staff Sergeant Pavel Slutsker’, *The IDF Blog*. Available at: <https://www.idfblog.com/in-memoriam/#Pavel-Slutsker> [Accessed 17 February 2016].

These obituaries craft the ‘heroic victim’ military figure by carrying and reinforcing discourses of mourning, grief, loss, and bereavement that permeate the Israeli civil-military relations. Through its insistence on the Israeli citizen-soldiers’ dedication, sacrifice, talent, and uniqueness, the *In Memoriam* project asserts the heroic nature of the fallen soldiers and victims of terror and invite sorrow and sadness concerning their death. They are portrayed as having been killed while performing their duties or during unfortunate private circumstances. Despite highlighting the violence that is enacted against these Israeli servicemen and women in a succinct manner, these obituaries investigated here speak less about harm, injury, and war and more about the servicemen and women’s professional and personal qualities. Therefore, the circulation of personalised representations of military service is important for building a bridge of solidarity between the IDF and local audience. Increasingly wary of serving in the military either due to their moral belief or due to fear for their lives, some young Israeli men and women are reluctant to join the military. In this context, the circulation of a heroic military figure reinforces the desirability and attractiveness of the Israeli military service by attaching it with moral and political value, and by presenting it as an opportunity to demonstrate the remarkable skills of a hero. However, narratives of military service captured either in literary representations or in activist practices against the occupation contest the heroic image of the military and show the role of this representation in effacing the physical, psychological, and moral consequences of military service.<sup>41</sup>

Moreover, through its obituaries written in English, *In Memoriam* is easily accessible to an international audience. Through their individualised representation of Israeli servicemen and women, these obituaries introduce the wider public to the official image of military service and, most importantly, invite Western audiences to empathise with the IDF. The personalised nature of these obituaries permits the Western audiences to see men and women that resemble to them. By circulating the representation of the Israeli Jewish troops as (young) men and women who have sacrificed for Israel and who exude of love, dedication, and uniqueness as parents, children or spouses, the IDF invites the Western public to express sorrow for the individual and collective loss of the Israeli military and society. This affinity between

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<sup>41</sup> Rosenberg, Y. ‘Yom Hazikaron for Veterans’. *Tablet*, 20 April 2015. Available at: <http://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-life-and-religion/190237/yom-hazikaron-for-veterans> [Accessed 23 September 2017].

the IDF and international audiences, presumably Western, is enhanced by the fact that these obituaries circulate a familiar military image that appeals to the Western public. Compared with Maja Zehfuss's investigation of the British military's obituaries that memorialise the British troops who have died during Operation TELIC, this research shows there is hardly any difference between the British and Israeli military personnel's obituaries. They highlight the heroism of the servicemen and women who have sacrificed for the nation, stress their gifted personalities and competences as soldiers and citizens, and reinforce the sadness and the grief of those peers and family members who mourn the death of their loved ones. Nonetheless, by resembling any other (Western) military and by presenting Palestinians as dangerous individuals, the IDF extract their military personnel from the complexity of the Israel/Palestine conflict, conceals their instrumentalisation in enforcing the occupation of Palestinians, and present themselves as fighting against global threats. Therefore, by capturing, circulating and provoking pain, loss, sadness, grief, and bereavement, these obituaries construct the Israeli subject as a 'heroic victim', whose dissemination both reinforces and depoliticises the IDF's violence against Palestinians. They cultivate a discourse according to which the Israeli military's violence against Palestinians has a self-defensive purpose insofar as the latter threaten and kill Israeli remarkable citizen-soldiers.

The following section broadens the study of the way in which 'death informs (...) political life' in Israel.<sup>42</sup> It discusses the forensic practices through which the bodies of Israeli Jews and Palestinians are recovered, handled, and buried. Imbued with religious symbolism, these medical practices reinforce the affective boundaries between Israeli Jews and Palestinians insofar as they construct the Israeli Jewish body as a sacred entity that is worthy of veneration and respect to such an extent that it should be distinguished from the Palestinian one. In this regard, forensic practices are imbued with, circulate, and provoke grief, revulsion, and animosity that strengthen the differences that characterise the socio-political relations between the Israeli Jews and Palestinians. By distinguishing between who should and who should not be mourned and grieved, and by differentiating between for whom the Israeli public should and for whom should they not care for, forensic practices sanction the enactment of violence

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<sup>42</sup> Murray, S. J. 'Thanatopolitics: On the Use of Death for Mobilizing Political Life', *Polygraph: An International Journal of Politics and Culture*, 18 (2006) p. 192.

for the purposes of defending the revered body of Israeli citizen-soldiers and of exonerating the Israeli troops' violent behaviour against Palestinians in the name of state security.

### **The Affective Politics of Managing (Violent) Death**

This section investigates the forensic practices of L. Greenberg National Institute of Forensic Medicine, a state institution, and those of ZAKA (Hebrew acronym for Disaster Victim Identification), the search-and-rescue ultra-Orthodox non-governmental organisation that works under the umbrella of the Israeli state authorities. Both institutions are involved in managing the wounded and the dead bodies of both Israeli Jews and Palestinians, both victims and perpetrators involved in violent attacks. The L. Greenberg National Institute of Forensic Medicine (Abu Kabir Institute) is a scientific institution affiliated with Sackler School of Medicine (Tel Aviv University) and conducts forensic investigations on dead bodies at the request of the Israeli civil and military authorities. This institute performs autopsies on all bodies that have experienced physical violence. It conducts tests on victims of sexual violence, on victims that experienced violence during incarceration, or on Palestinians that died during interrogation and during violent interaction with the Israeli military and security forces. Chevra Kadisha (Aramaic for 'Holy Society'), a religious institution that has a monopoly over burial practices in Israel, supervises the workings of this institute in an informal manner.<sup>43</sup>

Moreover, ZAKA is a organisation that is 'on call 24/7 to respond to any terror attack, disaster or accident immediately, professionally and with the necessary equipment'.<sup>44</sup> It is a non-profit organisation that works under the formal umbrella of the police's civil guard and its Division of Identification and Forensic Science, and collaborates with the IDF's Home Front Command and the Institute of Forensic Medicine.<sup>45</sup> ZAKA has also an International Rescue Unit, with volunteers that have assisted natural and man-made disasters across the world, from the earthquake that took place in Haiti in 2010 to the tsunami and earthquake that occurred in Japan in 2011, and the terror attacks that took place in Paris in 2015. As an official recognition of their

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<sup>43</sup> Weiss, *The Chosen Body*, pp. 57-8.

<sup>44</sup> ZAKA, *How ZAKA began*.

<sup>45</sup> Stadler, N., Ben-Ari, E. and Mesterman, E. 'Terror, Aid and Organization: The Haredi Disaster Victim Identification Teams (ZAKA) in Israel', *Anthropological Quarterly*, 78 (2005) p. 624.

work, the United Nations granted ZAKA observer membership to the United Nations Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations.<sup>46</sup> With its headquarters in Jerusalem, the organisation gathers around 3,000 Haredi volunteers across the country, which allows it to reach immediately the scene of a man-made or natural disaster. Even though its majority of members are ultra-Orthodox Jews, the organisation hosts a number of Christians, Muslims, secular Jews, Bedouins, and Druze members.<sup>47</sup> ZAKA worked in an informal manner between 1989 and 1995 and its founding is a direct response to a terrorist attack on the 405 bus that travelled between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. The attack took place in 1989 and a number of informal volunteers rushed to the scene of the disaster to help the wounded.<sup>48</sup> Since its establishment, the organisation functions as one of the few actors that is authorised by the state to prepare the Israeli Jews bodies for burial according to the Jewish laws.<sup>49</sup> Nurit Stadler believes its volunteers infuse the Israeli public space with ultra-Orthodox (Haredi) ideas and attitudes towards death and death rituals on the basis of a discourse of ‘corpse symbolism’, a narrative that relies on the veneration of the Israeli Jewish dead body.<sup>50</sup>

This section argues the practices performed by ZAKA and the Institute of Forensic Medicine are informed by and shape a discourse that frame the Israeli citizen-soldier as a vulnerable and sacred victim whose wounded or dead body deserves the highest care and attention at the detriment of the Palestinian one. Imbued with national Jewish religious symbolism, these forensic practices cultivate aversion and hatred against Palestinians and enhance the ideal and impeccable image of the Israeli military subject. Therefore, both institutions contribute to the cultivation of a faultless military subjectivity that reiterates the heroic and sacrificial nature of Israeli military service while enhancing the affective boundaries that characterise the Israel/Palestine conflict.

### ***L. Greenberg National Institute of Forensic Medicine***

The forensic practices performed at the Institute of Forensic Medicine reveal a continuous effort to distinguish between Jews and non-Jews, and especially, between

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<sup>46</sup> ZAKA, *International Rescue Unit*. Available at: [http://www.zaka.us/ZAKA\\_INTERNATIONAL\\_RESCUE\\_UNIT](http://www.zaka.us/ZAKA_INTERNATIONAL_RESCUE_UNIT) [Accessed 10 July 2017]; JTA, ‘UN recognition of Zaka seen as big win for Israeli diplomacy’. *The Times of Israel*, 28 January 2016. Available at: <http://www.timesofisrael.com/un-recognition-of-zaka-seen-as-big-win-for-israeli-diplomacy/> [Accessed 10 July 2017].

<sup>47</sup> ZAKA, *How ZAKA began*.

<sup>48</sup> ZAKA, *How ZAKA began*.

<sup>49</sup> Stadler et al. ‘Terror, Aid and Organization’, p. 628.

<sup>50</sup> Stadler, N. ‘Terror, corpse symbolism, and taboo violation: the ‘Haredi Disaster Victim Identification Team in Israel’ (*Zaka*)’, *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 12 (2006) p. 837.



civilians and soldiers.<sup>51</sup> During medical examination, the body of the dead soldier is treated with utmost respect. For instance, the subsection of the dead bodies of military personnel to autopsy and tests is performed separately from other bodies, and staff working at the Institute of Forensic Medicine are forbidden from taking tissues from the dead bodies of servicemen and women.<sup>52</sup> The military body is considered sacred and its handling should be performed with the highest precaution. As a staff member stressed: '[T]he soldier is a hero, his body is sacred. We must not touch it, we must not take away anything'.<sup>53</sup> Against these social norms, the harvesting of tissue from soldiers' dead bodies is prohibited and any medical practice on their corpses is forbidden. The utmost respect showed towards the bodies of the military personnel is explained through the fact that, as a symbol of society, the soldierly body is a metaphor for the collective body of the Israeli Jewish nation.<sup>54</sup> In this regard, Weiss claims the 'Israeli nationalism is constructed upon the body [of the soldier], with the body as a literal and metaphoric vehicle for collective fears, hopes and commitments'.<sup>55</sup> Any mishandling of the military body is an affront to the Israeli society and nation, and a sign of profound disrespect towards the sacrifices performed by Israeli troops to defend the Israeli Jewish individual and collective body.

One of the controversies that characterises the working of this institute is the fact that it harvests skin and organs from Palestinians killed by the Israeli military for medical purposes. Staff members at the Institute of Forensic Medicine acknowledged that during the First Intifada, the skin of Palestinians and Israeli-Arabs was readily available for harvesting.<sup>56</sup> In 2009, the collection of Palestinians' tissue and the harvesting of their organs became an international issue when the Swedish journalist Donald Boström published a piece in *Aftonbladet*, Sweden's most circulated daily newspaper. In his article, he disclosed Palestinian accusations that the Institute of Forensic Medicine might have harvested in an illegal manner the organs of Palestinian

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<sup>51</sup> Weiss, 'Others within Us', pp. 188-9.

<sup>52</sup> Weiss, *The Chosen Body*, p. 58.

<sup>53</sup> Staff member at the Institute for Forensic Medicine quoted in Weiss, *The Chosen Body*, p. 58.

<sup>54</sup> Douglas, M. *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (New York and London, Routledge, 1984), p. 116.

<sup>55</sup> Weiss, M. 'The Body of the Nation: Terrorism and the Embodiment of Nationalism in Contemporary Israel', *Anthropological Quarterly*, 75 (2001) p. 38.

<sup>56</sup> Weiss, 'Others within Us', p. 189.

stone-throwers and alleged terrorists in the aftermath of their death.<sup>57</sup> The journalist quoted a relative of a deceased Palestinian asking in a rhetoric manner:

‘Why are they keeping the bodies for up to five days before they let us bury them? What happened to the bodies during that time? Why are they performing autopsies, against our will, when the cause of death is obvious? Why are the bodies returned at night? Why is it done with a military escort? Why is the area closed off during the funeral? Why is the electricity interrupted?’<sup>58</sup>

These words relate the concerns of Palestinian bereaved families with regard to the fate of their loved ones and express wariness regarding the inexplicable security measures that are taken with regard to the dead bodies of their relatives. The article presents Boström’s conversations with Palestinian families who claim their sons disappeared and they were brought back dead with their corpses cut open and wrapped in hospital fabric. His article is based on his fieldwork performed in early 1990s in the West Bank. As a mix of political rhetoric, euphemisms, and unsubstantiated evidence – it seems to suggest that the IDF illegally abduct Palestinians. The written piece angered the Israeli authorities since Boström did not support his arguments with solid evidence. However, the journalist had never argued in his article that the IDF was deliberately abducting Palestinians for organ harvesting. He had just presented the concerns of Palestinian families with regard to the ways in which the Israeli military might have mismanaged the dead bodies of their loved ones.<sup>59</sup> Invited to Israel to discuss the publication of his article, Boström regretted the controversy provoked by his article but denied he had accused the IDF of having intentionally harvested Palestinian organs. The journalist called the Israeli media and authorities to engage in a fair investigation of the alleged Palestinian youth’s disappearances.<sup>60</sup> Broadly, the controversy provoked by this article indicates the complex role that journalists play in

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<sup>57</sup> Boström, D. ‘Our sons are plundered of their organs’. *Aftonbladet*, 26 August 2009. Available at: <http://www.aftonbladet.se/kultur/article11973850.ab> [Accessed 10 July 2017].

<sup>58</sup> Bereaved relative of a disappeared Palestinian man quoted in Boström, ‘Our Sons are Plundered of Their Organs’.

<sup>59</sup> Scheper-Hughes, N. and Boström, D. ‘The Body of the Enemy’, *Brown Journal of World Affairs*, 19 (2013) pp. 256-7.

<sup>60</sup> Levy, G. ‘Swedish Reporter in Israel: Not All Criticism of You Is anti-Semitism’. *Haaretz*, 2 November 2009. Available at: <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/swedish-reporter-in-israel-not-all-criticism-of-you-is-anti-semitism-1.4991> [Accessed 10 July 2017].

conflicts and that controversial articles might generate debates that could worsen the Israeli-Palestinian relations. Similarly with the discussion from the previous chapter regarding the visual representations of the IDF's violence against Palestinians, the Boström affair indicates that passionate debates and affective echoes of the violent interactions between Israeli Jews and Palestinians may both reveal and deepen the socio-political antagonism that characterises the Israel/Palestine conflict.

Nancy Scheper-Hughes offers a different perspective regarding the allegations about the mismanagement of Palestinian bodies by Israeli forensic state institutions. As a leading anthropologist working on illegal harvesting of organs and organ trafficking across the world, she has investigated the role of Israel in the illegal trade of organs. Witnessing the controversy sparked by the Swedish journalist's article, the scholar published an interview with Doctor Yehuda Hiss, the former director of the Israeli Institute of Forensic Medicine. She interviewed Hiss in 2000 and the talk was disseminated on Channel Two in Israel. He acknowledged that during the 1990s, the Israeli pathologists were harvesting organs from dead Israeli and Palestinian bodies without the consent of the families of the deceased individuals. These organs and tissue were sometimes transplanted to the bodies of the Israeli military personnel with the tacit approval of the military leadership.<sup>61</sup> The harvesting of Palestinian organs is controversial since they are considered the traditional enemy of Israel thus any harm to their bodies, including illegal harvesting of their organs and tissue, is seen as a continuation of violence that is enacted against them under the occupation. Moreover, the harvesting of organs from the Israeli military personnel represents a severe breach of the social rules that require the utmost care for the military body and that prohibit the harvesting of organs from troops since military corpses are sacred. Despite these socio-political controversies, Hiss readily admitted the institute and the military enjoyed a strong and mutually beneficial relationship. He reckoned during his interview with Nancy Scheper-Hughes that:

‘There is a special relationship between the institute and the army because of the current political situation in Israel. All Israelis feel we all have an obligation to help out in some way, and because we all served in the army, we all have a personal stake in the army ever after.

