ISRAELI AND AMERICAN ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSES TO WIFE ABUSE AMONG THE ORTHODOX

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ABSTRACT

In this exploratory study I examine available services for Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox or *haredi* victims of spouse abuse in Jerusalem Israel. These services are compared with those found in my earlier research on social change processes and available services for victims of such spouse abuse in New York City, USA. Ramifications of differences in national shelter policy are identified and examined. Further research is suggested, including an exploration of the relationship between national culture and the delivery of social services.

INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of 2007 the population of world Jewry was estimated at 13.15 million. With over 5 million Jews each in the USA and Israel approximately 82% of Jews currently live in these two major Jewish population centers. (DellaPergola 2007, Table 1:563). Demographically the Jewish Diaspora is shrinking and United States Jewry overwhelmingly constitutes its primary population.

Both Israel and the United States are industrialized countries with a high standard of living, education, and western democratic values. For our purposes, the primary difference between the two countries is the role of religion, it being a far more determinant variable in Israel than in the United States. The other significant political difference is that unlike the United States Israel is surrounded by hostile neighboring countries.[1] Still a third critical factor is that whereas in America Jews are a small minority in Israel Jews are the clear majority comprising approximately 80 percent of the population.

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It is this last variable combined with the larger role of religion in the politics and administration of the State that made me wonder whether or not the Jewishness of the State of Israel impacts the delivery of services for religious victims of abuse and if so, how. With financial support from the Hadassah-Brandeis Institute I undertook an exploratory study of the social services available to religiously orthodox and ultra-Orthodox victims of spousal abuse in Israel.

Methodology

The two largest population centers for Orthodox and Ultra Orthodox Jewry are New York City and Jerusalem. In previous studies I focused on resources in New York City. With the assistance of a grant from the Hadassah-Brandeis Institute I travelled to Israel in the summer of 2008 to explore the organizational response of Orthodox and Ultra-Orthodox Jewish communities to domestic abuse. I focused particularly on the Jerusalem area. Using the internet and personal contacts I successfully identified key organizations and individuals responsible for the response to victims of domestic abuse within the Orthodox and *Haredi* communities. As in my New York research, I interviewed key personnel. Questions asked pertained to the initiation and implementation of services for victims of spouse abuse in the Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox or *Haredi* communities in Israel; the role of rabbis in the development and implementation of services; and use by these various communities of services offered. All of my initial interviews took place in the organizational offices. Follow-up discussions and questions occurred through the internet and telephone. Two of the three organizational leaders I spoke with were modern Orthodox, one was *haredi*. I also interviewed a social worker, a psychologist, several rabbis and *rebetzins* (rabbi's wives), all of whom work in a professional capacity with the *haredi* population. Of these professionals, one was traditional/not religious, another was a religious Zionist, and three were *haredi*. These interviews were more informal and occurred in offices and or public spaces like a coffee shop or restaurant.

Because I did not interview victims of abuse or their abusers in my research in America I received a certificate of exemption from the Yeshiva University Committee on Clinical Investigations Exempt Categories Common Rule 45 CRF 46.101(b) and Non-Human Subject Research. I maintained the same protocol for my research in Israel.

Background

In earlier research I examined the process of intentional social change within traditional religious Jewish communities as expressed in the changing

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response to the presence of wife abuse (2009, 2007, 2006a, 2006b). Whereas previously, religiously Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox Jewish communities denied that abusive behaviors exist within their communities, over the past ten to fifteen years there has been an acknowledgement of its presence. To confirm the presence of change I identified several indicators. Firstly, the emergence of new organizations and new units within existing organizations to deal with the problem of domestic abuse clearly indicated that change had occurred. Secondly, the appearance in community newspapers and magazines of articles about domestic abuse where previously there were none indicated change. Thirdly, the organization of numerous conferences on this topic and the now popular relationship and parenting conferences indicates further social change. The contemporary prevalence of relationship and parenting conferences advertised in community newspapers and magazines suggests a preventative approach to abusive behaviours within families. It may also indicate a movement away from direct confrontation with the problems of domestic abuse in a community forum format. This last step would not be possible without the existence of organizations and professional staff that directly respond to victims of domestic abuse.

In interviews American professionals noted the following changes:

- One person who speaks before various groups on the topic of spouse abuse noted that before beginning to speak she always asks those in the audience who know of someone who has been abused to raise their hand. When she first began speaking approximately 20 years ago, no one raised their hand. Today, nearly everyone in the audience raises their hand.
- Another professional noted that the women who come to her for counseling today are younger and have been married for only a short time. In the past, Jewish women tended to come for help approximately 10 years later than their American counterparts. When asked whether she thought this change indicated a declining commitment to marriage she answered, no: it indicted a declining commitment to women suffering in marriage.
- In the past, daughters would be afraid to tell their parents if they were being abused. When told of abuse in a relationship parents often advised that their daughters to return to their husbands. Today, a professional who counsels abused women finds that parents are generally supportive of daughters who come to them for help.
- In speaking with community professionals the fact that change had occurred was often mentioned as, however, was the fact that the change is not as great as they would like it to be, indicating a need for further change, especially from the rabbinic leadership.

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These resources have not always been available in part because America lacked the sensitivity to the religious and cultural needs of minority populations and secondly, because religiously observant Jews, like other cultural and religious minority populations, preferred to deal with social problems through their own social networks and legal organizations. Thus, change reflects the increasing openness and attention given problems like substance, spouse, and child abuse and paedophilia in the larger American society as well as community consciousness-raising efforts of new organizations like Shalom Task Force often working in concert with professionals. These efforts were supported by the expansion of professional programs in existing community organizations (Farber 2006; Widawski and Frydman 2007). Today an extensive network of intersecting programs is responsive to the particular religious and cultural needs of the Orthodox and Ultra-Orthodox Jewish populations within the New York City area and throughout the country: non-profit community organizations typically work in tandem with local government offices. These developments function as both a critical indicator of change as well as a catalyst for change. The new organizations and units within existing organizations, that developed in response to greater awareness and acknowledgement of abuse problems, are discussed more fully in Farber 2006.

The process of social change in Israel reflects a comparable pattern: ideological change in the larger society led to policy shifts with respect to the response to wife abuse within the Israeli society. This ideological change then filtered down to religiously observant Jewish communities and provides the background context to acknowledgement by members and leadership of wife abuse within their communities and, importantly, a willingness to use newly available social services.

Muhlbauer (2006) notes that before ideological changes occurred in Israeli society incidents of domestic violence were treated as a 'singular tragedy' (p. 306).[2] Similar to change in America multiple ideologies, typically advocated by elite groups joined together to condemn domestic abuse.[3] Muhlbauer observes that 'It was the human rights movement that also helped politicize feminist visions and policies when two of the major groups joined forces in the 1974 elections. Thus the initially subversive messages delivered by small groups of women gradually succeeded in transforming public views and sentiments and taking the subject of domestic violence out of the closet' (2006:308). Change in ideology in other words, led to a shift in public policy and the development of services for victims of domestic violence.

The Populations

In both the United States and Israel, the ultra-Orthodox consist of both Hasidic and Yeshivish groups.[4] They tend to live in enclave

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communities, dress more modestly than the surrounding culture, reject most of modern culture, and regard their observance of religious law as more scrupulous than other Orthodox Jews. In these communities authority derives from and is mediated through religious law and cultural tradition by scholarly rabbinic authorities whose interpretation and application of the law often is accepted without question. The ethos of these communities, combined with cultural and religious customs and ritual observance, tends to constitute a formidable bulwark against social change and assimilation. Nevertheless, changes have occurred in response to encounters with modernity (Farber, 1995; Farber and Waxman, 1999; Fishman, 1999, 2000; Heilman, 1973, 1992; Heilman and Cohen, 1989; Joselit, 1990; Kranzler, 1995; Mintz, 1992; Silberstein, 1993; Stadler, 2008; Soloveitchik, 1994). In some cases, community structures that initially thwarted change now facilitate change (Farber, 2006, 2009).

WHAT IS WIFE ABUSE?

In her vignette about wife abuse, 'Flowers aren't enough,' Naomi Ackerman traces the process of self-doubt and degradation that occurs as a result of physical abuse inflicted on a wife by her husband. The name of her play refers to the syndrome whereby after abusing his wife, the husband returns with flowers and a promise never to hit her again. Her one-person play has been performed to audiences in lands with exceptionally diverse cultures all over the world. She notes that wife abuse and the process of self-doubt proceed along the same path all over the world (www.naomiackerman.com).

Wife abuse is a subset of domestic violence that occurs within a family context. It refers to spouse, child and/or elder abuse. In the United States; domestic violence is the largest cause of injury to women ages 15–44 (Novellow et. al., 1992). It is estimated that 31% of all female homicides are attributed to domestic violence (U.S. Dept. of Justice, 1992). 'If current abuse patterns continue, some estimate that up to 50% of all women will be victims of domestic violence at some point in their lives' (Corsilles, 1994). Because emotional, verbal, and financial abuse can and does escalate into physical abuse, these different types of abuse are often treated as a single phenomenon. Abusive behaviours include acts of physical battering and sexual force or intimidation including slapping, shoving, pushing, kicking, raping, punching, and the use of a weapon. Abuse also involves the threat of force; verbal and psychological intimidation can immobilize a person, demean self-image, and jeopardize emotional security. Verbal and psychologically abusive behaviours include shaming tactics that degrade a person in private or in public and in the presence of friends. Abuse can also take the form of withdrawal, neglect, and ignoring a person. These behaviours isolate women and make them feel worthless.

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Generally, abuse is secret. For various reasons, including the threat of further and more severe physical violence, a wife is often fearful that someone will discover her secret. This need for secrecy leads a woman to avoid or shun family members and other women, actions that further isolate her. Such isolating behaviours are typically encouraged by an abusive husband. In general, a pattern of abuse within the relationship is not suspected but if friends do suspect abuse, they will often avoid the woman as a consequence of feeling uncomfortable with the situation and not knowing what to do or say. Friends may also fear witnessing an incident or that the husband will be verbally abusive toward them. Or, because of the unpredictable behaviour exhibited by abusive people, friends may fear getting involved in a situation they would not know how to handle. Thus, friends, neighbours, and other community members tend not to want to get involved and so avoid contact with the couple in question.

Often however, this pattern of isolation does not apply to the husband especially in traditionally structured communities that have a greater number of gender-segregated activities. Religiously observant Jewish men for example, are required to pray three times a day, preferably with a *minyan* (prayer quorum of 10 men) with whom they build relationships separate from those they have with their wives. Thus, the husband often retains and continues to build his social status in the community even while he is an abusive husband at home. Jacobs and Dimarsky note that one of the myths that prevent effective action against wife abuse is the failure to recognize that an abuser can harbour and express contradictory behaviour patterns (Jacobs and Dimarsky, 1991–2:95). In other words, he can be both a kind and an abusive person.

Abuse is fundamentally about power and control.[5] Isolation is a technique used to achieve this goal. Isolation is especially effective when the husband has a good reputation in the community. This prohibits the wife from revealing that her husband is abusive since she understands that no one will believe her. Oftentimes her standing in the community is based on his status in which case the woman is further hurt by the abuse her reputation suffers if she does go ahead and disparage him; everyone will assume she is the problem. As a result, the woman is condemned to endure an abusive relationship while the man is pitied for being married to such a woman. This deception closes off traditional channels through which a wife might find solace and relief.

Community Attitude: Denial

The primary attitude to wife abuse recently thought to characterize strict religiously observant Jewish populations has been that of denial. Earlier, this was also the general attitude of all Jewish populations (Farber 2006). In fact, Jews tended to believe that most social problems present in

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modern society did not afflict their communities. These attitudes have changed as a result of clear evidence to the contrary. However, because the ultra-Orthodox or *haredi* populations typically live apart from other Jews and are not as well-integrated into the society of the country in which they live, their attitudes take longer to change. But change has occurred: an indicator of this change in these communities is the numerous organizations and programs developed in both America and Israel that are responsive to social problems like wife abuse (Farber 2006). The attitude of denial in other words, though still present has greatly lessened.

Denial of the presence of abusive behaviours in traditional communities can be understood from a number of perspectives. Assimilatory trends often lead to a confrontation between the norms and practices of majority and minority groups. Graetz identifies this confrontation as one of the sources of denial: 'As Jewish society opens up to assimilation outside of Jewish ghettos, the group loses 'control' over individuals. The 'hostile world' becomes a part of Jewish consciousness, and Jews become integrated into the 'outside' society. Large groups of Jews adjust to the notions and metaphors of the outside world, causing stress within Jewish society. Gradually there develops a need to defend traditional behavior, because the Jewish outgroup has a different perception of what constitutes normative behavior' (Graetz 1998: 151). Graetz notes that denial is '…based on a metaphor of Jewish society in a 'hostile world' and assumes that the former is relatively more moral than the latter' (ibid.:152). The source of negative or immoral behaviours that afflict the Jewish world then, is the larger society in which Jews are living.

Another way the phenomenon of 'denial' can be understood is not that the behaviour never happened or happens but rather, that such behaviour constitutes an individual aberration. Using C. Wright Mills' distinction, wife abuse would then be regarded as an individual problem rather than a social issue (Mills 1957/2000). The definition of a situation determines the prescription for action: if it is an individual behavioural problem the solution must likewise be individualistic, which is the way religious law typically adjudicates such issues. On the other hand, if wife abuse is perceived as a social problem, which would happen if it were recognized to occur more frequently, a communal response is appropriate. From a contemporary western cultural perspective, wife abuse is an obviously destructive force that should be opposed by all community members and leaders.[6] Sociologically however, because it touches on power relationships that serve as a model for other social and institutional relationships any change is easily seen as threatening, particularly within a family structure that is perceived to be more patriarchal than egalitarian.

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RABBINIC ATTITUDES

In the only survey data on American rabbinic attitudes and behaviours towards wife abuse, Cwik (1996, 1997) reports that rabbis from three denominations (Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform) had 'estimated that Jewish wife abuse is about two-thirds to three-quarters of what it is in the general society at large, which did not indicate strong 'denial'' (Cwik, 1996:280). He found that although the attitudes of the Orthodox rabbis were slightly more patriarchal than the Conservative rabbis who did not differ from the Reform rabbis, 'surprisingly, the actual levels of patriarchal attitudes for all three denominations were extremely low' (ibid.). In fact, the Orthodox rabbis were 'significantly more likely to believe that it is the duty of a rabbi to directly contact an abusive husband and put a stop to his abusive behaviour than both the Conservative and Reform rabbis. However, rabbis from all three denominations believed that it is the duty of a rabbi to describe ways for a wife to put a stop to her husband's abuse' (ibid.).

Similar to the Cwik study in challenging stereotypes, Steinmetz (2006) found that 'Regarding definitions of and beliefs about wife abuse among ultra-Orthodox men in Israel, the findings of the current study indicate that more than three fourths of the participants defined all of the behaviors that were presented to them as wife abuse. Thus, their definitions of wife abuse were highly consistent with those that are accepted in the empirical and theoretical professional literature (e.g., Sigler, 1989). With regards to men's beliefs about wife abuse, the results revealed that most ultra-Orthodox men did not justify wife abuse. In addition, two thirds of the participants believed that husbands are solely responsible for their violence, and they disagreed with the argument that women who are battered are to blame for violence against them. It should also be noted that close to two thirds of the ultra-Orthodox men believed that violent husbands are capable of controlling their behavior. In addition, the vast majority approved of punishing violent husbands. Nonetheless, about 16% to 40% of the participants still agreed that women who are battered are to blame for violence against them. Although 70% of those participants disagreed with the argument that women who are battered benefit from abuse, about 21% to 28% of them supported that argument' (Steinmetz 2006:546–547).

Egalitarianism and Feminism as Sources of Social Change

Spill-over of ideas from the larger community to subcultures is almost unavoidable. Porous group boundaries of contemporary societies ensure that even if resisted western modern and post modern societies, as found in America and Israel, constitute a source of new ideas and perspectives for members of traditional cultures to emulate and adapt, even if not

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consciously (Cohen and Eisen 2000; Farber and Waxman 1999, Fishman 1993, 1999, 2000; Graetz 1998; Soloveitchik 1994).

The shift to greater egalitarianism in the American family occurred concurrently with the spread and acceptance of feminist reforms as illustrated in the development of American family policy (Pleck 1987). Indeed, it can be argued that the primary impetus for change within Jewish religious communities was the shift in American family policy wherein which domestic violence was no longer tolerated as a necessary if evil component of marriage (Farber 2006;). Mulhauer (2006) confirms a comparable relationship between religious Jewish communities and Israeli society.

Social Capital: Resources for Social Change

Putnam and Campbell (2010) define social capital as 'the norms of trust and reciprocity that arise out of our social networks' (p. 517). Social capital resources include the formation of strong interconnections and relationships between people. Traditional religious communities such as Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox Jewish communities have large social capital resources (Farber 1995). These resources can constitute a barrier to change or provide the bridging function that enables change. In the New York City area I found that to break through the tightly-woven fabric of overlapping relationships and organizations that characterize religiously observant Jewish communities required an understanding how the community's norms and values function. Respect for and acceptance of its authority structures was essential if it was to be used as part of the change process. Although denial of spouse abuse was embedded in multi-layered and overlapping relationships once the abundance of social capital resources present in traditional religious communities was harnessed, these multi-layered relationships were used as avenues along which to channel social change. In other words, the very same multi-layered and overlapping relationships that enable a community to retain its distinctiveness by thwarting change and acculturation can become the pathways through which change can occur. Using the shared traditions and social structure of a community to bring about change is a process I called 'changing through tradition' (Farber 2006, 2009).[7]

Social Change Processes

Changes in *haredi* communities must be examined while holding in mind how very slow social change processes tend to be, especially when they concern an institution as fundamental to the community as the family. An advantage to working within a culture that has a strong religiously based moral and value structure is that the ideals and values inherent to the system can be used in consciousness-raising and social

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change programs. Images of the ideal family for example, can be contrasted with the reality of abusive relationships. This is an invaluable tool in bringing about change, especially since it is never sufficient to eliminate a behavioural pattern without having something to replace it. However, even though these images constitute the ideal towards which marriage and family relationships strive, a picture of marriage with all its complex challenges must be presented to young couples (Jacobs and Dimarsky, 1991–2:99). Adoption of this approach can be seen in the numerous parenting and relationship skills conferences and seminars that are now advertised in local community newspapers (Farber 2009).

Israeli Organizations

In this section I discuss Israeli organizations that provide services for religiously observant Jewish women who are victims of spouse abuse. Four primary organizations provide services for religious victims of abuse: the Bat Melech Shelter, The Israel Center for Family Justice, The Crisis Center for Religious Women, and the Yad Sarah Unit on Domestic Violence. All of these organizations originated in response to problems of domestic abuse within religious families. Unlike the others, the Yad Sarah Unit on Domestic Violence was created for the same reasons but within an established organization.

I interviewed the key personnel in these four organizations. The interviews were conducted in the organizational offices, each taking approximately 1–2½ hours. My questions concerned the origins of the organization, initial and current reception by the community and community leaders, services offered, problems encountered, and general reflections on the way in which social problems are or are not dealt with in the religiously observant Jewish communities. I also interviewed a professional social worker, psychologist, and other professionals who work with this population in different capacities. The organizations and their work are discussed below.

MIKLAT BAT MELECH

In 1995–6 Noach Korman, a rabbinical lawyer for the religious courts established the first shelter for *haredi* women after a *haredi* woman requested that he represent her in a divorce court; she claimed that her husband beat her. He agreed to take the case and asked where she lived. 'A hotel lobby' was her answer. 'Why?' he asked. She said she was afraid to go back to her husband and her parents said she couldn't go to them since they still have 10 children at home. Since she was now married she should return to her husband. Korman called many people to find a home for this woman but nothing was available. He finally

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found an elderly woman who needed help with housework and so she stayed there.

A second *haredi* woman, married for only six months and pregnant asked Korman to represent her. She said her husband had been abusive from the beginning of their marriage and that she had tried to go back to her parents but they refused to take her; they said they were afraid of her husband. Before her marriage this woman had learned in a religious seminary in Jerusalem. Korman contacted the seminary and they permitted the woman to stay at the seminary on the condition she would not leave her room. The administration was afraid she would be a negative influence on the other girls.

A third *haredi* woman asked Korman to represent her in a divorce from an abusive husband. This woman was currently living in a shelter, leading Korman to inquire whether or not State assistance was available for all victims of domestic abuse. What he found was that the State will pay a woman's rent only if she is living in a shelter. Korman then asked administrators of the secular shelter for help in establishing a shelter for religious women. They agreed and he brought together leading rabbis and government agency officials to develop a shelter for religiously observant women.

All shelters receive support from the Welfare Ministry, which provides staffing and service standards. Technically Miklat Bat Melech is administered by Korman's organization as a *haredi* shelter for the Welfare Ministry of the Israeli government, which provides support and supervision. The shelter founded by Korman in 1996 was called Miklat Bat Melech (Shelter for the Daughter of the King). It was funded in part by the Welfare Ministry, through which other shelters in Israel are funded and in part by private donations raised by Korman. The shelter site consisted of 4 apartments. As soon as it was completed it was filled with 3 women and their children.

In 2000 Korman opened another shelter in Ramot (a neighbourhood in Jerusalem) for six women and approximately 30 children. Every month Korman found it necessary to reject four to five women and so in 2005 Bat Melech opened still another shelter in Bet Shemesh (a city approximately one-half hour from Jerusalem). Soon however, because they were able to add more rooms in the second shelter, they closed the Bet Shemesh shelter. They now have approximately 14 spaces and usually there are 10 or more women with children in residence.

For safety purposes, the Bat Melech shelters have closed-circuit TV and are online with the police. Only once did they have a security problem because a woman had gone out on Shabbat and left the door open so she could return easily. A husband got into the shelter, kidnapped his wife and threatened to kill her. She was returned to the shelter after which the husband committed suicide. Following this incident Bat Melech changed to electronic gates so that now,

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even when they are not locked, the gates cannot be opened from the outside.

The Bat Melech shelters in Jerusalem are the only ones in all Israel that cater to the specific needs of religious women and their children. They have counselling and therapies for both mothers and children. In addition, because many *haredi* battered women lack financial independence, Bat Melech shelters provide job training. Interviewing skills are developed and the women are given the opportunity to attend university. In other words, the point of Bat Melech is not only to provide 'shelter' but also to rebuild the self-esteem, competence, and independence of both, the battered women and children.

Miklat-Bat Melech Israel Center for Family Justice

As more women got in touch with Korman he realized that many did not need to go to a shelter if their husbands received restraining orders that kept them away from their homes. What these women did need however was financial and legal aid. And so in 2004 Korman established the Israel Center for Family Justice which provides all Israeli women in need with legal representation in both the civil and religious court systems.. The Center is staffed by lawyers, social workers, and psychologists who provide legal aid and other services for victims of domestic abuse. This aid is provided to women who live at home and to those who reside in shelters. In 2005, 1,035 women sought legal help from Miklat, nearly four times the number in 2004. It is assumed this large increase was due to word of mouth recommendations. It is also thought to reflect a growing willingness among the *haredi* population to address the problem of domestic violence. In 2005, 687 women came to the Center to consult with staff attorneys about issues such as divorce, alimony, child support, child custody, criminal charges and restraining orders.