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<sup>61</sup> Black, I. ‘Doctor admits Israeli pathologists harvested organs without consent’. *The Guardian*, 21 December 2009. Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/dec/21/israeli-pathologists-harvested-organs> [Accessed 10 July 2017].

We are all linked to the army. And because of this, we took it [harvesting] for granted. We never asked. We thought it was part of the duty of all Israelis to cooperate'.<sup>62</sup>

In her article, 'The Body of the Terrorist', Scheper-Hughes motivates her decision to publicise the interview with Hiss as an effort to reveal the presence of Israel within the international network of illegal organ-trade and to disclose the harassment that Israeli scholars working at the Institute of Forensic Medicine experience due to their academic work.<sup>63</sup> For instance, the author recalls the problems faced by Meira Weiss (whose work is cited in this project) and those faced by Doctor Chen Kugel, a high ranking military officer who worked with Hiss and confronted the latter about the illegal practices that took place at the institute.<sup>64</sup> Kugel wanted to bring Hiss to justice and expressed his dismay at the way in which the Institute of Forensic Medicine was illegally harvesting body parts and tissues from Israelis and Palestinians, tourists, immigrants, victims of terror and Israeli civilians.<sup>65</sup> He stressed that it was very easy to harvest organs from Palestinians since 'they would be sent back across the border, and if there were any complaints, coming from their families, they were the enemy and so, of course, they were lying and no one would ever believe them'.<sup>66</sup> For example, during her investigation, Scheper-Hughes found out that in 1995 a Palestinian man, Abdel Karim Abdel Musalmeh, was shot in the head by the Israeli security forces and his body was returned to the family after an autopsy was performed on the corpse followed by the removal of tissue and cornea.<sup>67</sup> These illegal forensic practices came to light in early 2000s, when the Israeli authorities, supported by leading international forensic experts, discovered that Hiss had performed autopsies and removed tissues and organs without waiting for consent from the families of the deceased individuals. He sold the tissues and organs harvested to Israeli hospitals and private citizens. Following these events, Hiss was removed from the leadership of the institute but he remained in the position of Israel's chief pathologist. He defended himself in front of the Israeli public and

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<sup>62</sup> Doctor Hiss quoted in Scheper-Hughes, N. 'Body Parts and Bio-Piracy'. *Counterpunch*, 25 October 2010. Available at: <http://www.counterpunch.org/2010/10/25/body-parts-and-bio-piracy/> [Accessed 10 July 2017].

<sup>63</sup> Scheper-Hughes, N. 'The Body of the Terrorist: Blood Libels, Bio-Piracy, and the Spoils of War at the Israeli Forensic Institute', *Social Research*, 78 (2011) pp. 849-86.

<sup>64</sup> Scheper-Hughes, 'The Body of the Terrorist', pp. 859-60.

<sup>65</sup> Scheper-Hughes, 'The Body of the Terrorist', p. 872.

<sup>66</sup> Doctor Chen Kugel quoted in Scheper-Hughes, 'The Body of the Terrorist', p. 873.

<sup>67</sup> Scheper-Hughes, 'Body Parts and Bio-Piracy'.

authorities by arguing he had done the right thing for the purposes of saving victims of terror and ill Israelis. Furthermore, the Israeli military and the Ministry of Health were forced to acknowledge they had known about the illegal practices performed at the Institute of Forensic Medicine and that both Israeli and Palestinian organs were harvested in an illegal manner by pathologists working there. In 2013, Kugel took over the leadership of the Institute of Forensic Medicine and replaced Hiss after the latter was dismissed.<sup>68</sup>

Whereas the body of the Israeli soldier-citizen benefits from the utmost consideration, the body of the Palestinian suicide terrorist is the quintessence of the 'other', which should be disregarded and excluded from the Israeli body politic. The institute collaborates with the IDF and the Israeli Security Services (Shaback) in order to identify suicide bombers with the aim to find out the terrorist networks they are part of for the purposes of preventing future attacks.<sup>69</sup> The management of the bodies of Palestinian assailants became an issue of controversy during Meira Weiss's fieldwork when she researched the activities of the Institute of Forensic Medicine. For ten years, Weiss had worked as the official ethnographer of the institute and was granted access to its practices and its staff members. In a reflexive piece, she recounts the politics behind the identification of a Palestinian corpse at this institute. Weiss recalls her participation at the forensic evaluation of a Palestinian alleged attacker, Machmud Halil, whose autopsy was performed in the presence of a foreign expert from Ireland. She recollects that two file notes accompanied the cadaver. The first one claimed the IDF identified Halil as a terrorist who was killed near Jenin, during a fight between a couple of Palestinians and Israeli troops. The second file note contained information from the foreign press agency *Associated Press*, which identified Halil as one of the Palestinians who were arrested alive by Israeli security forces near Jenin yet both of them died during detention. Through the autopsy of the body, the institute had the power to adjudicate between the two versions of the same event, between the IDF's claim that the Palestinian was killed during fighting and the press agency's claims that Halil was killed in the aftermath of his arrest. Weiss notes to her dismay that the Israeli pathologists did not correct the failure of the Irish expert to recognise that the entry

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<sup>68</sup> Even, D. 'Chief Pathologist Tapped to Replace Disgraced Hiss'. *Haaretz*, 14 March 2013. Available at: <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/chief-pathologist-tapped-to-replace-disgraced-hiss.premium-1.509223> [Accessed 10 July 2017].

<sup>69</sup> Weiss, 'Others within Us', p. 193.

wounds of the bullet proved the Palestinian man was shot during arrest rather than while running as it was claimed by the file note. Equally significant, Weiss has observed the Israeli pathologists withheld evidence from the Irish foreign expert, namely the Palestinian man's hat and shirt that were torn in the back, evidence that could have challenged the IDF's official version regarding the violence that took place between Palestinians and military forces. Finally, the author denounces the deliberate misleading of the foreign expert that examined Halil's body when the former was told that the bruise on the Palestinian's body was caused by a passing bullet rather than by torture during arrest.<sup>70</sup>

Weiss's story is indicative of the role of the Institute of Forensic Medicine in reinforcing the classifying discourse between Israeli Jews and Palestinians while acting as a gatekeeper for the Israeli national security and for the IDF's violent actions in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The controversies, rumours, and the allegations that surround the workings of the Israeli Institute of Forensic Medicine indicate the complex relations between the Israeli nationalistic ideas concerning the symbolism of the Israeli Jewish body and, the pervasive role and presence of the Israeli military in the management of the Israeli and Palestinian corpses. Furthermore, the management of Israeli and Palestinian dead bodies without the consent of their families raises questions regarding the power of actors such as Yehuda Hiss to impose 'informal' rules and practices concerning the management of bodies brought for autopsy. Finally, yet significantly, the speculations concerning the unauthorised management of the Palestinian corpses together with the role of the Institute of Forensic Medicine in manipulating the findings of autopsies indicate the politicisation of Israeli and Palestinian bodies, dead or alive. Even though the insights concerning the way in which Palestinian cadavers are managed stir away from adjudicating the deliberate and intentional use of their corpses for illegal organ trade, this study indicates the socio-political and moral controversies with regard to the politicisation of the autopsies of Palestinian dead bodies. Against the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, the allegations, controversies, and rumours regarding the management of the Palestinian bodies indicate the continuum of violence, desubjectification, and humiliation to which 'enemy' bodies are subject to while shaping and being shaped by the hierarchical discourse that distinguishes between Israelis Jews and Palestinians.

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<sup>70</sup> Weiss, 'Others within Us', pp. 197-201.

### **ZAKA (*Disaster Victim Identification*)**

One of the first responders arriving at a site of a disaster, ZAKA members are easily distinguishable because they wear bright yellow and blue emergency jackets. At the scene of the tragedy, ZAKA members cooperate with the police, the Red Cross, the army or the fire fighters to recover the remains of the victims and to help the wounded.<sup>71</sup> ZAKA will treat the wounded first and foremost followed by the examination of the dead bodies.<sup>72</sup> Volunteers will cover the corpses and will make considerable effort to recover all the parts of the body making sure that they do not leave behind blood or bits of flesh. Following these meticulous practices, this organisation transfers the dead bodies or the bodily remains to the Institute of Forensic Medicine in Tel Aviv that is in charge of identifying the body.<sup>73</sup> The quintessence of the work performed by its volunteers is captured in ZAKA Jerusalem Deputy Commander's Yossi Fraenkel's words: 'We wipe away all traces of spilled blood and remove all human remains to ensure a full Jewish burial for the victims. Depending on the nature of the terror attack, this can take many hours of work. That's why ZAKA is often the first to arrive, but always the last to leave the scene'.<sup>74</sup>

ZAKA's peculiar practices of recovering and managing dead bodies represent an example of care that is given to the Jewish Israeli body even in the direst circumstances. Its efforts to assemble the body reflect an allegory for reconstructing the nation in the aftermath of a man-made or natural disaster in Israel. In this respect, ZAKA's 'recovery and burial of the bodies is a ritual that imbues bodies with subjectivity'.<sup>75</sup> As such, 'the recovery of bodies does more than attempt to re-establish subject/body coherence; it attempts to restore the appearance of integrity of the [Israeli] state as well'.<sup>76</sup> Furthermore, its practices remind of Mary Douglas's observation that ancient Israelites' preoccupation with the Jewish body illustrates both material and symbolic aspects. They feared that anything that could threaten 'the integrity, unity and

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<sup>71</sup> Stadler et al. 'Terror, Aid and Organization', p. 624.

<sup>72</sup> Stadler et al. 'Terror, Aid and Organization', p. 643.

<sup>73</sup> Wilcox, *Bodies of Violence*, p. 93.

<sup>74</sup> Yossi Fraenkel quoted in Spotlight: Communicated Content, 'ZAKA volunteers in the field – even under fire'. *The Times of Israel*, 15 February 2016. Available at: <http://www.timesofisrael.com/spotlight/zaka-volunteers-in-the-field-even-under-fire/> [Accessed 10 July 2016].

<sup>75</sup> Wilcox, *Bodies of Violence*, p. 92.

<sup>76</sup> Wilcox, *Bodies of Violence*, p. 92.

purity of the physical body’ could threaten as well the ‘boundaries of their body politic’.<sup>77</sup> Nonetheless, in contemporary times, ‘the body politic is again threatened’ insofar as ‘its boundaries are being penetrated’ by attackers that target citizens and soldiers in a variety of places, from checkpoints to the busy streets of Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv.<sup>78</sup>

Acting according to these ancient beliefs, ZAKA’s interest in maintaining the sanctity, the unity, and the purity of the Israeli body became an object of controversy in 2015, when this organisation decided to distinguish between Israeli Jews and Palestinians when offering help to wounded bodies at the scene of terrorist attacks. The Israeli Emergency Medical Services, Magen David Adom, asked medical authorities to attend to the severely wounded first, without distinguishing between victims and perpetrators. In response, ZAKA claimed they operate distinctively by treating the wounded Israeli Jews first and foremost at the detriment of Palestinian perpetrators.<sup>79</sup> The founder and the chairman of the organisation, Yehuda Meshi-Zahav, motivated volunteers’ approach by stressing they are prohibited to touch the body of a terrorist before the police does and declared that ‘we instruct our volunteers to first take care of all Jews, because they were harmed just because they are Jews, while the terrorist murderer deserve[s] death’.<sup>80</sup> However, Meshi-Zahav recognised his organisation operates within questionable ethical medical boundaries: ‘Although our Code of Ethics says we should first take care of those most severely injured, we need to know that there is also a limit to morality. If we don’t make the distinction, we will lose direction’.<sup>81</sup>

Moreover, the practices of differentiation between the Israeli Jewish and Palestinian bodies gained further symbolical meaning through ZAKA’s decision to place Israeli and Palestinian human remains in bags of different colours. Until 2015, the organisation had used white body bags with the logo of the organisation in order to recover the remains of both victims and perpetrators of terrorist attacks. This decision is an official answer to some Israeli citizens’ grievances that believed the bodies of

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<sup>77</sup> Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, p. 125.

<sup>78</sup> Weiss, ‘The Body of the Nation’, p. 55.

<sup>79</sup> Winer, S. ‘Volunteer medic group rejects treating terrorists and victims equally’. *The Times of Israel*, 17 December 2015. Available at: <http://www.timesofisrael.com/volunteer-medic-group-rejects-treating-terrorists-and-victims-equally/> [Accessed 10 July 2017].

<sup>80</sup> Yehuda Meshi-Zahav quoted in Ben Porat, ‘ZAKA Clarifies’.

<sup>81</sup> Yehuda Meshi-Zahav quoted in Ben Porat, ‘ZAKA Clarifies’.



terrorists are desecrating the ZAKA name through their actions and their way of death.<sup>82</sup> As a response to these public grievances, Yehuda Meshi-Zahav declared that:

‘ZAKA is an organization entrusted with honoring the dead. Man is made in the divine image – all men, and therefore ZAKA carries out its mission in Israel and around the world with dignity and sensitivity, irrespective of religion, race or creed. But when it comes to murderous and brutal terrorists, we too must know how to make a separation between victim and murderer. From today, we have taken this decision not to desecrate or defile ZAKA body bags’.<sup>83</sup>

This novel practice regarding the handling of Israeli and Palestinian dead bodies carries powerful symbolic and political significances. First, the covering of the Israeli Jewish bodies with a white bag is a symbolic reminder of the fact that, in Israel, the dead body is shrouded during burial. However, military troops benefit from a different burial ritual. They are placed in a closed coffin because their injured body or the missing parts of the body must be concealed from the visual because the military body symbolises the Israeli nation. The bodies of military troops cannot be shown if bodily parts are missing since it contests the integrity of the Israeli Jewish collective body.<sup>84</sup> Second, ZAKA’s decision to place the bodies of terrorists and the bodies of victims in bags of different colour indicate a continuous effort ‘to physically distinguish the body of the Arab terrorist from the bodies of Israelis – so that, literally, “their body” will not blend with “our bodies” ’.<sup>85</sup> An equal treatment to Israeli Jewish and Palestinian bodies would signify readiness to accept Palestinians within the boundaries of the Israeli Jewish body politic, and by extension, the legitimacy of their grievances. Therefore, the forensic efforts to distinguish between the Israeli Jewish and Palestinian bodies are driven by the assumption that ‘to become contaminated by the [Palestinian] corpse becomes an additional criterion of accepting the other’.<sup>86</sup> This practice of differentiating between Israeli Jews and Palestinian bodies by situating them in bags of

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<sup>82</sup> ZAKA Staff, ‘ZAKA To Use Black Bags For Terrorist Bodies’. *Breaking News*, 13 October 2015. Available at: [http://zaka.us/Breaking\\_news/141015](http://zaka.us/Breaking_news/141015) [Accessed 10 July 2017].

<sup>83</sup> Yehuda Meshi-Zahav quoted in ZAKA, ‘ZAKA To Use Black Bags For Terrorist Bodies’.

<sup>84</sup> Weiss, ‘“We Are All One Bereaved Family”’, p. 181.

<sup>85</sup> Weiss, ‘The Body of the Nation’, pp. 55-56.

<sup>86</sup> Morag, R. ‘The Living Body and the Corpse – Israeli Documentary Cinema and the Intifadah’, *Journal of Film and Video*, 60 (2008) p. 17.

different colour indicates fears and unease regarding the possibility of Palestinians bodies to penetrate and ‘to contaminate’ the purity and the cleanness of the Israeli Jewish body politic. By treating the Israeli Jewish and Palestinian bodies in an equal manner, the purity and the unity of the Israeli Jewish body is troubled and contested. Similarly, Douglas stresses that symbols of pollution are challenging systems of classification and order thus ‘uncleanness or dirt is that which must not be included if a pattern is to be maintained’.<sup>87</sup>

Depositing Palestinian remains in bags used for Israeli Jewish bodies or giving Palestinians medical treatment in the same way that is afforded to the Israeli Jewish wounded bodies desecrates and contests the sanctity and the purity of the Israeli Jewish individual and collective body. ZAKA’s medical practices indicate that ‘a polluting person is always in the wrong. He has developed some wrong condition or simply crossed some line which should not have been crossed and this displacement unleashes danger for someone’.<sup>88</sup> Moreover, the need to maintain the purity of the Israeli collective body by placing Palestinian bodily remains in different colour bags and in attending Palestinian wounds after treating the Israeli Jewish wounded victims of terrorist attacks indicate disgust and revulsion towards Palestinians and their abhorrent behaviour. Miller believes that disgust has ‘close affinities’ with emotions, such as melancholy, contempt, shame, hatred and fear.<sup>89</sup> Therefore, ZAKA’s controversial handling of the Palestinian bodily remains show how ‘these emotions often bleed into one another or are experienced simultaneously’ thus legitimising the IDF’s violence against Palestinians.<sup>90</sup> Its treatment of the Palestinian wounded bodies and remains reiterate the affective boundaries that characterise the Israel/Palestine conflict because ZAKA cultivates disgust and revulsion towards Palestinians and towards their presence within the Israeli Jewish body politic.

Even though ZAKA is unique in its actions, the practice of carefully distinguishing between the bodies of victims and bodies of terrorist attackers became a topic of controversy in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks on World Trade Center in New York. In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks, the American forensic authorities made

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<sup>87</sup> Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, p. 41.

<sup>88</sup> Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, p. 114.

<sup>89</sup> Miller, W. I. *The Anatomy of Disgust* (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 25.

<sup>90</sup> Ashworth, M. ‘Affective Governmentality: Governing Through Disgust in Uganda’, *Social & Legal Studies*, 26 (2017) p. 204.

considerable effort to recover the victims' remains.<sup>91</sup> However, more than one thousand one hundred victims from the World Trade Center and five victims from the Pentagon remain unidentified because the forensic experts could not find any DNA trace in the aftermath of the attacks.<sup>92</sup> At the same time, family members of the victims from the 9/11 attacks expressed their concern that body parts of the attackers were mixed with the victims' bodies. Robert Shaler, the head of New York's Department of Forensic Biology at the time of the terrorist attacks and who lead the expert team that identified the bodily remains of victims and attackers, declared that the families of the victims wanted to ensure the separation between their loved ones and attackers: 'They [families] did not want the terrorists mixed in with their loved ones. These people [attackers] were criminals and did not deserve to be with them'.<sup>93</sup> In this respect, Stuart J. Murray notes that in a terrorist attack, the attacker's body becomes a weapon that penetrates the body of the victim. In this way, the body of the victim and the body of the attacker become inextricably linked thus challenging the forensic efforts to assert where the body of the victim ends and where the body of the attacker begins.<sup>94</sup> This is influenced by the configurations of contemporary modes of war and conflict within which the 'human body is the battlefield' that both challenges and equally reinforces the us-them, victim-perpetrator, moral-immoral, legitimate-illegitimate binaries.<sup>95</sup> As Lauren Wilcox rightfully observes, in instances of suicide terrorist attacks, 'abject bodies of the bomber and his or her victims' are transformed 'into a spectacle that exposes not only the instability of the bodily integrity, but the instability of the political order as well'.<sup>96</sup> Therefore, ZAKA's practices are an attempt to prevent the blending between the remains of the victims and the remains of attackers because it challenges the boundary between 'us' and 'them' and upsets the distinction between who is inside and should be left outside from the Israeli Jewish body politic.

The identification of bodily remains in the aftermath of a terrorist attack is fraught with forensic, affective, and legal controversies thus showing that 'human remains, like all 'conflict bodies' became powerful symbols not in and of themselves,

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<sup>91</sup> Wilcox, *Bodies of Violence*, pp. 96-7.

<sup>92</sup> Conant, E. 'Terror: The Remains of 9/11 Hijackers'. *Newsweek*, 2 January 2009. Available at: <http://europe.newsweek.com/terror-remains-911-hijackers-78327> [Accessed 10 July 2017].

<sup>93</sup> Robert Shaler quoted in Conant, 'Terror: The Remains of 9/11 Hijackers'.

<sup>94</sup> Murray, 'Thanatopolitics', p. 207.

<sup>95</sup> Morag, 'The Living Body and the Corpse', p. 5.

<sup>96</sup> Wilcox, *Bodies of Violence*, p. 92.

but because of their ambiguity and multivocality'.<sup>97</sup> This social anguish – the blending of the victim's body with the body of the attacker – is present in the work that is performed by both ZAKA and the Institute of Forensic Medicine. Autopsies are performed separately and according to different protocols. If the body of the citizen-soldier is subjected to minimal investigation, the examination of the Palestinian attackers' bodies is thorough and aims to find out clues about the way in which the attack was performed and the network that the attacker might belong to. These practices reiterate the sanctity of the Israeli Jewish body and the Israeli permanent interest to defend the wellbeing of the community. Equally significant, the placing of victims and perpetrators in body bags of different colours or the treatment of the wounded bodies of a terrorist attack in a differential way indicate the efforts performed by the Israeli authorities to distinguish between who should be inside and who should be outside the Israeli socio-political order. In this regard, ZAKA's forensic practices through which Palestinian living and dead bodies are given a different treatment than Israeli Jewish bodies show the role of this organisation in upholding the affective boundaries that characterise the Israel/Palestine conflict by cultivating revulsion, disgust, and animosity towards Palestinians.

Finally, yet significantly, the allegations and controversies that surround the management of the dead bodies and bodily remains of Palestinians, either involved or caught in violence, indicate that Israeli state authorities, and the institutions that are delegated to act in their name, are working with and shaping a discourse that favours the Israeli Jews at the detriment of the Palestinian bodies. They produce an emotional discourse that imagines the Israeli soldier-citizen as a vulnerable victim whose body deserves the utmost care at the detriment of other bodies. As state representatives and institutions collaborating with the state apparatus, ZAKA and the Institute of Forensic Medicine validate and reinforce the affective boundaries that characterise the Israel/Palestine conflict. Against this institutional repertoire that reinforces violence between the two sides of the conflict, the final section of the chapter discusses the efforts made by and the challenges experienced by social movements and non-governmental organisations in order to commemorate and remember the casualties of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict notwithstanding their position of either victims or

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<sup>97</sup> Saunders, N. J. and Cornish, P. 'Introduction', in *Bodies in Conflict: Corporeality, Materiality, and Transformation*, edited by Paul Cornish and Nicholas J. Saunders (London and New York, Routledge, 2014), p. 6.

perpetrators. Therefore, the chapter ends by investigating efforts to upset the grid of intelligibility that distinguishes between Palestinians and Israeli Jews. As such, the final section echoes and does justice to Edward Said's claims that,

‘to build a conceptual framework around the notion of us-versus-them is in effect to pretend that the principal consideration is epistemological and natural – our civilization is known and accepted, theirs is different and strange – whereas in fact the framework separating us from them is belligerent, constructed, and situational’.<sup>98</sup>

### **Efforts and Challenges to ‘Egalitarian Mourning’**

In January 1988, a feminist and anti-militarist social movement, *Women in Black* emerged in Jerusalem in order to protest against the Israeli military aggression. Supported by Palestinian women, *Women in Black* activists started marching in the West Bank in order to protest the Israeli army's violent practices. Their protest was defined by their black clothing – traditionally worn during rituals of mourning and burial – and by their silent vigils for Palestinian victims. Their vigils were accompanied by the message ‘Stop the Occupation’ that was symbolically captured by a hand-signaling *stop* image. The organisation holds vigils every Friday between 1 pm and 2 pm in Gan Shmuel, Haifa, Jerusalem, and Tel Aviv.<sup>99</sup> Today, *Women in Black* is an international feminist activist network that protests across the world against injustice, war, militarism, violence against women, or against human rights violations. In June 2001, more than 10,000 women organised in 150 groups, and held vigils against the Israeli occupation all across the world, among which in Australia, Germany, Mexico, Turkey, and the United States of America.<sup>100</sup> Through their performance of silent vigils, *Women in Black* challenge the patriarchal features of the Israeli society and their assigned status of mothers that mourn the death of their sons and daughters that sacrifice for Israel. Moreover, they challenge the militaristic ethos of the Israeli society and call for ending the occupation of the Palestinian territories. Their practices unsettle the

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<sup>98</sup> Said, E. W. ‘The Clash of Definitions: On Samuel Huntington’, in *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*, edited by Edward W. Said (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2001), p. 577.

<sup>99</sup> Women in Black, *Israel*. Available at: <http://womeninblack.org/vigils-around-the-world/europa/israel/> [Accessed 21 July 2017].

<sup>100</sup> Women in Black, *Who are Women in Black*. Available at: <http://womeninblack.org/about-women-in-black/> [Accessed 21 July 2017].

conventional discourses concerning nationalism, gender, and military conscription. Therefore, the activism performed by *Women in Black* 'ought to be construed as an ethical and political reflection on what it means to be responsible to the memory of the lost other, the one whose suffering and loss is expropriated (the enemy, the marginal, the foreign, the illegal immigrant, the other)'.<sup>101</sup> *Women in Black* calls into question the status quo of the political order by inviting Israel to think about responsibility for and responsiveness towards Palestinians. Even though this organisation seems less interested in arguing for 'egalitarian mourning' for victims of Israeli/Palestinian conflict alike, their practices are important because they challenge the Israeli militaristic ethos, its military practices of occupation, and the patriarchal configuration of the Israeli society.<sup>102</sup>

Displaying a different ethos, the non-governmental organisation *Parents Circle – Families Forum: Palestinian and Israeli Bereaved Families for Peace* (*Parents Circle – Families Forum* hereafter) was established in September 1995 and is based on the principles of reconciliation and dialogue. *Parents Circle – Families Forum* is a social movement born out of grief. In 1994, Yitzhak Frankenthal, a bereaved father spent a few months in an Israeli public library in order to trace all the Israeli families that lost a loved one due to terrorist attacks. By the end of his research, he discovered that there were four hundred twenty two bereaved families. Frankenthal invited three hundred fifty of them – he excluded recently bereaved families and those that made controversial statements against Palestinians – to join a group of grieving Israeli and Palestinian families. Forty-four families answered positively and formed the core of the *Parents Circle – Families Forum*.<sup>103</sup> Today, the organisation conducts an array of activities, from film screenings, to dialogues groups, and exhibitions in which Israeli and Palestinians bereaved families meet and share with each other the pain of losing a loved one.<sup>104</sup> For instance, a significant event took place in the summer of 2014 when *Parents Circle – Families Forum* organised a peace vigil that started before, continued throughout and after the launching of Operation Protective Edge. For seventy days,

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<sup>101</sup> Athanasiou, A. 'Reflections on the Politics of Mourning: Feminist Ethics and Politics in the Age of Empire', *Historiein*, 5 (2005) p. 42.

<sup>102</sup> Butler, J. 'Violence, Mourning, Politics', *Studies in Gender and Sexuality*, 4 (2003) p. 9.

<sup>103</sup> Ahituv, N. 'The Saddest – and Most Optimistic – Peace Organization Turns 20'. *Haaretz*, 17 October 2014. Available at: <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.620808> [Accessed 21 July 2017].

<sup>104</sup> Parents Circle – Families Forum: Palestinian and Israeli Bereaved Families for Peace, *About*. Available at: <http://www.theparentscircle.com/Content.aspx?ID=2#.VsdPZ8e11Z0> [Accessed 21 July 2017].

Israeli activists, scholars, left wing politicians, and Palestinians activists, gathered in the plaza of the Tel Aviv cinemateque, and hosted activities that promoted reconciliation, dialogue, empathy, tolerance, and listening in order to counterattack the right wing Israeli official discourse.<sup>105</sup> Other activities performed by this organisation include trips of bereaved Israelis and Palestinians to Israel and the West Bank in order to meet with the families whose loved ones were killed during conflict.<sup>106</sup> Speaking about a meeting between Israeli and Palestinian bereaved family members, the then Palestinian co-chairman of the organisation, Abu Awwad, stressed that ‘the important thing is that we get dialogue going between us, the ordinary people. We need to understand each other, with the main problem being the dislike for the different. As soon as we change that, we can move that change further up the ladder’.<sup>107</sup>

The efforts pursued by *Parents Circle – Families Forum* represent a minor yet important effort to secure ‘egalitarian mourning’ for both Israeli and Palestinian victims of conflict. Their determination to facilitate meetings between both sides of the conflict and the difficulties that they experience in organising events demonstrate the strength of the discourses of mourning and grief that favour Israeli Jews citizen-soldiers at the detriment of Palestinians. One of the movement’s most significant events is the organisation of a joint commemoration event for Israeli and Palestinian victims of conflict. Annually, *Parents Circle – Families Forum* joins efforts with *Combatants for Peace* to bring family members of Palestinian victims to the event in order to share their stories of loss, bereavement, and mourning. The event takes place on the eve of Israel’s Memorial Day and is a counter practice to the official state practices of commemoration that entails an official ceremony in Tel Aviv’s Rabin Square and which includes a screening of Israeli Jews talking publicly about their experiences of pain and grief.<sup>108</sup>

The efforts to organise joint commemoration practices are met with serious resistance from different segments of the Israeli society. In 2015, a group of one hundred families appealed to the Israeli Ministry of Defense in order to prevent a joint Israeli-Palestinian commemoration event.<sup>109</sup> The families, supported by the Samaria

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<sup>105</sup> Parents Circle – Families Forum, *The Peace Square*. Available at:

<http://theparentscircle.com/Content.aspx?ID=87#.VsdQ28e1Z0> [Accessed 21 July 2017].

<sup>106</sup> Shalev, A. ‘Israeli, Palestinian bereaved families meet’. *Ynetnews*, 21 September 2008. Available at: <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3599864,00.html> [Accessed 21 July 2017].

<sup>107</sup> Abu Awaad cited in Shalev, ‘Israeli, Palestinian Bereaved Families Meet’.

<sup>108</sup> Wright, ‘Palestine, My Love’, p. 135.

<sup>109</sup> Miller, E. ‘100 bereaved families try to prevent Israel-Palestinian memorial event’. *The Times of Israel*, 20 April 2015. Available at: <http://www.timesofisrael.com/bereaved-families-try-to-prevent-israel-palestinian-memorial-event/> [Accessed 21 July 2017].

Settlers' Committee, asked the Ministry of Defense to prevent the entry of the Palestinian families in Israel because 'the ceremony is a provocation which degrades Memorial Day and the memory of the fallen. We are shocked by the fact that the Israeli government allows a joint memorial ceremony for our enemies who took part in murdering and harming our children'.<sup>110</sup> In contrast, the spokeswoman representing *Combatants for Peace*, Tamar Halfon, responded to this contention by stressing that 'we must remember that war is not fate but a human choice. That is why particularly on this day we call on both sides to acknowledge the pain and hope of those living on the other side of the fence, and try to prevent the next war'.<sup>111</sup> This was not the first time when the joint actions promoted by *Combatants for Peace* and by *Parents Circle – Families Forum* were met with public clamor. In 2011, the then Minister of Education, Gideon Sa'ar, announced that the participation of Palestinian bereaved relatives whose family members were killed during conflict would be prevented from joining Israeli-Palestinian events for reconciliation. Representing a group of Israeli parents that disagreed with the participation of Palestinian parents at joint meetings, the attorney Hila Cohen declared that 'drawing a comparison between bereaved Israeli families and Palestinian families is inconceivable, as such discussions legitimize acts of terrorism'.<sup>112</sup>

Furthermore, the likening between the suffering of Israeli Jews bereaved families and the grief and pain of Palestinian families of terrorist attackers became a reason of controversy in the Israeli public sphere in 2016, when a host from the Army Radio wondered on air about the difference between the bereavement of Israeli Jewish and Palestinian families regarding the practice of withholding dead bodies by either Hamas or Israeli authorities. The radio host, Razi Barkai, claimed that 'from the point of view of the feelings of a bereaved Palestinian mother and a bereaved Jewish mother, I don't think there's a difference'.<sup>113</sup> In response, the former Likud member of Israeli Knesset Moshe Feiglin wrote on a social media website the following: 'There isn't just

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<sup>110</sup> Miller, '100 bereaved families try to prevent Israel-Palestinian memorial event'.

<sup>111</sup> Tamar Halfon quoted in Miller, '100 bereaved families try to prevent Israel-Palestinian memorial event'.

<sup>112</sup> Hila Cohen quoted in Trabelsi-Hadad, T. 'Bereaved Israelis, Palestinian families' meeting nixed'. *Ynetnews*, 25 December 2011. Available at: <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4166475,00.html> [Accessed 21 July 2017].

<sup>113</sup> Razi Barkai quoted in Damelin R. 'Israeli and Palestinian Bereaved Mothers Feel the Same Pain'. *Haaretz*, 14 February 2016. Available at: <http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/premium-1.703226> [Accessed 21 July 2017].



pain – there’s good pain and there’s bad pain’.<sup>114</sup> Furthermore, Hadar Goldin’s and Oron Shaul’s parents, the Israeli troops killed during the Operation Protective Edge in 2014, demanded Barkai’s suspension and asked him to publicly apologise for his lack of empathy. Hadar Goldin’s father complained that ‘we are in a struggle to prove to the whole world that there are enormous differences between us and our enemies, and on Army Radio Barkai compares the Shaul and Goldin families and their feelings to the families of murderous terrorists’.<sup>115</sup> In response to this controversy, Robi Damelin, the International Relations Spokesperson of *The Parents Circle – Families Forum*, penned an article in the widely circulated left wing newspaper *Haaretz* and asked in a rhetorical manner:

‘What makes you think that the tears on the pillow of a bereaved Palestinian mother are of a different color or substance than those of a grieving Israeli mother? What could make you think that in comparing suffering no mother can suffer more than ‘our’ mothers? Perhaps you think that you know how a Palestinian mother feels, or that their culture is different, or that she does not value the life of her child like ‘we’ do?’