Yad Sarah's Unit for Domestic Violence

At Yad Sarah in Jerusalem, I interviewed Dr. Shlomit Lehrman, the Director of Yad Sarah's Unit for Domestic Violence for approximately one and a half hours. Yad Sarah is an organization best known for renting out and providing free medical equipment rentals to anyone who needs it in Israel. Because of the fine reputation they have with the Orthodox and *haredi* populations the Department of Welfare chose them to offer psychological and counselling services to *haredi* victims of domestic abuse. They receive approximately one-fourth to one-third of their budget from Israel's Welfare Office. The Jerusalem Unit opened in 2001 with two staff workers and quickly expanded to the eleven staff members it has today. Yad Sarah has a rabbinical committee that includes *haredi* emissaries.

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Throughout Israel Yad Sarah has seventy centres for treating domestic violence but only the Jerusalem office specializes in treating *haredi* victims of domestic abuse. The Yad Sarah unit on domestic violence functions like a walk-in clinic seeing approximately 150–170 individuals monthly.

Yad Sarah treats children who, if not actual victims, are almost always passive victims, meaning that they witness the violent abuse of their mothers: One young girl of nine for example, would not go to sleep until she placed her scissors, taken from her pencil case, under her pillow so if necessary, she could defend her mother against her father. Yad Sarah also treats men who in the great majority of cases are the abusers. An Israeli psychologist said he never treats abusers because they never admit to being an abuser; if they do not acknowledge a problem they are not amenable to change. I mentioned this to Dr. Lehrman who indicated this was indeed the case in nearly all situations and thus a treatment problem, which was dealt with it by enlisting the help of family and rabbinical leaders. If this does not work a coercive component is added, reminding the men that if they do not cooperate with treatment protocols they can go to jail.

In general, the policy of the Unit at Yad Sarah is for all staff members to treat men and women, victims and aggressors, although there are specialized social workers who only treat children. In addition to offering various psychological therapies, Yad Sarah does a lot of outreach work, speaking to groups whenever and wherever requested. They sponsor lectures and workshops for community members, rabbis, *mikvah* (ritual bath) attendants and others. In conjunction with the Family Office of Education, they also make presentations to religious High Schools. However, although they have an excellent working relationship with *haredi* rabbis, including the heads of *yeshivot* (religious schools), the *haredi* population does not avail itself of the preventative group work they do to raise awareness about domestic abuse.

On an individual basis Yad Sarah works with rabbis on issues like birth control and *mikvah* (ritual bath). In addition, Yad Sarah will intervene to prevent family problems from escalating into abuse. For example, if it comes to their attention that a wife needs help with the children and housework, representatives from Yad Sarah present the woman's point of view to key rabbis or yeshiva deans who in turn, speak with the husband to ensure that men listen to their wives' needs. This stops the conflict from escalating into verbal and even physical abuse. Dr. Lehrman also consults with rabbis when she encounters resistance to participating in group therapy due to the religious prohibition against talking about others (*loshon hara*). Once she explains the many benefits of group work to the rabbis they generally rule it permissible for the women to attend.

Haredi rabbis typically refer persons to Yad Sarah for counselling even though they do not permit preventative presentations in High Schools or

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other venues. The interventionist role of Yad Sarah is possible because all Orthodox groups including *haredim* trust the organization and personally trust Lehman and her staff. Orthodox and *haredi* representatives are willing to listen to her perspective and take advice on client needs. Overall, the *haredi* approach strongly suggests they understand wife abuse as an individual and not a social problem (Mills 1957/2000).

The Crisis Center for Religious Women

Debbie Gross is the founder and executive director of The Crisis Center for Religious Women which works in conjunction with the National Rape Crisis Center. She is a recipient of the Jerusalem Foundation Teddy Kollek Award for Leadership and Community Service. I interviewed her for about 2 hours in her Jerusalem office.

The Crisis Center was organized in 1992 when Gross, along with neighbours, was discussing how to respond to problems of sexual abuse in Jerusalem-based Orthodox families. When Gross asked a Modern Orthodox woman why she hadn't gone to the National Rape Crisis Center, the woman answered, 'They can't possibly understand my background.' Alerted to the fact that the needs of religious women were not served by State facilities, the group, under Gross's leadership developed a 24-hour hotline specifically geared to religious women.

The system Gross developed permits women to call back for further discussion and advice without compromising anonymity, an essential feature in a population fearful someone will overhear and know what is going on in their life. Gross developed relevant training protocols and courses. Initially, twelve women were trained for the Hotline, each for 6 months after which the women spent another six months listening to trained counsellors handle phone calls. Hotline volunteers receive a monthly stipend. When appropriate, the Hotline volunteers make referrals for psychological therapy, legal aid, medical treatment, and other assistance. A separate hotline was established for Ethiopian Israelis who, although particularly vulnerable to violence for various reasons, were not calling the existing hotline.

The hotline is manned with live volunteers from 8 am — 10 pm, after which they have a beeper system with a call-back that occurs within minutes. Since their inception through July 2008, they have trained over 700 volunteers in 17 training courses. At the end of a course each volunteer receives a comprehensive manual to guide them in their work. Additional training is provided at monthly meetings. Although they received calls from all segments of the Israeli population, as of July 2008, 60% of their calls were from *haredi,* 30% from *dati leumi* (National Religious), 5% from *masorti* (Traditional), and 5% from secular women.

The Crisis Center for Religious Women was established to provide emotional support and advice for religious women and children in crisis.

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Like the other organizations described above, the Center serves anyone requesting help. Services include a telephone hotline; workshops on abuse, violence, and rape with the goal of preventing future occurrences; and workshops for children and teenagers, which have self-protection as their goal. They do counselling for crisis intervention, but they do not do therapy. Crisis Center volunteers also work as translators for Ethiopian women who receive subsidized therapy. The Crisis Center will work with rabbis to convince a man to leave his wife for 2 months so that the Center can work with his wife. They encourage divorce only when there are no children.

Today, the organization has approximately 165 active volunteers who work alongside the following paid staff positions: one staff supervisor of volunteers who also coordinates with outside volunteers and agencies like the police; one staff coordinator for the educational workshops; and six part time and six full time staff members give workshops. Because of the high demand for these workshops volunteers lead them as well. The Crisis Center for Religious Women receives about 25% of their funds from the Ministry of Welfare: The remainder comes from active fundraising. By the end of July 2008, the Crisis Center had conducted 1200 workshops. Since 1993, the Center has been involved with over 35,000 different cases. The cases dealt with by the Center include approximately 40% sexual abuse; 40% domestic violence; and 20% other kinds of crisis.

Gross has been an international force for change. Under her leadership, the American organization, Shalom Task Force developed their hotline and training programs. In Europe, Gross assisted in the development of a hotline in Belgium that serves religious women through Europe. She was also instrumental in developing a hotline in Melbourne, Australia.

Comparisons

In my earlier study of the response to wife abuse in traditional religious American Jewish communities I focused on the process of intentional social change as opposed to the change that inevitably occurs as a consequence of assimilation, acculturation, and adaptation. This led me to examine grassroots organizations like Shalom Task Force as well as institutional units like Project Eden. In Israel I examined organizations that likewise sought to bring intentional social change to the Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox Jewish communities. Three of the four Israeli organizations examined were newly established and one was a new unit within an existing organization.

Each of these organizations takes a different approach to filling the needs of abused religious women. In their Hotline, the Crisis Center for Religious Women provided a first step to seeking aid. Women who call the Hotline can talk over their problems and upon request, will receive

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advice, referrals, and follow-up while maintaining caller anonymity. The Hotline will put abused religious women in touch with rabbis as well as persons trained in secular professions with whom they may have no contact in their culture. As such, the Crisis Center gives religious women, especially members of the more insular *haredi* population access to counselling, therapy, medical and or legal aid. In this sense, the Center matches abused religious women with resources often delivered by professionals educated outside the traditional religious culture.

Korman, a rabbi in the Rabbinical Courts took a more top-down organizational approach. He worked with the Israeli government and rabbinic leadership to establish the first and only shelter for abused religious women. His insider understanding of the situation and needs of abused *haredi* women led to the establishment the Center for Family Justice which provides legal and financial advice for this population. Korman's organization is an outgrowth of values, norms and mores of the Jewish religious community. As such, it is closest to what I called the process of 'changing through tradition' (see Farber 2009).The *Bat Melech* shelters provide numerous therapies and activities for family units and specifically for children. Importantly, Korman's approach focuses on the need to develop a woman's inner strength and resources.[8]

Working from within the highly respected Yad Sarah organization a Unit for Domestic Violence was established to provide psychological counselling and therapy for abused women and male abusers in religiously observant Jewish communities. As in America, the very provision of services functions as a catalyst to further social change. This is especially true for a population in which such services were completely lacking.

Rabbinic Involvement

Cooperation in Israel between institutional and rabbinic leaders appears to represent something akin to standard operating procedure although it, like all other types of informal communication necessarily depends on trust between the various parties. Those seeking change in Israel recognize that the rabbinic hierarchy must be dynamically and directly involved. This was likewise true in America.

Like activists in America, those within the Israeli *haredi* community did not directly challenge the authority structure but instead worked within the Tradition and built on it (Farber 2006, 2009). Korman, the founder and director of *Bat Melech Shelter and Center for Family Justice* for example, produced two DVDs, one on wife abuse and one on child abuse which are sold in stores located in *haredi* neighbourhoods in Israel and New York. Intended to raise community awareness of domestic abuse in religious communities, this format allows the learning to occur privately, within the confines of one's home.

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Group Boundaries

Paradoxically, in the United States treatment for abused women is individualized and group preventative seminars and training are permissible. This relationship is reversed in Israel where group or family treatment is the norm for *haredi* (and other) victims of abuse, but prevention seminars are prohibited by the *haredi* rabbinical establishment. This prohibition may in fact reflect the need for strong group identification and boundaries. If the larger Israeli society conceptualizes the problem of domestic abuse as a social problem (Muhlbauer 2006) and ultra-Orthodox and Orthodox rabbis follow suit, the line between the two communities with respect to the integrity of the most fundamentally important social institution within the Orthodox world, i.e. the family, would be blurred. In America, establishing this boundary is not essential since differentiation between the Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox Jewish populations and the predominantly Christian population groups is so much sharper.

Differences in Shelter Policies

Despite the fact that in both America and Israel, ultra-Orthodox groups live in enclave communities, have strong, religiously based cultures and patterns of authority, and regard the family as a fundamental institution I found a significant difference in the approach to wife abuse in the two countries. The primary concern of American professionals was with the individual woman as a victim of spousal abuse while in Israel professionals were primarily concerned with the woman in conjunction with her family and community.

American professionals expressed concern with the woman's safety and a desire to strengthen her psychologically.[9] In Israel on the other hand, while the safety of the woman and her children was of course a concern, primary emphasis was given to the effect of abuse on family structure and stability. Children were consistently mentioned and regarded as integral to the healing and recovery processes. They were the focus of various therapies and programs, separately and in conjunction with treatments for mothers and the community. The formation of a supportive community structure within the shelter was understood as an essential component of the healing process. This emphasis on the family unit within a community context was absent in my interviews with American professionals.

National shelter policies reflect these different orientations. For the protection of its residents American shelters typically consist of scattered site apartments and group shelters must have a minimum of 40 women to be funded by the government. In Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox shelters there are not enough residents to qualify. In sharp contrast, the Welfare Ministry in Israel will **only** approve group shelters.

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These national shelter policies appear to reflect the national cultures of the two lands. America emphasizes and values individualism and personal development over the family, group and community (Bellah et al 1985; Putnam 2000; Putnam and Campbell 2010). Israel on the other hand, a Jewish State with socialistic roots, is a more communalistic society even with the encroaching Americanization (Rebhun and Waxman 2000, 2004) and the realization that the Jewish family is not as perfect an institution that it was once believed to be (Waxman 2009).

The greater emphasis placed on the individual in America leads professionals to regard scattered site apartments as largely unproblematic (or at least something they cannot change) whereas the more communitarian orientation in Israel leads professionals to regard the social isolation of scattered site apartments as having severely negative consequences. The primary unit in Israel in other words, is the abused woman with her children in a consciously constructed community. In America it is the individual woman.