Robi Damelin, who lost her son after being killed by a Palestinian sniper, takes aim at those segments of the Israeli public and authorities that believe that the Israeli Jewish lives are more valuable and that their pain is worth disclosing and mourning in the public space. Damelin speaks against inflammatory discourses promoted by state officials such as Ayelet Shaked, the Minister of Justice, who wrote on social media that ‘they [Palestinians] are all enemy fighters and they are all marked for death’. Shaked accused the mothers of Palestinian martyrs that they ‘send them to hell with flowers and kisses. They need to follow their sons, there is nothing more just than that’.<sup>116</sup> It is exactly this discourse of mourning and grief that informs the enactment of violence that Damelin is arguing against:

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<sup>114</sup> Damelin, ‘Israeli and Palestinian Bereaved Mothers Feel the Same Pain’.

<sup>115</sup> Simcha Goldin quoted in Haaretz Staff, ‘Bereaved Israeli Parents Slam Radio Host for Comparing Families of Fallen Soldiers, Palestinian Terrorists’. *Haaretz*, 8 February 2016. Available at: <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.702081> [Accessed 21 July 2017].

<sup>116</sup> Ayelet Shaked quoted in Ahituv, ‘The Saddest – and Most Optimistic – Peace Organization Turns 20’.

‘[P]unishment, the withholding of dead bodies, born out of revenge, will only create more hatred and wish for revenge. We should have learnt this by now. Instead of the never-ending cycle of violence perhaps there is another way. We seem to repeat the same patterns of behavior on both sides, behavior we already know will only lead to more death and the destruction of families’.<sup>117</sup>

These words invite the reader to recognise that violence breeds further violence on both sides of the conflict and that both Israeli Jews and Palestinians should acknowledge that ending revenge and hatred between the two sides could bring about the end of violence. A similar dispute to the one mentioned above took place in 2012 when *Combatants for Peace* and *Parents Circle – Family Forum* organised an Israeli-Palestinian joint event in order to commemorate the Israeli and Palestinian victims of violence. The event was scheduled to take place in Tel Aviv’s harbor. A Facebook advocacy group was set up to call for canceling the event followed by public demands made by Israeli members of the Knesset to ban the event. Even though the event was not cancelled, the chair of the company that manages the harbor, Naomi Enoch, publicly declared that ‘as a governmental body we reject any attempt to put dead IDF soldiers and Palestinian victims on a par as damaging the memory of the fallen soldiers’.<sup>118</sup> The efforts of the Israeli non-governmental organisations to commemorate Palestinian and Israeli victims of the conflict represent frail yet hopeful actions to challenge the discourse of mourning that distinguishes between Israeli Jews and Palestinians. They aim to achieve solidarity between the two sides of the conflict through joint mourning rituals by demonstrating the Israeli Jews and Palestinians bereaved families experience the same pain, loss, and grief.

Even though non-governmental organisations try to challenge the binary discourses that permeate the Israeli civil and military spheres and to contest the labeling of Palestinians as dangerous terrorists, this research shows there are other bureaucratic, emotional, and legal obstacles that prevent the commemoration of Palestinian deaths in

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<sup>117</sup> Damelin, ‘Israeli and Palestinian Bereaved Mothers Feel the Same Pain’.

<sup>118</sup> Bar-Zohar, O. ‘Peace Activists Are Sick of Talking About Soccer’. *Haaretz*, 25 April 2012. Available at: <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/peace-activists-are-sick-of-talking-about-soccer-1.426396> [Accessed 21 July 2017].

the Israeli public sphere. For instance, Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian discusses the legal disputes involving the two Muslim cemeteries in East Jerusalem, Bab Alsbat and respectively, Mamilla cemetery. The author claims that the Israeli Supreme Court's efforts to prevent Palestinians from accessing and using these graveyards aim to dispossess, to erase, and to challenge Palestinians' claims to memory and past.<sup>119</sup> The legal dispute that involves Bab Alsbat refers to the efforts pursued by a group of Jewish settlers to prevent Palestinians' access to the graveyard by arguing that burial in that site endangers the public health of the Israeli Jews citizens and damages the Jewish ancient relics that are buried in the cemetery.<sup>120</sup> This group of Jewish settlers argues that the cemetery, located in an adjacent area to the Wailing Wall, in the Ofel Way, is an archeological site of highly public and religious significance that does not warrant the building of graves.<sup>121</sup>

The dispute involving the case of the Mamilla cemetery is more complex. More than 1,000 years old, a plot on the edge of Mamilla Cemetery was selected as a site for building Israel's Center for Human Dignity – Museum of Tolerance. Human remains were excavated and the Muslim authorities accused Israel of desecrating the ancient graves. Despite legal objections, the Supreme Court approved the building of the planned museum.<sup>122</sup> Weekly protests followed the Court's decision and a group of sixty Palestinians launched an international campaign to save the Mamilla cemetery. The movement organises protests, vigils, and engages in international advocacy efforts in order to save the cemetery.<sup>123</sup> The campaign and the activists that organise vigils at the Mamilla cemetery contest the classifying discourse and practices of commemoration according to which the Palestinian deaths are less grievable than the Israeli Jewish ones. The legal controversies that characterise Muslim cemeteries in East Jerusalem show that the Israeli legal system is flawed, allows the infliction of psychological violence against bereaved families, and permits the desecration of the Palestinian graveyards.

This hierarchical discourse of grief that characterises the legal disputes about Muslim graveyards is rounded by ethnographical findings concerning the difficulties

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<sup>119</sup> Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 'Criminality in Spaces of Death', pp. 43-6.

<sup>120</sup> Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 'Criminality in Spaces of Death', p. 44.

<sup>121</sup> Shalhoub-Kevorkian, *Security Theology, Surveillance and the Politics of Fear*, p. 125.

<sup>122</sup> Leshem, N. ' "Over our dead bodies": Placing necropolitical activism', *Political Geography*, 45 (2015) p. 34.

<sup>123</sup> Campaign to Preserve Mamilla Jerusalem Cemetery. Available at: <http://www.mamillacampaign.org> [Accessed 21 July 2017].

that Palestinians from East Jerusalem experience when performing rituals of burial and mourning. In this regard, Shalhoub-Kevorkian underlines that, for the Israeli state, 'dead and their desecrated bodies are turned into symbols of power and became boundary markers that appropriate Palestinian place, space and conduct to reproduce a context of constant uncertainty and chaos'.<sup>124</sup> The author shares Rasha and Samer's baby's story in order to show how the Israeli security services control and police the death and the burial of Palestinians. The baby's mother, Rasha, argues that her infant child died when the Israeli security forces entered her house and threw teargas bombs. Her baby, suffering from a cold, stopped breathing due to the heavy smell of tear gas. The baby's mother accused the Israeli security forces of preventing her from taking her baby to the hospital. The baby's father, Samer, recounted that when they eventually reached the hospital with the baby the hospital authorities called the police to question the family and the hospital personnel that took care of the baby. He recalled the pressure that the police put on doctors and nurses to issue a medical report that stated the baby had died because of cold and fever. Finally, Rasha recalled that the funeral of her baby was heavily controlled and policed by the Israeli authorities and that only fifteen family members were allowed to be near the grave.<sup>125</sup> According to Shalhoub-Kevorkian, stories such as the one told by Rasha and Samer show that:

'Policing death and dying is a technology that dispossesses the native bereaved of the ability to mourn the dead. The violence of such dispossession deprives people of their ritual, culture and language [while] the human body, dead or alive, are marked as different, as lower in their humanity, as open to violation and damage'.<sup>126</sup>

This section has explored the efforts pursued by and the difficulties experienced by Israeli Jews and Palestinians to organise events in which victims from both sides of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict are mourned in an equal manner. By discussing the successes and the controversies that surround the commemoration of Israeli Jews and Palestinians during joint events, it shows that there are brief moments of solidarity that upset the belligerent socio-political order that characterises the

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<sup>124</sup> Shalhoub-Kevorkian, *Security Theology, Surveillance*, p. 20.

<sup>125</sup> Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 'Criminality in Spaces of Death', pp. 47-48.

<sup>126</sup> Shalhoub-Kevorkian, *Security Theology, Surveillance*, p. 121.

Israel/Palestine conflict. Furthermore, the section dwelled on the psychological, bureaucratic, and emotional barriers that Palestinians living in East Jerusalem experience while performing rituals of mourning and burial. The examples presented in this chapter indicate the reluctance of large segments of the Israeli society or public authorities to welcome the bereavement of Palestinian deaths in the Israeli public sphere even if they might not be directly involved in violent confrontations between military troops and Palestinians.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has examined the social practices through which the bodies of Israeli Jews and Palestinian are memorialised, recovered and handled. It indicates that commemoration, forensic, bureaucratic, and respectively legal practices capture, circulate, and provoke dispositions of mourning, grief, pain, loss, revulsion, and animosity that reinforce the affective differences that characterise the Israel/Palestine conflict. The examination of these practices shows the emergence of the ‘heroic victim’ military figure as an affective technique through which the IDF reinterpret violence against Palestinians as a self-defence endeavour for the purposes of defending the Israeli Jewish individual and collective body. Contrasted with the Palestinian body either in an implicit or explicit manner, the ‘heroic victim’ figure imagines the Israeli servicemen and women as gifted individual whose bodies are sacred and pure, and who are endowed with exceptional military and individual qualities. Through this flawless representation, the Israeli military curbs local (and international) criticism against the IDF and their violent abuses in the Israel/Palestine conflict. By studying military obituaries, medical, discursive, and respectively, bureaucratic practices that contest an ‘egalitarian mourning’ of Israeli Jews and Palestinian bodies, this research highlights the efforts pursued by a variety of actors to differentiate between Israeli Jewish and Palestinian bodies in order to stress the distinctiveness and the impeccability of the Israeli military figure. Through this lens, the military subject becomes incapable of harming other bodies and he is imagined as a tragic victim whose death is invariably caused by threatening and dangerous Palestinians. Accompanied by this symbolism, the IDF’s violence against Palestinians is reinterpreted as efforts to defend the individual and collective Israeli Jewish body.

Furthermore, this chapter shows that the online commemoration practices and the management of the dead bodies by influential gatekeepers such as the Israeli military, ZAKA, the Institute of Forensic Medicine, and the Supreme Court confine the possibility to mourn and grieve Israeli Jews and Palestinians in an ‘egalitarian manner’. The commendable efforts of *Women in Black*, *Combatants for Peace* and *Parents’ Circle – Family Forum* and the difficulties that they experience while organising joint commemoration events speak to and challenge the mourning and grief that are part and parcel of the discourse that justifies, allows, and reinterprets the enactment of violence in the name of the security of the state. Their counter-practices upset the politicised nature of mourning, bereavement, and grief in Israel and invite a reflection upon the ways in which brief moments of solidarity can unmake violence, inequality, and conflict.

By investigating the political nature of mourning and recovering bodies and bodily parts and by mapping out the role of state authorities in acting as gatekeepers in distinguishing between bodies that should and that should not be commemorated, grieved, and buried, this chapter claims that Israeli state authorities politicise mourning, grief, loss and pain in order to disregard and conceal the violence that is enacted in the name of the security of the state. Against this background, the Israeli citizen-soldier is both a hero and a victim – a social imaginary that confines criticism and condemnation against the Israeli military. This representation offers a sanitised and idealised version of the Israeli military subjectivity, and invites solidarity with and support for the IDF since local and international audiences are called upon to admire the talented young men and women that have sacrificed for Israel and to express sadness and sorrow regarding their tragic death.

## Conclusion

The project has investigated the productive power of emotions in constituting the Israeli military subjectivity by examining the practices, actors, representations, and processes that are involved in creating the Israeli soldiering figure and in constituting the affective boundaries that characterise the Israel/Palestine conflict. The central research asks: *How do emotions arise within and constitute the conviction that the 'IDF is the most moral army in the world' inside civil and military spheres?* Offering one answer among the possible ones, *the project argues that emotions arising from (self-)representations within the IDF constitute a professional, non-threatening, and humanitarian soldiering image that nurtures civil, military, and political tolerance for violence against Palestinians.*

Due to its interest in the role of emotions in the Israel/Palestine conflict, the thesis highlights the importance of thinking about emotions as modalities and techniques of governing the conduct and the views of local and international audiences towards the Israeli military. It shows a variety of social practices cultivate a proficient, benign, and humanitarian military figure that moderates local and international dissent by embodying, circulating, and eliciting emotions of affiliation with the military and respectively, hostility towards Palestinians. This research nuances the study of emotions in war and conflict by moving from an engagement with their essentialism (what emotions are) towards an analysis of the political trajectory of emotions (what do emotions do, who are the actors that rely on emotions to (self-)govern, how are emotions incited and acted through, what are the means and the consequences of governing through emotions). Therefore, it has examined 'what do emotions do?', 'what are emotions for?', and 'how do emotions operate?' within the Israel/Palestine conflict by building on the scholarly work of feminist and critical scholars like Sara Ahmed, Claire Hemmings, Ann Cvetkovich, Carolyn Pedwell, and Laurent Berlant. They claim the study of emotions reveals power inequalities, injury, and violence while maintaining open the possibility to challenge discrimination, disparity, and harm.

Through its engagement with the materialisation of emotions and the emotionality of varied Israeli military (self-)representations, the thesis sits comfortably alongside other feminist investigations of the Israeli military while exploring the

productive power of emotions within the Israel/Palestine conflict. It shows that emotions accompany discourses, interpretations, and representations that sanction, condone, and downplay the Israeli forces' violence against Palestinians. In spite of providing a pessimistic view regarding the Middle East conflict, this research unearths emotions, practices, representations, actors, and bodies through which the flawless image of the Israeli military is both constituted and disputed by both Palestinians and Israeli citizen-soldiers. This approach opens the Israeli military practices to criticism, troubles the perpetrator/victim binary view that is attached to Palestinian subjects living under the occupation, and raises questions regarding the fluidity, ambivalence, and the contested political role of emotions in the Israel/Palestine conflict.

### **The Cultivation of a Flawless Military Subjectivity: Means of (Self-) Government By Emotions**

Phenomenological approaches, interested in mapping out the affective baggage of military service, argue emotions such as fear, anger, hate, distress, boredom, anxiety, resentment, despair, or tiredness are the principal emotional estates that determine military forces to act reckless, and to physically and psychologically abuse innocent civilians. Seen through this lens, violence is an inevitable outcome of military service under the duress of combat and an unfortunate consequence of the tumultuous nature of war and conflict. Through this narrow perspective, violence against civilians is a breach of military discipline. Although this literature is important for criticising the clinical and sanitised representations of war put forward by political and military elites, it carries a limited explanatory value for the development of this project. As such, this thesis situates individual emotions in the power structures within which they emerge and gain meaning in order to elucidate the reluctance to condemn the Israeli forces for the violence enacted against Palestinians. It investigates the reliance of the IDF on emotions in introducing citizen-soldiers to the Israeli military culture and life, and examines the affective responses and passionate debates provoked by the circulation of visual representations of the Israeli forces' violence against Palestinians in the public sphere. Finally, yet significantly, this research scrutinises the practices through which the Palestinian and Israeli Jewish bodies are recovered, buried, and commemorated in the aftermath of a violent attack. These areas of inquiry have enabled this project to present the social practices that embody, circulate, and provoke emotions that constitute



a benign military image, which nurtures the military, political, and public leniency for the IDF's violence against Palestinians.

The first chapter of the thesis provides the theoretical framework for the development of this project and argues this idealised military subjectivity functions as an 'affective frame of soldiering' that moderates local and international dissent against the military therefore confining the possibility to hold the Israeli forces accountable for their violence against Palestinians. It blends Michel Foucault's *regime of truth* and Judith Butler's *frames of war* with Sara Ahmed's theory of the cultural politics of emotions in order to investigate the practices, emotions, representations, actors, and bodies that constitute and reproduce a romanticised Israeli military image that nurtures the military, political, and public tolerance for the Israeli forces' violent behaviour against Palestinians. The claim that individual and collective tolerance for the IDF's mistreatment of Palestinians is informed by a variety of affective social practices that construct a professional, non-threatening, and compassionate military image suggests the importance of bringing emotions and violence under a broader analytical framework. In this respect, this research insists that in order to explain the leeway that the Israeli military forces enjoy in harming Palestinians, it is important to examine the individual and collective affective investment in cultivating a flawless Israeli military subjectivity. One way to broaden the methodological engagement with the productive power of emotions in war, conflict, and violence is by studying the Israeli public's continuous support for the military and the tolerance for the Israeli forces' mistreatment of Palestinians at the intersection between the literature on governmentality and the scholarship on emotions.

Developed by Michel Foucault, governmentality refers to the techniques through which the state controls and governs the population with the ultimate aim to secure their wellbeing. In the author's words, it refers to

'the ensemble formed by institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, calculations, and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific, albeit very complex, power that has the population as

its target, political economy as its major form of knowledge, and apparatuses of security as its essential technical instrument'.<sup>1</sup>

Far from being a collective and aggregated entity, state power is dispersed among a variety of actors that gather and process information, and impose particular governing regimes upon the population that guides their behaviour, way of acting and of thinking, and their engagement with socio-economic resources and practices. Interested in practices of governmentality within the context of neoliberalism, Foucault believed the ultimate aim of neoliberal governing is to teach individuals how to govern themselves. In this respect, technologies of the self

'permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection or immortality'.<sup>2</sup>

Differently put, the governing of subjectivity does not take place through manipulation but 'by encouraging, inculcating, and suggesting certain ways of [individual and collective] conduct that increase the health, wealth and happiness' of the population.<sup>3</sup> Although thinking about emotions in the context of governmentality seems to be at odds with Foucault's theoretical programme due to its emphasis on rationality, it is important to highlight that rationality is not void of an affective component. For instance, the author observes that governmentality is interested in how the population thinks and feels, in 'its opinions, ways of doing things, forms of behaviour, customs, fears, prejudices, and requirements'.<sup>4</sup>

As an emerging field of inquiry, the intersection between governmentality and emotions covers a variety of fields such as legal studies, criminology, urban geography, citizenship studies or development studies. Although some scholars who work with

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<sup>1</sup> Foucault, M. *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977–78* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 108.

<sup>2</sup> Foucault, M. 'Technologies of the Self', in *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, edited by Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman and Patrick. H. Hutton (London, Tavistock Publications, 1988), p. 18.

<sup>3</sup> Isin, E. F. 'The Neurotic Citizen', *Citizenship Studies*, 8 (2004) p. 220.

<sup>4</sup> Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, p. 75.

governmentality and emotions distinguish between the latter and affect while other authors conflate affects with emotions, they agree the scholarly practice to distinguish between the two of them reinforces the Cartesian body/mind dichotomy, which is a view strongly challenged by the feminist scholarship.<sup>5</sup> Michael Ashworth argues Ugandan state actors, religious figures, and journalists have constructed a discourse of disgust against homosexuality in order to secure the passing of a law that would criminalise it.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, Sean Watson claims criminology benefits from intersecting the theory of social control with affect as it provides a solid framework for studying the cultivation of police officers' subjectivities.<sup>7</sup> Alternatively, D. Asher Ghertner argues authorities in New Delhi have used aesthetic norms and codes in their slum surveys in order to cultivate the dwellers' interest to improve their slums or to resettle from the slums deemed unfit therefore permitting the demolition of their homes without resistance.<sup>8</sup> Finally, Anne-Marie Fortier studies the role of emotions in cultivating citizenship by mapping our practices, policies and programmes through which the British authorities cultivate affective citizenship for the purposes of enhancing minority inclusion.<sup>9</sup> With regard to the study of the military, James Eastwood, Allison Howell, Beatrice Jauregui, and Harriet Gray study the constitution of soldierly subjectivity through the lens of governmentality. Through a variety of examples ranging from the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Israel, Canada, and Australia, these scholars argue military service is increasingly portrayed as a practice of the self that is based on the responsabilisation of the individual military recruit.<sup>10</sup> In spite of agreeing that the construction of the (resilient) military subject contributes to the normalisation and the perpetuation of war and conflict, these authors pay little attention to the theoretical strength of marrying governmentality with the literature on emotions/affect. Encouraged by the recent scholarly interest in studying

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<sup>5</sup> D'Aoust, 'Ties that Bind?', pp. 267-76.

<sup>6</sup> Ashworth, 'Affective Governmentality', pp. 188-207.

<sup>7</sup> Watson, S. 'Policing the Affective Society: Beyond Governmentality in the Theory of Social Control', *Social & Legal Studies*, 8 (1999) pp. 227-51.

<sup>8</sup> Ghertner, D. A. 'Calculating without numbers: aesthetic governmentality in Delhi's slums', *Economy & Society*, 39 (2010) pp. 185-217.

<sup>9</sup> Fortier, A.-M. 'Proximity by design? Affective citizenship and the management of unease', *Citizenship Studies*, 14 (2010) pp. 17-30.

<sup>10</sup> Eastwood, ' 'Meaningful Service': Pedagogy at Israeli pre-military academies', pp. 671-95; Gray, H. 'The trauma risk management approach to post-traumatic stress disorder in the British military: masculinity, biopolitics and depoliticisation', *Feminist Review*, 111 (2015) pp. 109-123; Howell, A. 'Resilience, war, and austerity: The ethics of military human enhancement and the politics of data', *Security Dialogue*, 46 (2015) pp. 15-31; Jauregui, B. 'World Fitness: US Army Family Humanism and the Positive Science of Persistent War', *Public Culture*, 27 (2015) pp. 449-85.

the military as a practice of (self-)governmentality and the potential of intersecting governmentality with emotions, the project concludes by outlining the strengths of studying the persistence of the conviction that the 'IDF is the most moral army in the world' at the intersection between these two bodies of literature.

The study of the public, political, and military reluctance to condemn the Israeli military's violence against Palestinians at the intersection between governmentality and emotions indicates that the Israeli benign military figure functions as a discursive system that regulates, generates, and determines individual and collective dispositions, behaviours, and beliefs regarding the IDF. This discursive system cultivates individual and collective affective subjectivities actively invested in nurturing and praising the impeccability of the Israeli military subjectivity. The project has showed the construction of the IDF's romanticised military figure is 'the practical labour of a variety of agents who operate [within and] beyond the state system, the spheres of the official and unofficial, state and civil society and governed and governor'.<sup>11</sup> In this respect, it has mapped out the role of a variety of individual and collective actors that endeavor to construct a faultless Israeli military subjectivity. The second and third chapters have investigated the role of the IDF's Education and Youth Corps and respectively, of the IDF Spokesperson's Unit in constituting military service as an attractive and desirable activity. This view permits recruits to develop remarkable qualities that would serve their military and civilian lives alike. The fourth chapter has highlighted the role of political actors, military leaders, public figures, and citizen-soldiers in imagining and constituting the Israeli military subjectivity. These actors shift responsibility from the Israeli troops to Palestinians by imaging the former as vulnerable and defenseless figures that are attacked by vile and cunning Palestinians, who fabricate their pain in order to convict the Israeli military personnel of fictive violent abuses. Lastly, the fifth chapter has examined the role of the military, medical, and public authorities in constructing a 'heroic victim' military figure. These actors stress the importance of treating the body of the citizen-soldier with the utmost care and respect yet neglect, disregard, and mistreat the Palestinian dead bodies. The prevalence of this remarkable military image, and its role in justifying violence, hinders Palestinians efforts, either individual or in cooperation with Israeli Jewish citizens and organisations, to honour their dead relatives or to participate at joint commemoration

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<sup>11</sup> Ashworth, 'Affective Governmentality', p. 196.

events with the Israeli Jewish bereaved families. Therefore, the project has showed a variety of actors, institutions, and individual and collective bodies construct a romanticised military subjectivity by relying on discourses, practices, and processes that capture, circulate, and incite emotions for the purposes of eliciting individual and collective positive attitude, trust, and support for the Israeli military.

The fruitfulness of an engagement with governmentality and emotions is visible throughout the entire project as these actors rely on affective dispositions, passionate debates, and emotional engagements in order to elicit individual and collective support and solidarity with the Israeli military. Pedagogical activities pursued by Israeli recruits aim to secure both individual and collective affective investment in defending and building the State of Israel. The second chapter has showed that emotions are part and parcel of the military didactic practices during which recruits are asked to work through their emotions in order to cultivate and appropriate a productive military subjectivity. Trips to historical sites, workshops in which the Israeli recruits are invited to discuss their affective experiences of serving under the occupation, or lectures about Zionism and the history of the Jewish people equip recruits with moral strength, loyalty, devotion, and commitment towards building and defending the Israel. Moreover, these educational practices, influenced by the power struggle between secular and religious Israeli voices, imbue the Israeli (future) military forces with a sense of exceptionality and superiority, aspects that carry significant political implications for the Israel/Palestine conflict. As an image that envisages the Israeli military personnel as remarkable and moral figures who are committed to care for Palestinians and for other foreign individuals that might experience difficult situations, the professional, non-threatening, and benign military representation conceals the violence that is enacted by and against the Israeli military forces, and effaces the Palestinian pain and narrative. Equally, the third chapter has indicated the importance of studying the emotions embedded in, circulated and respectively provoked by the military photos that constitute the IDF's official Facebook account. These pictures exude happiness, relaxation, and excitement. They imagine military service as an opportunity for the Israeli citizen-soldiers to develop their skills, irrespectively of their gender, race, class, ethnicity, or religion. These photos erase the violence of the military service. They present joyful young men and women that blend with breathtaking landscape, that play soccer with they peers, that travel to Nepal or Turkey for humanitarian interventions, or that help Palestinians to access medical treatment in the West Bank or Israel.

Similarly to didactic military activities, these pictures present military service as an attractive opportunity to enhance one's abilities and to enjoy fulfilling experiences that serve his or her civilian and military lives alike. The second and third chapter of the thesis put forward an idealised representation of military service and life that aims to confine criticism, and to moderate Israeli recruits' reluctance to join the military or to serve in combat positions. Therefore, these pedagogical and aesthetic practices function as subtle emotional techniques for the purposes of enhancing the Israeli youth's desire to join and to dedicate themselves to the military.

Furthermore, the circulation of the professional, non-threatening, and compassionate military subjectivity permits the IDF to govern the attitude of international audiences towards the Israeli military in order to attract their support and solidarity with the Israeli military. The imaginary resemblance between the IDF and other Western militaries is important for encouraging international audiences to relate to, to empathise with, and to support the Israeli military. The dissemination of this benign image invites non-Israeli audiences to become emotionally invested in the IDF thus deterring the moderation of criticism and the cultivation of a positive view towards the Israeli military. In this respect, the construction of an affective link between the IDF and international audiences is informed by the efforts pursued by a variety of Israeli actors to liken the Israeli military with its Western counterparts while presenting the IDF as being involved in combat and humanitarian missions alike. This carefully crafted image cultivates international support for and solidarity with the IDF by extracting the Israeli military from the complexity of the Israel/Palestine conflict and by moderating its instrumentality in the military occupation of Palestinians. Through this discursive move, the Israeli military does not only depoliticise the IDF's involvement in the Israel/Palestine conflict, but it also imagines the Israeli military as being involved in the global fight against radical fighters therefore appealing to Western audiences.

Finally, yet significantly, the efforts pursued by a variety of Israeli actors to cultivate local and international support for the military is dependent on the affective constitution of antagonistic Israeli Jewish and Palestinian subjectivities. In the Israel/Palestine conflict, emotions are technologies of government that shape the conduct of the Israeli citizen-soldiers by imposing on them a gendered and racialised regime of truth that cultivates affiliation with the Israeli military and that invites antagonism and hostility towards Palestinians. Similarly, by drawing on the intersection

between affect and governmentality, Haktan Ural stresses that neoliberal discourses are marked by an affective dynamic that produces subject positions that serve the neoliberal order by marginalising and excluding undesirable subjects that do not correspond to the rational needs of the state and its citizens. In this view, neoliberal governmentality is 'marked with certain affective dispositions that name other subjects as menaces to the social order' since 'dispositions derive from discomfort with certain people, places or practices'.<sup>12</sup> The efforts pursued by Israeli individual and collective actors in order to cultivate support for and attachment towards the IDF are linked with their interest to vilify and denigrate Palestinians thus sanctioning the enactment of violence against the latter. In this regard, this thesis showed that both pedagogical practices and aesthetic representations imagine Palestinians as terrorists and 'dangerous civilians' who are ready to sacrifice their families and children in order to harm the Israeli troops or to blame them for alleged violence. Moreover, the fourth and respectively, the fifth chapter of the thesis have reinforced the stereotypical representation of Palestinians by indicating the role of political authorities, military and religious leaders, public figures, and citizen-soldiers in reinterpreting, justifying, and downplaying the IDF's violence against Palestinians. Rhetorical practices express doubt, suspicion, and disbelief towards Palestinian pain and violent experiences, and express empathy and support for the Israeli troops who are exposed to the Palestinian threatening behaviour during their military service. Through the rhetorical assessment of the episodes of violence circulated in the public sphere, Palestinians become vile and cunning individuals that are ready to harm the Israeli military personnel and to fabricate their pain for the purposes of condemning military personnel for imaginary violent abuses. Forensic practices neglect Palestinian wounded and dead bodies in violent attacks, and hide or falsify evidence that indicates the Israeli forces' responsibility for harming Palestinians. Thus medical figures, political and military elites, and private individuals affectively engage with the IDF's violence against Palestinians in order to create and circulate particular representations of military service that appeal to Western and local audiences alike: a defenseless and vulnerable yet heroic figure who is ready to sacrifice for the Israeli collective wellbeing while facing radicalised and ruthless Palestinian freedom fighters.

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<sup>12</sup> Haktan, U. 'Affective economies of Beyoglu in Istanbul: The construction of 'Disgust' and 'Fear' in neoliberalization of nightlife', *Emotion, Space and Society*, 23 (2017) p. 2.

Therefore, the circulation of familiar soldiering representations to local and international audiences enables the IDF to build an affective kinship between the military, and local and international audiences for the purposes of securing their endorsement and approval for the IDF's (future) military operations. A variety of actors, practices, discourses, and interpretations try to elicit support, empathy, and solidarity with the Israeli professional, non-threatening, and humanitarian military figure and to provoke hostility and opposition towards Palestinians. The participation of an array of actors and practices at constituting an idealised military image illustrates the assumptions of governmentality according to which the state imposes particular regimes of truth on citizens for the purposes of guiding their behaviour, dispositions, and beliefs. The blending between governmentality and emotions indicates that state authorities intervene upon and cultivate collective affects in order to organise the good life of the population. Practices of governmentality are aimed at the population and collective life in order to secure their wellbeing from health programmes monitoring depression to confidence in public authorities and, the case of the Israeli military, in order to secure support, solidarity, and trust in the IDF. Nevertheless, the success of the techniques of governmentality to act on and through emotions in order to regulate the conduct of the population depends on constructing and fabricating threats, dangers, risks, menaces that need to be controlled and, if needed, eliminated. Translating these insights to the efforts pursued by the IDF in order to moderate dissent against the Israeli military personnel and against the occupation, this research shows didactic, aesthetic, rhetorical, commemoration, legal, forensic, and bureaucratic practices cultivate the Israeli public's trust and support for the military. These practices conceal, reinterpret, and downplay the violence that is inherent in military service by constituting an idealised representation of military subjectivity that encourages individual and collective positive views towards the Israeli military. This positive view towards the IDF is dependent on contrasting the Israeli 'good military subjectivity' with the fearsome, wicked, and vile Palestinian that might enact his own suffering in order to falsely accuse the military of violent behaviour in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. In this respect, the individual and collective affiliation with the Israeli military relies on variety of symbolic and material practices that cultivate a benign soldiering figure. This romanticised military representation creates the affective social and political barriers that sanction violence and harm in the Israel/Palestine conflict by nurturing the hesitancy of the Israeli public, political, and military to investigate, prosecute, and



condemn the IDF's violence against Palestinians. As a consequence, its imagined faultlessness confines the possibility to hold the Israeli military personnel accountable for their unrestrained violence against Palestinian civilians.