Marriage and National Culture

Another potential source of the different national shelter policies is the prevalence of marriage within each society. In Israel, 97 percent of all households consist of married couples with and without children. In America, the comparable number in America is 49.7 percent, less than half the population. This suggests that a large percentage of women in Israeli shelters are also married. For women in religious shelters who come from cultures where cohabitation without marriage is strictly prohibited, the percentage married is 100 percent. Thus, there exists a shared culture between women in shelters and the larger culture that focuses on the central importance of marriage and the family.

In America this shared culture does not exist in part because only 49.7 percent of the American population consists of married households. The other reason is that the composition of the shelter population is largely black, unmarried and living in poverty. It is an underclass population for whom the values of family and community do not appear central or relevant. Research typically speaks of 'intimate partner violence' rather than domestic abuse, a reference to the fact that this population cohabits rather than marry. Indeed, the common perception in America is that battered women in non-Jewish shelters are lower class; a perception supported by national studies (Jasinski 2004; Sweet, Bumpass and Call 1988; Sweet and Bumpass 1996; US Department of Justice 1992).[10]

According to Debbie Gross, the desire of the majority of women in Israel, including those in shelters, is to be a good mother. This leads Israeli women to perceive abused women as part of 'us' rather than 'the other'. Israeli women are said by both Gross and Korman to enter a shelter precisely so they can better care for their children. Gross, who

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was born in America, notes that Americans tend to regard women in shelters as bad and uncaring mothers, an attribute that separates them from other women.

This consideration reflects the importance of class, ethnic, racial, and or cultural differences in determining whether women in shelters are regarded as 'part of us' or as 'the other'. Weitzman (2000) makes clear that there is a difference between battered women in and those not in shelters. Her book, *'Not to People Like Us': Hidden Abuse in Upscale Marriages* underscores the fact that spouse abuse is found within all social classes. Nevertheless, the shelter population has distinctive characteristics defined by race, class, and cultural behaviours that set it apart from the general population.

Although class, ethnic and cultural differences are certainly present in Israel there are religious and cultural commonalities that give rise to a sense of a shared destiny that may trump existing class differences, particularly within Orthodox and Ultra-Orthodox subcultures (Levy, Levinsohn and Katz 2004). The blurring of boundaries between abused women and other women is intended in the name Korman gave to his shelter, *Bat Melech.* While these observations obviously require further research, the shared religious orientation between women in and those not in shelters suggests identification with one another.

In modern and postmodern societies (Inglehart 1997; Inglehart and Welzel 2005; Norris and Inglehart 2004; Farber and Waxman 1999) greater value is given to the multiplicity of lifestyle choices with reference to religion, sexual preference, and family style. Shared behavioural expectations, value, and belief systems that join individuals together are not valued to the same extent as is personal choice and expression. Israel, although frequently understood as a society that is postmodern in its orientation is still thought to reflect Jewish communal values (Levy, Levinsohn and Katz 2004; Schweid 2004). Its relatively high birth-rate for a modern/ postmodern society is one indication of this.[11] Social policy regulations regarding shelters for abused women might likewise be a reflection of the high value given to community and Jewish family life.

Suggestions for Further Research

I began this research with the intent of exploring services available for religiously Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox Jewish victims of spouse abuse in Israel with those I found in my studies of services for the same population in America (Farber 2006; 2009). I wondered whether the fact that Israel is a Jewish state with a majority Jewish population would have an impact on the delivery of these services, even though the specific groups with which I was concerned are a minority subculture in both Israel and America. I found that there was indeed a difference.

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American professionals expressed an overriding concern with the individual abused woman in contrast to Israeli professionals for whom the family unit is emphasized. In America, shelters consist of scattered site apartments until there are 40 or more residents and then group shelters are supported by the government. Israel, on the other hand, will only support group shelters because they eliminate the inevitable isolation experienced by an abused mother and children. Israeli professionals consciously create a supportive, interactive community with a variety of healing therapies and programs. This approach builds on the importance of an individual's role within a social setting rather than as an individual unit. The highly individualistic character of the United States as compared with the Jewish and more socialistic, communally-based foundation of Israeli society may account for these differences. So too, the sharp difference in marriage rates in the two countries is in sync with the different orientations.

These findings point to the need for further research in several important areas. First is the implementation of a more detailed and nuanced comparison of the American and Israeli shelters systems with specific attention given to its effectiveness for family-oriented subcultures like that of Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox Jewish communities. The goals and outcomes of each approach need to be identified, examined and analyzed for their effectiveness. It is possible that the more individualistic approach used in American shelters is more effective even in community-oriented American subcultures. But it is also possible that the more communalistic approach used in Israel would yield better results for these subcultures even in America.

Secondly, it would be interesting to determine whether or not the religiously Orthodox Jewish populations in America and Israel stigmatize abused women as 'the other' or if they consider them part of 'us'. If the former is found to be the case, policies and programs designed for abused women would not concern the larger population. If they are considered part of 'us', the concern and care given to these policies would certainly be greater.

A useful way to begin the development of applicable research would be the sponsorship of a conference, bringing together Israeli and America professionals who work with victims of spouse abuse in the Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox communities. Professionals from each country would then be able to share their techniques and formally articulate their goals and desired outcomes with each other. The results of such a conference would open up further avenues of relevant and applicable research.

A broader and more theoretical area of research indicated by these findings is the general relationship between a national culture and its social service policies. If social service design and delivery is generally derivative of national culture then we need to understand the effects

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these models have on minority groups with cultures that differ in significant and relevant ways from the national culture.[12]

An examination of shelter policy as a derivative of national culture provides a specific illustration of the way national culture generally determines social service delivery patterns. Such an analysis would enable us to identify conflicts that emerge between national public policies and community values. Guidelines may be developed pertaining, for example, to the suspension of the rule that a shelter must have a minimum of 40 occupants before it can be approved and funded as a group shelter. Strong family and community-based cultures of groups like the Jewish Orthodox, religious Muslims, and Evangelical Christians would seem to make the helping strategies found in Israel preferable to the individually-oriented American approach.

Ann Swidler understands culture not only as the ideals, norms, values and the artefacts of a society but the ways in which non-material culture is implemented in concrete situations, i.e., strategies of action (Swidler, 1986). Perhaps this approach provides a conceptual lens for looking at, evaluating and comparing the ways in which a national culture is expressed in public policy. Clearly this idea is not fully developed in this paper but hopefully, seeds have been planted for further research and analysis.

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NOTES

[1] See DellaPergola (2009) for a discussion of this factor as a population determinant.

[2] C. Wright Mills made the distinction between a personal trouble and a social problem (Mills 1957).

[3] See Pleck, 1987 for a history of American social policy against family violence.

[4] See Nadler (1997) on the origins of *yeshivish* and *hasidic* groups. Heilman distinguishes the ultra-Orthodox from Orthodox Jews who 'pass nearly indistinguishably among other contemporaries, preserving their religion in compartments of their lives that remain largely out of view to outsiders' (1992:11). The ultra-Orthodox are those Orthodox Jews 'who have not merged as easily into the mainstream' (ibid.). They are called "ultra-Orthodox," assuming that they maintain stricter standards of faith and observance' (ibid.). He observes that the terms "Orthodox" and "ultra-Orthodox" come from a language foreign to Jewish experience. Unlike them, "*haredi*" resonates with Jewish meaning. … For today's ethnically more secure Jews, "Orthodox" becomes "*dati*" and "ultra-Orthodox" becomes "*haredi*"…' (Heilman 1992:12). He also notes that 'while other Jews increasingly use this designation, ironically *haredim* generally do not use it to refer to themselves. Rather, in their vernacular Yiddish, they commonly call themselves *Yidn*, Jews, or more specifically *erlicherYidn*, virtuous Jews' (ibid.). Use of the term *haredi* rather than ultra-Orthodox is more prevalent in Israel.

[5] There is general agreement that abuse is about power and control. See other sources referenced in this paper on abuse. An example of this relationship is pictorially represented in the Power and Control Wheel, which was 'developed in the early 1980s in Duluth, Minnesota, when battered women in support groups and men in batters' intervention groups were interviewed and asked to describe their experiences of abuse. The women were asked to identify the ways in which they felt they were controlled, and the men were asked to identify the tactics they used to maintain an environment of fear and control (Pence 1987:12)' (Gardsbane 2002:12). One of the slices on the wheel is isolation which is described as 'Controlling what she does, who she sees and talks to, what she reads, where she goes — limiting her outside involvement — using jealousy to

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justify actions' (ibid. p.13). Use of this Wheel is widespread in programs designed to educate and act against wife abuse.

[6] Traditional perspectives on the family may regard beatings as a legitimate way for the head of a family to retain discipline, a perspective that conflicts with contemporary thought. This conflict was at the center of the development of American family policy (Pleck 1987).

[7] Kwame Anthony Appiah notes how important it was to respect a culture and use its leadership to bring about change in his discussion of ending foot-binding in China. See Appiah 2010:22–25.

[8] The phrase *bat melech* is taken from Psalm 45: 14 where it says: *kol k'vod bat melech penimah* translated to mean 'all honor awaits the Jewish woman within'. Rashi, the great Medieval commentator interpreted this phrase to mean that the princess, the Jewish woman 'who conducts herself with modesty and dignity, shunning ostentation, is the true symbol of nobility and glory' (Metsudah Tehillim 1983:87). The Maharshal in Gemara *Yevamos* (77a) notes that 'The Honor and dignity of a princess require that she remain in her palace and not go outside and mingle with the common folk.' The Israelite women in other words, emulated the dignified behavior of a princess, and did not leave their tents so as not to come upon the improprieties of the market place. There are of course, interpretations of this phrase that are more suitable for our times. For example, the understanding that the essential or inner nature of a woman is best demonstrated and actualized within the home environment. In this inner realm, she can bring out the strengths and talents of her family and thereby raise good Jewish children. I thank Professor Jonathan Sarna for noting the important and relevant meanings of this phrase.

[9] I attended a presentation by a judge in the Brooklyn Family Court in which she expressed a serious concern for family, particularly children in her discussion of how the community is dealing with child abusers. Here the concern was the negative effect that community publicity given to the sentencing of a child molester was having on other children in the family. There is an ongoing need to find a balance between showing concern for the family of an abuser and the need to identify him in order to protect other children.

[10] In America, studies of intimate partner violence, using results from the National Crime Victimization Survey, identify several indicators that make it more or less likely a person will experience intimate partner violence: 'Among women, being black, young, divorced or separated, earning lower incomes, living in rental housing, and living in an urban area were all associated with higher rates of intimate partner victimization between 1993 and 1998. Men who were young, black, divorced or separated, or living in rented housing had significantly higher rates of intimate partner violence than other men' (Rennison and Welchans 2000:3). Since ultra-Orthodox Jews tend not to be black, divorced, or separated, they would have a lower probability for being victims of intimate-partner violence. Ultra-Orthodox populations do tend to be young, live in urban areas in rental housing, and often are poor—all of which are characteristics of intimate-partner violence victims (Ukeles and Grossman, 2002). However, none of the above studies include members of the American Jewish population, which constitutes less than 2% of the U.S. population. Orthodox Jewry, including the Ultra-Orthodox, constitute an even smaller percentage; they are approximately 12% of the American Jewish population.

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[11] DellaPergola (2009) illustrates that the rise in birth-rate among the Israeli Russian immigrant population to approach that of the Israeli population is a reflection of the Jewish value in having many children.

[12] As an illustration of problems between our national culture and policy directives with respect to our increasingly diverse populations see Mary Pipher's (2002) discussion of refugees in Middle America. For example, she identifies the mismatch between the way the traditional culture of Vietnam deals with loss and depression and the American approach that offers psychological services (2002:279–304).