The thesis nuances the feminist and critical literature that addresses the Israeli military's violent behaviour against Palestinians by blending the literature on emotions with the study on governmentality with the aim to explain the tolerance for the Israeli military's violence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. It indicates the importance of situating emotions within the broader power relations that define the Israel/Palestine conflict and encourages the study of the productive power of emotions when addressing the public, political, and military leniency for the Israeli military personnel's violence against Palestinians. Therefore, the study of emotions as modalities and techniques of (self-)government that cultivate support and affiliation with the Israeli military and respectively, disregard and hostility towards Palestinians rethinks the role of emotions in cultivating military subjectivity. As such, the thesis underlines a change regarding the role of emotions in military training since military education is less driven by the need to repress emotions and more focused on encouraging recruits to work with their emotions in order to cultivate their military subjectivities. Eastwood, Gray, Howell, and Jauregui have used governmentality in order to study the cultivation of a resilient military subjectivity as a form of neoliberal responsabilisation through which the military shifts its aggregated responsibility onto the individual recruit. In contrast, this project nuances the study of military subjectivity as a practice of (self-)governmentality and highlights the importance of studying the reliance of the military on emotions in order to govern recruits and to build a positive military image for the purposes of local and international consumption. A detour through Foucault's disciplinary power reinforces this argument. The military is the quintessential site for the application of the disciplinary power of the individual body. Disciplinary power targets capacities and actions by shaping what soldiers should, may or can do while 'the desired outcome is for the discipline to keep going by itself, to be a normed conduct, and the means of training of what a body can do'.<sup>13</sup> The social control of the bodies through discipline is unthinkable without the control of emotions while its ultimate aim is to determine subjects to self-govern their conduct. The military body is made productive through the

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<sup>13</sup> Anderson, B. 'Affect and biopower: towards a politics of life', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 37 (2012) p. 31.

military subjects' active engagement with their emotions, be them anger, fear, anxiety, resentment, compassion, devotion, patriotism, and loyalty towards the state.

Departing from Foucault, this research indicates a shift in the construction and representation of hegemonic military masculinity that refashions his insights on military subjectivity. Traditionally, constituting military subjectivity has involved risk-taking, physical and mental toughness, emotional control, and readiness to fight. Military training and preparation for combat required recruits to restrain and control their emotions. Training would ideally transform recruits to be physically fit and mentally strong, and if possible, detached and unemotional individuals that possess the necessary mental strength to confront the complexity of military service. A dominance of one's emotions, feelings, and affects was important for victory and prevalence over the enemy. Today, (Western) militaries seem to put a different emphasis on emotions insofar as they pay attention to recruits' affective baggage and encourage them to work through their emotions rather than repress them. In contemporary soldiering, Dyvik argues, expressions of emotions are not associated solely with weakness and femininity. By studying representations of Norwegian soldiering, her research indicates that in constituting contemporary military subjectivity, 'emotional displays of sadness, despair and vulnerability are not necessarily problematic, and oftentimes they are encouraged, particularly in situations where fellow soldiers have been wounded or killed'.<sup>14</sup> This thesis broadens Dyvik's argument regarding the role of emotions in constructing military subjectivity and shows they are part and parcel of cultivating military subjectivity prior, during, and in the aftermath of military service. As the second and third chapters have indicated, didactic and aesthetic military practices invite recruits to work through or to express emotions in order to construct and represent a desirable military subjectivity for the purposes of local and international consumption. The aim of these social practices is to build an affective affiliation between the society and the Israeli military and to enhance the recruits' desire to join the military since service it is envisaged as an appealing activity. This study argues emotions, rather than their absence, are pivotal to crafting contemporary military subjectivity and to securing the broader support for the military. Nevertheless, this novel representation of military subjectivity carries significant political implications insofar as it depoliticises the violence enacted by the Israeli military forces. By presenting military service as a self-

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<sup>14</sup> Dyvik, 'Valhalla Rising': Gender, embodiment and experience', p. 140.

fulfilling practice, 'emotional military training' determines the development of a myth of invincibility, invulnerability, and faultlessness that serves the justification, the concealing, and the excusing of violence. Explicitly, the techniques of teaching recruits to govern and to represent themselves in the public sphere that were investigated in the second and third chapters indicate the role of emotions in reducing the possibility to hold military forces accountable for the violence enacted against Palestinians. Witnessing and participating at the construction of an appealing and faultless military subjectivity, the Israeli citizen-soldiers ultimately envisage violence against Palestinians as either individual failures to live up to the expectations of the military or as exceptional episodes detached from the power dynamics that sanction war and conflict.

Furthermore, the study of the productive role of emotions in the Israel/Palestine indicates that apart from the military, a variety of actors rely on emotions in order to constitute the Israeli military subjectivity. The fourth chapter explored the emotional engagement with and the passionate debates that take place in the public sphere regarding the IDF's violence against Palestinians. Political actors, military leaders, public figures, or Israeli citizen-soldiers themselves rely on affective discourses and interpretations in order to justify and downplay the military forces' violence against Palestinians by imagining the former as defenceless and vulnerable victims that fight dangerous Palestinians. The fifth chapter showed that medical figures and religious authorities are important gatekeepers in upholding the 'heroic victim' status of the military personnel, and in concealing the violence that is enacted by and against the military. The diversity of individual and collective actors in constituting military subjectivity indicates the eclecticism of emotions, actors, representations, and social practices in constituting the Israeli remarkable military figure as an 'affective frame of soldiering' that nurtures the military, political, and public reluctance to hold Israeli military forces accountable for the violence enacted against Palestinians. Therefore, by mapping out the variety of emotions, actors, practices, and representations in cultivating military subjectivity, the thesis shows the Israeli soldiering figure is constructed through an array of social processes that engage recruits before, during, and in the aftermath of military service. Therefore, the thesis nuances the relation between violence, emotions, and military service. By studying emotions that accompany debates, interpretations, and representations of and about military

subjectivity, it indicates that emotions affect violence in a variety of ways from reinterpreting and condoning it to downplaying its consequences.

Despite its insistence on showing that the military, political, and public tolerance for the IDF's violence against Palestinians is determined by a variety of emotions, actors, representations, and bodies which cultivate individual and collective affective investment in the military, the project does not dismiss the possibility to unsettle the conviction that the 'IDF is the most popular army in the world'. The fourth chapter of the project shows dissent against the Israeli military and the occupation should not be restricted to the circulation of visual and narratives representations of violence. The fifth chapter has investigated the efforts pursued by local activists in order to organise joint Israeli-Palestinian commemoration events regardless of their victim or perpetrator status. Although these events temporarily unsettle the antagonism that characterises the Israel/Palestine conflict, this research shows that affective boundaries that inform war and violence in the Middle East remain strong. Palestinians encounter emotional, bureaucratic, and legal barriers to honour their dead relatives while their pain and narrative are dismissed by the Israeli military, political, and public alike. Therefore, the study of the productive role of emotions in the Israel/Palestine conflict warns us that 'emotions partake in relations of power' and contribute to sustaining violence, war, and conflict in the Middle East yet leaving space for disruption and alteration.<sup>15</sup>

### **Israel's 'Tough and Tender' Military Subjectivity: Confining Local and International Criticism**

The investigation of the social practices that reinforce the faultless Israeli military image enables this project to put forward the claim that a novel military subjectivity emerges in Israel. This both complements and challenges the conventional images associated with the Israeli military as the heroic, and respectively, the disturbed military figure. Indicating an adjustment to the contemporary geopolitical dynamic of the Israel/Palestine conflict and to the socio-political changes that have shaped the Israeli society, the development of this novel soldiering image represents the Israeli military's answer to the growing local and international criticism against the occupation and against the Israeli forces' violence against Palestinians. Traditionally, the IDF

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<sup>15</sup> D'Aoust, 'Ties that Bind?', p. 271.

cultivated the image of heroism and the importance of self-sacrifice. This was constructed through a detachment of the narratives that characterised the Jewish life in exile and through a revival of the myths of sacrifice (the Biblical myth of the binding of Isaac, the myth of Masada, or the story of Samson, or the myth of Joseph Trumpeldor).<sup>16</sup> Inspired by discourses about nationalism, colonialism, race, militarism, and respectively Social Darwinism that emerged at the end of nineteenth century and early twentieth century, Zionism both assimilated and extended these discourses by grafting individual and collective Jewish rejuvenation on the body of the 'New Jew'.<sup>17</sup> This was envisaged as muscular, sturdy, and morally fit Jew that would construct the State of Israel.<sup>18</sup> As a trademark of Zionism, 'muscular Judaism' was perceived as an antidote to the Jewish Diaspora, who was represented through the image of a studious, wondering, passive, and effeminate Jew.<sup>19</sup> This gendered and racialised image served the cultivation of heroism, and ultimately the development of a uniform culture of bereavement, grief, and mourning that prohibited parents to personalise the tombs of their loved ones, that barred parents from changing the words inscribed on tombs, or that forbade military personnel to cry at funerals in order to avoid imagining the IDF outside its heroic and extraordinary features.<sup>20</sup> Although both the second and the fifth chapter have indicated that the symbolism of the Sabra has not disappeared from the Israeli public imaginary insofar as it represents the quintessence of the IDF's representation as a remarkable and heroic military, this research has showed the growing readiness of the Israeli society to question the IDF's heroic myth and its refashioning within the constitution of the Israeli contemporary military subjectivity.

Throughout time, various political events have led to a relaxation of the uniformity of bereavement practices and of the heroic military myth in Israel. The emergence of a movement of conscientious objectors, the withdrawal from South Lebanon, and the military forces' engagement with routinised military practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territories have questioned the official military narrative of bravery and invincibility by addressing more openly the trauma of military service.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Weiss, E. 'The interrupted sacrifice: Hegemony and moral crisis among Israeli conscientious objectors', *American Ethnologist*, 38 (2011) pp. 576-88; Bar-On, D. 'Israeli Society between the Culture of Death and the Culture of Life', *Israel Studies*, 2 (1997) pp. 88-112.

<sup>17</sup> Presner, *Muscular Judaism*, pp. 16-18.

<sup>18</sup> Max Nordau quoted in Presner, *Muscular Judaism*, p. 1.

<sup>19</sup> Presner, *Muscular Judaism*, p. 192.

<sup>20</sup> Bar-On, 'Israeli Society between the Culture of Death and the Culture of Life', pp. 88-112.

<sup>21</sup> Cohen, S. A. *Israel and its Army: From cohesion to confusion* (London and New York, Routledge, 2008); Kober, A. 'From Heroic to Post-Heroic Warfare: Israel's Way of War in Asymmetrical

For instance, Israeli documentaries and films, especially produced during the early 2000s, cultivated the Israeli public's interest in the figure of a distressed and troubled soldier. Raya Morag argues films like *Lebanon* (Samuel Maoz, 2009) *Beaufort* (Joseph Cedar, 2007) and *Waltz With Bashir* (Ari Folman, 2008) indicate a turning point in the visual politics that characterise the Israel/Palestine conflict insofar as they confront the Israeli public with the moral complexity of military service, expose the dire psychological effects of military service upon the individual and the collective body of the military, and raise questions regarding the accountability of the military's violent practices against non-combatants and civilians.<sup>22</sup> Other documentaries such as *Local Angel: Theological Political Fragments* (Udi Alon, 2002) and *Avenge but One of My Two Eyes* (Avi Mograbi, 2005) criticise the prevalence of ancient myths in the Israeli society and raise ethical questions regarding their persistence in the context of the Israel/Palestine conflict.<sup>23</sup> Likewise, the Israeli servicemen and women have authored documentaries about their own military experience. They focus on the personal experience of either serving during the Second Lebanon War or on performing routine military practices in the West Bank. For instance, Avi Mograbi's *Z32* (2008) is a documentary that addresses the moral dilemmas faced by an Israeli veteran who recounts his participation in a covert operation in the West Bank. Yariv Mozer's *My First War* (2008) documents the author's participation in the Second Lebanon War. Equipped with his personal recording camera, Mozer interprets his combat experience through the lens of the myth of the binding of Isaac and imagines himself as an innocent victim that risks being sacrificed by the military. Finally, Tamar Yarom's *To See If I am Smiling* (2007) illustrates the military experiences of four women who have served in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The documentary shows the Israeli female soldiers are exposed both to Palestinian attacks and to their male peers and commanders' practices of objectification and sexualisation.<sup>24</sup>

By studying these socio-cultural representations or by performing phenomenological investigations of female and male Israeli military service, scholars

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Conflicts', *Armed Forces & Society*, 41 (2015) pp. 96-122; Rosman and Israeli, 'From 'Rambo' to 'sitting ducks' and back again', pp. 112-30.

<sup>22</sup> Morag, *Waltzing with Bashir*.

<sup>23</sup> Meiri, S. ' 'Let me Die with the Philistines': Israeli documentaries as a critique of the enactment of ancient myths in Israeli society', *Studies in Documentary Film*, 6 (2012) pp. 307-22.

<sup>24</sup> Morag, R. 'Perpetrator Trauma and Current Israeli Documentary Cinema', *Camera Obscura*, 27 (2012) pp. 93-133; Duvdevani, S. 'How I shot the war – ideology and accountability in personal Israeli war documentaries', *Studies in Documentary Film*, 7 (2013) pp. 279-94.

like Erella Grassiani, Ron James, or Matthew Zagor used embodied representations of military subjectivity in order to map out the role of emotions that shape military service in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. These authors highlight fear, anger, hate, tiredness, or boredom causes the Israeli servicemen and women's unrestrained violence against Palestinians.<sup>25</sup> The project has criticised this literature, and implicitly the circulation of the morally conflicted military figure, for its role in alleviating the Israeli forces' individual and collective responsibility for their violent behaviour against Palestinians. It argues that an insistence on the impact of the architecture of the occupation on the morale of the Israeli servicemen and women either constrains or puts too much emphasis on the Israeli forces' agency when addressing their violent behavior. In this regard, the symbolism of the troubled military figure risks reinforcing the Israeli narrative regarding the Israel/Palestine conflict while ignoring both the Palestinian precarious experience under the occupation and the power structures that permit the enactment of violence in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Therefore, this research suggests, the figure of a panicked, anxious, and worried soldier serves the humanisation of the Israeli serviceman or woman, highlights its defenselessness during combat, and reinforces the need to protect the vulnerable lives of those that defend the Israeli collective body.

More significantly, the circulation of this image in the public sphere and its role as a reliable source to disclose the Israeli forces violence against Palestinians is carefully scrutinised and profoundly disliked by the Israeli public and authorities. For instance, wary of the role of *Breaking the Silence* and other human rights organisations in exposing the Israeli forces' violent behaviour, state authorities and some Israeli reservists have pursued legal and activist efforts to curb the impact of left wing activists both at the local and international level. For instance, the passing of the 'NGO Law' shows the Israeli authorities' active interest in reducing criticism against Israel and against the military. This law requires civil organisations, which receive more than half of their funding from foreign bodies, to disclose this information to the Israeli public and authorities. Local and international bodies have criticised this law for potentially

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<sup>25</sup> Grassiani, *Soldiering Under Occupation*; Kimhi and Sagy 'Moral justifications and feelings of adjustment to military law-enforcement situation', pp. 177-91; Zagor, ' "I Am the Law!" – Perspectives of Legality and Illegality', pp. 550-89.

harming the workings of human rights organisations in Israel.<sup>26</sup> Seemingly targeting left wing organisations, the Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu hailed this law as a means to secure transparency, to avoid foreign intervention in Israel, and to raise awareness among the Israeli public regarding the political agenda of human rights organisations.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, Netanyahu's decision to cancel a meeting with the German Minister of Foreign Affairs, Signal Gabriel, in the aftermath of the minister's meeting with leaders of *Breaking the Silence* during his visit in Israel, shows the Israeli authorities' dislike towards activism against the occupation, their discomfort with the image of the distressed and remorseful soldier as tool for activism, and their active efforts to avoid the cultivation of a negative view about the Israeli military at the local and international levels.<sup>28</sup> Finally, yet significantly, some veterans and reservists have highlighted their discontent with the dissenting practices pursued by *Breaking the Silence* or *B'Tselem*. In exchange, they have set up their own organisation, *Reservists on Duty*, in order to contest activist practices that, according to them, denigrate the Israeli military by presenting violence against Palestinians as a widespread practice in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.<sup>29</sup>

Despite witnessing a growing anxiety at the political level and amongst groups of veterans and reservists regarding the possible impact of human rights activism upon the Israeli society and military, the fourth and the fifth chapter of the project show the success of left wing activism against the military is fairly reduced. The fourth chapter indicated the strength of the nationalist and right wing voices in downplaying the Israeli military forces' violence against Palestinians and in representing them as defenseless victims who have to be protected against cunning and fearsome Palestinians. Moreover, the fifth one showed that the Israeli and Palestinian efforts to commemorate the victims of the conflict in a joint manner is vehemently contested by political and military

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<sup>26</sup> Beaumont, P. 'Israel passes law to force NGOs to reveal foreign funding'. *The Guardian*, 12 July 2016. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jul/12/israel-passes-law-to-force-ngos-to-reveal-foreign-funding> [Accessed 7 September 2017].

<sup>27</sup> Lis, J. 'Despite Global Criticism, Israel Approves Contentious 'NGO Law' '. *Haaretz*, 11 July 2016. Available at: <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.730324> [Accessed 3 August 2017].

<sup>28</sup> Fisher, I. 'Israeli Leader Cancels Meeting After German Official Visits Protest Group'. *The New York Times*, 25 April 2017. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/25/world/middleeast/israel-netanyahu-germany-foreign-minister.html?mcubz=1> [Accessed 3 August 2017].

<sup>29</sup> *Reservists on Duty*. Available at: <http://onduty.org.il> [Accessed 3 August 2017]; Gravé-Lazi, L. 'Fighting for Israel on Another Front: Reservists on Duty Group Counters BDS'. *The Jerusalem Post*, 30 May 2016. Available at: <http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Fighting-for-Israel-on-another-front-Reservists-on-Duty-group-counters-BDS-455398> [Accessed 3 August 2017].



authorities, public figures and bodies, or private citizens. Taking account of the findings of these two chapters and the recent legal and activist efforts pursued in order to restrain left wing activism in Israel, the thesis argues the development of a professional, non-threatening, and humanitarian military figure carries significant political implications for the Israeli and Palestinian societies alike. It conceals the violence that is inherent to military service and shields the Israeli military from collective and individual responsibility for the violence enacted against Palestinian civilians. Specifically, the emergence of this novel image challenges local dissenting voices against the military by reconfiguring the IDF's gendered identity through the projection of a 'tough and tender' military masculinity, moderates the strengthening of a conscientious objectors' activism against the military and against the occupation, and confines international criticism against the IDF's violence by likening the Israeli military with other Western forces engaged in humanitarian and combat missions alike.<sup>30</sup>

This research claims that the cultivation of a humanitarian, compassionate, and non-threatening military conceals the violence that is often associated with the cultivation of a militarised masculinity and that is inherent in military service. Presenting military service as a practice of self-growth, the IDF alleviate the Israeli public's concerns regarding the harshness of the military service yet obscures the traumatic experience of military service by presenting the latter as an opportunity to enhance one's physical and mental resilience. The new gendered identity of the military refashions ideals of masculinity by attaching a new significance to what heroism and vulnerability mean within the context of the Israeli military. Specifically, this fresh military image suggests that being a hero means not only sacrifice but also caring for strangers that find themselves under distress. Moreover, emotions associated with military service such as vulnerability, fear, doubt, or uncertainty are less a sign of weakness and more a pedagogical opportunity to cultivate a remarkable military subjectivity. The IDF's refashioned identity, which incorporates features pertaining both to the heroic and to the troubled military figures, cultivates a soft masculine military image in order to appease the public's worries (especially parents' concerns) regarding their children's lives and their exposure to violence during military service. Starting with the 1990s, Israeli parents have begun to exercise significant influence over the Israeli military by scrutinising the wellbeing of their children during their military

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<sup>30</sup> Niva, 'Tough and Tender', pp. 109-28.

service. Parents' influence has materialised through a variety of practices from phone calls at training bases urging commanders to ease military training to lobbying practices to remove military personnel from bases stationed near the Gaza Strip that do not offer adequate shelters against Qassam rocket attacks.<sup>31</sup> Indicating awareness regarding the Israeli public's contestation of the heroic military myth and responding to the parental pressure exercised upon the military to secure the safety of their recruits, the benign military image presents the IDF as thoroughly invested in the self-growth of and the wellbeing of the Israeli youth.<sup>32</sup> This (self-)representation enhances the Israeli public's confidence in the Israeli military and in its commitment to the welfare of the military personnel.

However, the presentation of military service as an opportunity to develop oneself not only obscures the violence that is inherent in military service, but also masks the (possible) traumatic experience of military service. Therefore, this idealised and gentle military image cultivates discrepancy between a fictive non-threatening pursuit and the violent reality of military service. For instance, the aesthetic military (self-)representations that have been investigated in the third chapter show the relentless effort of the IDF to imagine themselves as a modern military that responds both to local and international grievances. The construction of a playful, cosmopolitan, and humanitarian military image through aesthetic practices masks the violence of military service by presenting it as an opportunity for development, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, religion or class. Furthermore, this image presents military subjectivity as an opportunity to acquire skills and as a network of friends that serves military and civilian lives alike, and as a commendable activity that permits recruits to provide Palestinians and foreigners with humanitarian help and support. Furthermore, the cultivation of positive military figure by imagining military service as an opportunity to enhance personal growth effaces the impact of the military upon the physical and psychological wellbeing of the Israeli recruits. As explored in the second chapter, the didactic practices that invite recruits to work through their emotions in order to enhance their

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<sup>31</sup> Levy, Y. 'The Essence of the "Market Army"', *Public Administration Review*, 70 (2010) pp. 378-89; Weiss, E. 'Incentivized Obedience: How a Gentler Israeli Military Prevents Organized Resistance', *American Ethnologist*, 118 (2016) pp. 91-103.

<sup>32</sup> Lebel, U. and Rochlin, Y. 'From 'Fighting Family' to 'Belligerent Families': Family – Military – Nation Interrelationships and the Forming of Israeli Public Behavior among Families of Fallen Soldiers and Families of MIAs and POWs', *Social Movement Studies: Journal of Social Cultural and Political Protest*, 8 (2009) pp. 359-74.

preparation for serving in an urban space, show the military's interest in teaching (future) soldiers to be resilient and self-reliant during complex military operations by making them aware of the importance of governing their emotions. Contrary to expectations, talking about one's feelings does not weaken the Israeli recruits yet represents an opportunity to manage and overcome the negative experience of military service. Through 'experiential' trainings, the IDF recognise that although military service is emotionally strenuous, recruits are taught how to overcome its affective burden by talking, naming, and making sense of their affective dispositions.

The strong emphasis that the military puts on recruits' efforts (and ultimately, duty) to work with and through their emotions in order to fortify their mental strength is evidenced as well in the Israeli military's recent endeavors to develop prevention programmes that alleviates the trauma of military service. The psychology department from Tel Aviv University collaborated with the Sagol Brain Sciences School and the IDF Medical Corps in order to design a computer programme that permits recruits to undergo preventive attention training. During this training, each recruit is confronted with neutral and threatening scenarios, words and pictures in order to enhance their preventive attention skills.<sup>33</sup> According to the IDF, this military training proved successful. During the Operation Protective Edge in the Gaza Strip (2014), military personnel who have undergone preventive attention training were sent to combat together with peers that have not pursued a similar preparation. Medical reports showed that those who have not participated at the preventive attention training developed post-traumatic stress disorder in a higher percentage than those that have been subjected to this kind of training.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, the Israeli media reported that select army bases and units have indicated their interest to teach recruits to practice yoga as a means to keep them calm and focused. Although far from being institutionalised across the entire military, soldiers who have been included in this pilot programme have expressed their excitement and interest to continue practicing yoga throughout their military duty both as a means to relax and as a technique to enhance their resilience.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Siegel – Itzkovich, J. 'IDF to Use Israeli-Made Computer Tech to Thwart PTSD, US to Follow Suit'. *The Jerusalem Post*, 7 July 2016. Available at: <http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Tel-Aviv-U-research-on-PTSD-to-be-implemented-in-the-IDF-and-considered-by-US-military-459706> [Accessed 3 August 2017].

<sup>34</sup> Siegel – Itzkovich, 'IDF to Use Israeli-Made Computer Tech to Thwart PTSD'.

<sup>35</sup> Steinberg, J. 'Yoga mom seeks namaste for the IDF'. *The Times of Israel*, 21 June 2015. Available at: <http://www.timesofisrael.com/yoga-mom-seeks-namaste-for-the-soldiers/> [Accessed 3 August 2017].

Through their active engagement in cultivating resilience and a mentally strong military figure, the IDF resemble other Western militaries that are designing programmes in order to fortify the morale and the psychological strength of their recruits. Howell shows the growing Western militaries' reliance on resilience training contributes to the perpetuation of violence and conflict insofar as it cultivates invulnerability and determines recruits to ignore the negative effects of war.<sup>36</sup> Thus an insistence on recruits' resilience envisages military subjects that are able to fight and thrive during 'inevitable, enduring, and persistent' situations of war and conflict.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, Jauregui argues an emphasis on military resilience indicates the reconfiguration of soldiering identity insofar as 'heroism and honor, discipline and duty, pride and sacrifice in war' are translated into 'technological superiority and social savoir faire in combat, indomitable strength and prowess, and psychological buoyancy in the face of incessant strife'.<sup>38</sup> Although the Israeli military's programme to foster resilience seems less developed than its Western counterparts, the IDF's interest to avoid PTSD by cultivating recruits' preventive attention and by deterring them to discuss and share their emotional experiences during 'experiential' training shows the military's acknowledgement that fortifying Israeli recruits' morale and mental strength is as important as their physical skills for achieving victory.

Seemingly a positive development that addresses the impact of PTSD on all militaries not only on the Israeli one, the programme that cultivates resilience carries unforeseen consequence both for the Israeli recruits and for the Israel/Palestine conflict. With regard to the Israeli forces' wellbeing, by putting too much emphasis on individual responsibility to become resilient and self-reliant, the IDF risk contributing to a reinforcement of the stigma associated with PTSD and risk encouraging the Israeli recruits to interpret their (potential) failure to cultivate resilience as a personal defeat rather than a systemic one. Furthermore, the cultivation of a resilient military figure affects the Israel/Palestine conflict dynamic. The IDF's interest to avoid the trauma of military service is linked with its interest to restrict the use of the traumatised figure as a symbol of dissent against the military and implicitly, against its continuous presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The reliance on an array of activities that focus on the individual practice of cultivating resilience, the dissemination of aesthetic

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<sup>36</sup> Howell, 'Resilience, war, and austerity', pp. 15-31.

<sup>37</sup> Howell, 'Resilience, war, and austerity', p. 22.

<sup>38</sup> Jauregui, 'World Fitness', p. 449.

representations of positive and playful military personnel, and the circulation of the IDF's finest heroic figures through digital technology confines the popularisation of a disturbed military image and its possibility to affect the collective morale of the Israeli military and society. More significantly, the disturbed military figure may challenge official discourses and grand narratives of heroism, self-defense, and patriotic duty that are used to justify war, violence, and conflict. By indicating an acceptance of the traumatic experience of military service yet putting considerable effort into confining its impact on the Israeli recruits, the IDF reinforce the myth of invincibility and strength upon the adversary that not only normalises violence and the occupation but it also serves the enhancement of Israeli public's trust and support for the military. Within this context, an emphasis on individuals' personal responsibility for their experiences deters criticism against the structural dynamics of war, conflict and violence in the Middle East since an individualised approach on military experience restricts 'the space for critical engagement with the causes and consequences of war', while the understanding of 'the military body as a political and geopolitical body, is reduced'.<sup>39</sup>

In addition, the development of a new military image reduces local dissent against the military and against the occupation by moderating the impact of the conscientious objectors movement on the Israeli society. Specifically, the crafting and the dissemination of a virtuous military image weakens the consolidation of the conscientious objectors movement in Israel by presenting military service as an appealing pursuit rather than as an obligatory duty that might ask or determine recruits to act in an unethical manner in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Although the IDF have witnessed military service refusal throughout time, the Israeli military has changed its approach towards conscientious objectors from imprisoning them to quietly releasing them from their military duties. Stuart Cohen shows the Israeli military has witnessed dissenting voices regarding military service since the late 1940s but underlines the discontent grew in the aftermath of the Sabra and Shatila massacre in 1982 and has gained more and more supporters during and in the aftermath of the First and respectively, the Second Intifada.<sup>40</sup> In Israel, refusal to perform military service is prohibited and punishable by prison. Although the imprisonment of refuseniks is rarely

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<sup>39</sup> Woodward, R. and Jenkins, K. N. 'Soldiers' bodies and the contemporary British military memoir', in *War and the Body: Militarisation, Practice and Experience*, edited by Kevin McSorley (London and New York, Routledge, 2013), p. 162.

<sup>40</sup> Cohen, *Israel and its Army*, p. 142.

acknowledged in the international media, one episode has reverberated beyond the Israeli public sphere and has indicated the Israeli military's harsh approach towards conscientious objectors. In 2003, a group of high school students sent an official letter to the Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and explained their refusal to enlist in the 'army of occupation'. When they were sent letters of invitation to report to the military induction centres, the high school students kept by their beliefs and refused to enlist in the army. After taking disciplinary actions against these refuseniks, the military command decided to send the five leaders of the group to the martial court.<sup>41</sup> This decision was a turning point in the way in which the IDF dealt with the refusenik movement and raised a number of questions concerning the legality of this measure. These conscientious objectors were civilians that refused to don the uniform therefore their trial in front of a military court was groundless. However, the Israeli High Court rejected the petition of one of the defendants to be tried in front of a civilian court since he was not part of the IDF. Similarly, the State Prosecutor argued the IDF Service Law allows the military establishment to try at a martial court anyone who refuses to enlist in the military.<sup>42</sup> The IDF's decision to take refuseniks in front of the martial court was an acknowledgement of the impact the conscientious objectors movement could have on the Israeli society and on the military establishment thus indicating the IDF's interest to deter future recruits from taking similar decisions.

Erica Weiss has investigated the Israeli military's engagement with conscientious objectors in the aftermath of the Second Intifada and found that the Israeli military has tempered its punitive actions against the recruits that refuse to serve in the military. Interestingly enough, this study shows conscientious objectors are not only given military exemptions within a more accommodating style, but the IDF also depoliticises conscientious objectors' reasons for refusing to serve by granting them exemptions on the basis of imaginary health problems rather than taking into account their political reasons for refusing military enrolment.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, this benevolent approach permits the IDF as well to reinforce the Israeli recruits' motivation to join the military. Recent reports have shown the Israeli military is fraught by the Israeli youth's growing disinterest to enlist in the IDF. For instance, Amos Harel, writing for *Haaretz*,

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<sup>41</sup> Kidron, *Refusenik!: Israel's Soldiers of Conscience*, p. 4.

<sup>42</sup> Reinfeld, M. 'Court Sends Refusenik Back to the Army for a Court Martial'. *Haaretz*, 16 April 2003. Available at: <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/court-sends-refusenik-back-to-the-army-for-a-court-martial-1.12692> [Accessed 3 August 2017].

<sup>43</sup> Weiss, 'Incentivized Obedience', pp. 91-3.

has highlighted that one of the challenges the Israeli military faces in 2017 is the discrepancy between the reluctance of recruits to serve in combat positions, and the growing interest for positions in intelligence units that do not require recruits to risk their lives, and which consequently permit them to access high-paid jobs in their civilian lives. In order to restrict criticism and to enhance the military's appeal for today's recruits, the IDF are increasingly refashioning military service as a practice of self-development that benefits the Israelis' civilian and soldiering identities for the purposes of attracting quality individuals.<sup>44</sup> Less a rite of passage that might determine the Israeli recruits to sacrifice themselves and more a constructive step in one's professional career and daily life, military service is presented as an opportunity for the Israeli youth to become engaged local and global citizen.