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WOMEN IN THE ISRAELI ARMY

Orlee Hauser

ABSTRACT

This article discusses women serving on closed bases (where soldiers stay to sleep) in Israel's Defence Forces (IDF). Based on findings of a large-scale qualitative study, the author suggests that women mimic male soldiers to get round the structural barriers set by the military. This response is linked both to women's proximity to combat and to the living conditions found on closed bases. These women have created a new approach for 'doing masculinity'. They mimic male combat behaviour and often stretch the definition of combat to include themselves in it. This is beneficial to women soldiers on an individual level but does little to alter traditional gender roles and may even serve to reinforce them.

A 1990s episode of a popular Israeli television show depicts a young female soldier discussing her violation of uniform code. She tells the viewer that when questioned by a superior officer she explained to him that wearing her hair down may be a breach of army code but does not impact negatively on her ability to fly a plane. Her unbuttoned shirt, she explained to him, does not pose a threat to her operation of a tank and, likewise, when she infiltrates enemy territory, her bright red lipstick, also a uniform violation, is not picked up by enemy radar. The female soldier then recounts for the audience how the officer was an intelligent man and immediately understood the validity of her points. They agreed that when on combat missions she could breach uniform code but that when she works in the office she must have her hair collected in proper fashion so as to not interfere when she 'blows' her commanding officer.

Popular representations of Israel's military suggest that the integration of women into the organisation has created a degree of gender equality in both the military and in Israeli society. This sketch, through its tongue-in-cheek humour, expresses the more complex role of women in the IDF. Indeed, the integration of women into a previously male

domain does not necessarily create gender equality. The woman in the sketch seems to be active in combat—infiltrating enemy territory, driving tanks, flying planes. The punch line, of course, reveals the true nature of her position, which is clearly less significant than it seems and very much subordinate to her male commanding officer. As with other scholars interested in women's participation in the IDF, my research deals heavily with the structural barriers faced by female soldiers.

As noted by Sasson-Levy,[1] women soldiers find ways of getting around the IDF structural barriers set by mimicking male soldiers. She adds that women in masculine army roles may be looked upon as symbols of feminist achievement, yet 'their emphasis is on individual equality and meritocracy and not on the general collective change of gender relations'.[2] This emphasis on individual equality manifests itself in the imitation of male soldiers. However a deeper analysis of how female soldiers accomplish this mimicry and what consequences this behaviour brings has yet to be carried out.

This paper outlines the apparatus that female soldiers draw upon as they mimic male soldiers in a new approach for 'doing masculinity'.[3] In essence they are 'playing at being real soldiers' — much like the soldier in the sketch; they portray themselves as active and important in the male military domain while in reality their power in this sphere is minimal, as are their roles. This paper analyses mimicry practices by outlining how women serving in peripheral positions in Israel's army attempt, through imitation, to capture an element of the prestige, sense of importance and belonging typically reserved for male combat soldiers. They do this by simulating the living conditions associated with combat, particularly closed base living. Closed bases are bases on which soldiers stay to sleep and so differ from open bases in which soldiers return to their homes to sleep. Women also mimic by associating themselves with male soldiers, with weapons and by danger through proximity to combat. This mimicry goes so far that female soldiers often stretch the definition of combat to include themselves in it. All of this seems to be beneficial to women soldiers on an individual level. It increases their individual feelings of pride and their sense that they have truly participated in the IDF. However, it does little to alter traditional gender roles in both the army and Israeli society, and may even serve to reinforce them.

The IDF as a gendered organisation

Kanter's theory of proportional representation and tokenism suggests that when more women move into a male dominated organisation, the treatment of women within that organisation, especially those in token positions, will change.[4] However, thinking beyond this gender-neutral relative numbers interpretation, women's integration into male dominated organisations is increasingly being viewed through the lens of

gendered organisations theory. There is a growing acknowledgement that organisations themselves are not gender neutral but rather that gender ideologies and expectations are embedded in organisations themselves, as well as in the interactions of their members. Indeed, organisational structure and culture are greatly influenced by context, which in turn affects the gendering process.[5] Furthermore, when women and men are physically integrated, functional differentiation leads to a sexual division of labour that is grounded in stereotypes concerning biological sex differences. These stereotypes are supported by various social control mechanisms and allow men to preserve their own privileges within the organisation. As a result women who work within traditionally male settings are filtered into traditionally female jobs within those settings.[6] Indeed, there is often a great deal of sex segregation in jobs and duties within the same occupations. For instance, female managers often lead smaller or less powerful departments than their male counterparts and female clerks often have less prestige and responsibility than male clerks.[7]

The IDF provides an excellent example of this tendency. In recent years the IDF has received a great deal of media coverage worldwide about the integration, promotion, and status of Israeli women. As a result, discussing my research on women in the Israeli military often becomes tiresome. Researchers in this field seem to be cursed with the need to explain, over and over again, that the media image of gender egalitarianism in the IDF is largely a myth. Although most Jewish Israelis serve in the IDF and might appear to share a common army experience, conscription is not universal and the experiences of men and women differ. Married women, pregnant women, mothers, and religious women are automatically exempted from service, resulting in a large discrepancy between numbers of men and women serving in the army. In fact, only 60 per cent of Jewish women are drafted compared to 80 per cent of Jewish men. Moreover, the length of obligatory service is different for men and women. Women are required to serve an army term of 24 months while men serve 36 months.[8] Women do virtually no reserve army duty while men are expected to spend 'a near life-time of active reserve'.[9] As Uta Klein contends, 'All in all these aspects of different conscription policies show that what is called 'universal' conscription is selective rather than universal, when the female population is concerned'.[10]

Despite the discrepancy in male and female participation rates, the majority of Jewish women in Israel, like the majority of Jewish men, do serve in the IDF. However, this does not necessarily result in uniformity of army experience. The IDF is characterized by an extreme sexual division of labour; women are excluded from most combat positions and are often relegated to clerical or administrative positions. Izraeli points out that even where women hold the prestigious position of combat

instructor, they do not share the same stature as their male counterparts because they lack field experience. 'What works by the books, the soldiers say, may not work in practice'.[11] She further argues that while assigning instructor positions to women helps to advance the careers of individual women, it also serves to preserve the gendered division of labour already present in the IDF.

The gendered nature of the military

The IDF, like other militaries, is by nature a masculine institution. In fact, as Segal notes, the military may be 'the most prototypically masculine of all social institutions'.[12] Barrett claims that, 'militaries around the world have defined the soldier as an embodiment of traditional male sex role behaviours'[13] and argues that not only is the military a gendered institution, it also helps to create gendered identities. Military culture honours traits traditionally deemed to be masculine: physical strength, force, aggressiveness, etc. These are the traits that are most commonly associated with combat. Morgan writes: 'Despite far-reaching political, social, and technological changes, the warrior still seems to be a key symbol of masculinity'.[14] Indeed, women's participation in the military has often been fraught with obstacles due to anti-female attitudes embedded in military culture. This often leads to feelings of marginalization and even to harassment and abuse.[15]

Enloe argues that allowing women entry into the military core, 'would throw into confusion *all* men's certainty about their male identity and thus about their claim to privilege in the social order'.[16] She continues by explaining how, in order to preserve the present social order, women must be denied access to the front and to combat, which are viewed as the very essence of the military. Thus, not only is masculinity in the military rewarded, it is the primary construct around which socialization into soldiering takes place.[17] In fact, when present, women's army roles are meant to reinforce masculinity by providing reminders of femininity. For instance, women are viewed by the IDF as 'civilizing forces' and are expected to behave as such. Moreover, women provide 'symbolic touches of home' and are encouraged to demonstrate their femininity as well as the nurturing aspects of their personalities.[18] This, no doubt, provides the contrast needed to amplify the masculinity of male soldiers while at the same time reminding them of the feminine body for which they are fighting.

One would assume that the presence of women soldiers would somewhat change the masculine nature of the military. However, theories of gendered organisations make clear that institutions such as the military are infused with gender and that a shift in numbers (as suggested by Kanter) does little to alter the masculine construction of the organisation. My research suggests that women on closed bases serve within

this masculine framework yet fail to become an integral part of the system.

Gendered organisations and gendering processes

Acker's groundbreaking work moved gender from the realm of the individual by suggesting that organisational *structures* are gendered. She argues that these structures embody assumptions about gender and gender roles. 'Abstract jobs and hierarchies...… assume a disembodied and universal worker....[who is] actually a man; men's bodies, sexuality, and relationships to procreation and paid work are subsumed in the image of the worker...and pervade organisational processes...'.[19] Acker uses this argument to explain why gender segregation is repeatedly reproduced and, in doing so, implies that integration is not a practical tool in lessening gender inequality.

Kanter discusses the experiences of women who have integrated into previously male dominated organisations in terms of tokenism, i.e. the marginal status of workers who are the minority in their workplace. However, she argues that tokenism is a problem of numbers and therefore the experiences of token women should become more positive as more women enter the organisation.[20] This argument stands in opposition to gendered organisation theories. Today, scholars take issue with this gender-neutral analysis and posit that women's negative experiences are a result of their positions as social, as opposed to numerical, minorities. Thus, work experiences are determined by the status of the minority group in society and not by relative numbers.[21] This may explain why the movement of women into closed bases has done little to change the status of women in the IDF.

In a remarkable work, West and Zimmerman view the military as a gendered institution that creates gendered behaviour, arguing that gender is the product of social interactions. They argue that gender is a 'situated doing', not a property of individuals but, rather, 'a feature of social situations: both as an outcome of and a rationale for various social arrangements and as a means of legitimating one of the most fundamental divisions of society'.[22] In the highly gendered institution of the military, army life and positions provide a great many opportunities to reinforce traditional gender behaviour patterns, and more importantly, to use biology as a means for membership sorting.[23] Gender is, indeed, constructed and sustained through social performances[24] for which the military provides an optimal stage.

Acker points out that simply knowing which gender category one belongs to is not necessarily an adequate guide as to what is appropriate male and female behaviour. Rather, what is acceptable gendered behaviour depends on the structure of the institution one is participating in.[25] While the IDF neatly places female and male soldiers into groups

that adhere to its needs, soldiers actively construct personas that are appropriately gendered for the military institutional setting. As Britton and Logan note: 'workers themselves may craft their identities in gendered ways through their work'.[26] This is clear in military adages such as, 'turning boys into men'. Less clear are notions of the military 'turning girls into men' though research indicates that this gendering also takes place. Research on women in both the IDF and the U.S. army has found that women are often placed in a 'Catch 22' situation. They are expected to be womanly, but penalized for being overly feminine. They are expected to be masculine yet faced with the stigma of being labelled either a lesbian or 'not a real woman' if they are considered to be too masculine. The tension between these two competing gender-demands creates a source of tension for female soldiers.[27]

Female soldiers seem to be torn between doing feminine or masculine gender. As Weinstein and D'Amico, writing about women in the United States' military, explain:[28]

> Each day, the servicewoman must (re)construct her gender identity: Should I try to be 'one of the guys,' that is, adopt a passing strategy, hoping for male bonding to extend to include me? Or should I be 'one of the girls,' that is, become ultrafeminized, hoping for brotherly affection or chivalric protection? Should I try to be a 'soldier,' that is, aim for a seemingly gender-neutral professionalism, hoping for mutual respect? Or should I be a crusader, mounting a conscious — and personally and professionally risky — challenge to the structure of gender relations in the institution?

As previously noted my research, discussed below, suggests that women serving in Israel's closed bases 'do gender' with a twist. They manage to retain the feminine qualities valued by society while attaining a measure of prestige offered by the military structure by stretching definitions of combat and mimicking male soldiers.

Research methodology

In 2002, I travelled from my home in Canada to Israel in order to carry out both field research and interviews. By the end of the year I had conducted interviews with sixty-two Jewish-Israeli women.[29] Interviews were semi-structured and conducted in Hebrew. Respondents were asked a series of questions pertaining to their army experiences such as: How did you come to hold your army position? What did you do with your free time at the base? What kind of relationships, if any, did you have with co-workers? Interviewees were also asked to describe their daily activities on the base in detail (from the time they woke up and brushed their teeth to bed time). This technique produced rich data on their thoughts and feelings as soldiers and also worked as a memory aid for interviewees.

Respondents ranged in age from 18 to 31 and varied greatly in terms of ethnicity with women from many backgrounds: Polish, Romanian, Iraqi, Moroccan, Egyptian, German, Yemenite, Turkish, Russian, Indian, South American. This reflects the Jewish Israeli population and its diversity. Interviews lasted from 30 to 90 minutes[30] and once completed were transcribed verbatim and translated into English. The data was then coded for analysis into themes such as proximity to combat, tokenism, closed base service, open base service.

The sample was obtained by a snowball technique that built on a number of small snowball groups. I approached both women known to me through family and friends as well as strangers, simply requesting an interview. Often informants referred me to others. Approximately one quarter of respondents were still serving in the IDF at the time of the interview.

Additionally, for two months I conducted field research on six army bases throughout Israel. I did so by volunteering for an IDF program set up for both Israeli citizens and tourists who would like to spend a period working for the army. The program encompasses people from various countries and religious backgrounds (approximately half of the volunteers identified as Jewish and half identified as Christian) and can extend from as little as one week to as long a period as desired. During their participation volunteers eat with soldiers in the dining hall, socialize with soldiers in both the workday and the evening, and sleep in soldiers' barracks.

My knowledge of Hebrew was especially helpful during fieldwork. While other volunteers were sometimes treated as outsiders, I was often mistaken for a regular soldier. I was invited to chat over refreshments in the offices and to both male and female soldiers' rooms to smoke water-pipes (which is actually prohibited by the IDF). I often sat with them at mealtimes and drank coffee with them during my breaks.

Throughout my field research I attempted to vary my physical location and my army jobs as much as possible. When I finished my daily, allotted job,[31] I would often seek out other jobs in order to maximize the number of soldiers that I met and the number of work settings that I observed. Through this strategy I was able to participate in many spheres, including kitchen work, sorting and packing medical supplies (for both army and public use), laundry and uniform distribution, bakery work, gas mask inspection, food distribution services (for soldiers serving in the occupied territories), cooking and cleaning.

Often, I found my way into different job settings by talking to soldiers working there and by finding excuses to visit them. I visited the infirmary and went into offices in order to share their snacks or help with volunteer paperwork. I requested tours from soldiers who were pleased to show me their work-stations, including army tanks and guard stations. For all these visits, I identified myself as a volunteer who was

also carrying out research, making clear my role as a researcher. I also informed the IDF of my presence as a researcher/volunteer by means of the IDF branch responsible for foreign volunteers and the sister organisation in Canada through which I had enrolled. Thus, the IDF knew of my presence and, in fact, several officers volunteered to find me respondents. Since my research concentrated mostly on soldiers' feelings and not on details of their work or on military tactics, I did not require official IDF permission to carry out my research.

The myth of military service

Discussion of the military in Israel and elsewhere brings forth certain images central to army service, most often associated with weapons, borders, and combat. In the IDF, combat roles are among the most esteemed positions and their prestige is subsequently transferable to civilian life. While white-collar military roles are granted high status, the highest status is reserved for soldiers serving in combat units.[32] As E. Levy contends, 'combat soldiering is not simply another job in the IDF, but is conceived of as a key to entry into the collective. It is the strongest version of the link between army service and national belonging'.[33]

However, combat missions play only a small part in IDF operations: only 20 per cent of male soldiers are considered combat soldiers and a mere 2.5 per cent of female soldiers are considered to have combat positions.[34] As most soldiers are not directly linked to combat, the notion that army experience is regularly connected to weapons and fighting is largely a myth. Nevertheless, there is an overwhelming conception in Israeli society that army service is somehow linked to being in direct contact with combat. Just as prestige is connected to combat positions, having had a 'real' army experience is connected to having had contact with combat. The closer one's proximity to combat, the greater the prestige of the position and the more authentic the army experience. As women serving in the IDF serve mostly in peripheral positions, their army experiences are often highly removed from the combat frame.

My research was carried out at the height of the Al-aqsa Intifada, the second Palestinian uprising against Israel's military and civilian population, during which terrorist attacks on Israeli civilians took place at alarming rates, at times averaging one attack per day. Concurrently, IDF operations in the occupied territories greatly increased. With many deaths and much suffering for those on both sides of the existing conflict, the Intifada created special circumstances for Israeli society and for the IDF and, thus, for my research. The security situation in Israel was heightened and many soldiers who served in non-combat positions were placed in situations where they were expected to perform semi-combat duties. For instance, soldiers whose only experience with weapons was from their few weeks in basic training, often found themselves having

to carry weapons. Soldiers, especially armed soldiers, were expected to represent security and calm, as if their very presence would somehow prevent an attack. Accordingly soldiers, especially male soldiers who did not have positions associated with combat, were thrown into the 'soldier role,' magnifying the visibility of masculine military imagery and strengthening the myth that most military service is combat based.

Play soldiering: Combat proximity and living conditions

Closed bases allow women soldiers to live in military space without the interruption of going home to sleep, thus providing a 'typical' army life-style. Moreover, the closer the closed base is to combat, the more connected base life is to combat tools (weapons, tanks) and, more importantly, to combat soldiers. In line with the myth of military service, army life is most often envisioned as linked with weapons and war and those serving in bases connected to these things feel that they are undergoing the veritable army experience. Just as combat positions are considered to be the 'true' military positions, closed bases are regarded as the 'true' military bases, irrespective of the fact that this does not mesh with reality. This is because closed bases often simulate combat conditions in terms of physical conditions and distance from home and because male soldiers are most often posted to closed bases, just as male soldiers monopolize combat positions. Closed bases therefore provide an environment in which women can live the same life-style as combat soldiers. Indeed, what better a way to mimic combat soldiers than living among them and suffering the same physical conditions? Sasson-Levy argues that, by modelling themselves on male combat soldiers, women soldiers reproduce the notion that masculinity is a universal norm for soldiering.[35] I would add that by mimicking combat soldiers, women soldiers strengthen the notion that the only 'real' soldiers are those involved in combat.

In addition, because combat is considered the most prestigious form of army service and as women are formally barred from most forms of combat duty, women's prestige is measured by their proximity to combat. As Ben-Ari states, 'status is dependent on proximity to or distance from the epitome of the serviceman – the combat soldier'.[36] Thus, the closer one is to living the myth of military service or to others who are living it, the higher the individual prestige level. As women cannot officially enter most combat units, true combat identity is unreachable. In response women serving on closed bases make themselves members of this high status group and gain a sense of true military participation by modelling their life-style on, and associating with, combat soldiers. Golan points out that, 'the closer a woman's task is to an actual combat position, the higher her status, albeit after that of her fellow male soldier'.[37] However, it is important to note that women's status is not only determined by the

proximity of her military position to a combat position, but by her physical proximity to combat and combat soldiers. While women soldiers' status may not reach that of their male counterparts in combat, they raise their own status by both mimicking male combat practices and placing themselves near male combat soldiers. Edna Levy found that young people in Israel ranked the desirability of military jobs according to their, 'actual proximity to the battlefield or...similarity to combat service'.[38] She notes that this was most striking among the young women she studied who are formally banned from direct combat roles. Likewise, Robbins and Ben-Eliezer write: '"Combat" for women...is highly connected to serving in the territories; it does not involve fighting or even training. However, the cultural capital and prestige earned from these roles is clearly a case of support for militarism without full participation'.[39] Women soldiers, unable to participate fully in the myth of military service, can gain many of the advantages offered from combat by placing themselves nearer to the myth. This seems to be the closest women can come to full participation in the military organisation. Simply put, women soldiers use male combat soldiers as a means of gaining status in an organisation that values combat above all else.

Physical demands and base conditions

Barrett, discussing the construction of hegemonic masculinity within the US Navy, points out that, for some, enduring physical hardship becomes a mark of masculine achievement.[40] Indeed, physical endurance and rough conditions are often associated with 'real' soldiering. I found that respondents who served in combat or combat-type positions (such as border guards or combat instructors) were made to go through vigorous basic training and courses as preparation, even though they would never be placed in combat situations where this training would come in useful. Often they reported having been pushed to their physical limits during training through activities that included running with heavy loads, staying awake for long hours, and standing on their feet for long durations in cold weather conditions. They reported feeling that they had been forced to carry out activities that they did not, initially, think they could manage. Carrying out these tasks left them with feelings of great accomplishment. Furthermore, physical activity simulates combat because basic combat training is highly dependent on physical action. If women in closed bases are 'playing at being real soldiers', pushing themselves to their physical limits is essential to the game.

Many respondents serving at closed bases experienced unwelcoming physical conditions. Bases were often very cold during the winter, shower and toilet facilities were often unclean, bedrooms were crowded, laundry presented a problem, food was distasteful, and sometimes respondents reported having had insects, rats and mice at their bases. These harsh

physical conditions (especially at bases close to combat) also served as a source of pride for soldiers. The conditions stand in strong contrast with conditions at open bases. Respondents who served in open bases often reported choosing not to eat any food whatsoever served at the base (due to their dislike of army food) and spoke of their preference for their home's private, clean shower and their own comfortable bed. These options were not available at a closed base and this contrast was very much a source of pride for my respondents. Moreover, respondents reported that suffering through harsh conditions made them feel like 'real soldiers'. Of course this is not surprising as rough base conditions resemble those of combat soldiers, while having the luxury of going home from open bases each day presents the epitome of non-combat service.

The contrast between open and closed bases is demonstrated through the term *jobnik*. This term is pejorative, used to refer to all those who do not serve in combat units. Although in reality this includes the majority of men in the army and, of course, almost all women (which is why the term is seldom used to describe women — women's non-combat status is a given), it is usually aimed at the lowest status military positions, such as cooks, common guards, drivers. Fisch explains the link between the term *jobnik*, combat service, and masculinity:[41]

The non-combat male soldier, known as a *jobnik*, is completely outside this [combat unit] hierarchy and thus unable to access the symbolic capital associated with manhood and combat. Although all women serve in a *jobnik* position, the term is restricted for men in non-combat units and ultimately infers that their positions are not 'proper' roles for a man and interchangeable with the strictly non-combat female roles. Thus through the gradation of status organised around the link between combat and manhood, these roles serve as a [means for determining male and female domains].

Women serving on closed bases seem somewhat removed from the *jobnik* state as their placements, if not their positions, model combat where status and prestige are derived in part through differentiation from and denigration of non-combat service. Combat soldiers are more highly valued than *jobniks* because non-combat positions are regarded as less essential by both the IDF and Jewish Israeli society, Interestingly, while male combat soldiers derive prestige by comparison with non-combat soldiers, women soldiers on closed bases derive prestige not only through their association with male combat soldiers but also in comparison with women serving at open bases. While they are not combat soldiers when compared to their male counterparts, they are more like combat soldiers than their female counterparts on open bases. As Sasson-Levy (2002) explains that by differentiating themselves from women in more traditionally feminine military roles, women construct a positive perception of themselves. She writes:[42]

> Like their male counterparts, the women soldiers in masculine roles identify with the military masculinist ideology and express anti feminine attitudes. Therefore, in order to differentiate themselves from what they perceive as traditional, weak, and submissive femininity, as it is represented by the army, they speak with condescension and distain about other women whom they regard as inferior to men, and they tend to think that most women belong to that category (certainly women soldiers who serve in traditional feminine roles).

Indeed, my respondents on closed bases often spoke of women on open bases as somewhat spoiled or even unmotivated. One respondent articulated this well:

> I think that most of the women, there aren't so many combat women but those that are, are much more mature and not as spoiled as the clerks [at open bases] that worry about their nails....to start crying because: I have a paper cut! Or if I accidentally break a bit of a nail it's the end of the world.

It is interesting to note that this respondent views combat (and closed bases) and non-combat (open bases) as dichotomous with combat equivalent to maleness and non-combat equivalent to hyper-femaleness (e.g. being upset by a broken nail). Furthermore she speaks of women on closed bases as if they are, themselves, combat soldiers. Another closed base respondent, speaking of her friend (who served in the same position as she did but at an open base) noted:

> In short Miriam is stressed...[when she's not] at home. She can't not come home. She's one of those mommy's girls, wrapped in a ribbon.