The findings of this thesis show the breadth and the depth of the efforts pursued by the Israeli military to limit dissent against the IDF and/or against the occupation. They indicate the significant efforts pursued by the Israeli military to constrain criticism through a variety of practices apart from the bureaucratic ones that permit Israeli recruits to avoid military service without hassle and without loud activism against the occupation. The project explores the pedagogical and the aesthetic practices that craft military subjectivity and indicates the military infuses its ideological and nationalistic assumptions with a personal growth rationale. In the third chapter, the Israeli military (self-)representations on social media blend traditional representations of heroic masculinity with softer representations such as humanitarian practices or service on behalf of the Israeli community. Equally significant, the second chapter shows that 'experiential workshops', visits to military museums or to the Holocaust center, and field trips to historical sites are presented less as tools to inculcate a particular historical and political rationale and more as emotional opportunities for Israeli recruits to enhance their knowledge regarding their place in the Israeli society and in the world. Moreover, didactic practices that situate the recruit at the center of their educational endeavor and aesthetic practices that present military service as a rewarding and as a pleasant activity demonstrate the growing modalities and techniques through which the IDF waters down even the compulsory trait of military service. In this context, the circulation of a benign military image is transforming obligatory military service into a desirable and appealing activity. Rather than reflecting total subordination and

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<sup>44</sup> Harel, 'The Israeli Army's New War: Ensuring It Has Enough Quality Combat Troops'.

unconditional acceptance of the military ethos, the mandatory military duty becomes a means through which the IDF cater for the individual needs and ambitions of the Israeli recruits.<sup>45</sup>

Nevertheless, the efforts to present military service as a satisfying and pleasant activity and as a site of self-growth conceals gendered, racialised, and classed assumptions about whose life is worth sacrificing in the name of the Israeli state security. In this regard, the IDF resemble other Western militaries that rely on marginalised groups in order to recruit members to pursue violence in the name of the state. The study of the high rate of mortality of women, national religious soldiers, Druze or Mizrahi Jews during the Second Intifada indicates marginalised groups filled in the places (mostly combat positions) left empty by Ashkenazi Jews. Increasingly, this group has showed their lack of interest for joining the military either due to political and ethical reasons or because they found other opportunities to climb the social ladder without necessarily relying on military enrollment.<sup>46</sup> Similarly, Catherine Lutz and Matthew Gutmann stress that young Americans have been enticed to join the military through promises of greater financial stability, of funding for education, and of the possibility to acquire skills that would serve them in their careers in the aftermath of their military service.<sup>47</sup> Likewise, Gina M. Pérez provides an ethnographic investigation of the expansion of Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) programme in public schools populated by Latina/o and African American students. Apparently a practice to discipline youth 'at risk', these young participants are far from being a danger to the American society yet represent a guaranteed and valuable source of bodies for the American military forces. The young recruits' willingness to join this programme is based on a socio-economic rationale insofar as they view military service as a window of opportunity towards a better life.<sup>48</sup> Likewise, Victoria Basham has investigated the British military's recruitment practices targeting working class youth and shows these practices not only reinforce class divisions in the British army but also, most importantly, they relegate recruits from a poorer background to the lowest military ranks while exposing them to danger and death. The British military, like the American

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<sup>45</sup> Levy, 'The Essence of the "Market Army"', p. 386.

<sup>46</sup> Levy, Y. 'The War of the Peripheries: A Social Mapping of IDF Casualties in the Al-Aqsa Intifada', *Social Identities: Journal for the Study of Race, Nation and Culture*, 12 (2006) pp. 309-24.

<sup>47</sup> Gutmann, M. and Lutz, C. *Breaking Ranks: Iraq Veterans Speak Out against the War* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, University of California Press, 2010).

<sup>48</sup> Pérez, G. M. *Citizen, Student, Soldier: Latina/o Youth, JROTC, and the American Dream* (New York, New York University Press, 2015).



and the Israeli ones, discloses a dangerous rationale according to which ‘the most vulnerable, and often least politically enfranchised, continue to fight and die in disproportionate numbers’.<sup>49</sup>

The demographic cleavages that mark the Israeli military became apparent in the public debate that surrounded Azaria’s case that was discussed in the first chapter. Critical voices argued the public debate regarding his trial was informed by his Mizrahi Jewish identity (a Jew of Middle Eastern and North African origins), thus by his belonging to a lower Israeli social class. Rohn Cahlili, writing for *Haaretz*, argues that had Azaria been an Ashkenazi Jew, the public conversation would have been less about the combat medic and more about the futility of the occupation and the occupation’s moral corruption of the military. Far from arguing that Azaria would have not been convicted or sentenced had he been an Ashkenazi Jew, the journalist condemns the blindness of the Israeli military to recognise the reverberation of the Israeli societal inequality and discrimination within the military. Coming from a poor neighbourhood in Ramle, Azaria was exposed to a new right wing and nationalist discourse that appeals to Mizrahi Jews due to their feeling of disenfranchisement within the Israeli society and their resentment towards the privileges afforded to the middle and upper classed, formed mostly of Ashkenazi Jews of European origins.<sup>50</sup> Within this societal dynamic, Azaria’s social position hindered him from accessing a high standard education that would have offered him the possibility to access elite units such as cyber warfare or air force units. These units are highly populated by Ashkenazi Jews who benefit from social capital and financial resources to study at select schools that equip them with enough proficient knowledge to attain a higher score during their military recruitment tests thus enabling them to access the most coveted units in the IDF. Serving in special units such as targeted killings or intelligence analysis, Ashkenazi Jews remain shielded from the complexity of the everyday service in the military yet confident they are moral and good forces that defend Israel.<sup>51</sup> Informed by class, race, and ethnicity discrepancies, Azaria’s trial could be read as yet another example through which a marginalised group (Mizrahi Jews) is paying for Ashkenazi Jews’ mistakes (highly

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<sup>49</sup> Basham, ‘Raising an Army’, p. 261.

<sup>50</sup> Cahlili, R. ‘If Elor Azaria Was Ashkenazi’. *Haaretz*, 5 January 2017. Available at: [http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/premium-1.763230?=&ts=\\_1491573043778](http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/premium-1.763230?=&ts=_1491573043778) [Accessed 3 August 2017]; Cook, J. ‘Israel’s Fear of the Arab Jews in its Midst’. *Counterpunch*, 23 June 2016. Available at: <http://www.counterpunch.org/2016/06/23/israels-fear-of-the-arab-jews-in-its-midst/> [Accessed 4 August 2017].

<sup>51</sup> Cahlili, ‘If Elor Azaria Was Ashkenazi’.

represented amongst Israeli military and political elites), the latter enforcing an occupation while detached from the realities the Israeli Border Police and patrolling military brigades witness and experience every day.<sup>52</sup> The support the combat medic received throughout his trial and in the aftermath of his sentencing and conviction indicates less the much-discussed left–right political division discourse in Israel and highlights the resentment against relegating marginalised and disenfranchised groups to do the ‘dirty labour’ of the occupation. Therefore, Azaria becomes not only a victim of the societal and military inequality, but also an instrument through which the morality of the IDF is sustained insofar as an unruly, bad, and disobedient Mizrahi Jew sergeant, who acted against open-fire regulations was punished for the purposes of reiterating the highest standard of the Israeli military’s morality. Relatedly, archival research shows the IDF, since their establishment, have perceived Mizrahi Jews as inferior subjects who had to be educated, ‘civilised’, and taught to behave properly within the military and respectively, the Israeli society.<sup>53</sup> Finally, Mizrahi Jews have been perceived as an internal threat in Israel insofar as they could have allied with Palestinians against Israeli Jews (of Ashkenazi, European origins). Critical voices argue that sending Mizrahi Jews to Occupied Palestinian Territories represents a strategic movement to hinder an alliance between Palestinians and Mizrahi Jews by pitting them against one another.<sup>54</sup> Far from implying that Azaria’s marginalised status in the Israeli society determined him to kill al-Sharif, this detour through the complexity of the demography of the Israeli military and society shows the similarities between Israel and other states who rely on and reinforce societal divisions for the purposes of war recruitment and fighting. More significantly, Azaria’s case displays the links between practices of racialisation and marginalisation within the Israeli military, the increasing role of nationalist discourse in the Israeli civil-military relations, and the violence of the occupation against Palestinians.

Despite that the presentation of military service as an opportunity for self-development that enhances the vulnerability of some groups at the detriment of others characterises militaries in different states, the illustration of the Israeli military service

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<sup>52</sup> Cook, ‘Israel’s Fear of the Arab Jews’.

<sup>53</sup> Hazkani, S. ‘The Silenced History of the IDF’s ‘Mizrahi Problem’’, *Haaretz*, 28 August 2015. Available at: <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.673297> [Accessed 3 August 2017].

<sup>54</sup> Mehager, T. ‘Black labor: How a white elite uses black soldiers to enforce its will’. *+972 Magazine*, 25 September 2015. Available at: <https://972mag.com/black-labor-how-a-white-elite-uses-black-soldiers-to-enforce-its-will/112017/> [Accessed 3 August 2017].

as a rewarding and pleasing experience carries serious political consequences for the Israel/Palestine conflict in the context of the IDF's obligatory conscription. Through these techniques – adopting a softer attitude towards conscientious objectors and presenting military service as a self-advancement practice – the IDF discredit critiques against the military and the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The core of the conscientious objectors' activism and of the efforts pursued by human rights organisations to question the Israeli military and the occupation is reflected in their criticism against the harshness of the military, against the militarisation of the Israeli society, and against the moral corruption of the Israeli society triggered by the continuous occupation of the Palestinian people. Faced with the image of a gentle, benevolent, and tender military, critical voices lose their appeal, are ignored by the Israeli society and risk becoming irrelevant. By moderating dissent and constraining the room of maneuver for conscientious objectors, the IDF distance themselves from the possibility to be held accountable for their violence against Palestinians. By circulating a positive image of military service, the IDF question the legitimacy of the activism against the occupation and against human rights abuses, and avoid the construction of a bridge of trust and confidence between the Israeli public and activists that criticise the occupation. Therefore, this countermove against dissent strengthens the Israeli public's indifference towards Palestinian suffering and their support for the Israeli military despite contrary visual and written evidence that shows the IDF's widespread violence against Palestinians. More significantly, a societal reluctance to condemn the military provides little impetus for the IDF to punish servicemen and women who have abused Palestinian civilians. A more thorough process of accountability would require the Israeli military to recognise its complex legal, military, and political presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, to acknowledge the military's widespread violence against Palestinians, and to sever the trust link between the society and the military. Within this context, episodes of violence, similar to those discussed in the fourth chapter, continue to be perceived as exceptions to the impeccable military image, as instances that demonstrate the vulnerability and the defenselessness of the Israeli recruits, and as instruments through which Palestinians are constituted as fearsome individuals.

Finally, yet significantly, the cultivation of an altruistic, benevolent and non-threatening military figure represents not only an effort to moderate local dissent, but also a means to avoid international criticism. Specifically, this new military identity

curbs the political complexity of the Israel/Palestine conflict by situating the IDF alongside other Western militaries that fight radicalised forces and who engage in humanitarian practices. The study of the pedagogical, aesthetic, forensic, rhetorical, and commemoration practices that construct military subjectivity shows the IDF cultivate an image that resembles other Western militaries. This is highlighted through images and narratives that note the Israeli military's humanitarian practices towards Palestinians and towards other populations that find themselves under distress, and through its involvement in joint military exercises with other Western forces in order to highlight the IDF's participation in the Western security alliance against the global threat of terrorism. By emphasising its role in alleviating the suffering of strangers and in fighting nameless (Palestinian) radical fighters, the Israeli military imagines itself 'not only [as] a protective public service but also a constructive resource for society, and not just for [Israeli] society but, inter alia, for humanity at large'.<sup>55</sup> Situating themselves alongside other Western militaries that perform combat operations and humanitarian missions, the IDF do not only address themselves to a global public, but equally significant, present the Israeli military service less as a patriotic duty and more as a 'global opportunity' to serve and defend the Western world.<sup>56</sup> This image permits the IDF to project the impression they are defending and taking care of the entire humanity not only of the Israeli state. As a new form of 'winning hearts and minds', this image addresses less the populations helped and more the local and global public that witnesses Israel's military operations in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and its humanitarian actions abroad. Therefore, the IDF use the image of a kind, benevolent, and benign military in order to moderate the complexity of the Israel/Palestine conflict, to reject the image of an 'occupation army' and to represent its presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories as a security necessity that addresses the violence of radicalised freedom fighters.

At the same time, this research has mapped out the IDF's reliance on the gendered and racialised image of the Palestinians in order to highlight their impeccability and to hinder local and international audiences to build a bridge of solidarity with Palestinians. The didactic activities studied in the second chapter, the aesthetic representations examined in the third chapter, the rhetorical practices mapped

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<sup>55</sup> Jauregui, 'World Fitness', p. 466.

<sup>56</sup> Jauregui, 'World Fitness', p. 451.

out in the fourth chapter and the commemoration practices analysed in the fifth chapter have showed the IDF's relentless effort to transform Palestinians in ultimate strangers and others. Through this stereotypical representation, the Israeli military delegitimise the Palestinian calls for social justice and confines the political weight of their suffering and grievances. Equally significant, the combination between the humanitarian practices and combat military operations serves the IDF to justify their presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories while creating the image of a persistent war and conflict between Israelis and Palestinians yet indicating their devotion to help Palestinians if they need. The concern for both Israeli security and Palestinian wellbeing effaces the violence of the occupation and shifts the responsibility of the Middle East conflict onto Palestinians who are imagined as reluctant to accept Israel's benign intentions. This blurred military image that intersects combat operations, with humanitarian concerns for Palestinians, and aid for other populations that find themselves under distress likens the Israeli military with British, American, or Canadian militaries that perceive themselves as force for good in the world yet do not recognise the political implications of their interventions in non-Western parts of the world.

Relatedly, proficiency in using media technology serves the IDF's projection of a humanitarian, compassionate, and benign military figure (and presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories) for the purposes of deterring local and international criticism. The third chapter, the fourth and respectively, the fifth chapter of the project show media technology enables the IDF to make themselves available to local and international audiences by imagining themselves as an 'army that is approachable, comprehensible, and transparent'.<sup>57</sup> As a growing trend among Western militaries, the use of social media for the purposes of local and international public outreach indicates the need to reconfigure the study of civil-military relations by attaching them with a transnational perspective thus paying attention to the international(ised) dimension of their military identities. The engagement with the emotions captured, circulated, and provoked by social media either in the context of crafting military service as a pleasant or rewarding experience or in imagining a virtuous and heroic military subjectivity shows that social media blur the public/private debate and erase confinements on time and space. Digital technology helps the IDF to disseminate to wider audiences the

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<sup>57</sup> Jauregui, 'World Fitness', p. 461.

intimacy of military service while determining these audiences to affectively engage with the visual representations they encounter. This research shows the IDF's social media presence 'progressively integrates the [Western] citizen into the momentum of the war machine' therefore permitting the Israeli military to project the idea of a joint military experience due to social media users' interaction with, following of, and repetitive returning to check the IDF's Official Blog, the Facebook, and respectively, the Instagram accounts of the military.<sup>58</sup> By creating a proximate space of interaction, social media invite users 'to cross over and try on a soldier identity', and contribute to the normalisation of war, violence, and conflict by attracting them 'into an interactive military thrill ride'.<sup>59</sup> The users' engagement with the information circulated on social media, hardly limited to local audiences insofar as the IDF's Blog, and the IDF's Facebook and Instagram accounts can be accessed by anyone who comes across them, shows the users' readiness not only to assent to the image projected by the Israeli military but, equally significant, to contribute to the co-constitution of the meaning of enemy.<sup>60</sup> They send messages of encouragement for the IDF, they castigate nameless and imaginary radicalised Palestinian freedom fighter and they praise the Israeli military's combat operations in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and its humanitarian missions in Nepal or Turkey. Thus the global audience that scrolls through and comments on the IDF's social media images enters into an imaginary kinship with the Israeli military and disregards the socio-political context in which the Israeli servicemen and women (pictured on social media) fight and perform their military service. As Kevin McSorley cautions, intimate representations of military service serve the normalisation of war, conflict, and violence because individual stories of military service erase geopolitical dimensions of conflict.<sup>61</sup> Within this context, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip seemingly become

'inhospitable backdrops against which timeless Western experiential dramas – coming of age, heroic struggle – are played out. Any particular geopolitical context largely disappears from such a mythological narrative framing, the deployment of state violence

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<sup>58</sup> Stahl, *Militainment, Inc.*, p. 110.

<sup>59</sup> Stahl, *Militainment, Inc.*, p. 92.

<sup>60</sup> Jauregui, 'World Fitness', p. 459.

<sup>61</sup> McSorley, K. 'Helmetcams, militarized sensation and 'Somatic War' ', *Journal of War & Culture Studies*, 5 (2012) pp. 47-58.

particularly decontextualized and depoliticized, portrayed as essentially a defensive and inevitable act.<sup>62</sup>

The thesis contributes to the feminist and critical engagements with the Israeli military and its violent behaviour against Palestinian civilians. Intrigued by the public, military, and political reluctance to condemn the Israeli military forces for their violent behaviour against Palestinians, this research has sought to reveal the artificial and multifaceted construction of a professional, non-threatening, and humanitarian military subjectivity as a material and symbolic soldiering figure that constrains local and international dissent against the IDF. The examination of the productive power of emotions in the Israel/Palestine conflict indicates this idealised figure is invented through a variety of interpretations, representations, and discourses that capture, circulate, and provoke emotions that determine affinity with the Israeli military and respectively, hostility against Palestinians. Therefore, the constitution and circulation of this romanticised military image strengthens the affective divisions that sanction and justify the enactment of violence in the Middle East.

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<sup>62</sup> McSorley, 'Helmetcams, militarized sensation and 'Somatic War' ', p. 55.

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