Clearly, this respondent equates open-based service with being spoiled—real soldiers, it seems, do not go home to mommy. Since she served in exactly the same position as her friend but in a closed base setting, her comment also served to reinforce her place in the unofficial military hierarchy. She does not go home every day and so her military service resembles that of 'real' soldiers serving in combat. By belittling her friend's base placement, she elevates her own unofficial status in the military organisation.

Most respondents on closed bases had not previously lived apart from their parents. Many spoke of having to 'fend for themselves' and directly linked this with both independence and maturity. Given that the army structures its soldiers' daily routines, it is interesting that army service should provide respondents with such a sense of independence. The army dictates what soldiers should wear, what they should eat, where they sleep, and how they spend their time. Parental rules are replaced with a military structure that regulates behaviour and simultaneously confers a false illusion of independence. Indeed, while military regulations may objectively be regarded as lessening independence, my respondents did

not perceive them in this manner . On the contrary, the fact that the IDF provides structure and rules was viewed as something that soldiers are made to 'deal with', and overcoming the difficulty of adjusting to this lifestyle was seen as a step to independence and maturity. Many respondents told me stories of having to overcome both the rules and limitations placed upon them by the IDF. These women often claimed that such trials made them emerge stronger, and sometimes claimed that the army taught them how to stand up for themselves. This is not surprising as strict rules and structure mimic the atmosphere of combat (in its military portrayal if not in its messy reality). One officer commented on this by explaining why she feels that people who have served in the IDF are more mature:

> Forgive me for saying this to you but I think that one of the reasons that in Israel people are more mature, smarter, and more open to things than people in other countries is because of the army. Because at eighteen suddenly, without asking you, they disconnect you from the life that you're used to. And they tell you what to wear, what to eat, how to behave, what to do, and you get a great amount of responsibility.... The army matures.

This soldier links a strictly structured atmosphere with maturity and responsibility in a manner that echoes the rhetoric of 'the making of men' yet fails to see the irony in her statement. She explains that soldiers have their every move controlled but, in the same breath, suggests that this very thing leads to responsibility. However, this irony can be explained through examining the myth of military service. The atmosphere of a closed base is linked in soldiers' minds to ideas surrounding combat regardless of whether or not the base is actually located in a dangerous area or connected to combat positions. The highly structured environment of a closed base feels like combat soldiering to them. The very fact that the soldier must adhere to military rules and regulations implies proximity to combat even if this is not the reality. This concurs with Enloe's analysis as she explains: 'In reality, of course, to be a soldier of the state means to be subservient, obedient and almost totally dependent. But that mundane reality is hidden behind a potential myth: to be a soldier means possibly to experience "combat"...'.[43] Living alone for the first time and managing military life places women at closed bases as what Edna Levy calls 'simulated soldiers'.[44] For the closed-based soldiers in my sample, the life-style associated with closed-base soldiering simulates actual combat positions while being forced to obey stringent rules and regulations becomes a replacement for battle.

Bending Definitions: Equating Danger and Action with Combat

One of the greatest sources of pride for soldiers is to serve in an area that is considered dangerous. Most of the women in my sample who served

in close proximity to combat found themselves in dangerous areas. Many of these women served (as educators, computer technicians, dental assistants, and social workers) in positions that were not directly related to combat yet they considered themselves to be combat soldiers. One most blatant example of this phenomenon comes to light in an interview with two women serving as computer technicians — Miriam, who was serving on an open base, and Orna, who was serving on a closed base close to one of the occupied territories.

> Orna: I'm *kravit* [female combat soldier] and she's a *jobnikit* [female form of jobnik].
> ...
>
> Miriam: … she's a jobnikit…she doesn't understand that she's a jobnikit just like me.
>
> Orna: I'm krav
>
> Interviewer: What do you mean? Explain yourself.
>
> Miriam: Because she always thinks that she, she's in the territories so that's it. So she's kravit. And she's not kravit....I have an exemption from the territories.
>
> Orna: (said in funny voice) She has an exemption from the territories! An exemption from the territories…
>
> Miriam: Why should I go to a dangerous place?
>
> Orna: Nooo
>
> Miriam: There's no reason for me to go.
>
> Orna: That means that you're a jobnikit! That you're a coward!
> ...
>
> Interviewer (to Orna): Do you think of yourself as kravit?
>
> Miriam: (laughing) She left her M-16 at home.
>
> Orna: Because of the fact that they shoot at me in the shower. Because of the fact that instead of a window in my office I have concrete, then...it's considered very dangerous.

Clearly, Orna equates danger with combat. In her view, simply being in close proximity to combat makes her a combat soldier. This sentiment was shared by other respondents One who served in a clerical position at a closed combat base related:

> I really, really loved it. It's like: a soldier, going to the Golan Heights...it's like I'm kravi.

Indeed, simply being placed in dangerous situations made respondents feel that they were like combat soldiers because they were placing their lives at risk. Several respondents spoke of having to spend long hours in bomb-shelters or secured rooms, which gave them a sense of combat and also served as a bonding mechanism between soldiers. Others spoke of being forbidden to leave their work spaces during dangerous periods. Risking their lives in this way made them feel that they were much like combat soldiers and evoked feelings of pride. They felt that even if they were not themselves fighting, their sacrifice showed a devotion and courage equivalent to that of their male combat counterparts. One respondent explained:

> Even if there was shelling or something like that, I would have to — it was forbidden for me to move....everyone would go down to the bomb shelters, we...would stay....Going in, not going in, war, you're staying to work. So eh, that's patriotic.

Just as danger was equated with combat, serving at a combat (as opposed for example to a maintenance or a clerical) base was enough to make my respondents feel that they were themselves combat soldiers. It seems that the atmosphere of a combat base, as well as the company of combat soldiers, results in feelings of belonging to combat units as well as feelings of pride. One respondent articulated this well by pointing out that simply belonging to a combat division made her feel the status of the entire group. She explains that in retrospect she realizes that she did not actually serve in combat at all, yet at the time of her service group membership made her feel entitled to group standing.:

> Yes [I think of myself as kravi], because I'm serving like...kravi and I'm serving with soldiers that are kravi soldiers.... But why is it pride? Because you feel that — first of all the more that you are in a division, the more that you understand what the contribution of that division is to the IDF...and you basically start to become part of it and the moment that you're part of it, you develop some sort of pride...[You're] like bursting from pride! You get to the unit and it's all the wind [rush] of kravi.... Today it's really funny to me because really, come on, you know, what is it really? But then, it looked like — you felt it, that you were doing something very important.

Alongside danger, respondents often mentioned what they referred to as 'action' as a great source of pride. They regarded simply serving at bases where there was a great deal of combat activity as exciting and it made them feel that they were themselves combat soldiers. For instance, when I asked one respondent what she meant when she used the word, 'female-fighter' she answered: 'someone who's found in the centre of things.' She then explained that feeling she was in the centre of things gave her a great deal of confidence and pride. Another respondent, who worked in education, explained that being at the centre of the action

made her feel special. That is, she felt special to be chosen as one of the few girls to be close to the action and she felt that simply by being there she made a greater contribution than she would have at a base far from 'action'. She said:

> Like, it's pride and it's fun. And you feel, again, you feel that you're not merely in the Kirya [a large open base located in TelAviv] and that. You feel that you're doing something more 'action' like that.... But I was one of the few girls who went up there, most of the girls stayed at the base.

Clearly, being near 'action' provides a fitting set for the playing at being real soldiers that these women seem to be doing. Indeed, many respondents mentioned that they requested to be in close proximity to combat because they wanted to be close to action. As one respondent who did not have this request fulfilled, and who served in an open base explained:

> [I wanted to be combat] because I like action. I like...to be in the field....I like that a great deal. I wanted an army environment. I really liked the idea of the army and to be a fighter. I liked...[that world]. Not the...[world] of contributing.... [That is] more the men I think, but being more part of... [that world]. To really feel the army and not to sit in the office....You understand, the army is somehow adventure service.

What is most interesting in this respondent's statement is that she fully acknowledges that in a position that she considers to be combat, she would not be contributing in the same manner as combat men, yet she desires to be in the field in order to feel the 'adventure' of combat. Other respondents echoed these sentiments and added that being in a location where there is 'action' is more fun as it adds an element of excitement to work that is otherwise somewhat monotonous or uninteresting. Additionally, being around action usually overlaps with being in imminent danger, which, as noted, gives women soldiers the feeling that they are risking their lives and are thus, themselves, combat soldiers. One respondent articulated this well when asked why she enjoys serving at a base close to the occupied territories:

> Because it's — it's like action. It's fun. Every time you hear [certain] noise you run straight away to see...what's going on. It's a risk.....It's very interesting.... It's dangerous. I like that it's dangerous. Because they can shoot at me...it's not a problem for them....Any second something can happen but still it's, it's a risk like that, understand. It's dangerous to be there and that's why it's fun.

Other researchers have also found that women serving in pseudo-combat roles in the IDF find the danger involved in their placements to be exciting. The Israeli media portray these women as enjoying the adventure of combat as well as the action involved in travelling risky routes to and from their bases.[45]

The notion that danger is considered a source of fun is strongly tied to the game of playing combat. It is striking that the women in my sample who served in dangerous areas spoke only of the excitement involved in the danger and did not mention having had any concerns for their own safety. Also, there is no mention of the fact that this excitement is intricately linked to proximity to conflict, violence, and human tragedy. The fact that these women feel elated by their connection to suffering, death, and war is discouraging regardless of one's political position on the Israeli-Palestinian or Arab-Israeli conflict. Traditional notions of gender suggest that women are peace minded and that men are war minded. While this thinking has been questioned by military gender scholars[46] it serves to reinforce the military as a masculine domain. Women soldiers enjoy their proximity to war for precisely this reason: considering the great prestige conferred onto combat soldiers, Robbins and Ben-Eliezer note:[47]

> During helicopter journeys to and from distant bases in Lebanon, women soldiers on occasion engaged in 'war games,' decking themselves in the men's military gear for the return. The bullet-proof vest became a status symbol; it testified to one's proximity to battle and the risk of death this unusual assignment entailed.

Danger and action are crucial elements of combat. If women are playing at having real combat positions, the closer their conditions resemble those of combat soldiers, the better players they become; and playing the game well leads to status and prestige.

Creating combat identity through tools and base placement

Connection with the tools and/or the environment of combat, rather than actual involvement in combat activity, seemed to make soldiers feel the pride and status connected with combat soldiers. This point is best illustrated by a discussion with one respondent who explained how simply carrying a weapon confers combat status

> Interviewer: Why are you walking around with a weapon?
>
> Respondent: I don't know. I got it in basic training and it hasn't left me, and I'm asked everyday why I have a weapon. I don't know — they decided that we're combat and...
>
> Interviewer: What kind of feeling does it give you that they decided that you're combat?
>
> Respondent: Pride.... Combat is pride.

Just as carrying a weapon is associated with combat and is thus a source of pride, so is serving at a closed base (even one removed from combat). Indeed, simply serving at a closed, as opposed to an open, base

gave some respondents the feeling of being pseudo-combat soldiers. One respondent (who did not serve anywhere near combat or danger) illustrated this well when she told me:

> Once every two months you do weekend service, so it turns out that I'm at the base for a week and a half [without going home]. So I really feel *kravit*!

Another respondent who did not serve in close proximity to combat but did serve in a closed base shows how serving far from home is also associated with combat, pride, and 'real' service.

> ... not many girls serve far from home. When we were in the base… we'd always say that we are *kraviot* and all, we're not at all like other girls because we come home once every two weeks like boys and we were really enthused that we were pseudo-kraviot with the going home schedules of *kraviot.* And also in that most of my female friends would go to the base at eight in the morning and come back at five in the afternoon....I think that my service was much better than theirs.... And I think that in order to have the army experience you really have to be far from home… and to *feel* that you're doing army. That is, not to be spoiled and come home everyday. That's it. So I felt that my service was even better than that of others.

Reinforcing gender roles

One must be cautious when evaluating gender performances. Often, what seems 'progressive' in terms of gender equality has counterproductive consequences. For instance, Pilgeram, in her discussion of female farm operators performing masculine roles, suggests that, 'the women's performance might actually enforce the idea that all good farmers are men and that the only way to succeed in agriculture is to conform to the requisite standards of hegemonic masculinity'.[48] Similar arguments have been put forward in relation to women's participation in Israel's military. Sasson-Levy in her discussion of women in masculine army roles, notes:[49]

> Through mimicry practices, they [women] resist the traditional military definition of women as weak and vulnerable or as sexual objects. In so doing, they challenge the patriarchal order of the military gender regime. On the other hand, mimicry expresses an idealization of, and ingratiation to, the powerful group.

While being in closed bases, especially those in dangerous areas, was a source of pride for my respondents, it also reinforced stereotypical gender roles. The clerical, social work, or other non-combat nature of my respondents' activity on these bases contrasted strongly with the work done by male combat soldiers around them. That they were not really combat soldiers stood out more clearly at a base close to combat than it would have at any other base. Indeed this juxtaposition only serves to

reinforce gendered expectations about which jobs men and women are best suited for and to strengthen the gendered nature of the institution. It also served to reinforce the position of women as weaker and in need of protection.

A very blatant expression of this is present in the discussions surrounding the deaths of Sgt. Adi Osman and Sgt. Sarit Shneor. These female soldiers were serving in the territories and were among those killed on October 24, 2003 when their army base in the Gaza Strip settlement of Netzarim was infiltrated and the soldiers' barracks were fired on. The deaths of Osman and Shneor stirred up a great deal of controversy in Israel not only about the issue of settlements in Israel's occupied territories but also about arming female soldiers serving in clerical or social work roles in dangerous areas. Both Osman and Shneor had had their weapons taken from them as a result of IDF budget cuts. In fact, after the incident, the IDF began investigating a claim that a base commander took weapons away from all female soldiers serving on that base.

Like Osman and Shneor, many respondents serving in close proximity to combat were not armed. They explained the rationale behind this decision was that in a combat situation their weapons could be taken from them. This left my respondents dependent on the male soldiers at the base. Many reported needing to be escorted from place to place by an armed male or having a group of male soldiers on the base solely to guard them. The fact that their male counterparts were often involved in combat activities seemed to magnify their own non-combat roles at the base. The comments of several respondents suggest that they recognized that they were, in some ways, fooling themselves when they spoke of themselves as combat soldiers. One respondent explained:

> In the selections they told us, "combat, combat, combat" but in the end I don't fight the enemy or something.

Indeed, I encountered several situations where juxtaposing female soldiers to combat and actual combat soldiers evoked some ridicule from the general public. This became especially evident during my field research when I overheard soldiers speaking of female combat instructors as glorified clerks or as somewhat useless to the army. An outstanding example came during a social gathering when one of my respondents explained to a male friend that she had been a combat soldier during her service. Upon learning the nature of her position (which was related to health), her friend broke into laughter at the notion that she would call herself a 'combat soldier' when her position had nothing, whatsoever, to do with combat.

Concluding observations: Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery

The notion that women serving in non-combat roles could refer to themselves as combat soldiers simply because of placement on a closed

base may at first seem outlandish. However, it is important to note that the limitations placed on female soldiers are structural and far from hidden. In response, female soldiers create the alternative means of 'doing masculinity' to seek status. As detailed above, they use closed-base placement as a means of mimicking male combat soldiers and, thus, find a way to retain their femininity while still gaining from the prestige and status conferred on their male counterparts. However, while the belief that they are like combat soldiers may bring them status and pride, the very fact that this belief is a fallacy prevents their positions on closed bases advancing women's position generally in the IDF. The old adage that states that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery: the mimicry of male combat soldiers by status-seeking women is just that — flattery. It works as a pat on the back to a system that places serious limitations on the roles of women soldiers and reinforces women's places in the IDF as peripheral.

Women in the IDF playing at being real soldiers and belonging to the military organisation may bring a sense of self-worth to individuals. Collectively, however, it is as progressive as a children's game of dress-up and carries much the same result. By 'pretending' to be combat soldiers, women in closed bases gain legitimacy and, at least somewhat overcome the structural limitations placed on them by the military organisation. Simultaneously however, mimicking combat soldiers strengthens the myth that the authentic army experience is combat and reinforces gender role differentiation within the IDF. In order to make genuine progress towards gender equality, women soldiers need to move away from imaginary power, exchanging it for genuine combat positions. This will not happen soon as the way that the military is currently legitimized draws heavily on gender metaphors and notions of women as in need of protection. It only goes to reason that, until this changes, women will continue mimicry practices for individual gains and group losses.

This study leaves us with many questions. It would be interesting to see if the few female soldiers who do serve in actual combat positions feel the need to elevate their own status through mimicry of a different nature. It would also be informative to interview male soldiers who serve in peripheral IDF positions to assess whether they too engage in mimicry. If closed-base women engage in mimicry as a result of structured IDF gender limitations, do other groups (e.g. soldiers whose profiles limit their ability to engage in combat, visible minorities, those who deviate from societal gender or sexuality norms, etc.) who face structured, or even unstructured, limitations engage in similar behaviour? Moreover, is there a way that this type of mimicry can be used not only to advance individual status but also to further collective goals?

NOTES

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[9] G. Golan, 'Militarization and Gender: The Israeli Experience', *Women's Studies International Forum*, 20, 5–6, Sept.–Dec., 581–586, 1997, p. 582.

[10] Klein, in Note 5 above, p. 672.

[11] Izraeli in Note 5 above, p.148.

[12] M. W. Segal, 'Women's Military Roles Cross-nationally: Past, Present, and Future', *Gender & Society*, 9, 6, 757–775, 1995, p. 758.

[13] F. Barrett, 'The Organisational Construction of Hegemonic Masculinity: The Case of the US Navy', *Gender, Work and* Organis*ation*, 3, 3, 129–142, 1996, p.129.

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[29] Non-Jewish Israeli women were not included in my sample as the majority of non-Jewish women do not serve in the military.

[30] Average interview lasted one hour.

[31] Jobs were allocated by the soldiers in charge of the volunteers.

[32] Sasson-Levy, in Note 1 above; Y. Levy, 'Militarizing Inequality: A Conceptual Framework', *Theory and Society*, 27, 873–904, 1998.

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[39] J. Robbins and U. Ben-Eliezer, 'New Roles or 'New Times'? Gender Inequality and Militarism in Israel's Nation-in-Arms', *Social Politics*, 7, 309–343, 2000, p. 335.

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[42] Sasson-Levy, in Note 1 above, p.374.

[43] Enloe, in Note 14 above, p.13.

[44] Levy, in Note 28 above.

[45] Robbins and Ben-Eliezer, in Note 34 above.

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[48] R. Pilgeram, ''Ass-kicking' Women: Doing and Undoing Gender in a US Livestock Auction', *Gender, Work and Organisation*, 14, 6, 572–595, 2007, p. 574.

[49] Sasson-Levy, in Note 1 above, p.376.

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THE JEWS OF BOSTON, LINCOLNSHIRE

Harold Pollins

In Anglo-Jewish history the county of Lincolnshire was important in two eras. First, in the Middle Ages the town of Lincoln had a significant Jewish settlement and was particularly notorious for the long-lived blood-libel and myth of Little Hugh of Lincoln. More recently, there has been the community of Grimsby and also the role of that port as a point of entry for Jews and other immigrants. In the 19th century small numbers of Jews settled in several towns in the county — a few at Gainsborough and Louth; rather more at Lincoln, and most at Boston. The Jewish community of Grimsby has greatly declined in recent years, but a new community, a Progressive congregation, was formed in Lincoln in 1992.[1] In this article I shall look at Boston.

In his *Rise of Provincial Jewry,* Cecil Roth devoted a page to the Jews who lived in Boston, and in the 1975 publication, *Provincial Jewry in Victorian England.,* very little more information was added to Roth's account,[2] but it is possible to add considerably to the little that has hitherto been published about its Jewish component.

Cecil Roth ended his book on provincial Jewry at about 1840 although with some references to later events and people. He referred to one man who lived there in the 18th century, about 1779–80, and to Mary Myers who was born in the town in 1799. Otherwise he wrote particularly of Henry Lewis Leo, born c. 1800 in London, who married Mary Myers. Two of their three daughters were born in Boston in the 1820s; they were Abigail and Elizabeth, who remained unmarried while the third daughter, Rosina, married a Boston jeweller, Benjamin Abrahams, in February 1857, at what was probably the first Jewish wedding performed in Boston.[3] Roth said that 'the Leo family' were 'traditionally quill-pen manufacturers, and at the same time cigar and sweet-merchants'. In the 1841 Census Leo is described as a 'quill dresser', in 1851 as a general shopkeeper, and in 1861 as a tobacconist. He died just before the 1871 Census but his widow then became the tobacconist, in the few months before she died.[4] A curious story about Henry Lewis Leo appeared in a

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local newspaper, which was picked up and partly reprinted in the *Jewish Chronicle*. It stated:

> THE GUILD OF WORMGATE. — Election of a Jew Mayor. The members of the above Guild assembled in strong force on Monday evening last at their hotel (the Dog and Duck) in Wormgate to inaugurate the Mayor (Mr. H.L. Leo) for the ensuing municipal year. After which a splendid supper was served by the host, and a very pleasant evening was spent. The usual loyal toasts were given and responded to in an enthusiastic manner, not forgetting our glorious allies, the French (which by some carelessness or other cause was omitted at the dinner given to F. Cooke, Esq. at the Town Hall on Friday last.) The health of the Lord Mayor of London was also received with great applause, and responded to by the Mayor, who congratulated the citizens of London and the Guild of Wormgate on the liberality of spirit displayed by them in electing their magisterial officers from members of the Jewish persuasion — a class hitherto debarred from public offices similar to those to which he and Mr. Salomons had been elected.

This was a strange news item. The Mayor of Boston was not Henry Lewis Leo but Frederick Cooke who was indeed the Mayor for three years, 1853–6.[5] It has been suggested to me that this was an ironic view of the recent dinner given to Cooke, the Mayor-elect, comparing the election of David Salomons to be the Lord Mayor of London with the absence of a Jew in municipal office in Boston.[6]

It was not until the 1880s that any sort of Jewish communal activity took place in Boston. Table I indicates that there was a small increase of population by then. Before then, and in addition to the Leo family, a few Jews had lived in the town.

Table I.
Jewish Population of Boston, at the decennial Censuses 1841–1911

Census Year	Jewish Population
1841	19
1851	11
1861	5
1871	6
1881	16 (+1?)
1891	18
1901	34
1911	53

NOTE: The additional 1 in 1881 with a question mark refers to Lina Frank, a domestic servant from Germany in the household of Lewis Szapira, who may have been Jewish.

At the 1841 Census the 19 Jews comprised two families: six were of the Leo family, including his mother-in-law, all born in the UK; the other family was that of Daniel Cohen, a general dealer, amounting to seven,

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five of whom were born abroad. There were also six single men, born abroad, two tailors, a hatter, and three jewellers. The Leo and Cohen families were still there in 1851 (the latter family less three sons), as were three travellers (hawkers) residing in a lodging house. One of these three was Abraham Moses who may well have been the same Abraham Moses who was in Boston at the 1841 Census. He moved to Lincoln in the 1850s as did the Cohen family, thus markedly reducing the small Boston population. Cohen's wife died in Lincoln in 1868 and the husband in 1872. In Boston in the 1861 Census there now just the Leos, less the now-married daughter Rosina, but her daughter, Pamela Kate, was with her grandparents in Boston; there were also two transient travellers. As mentioned above, Henry Leo and his wife died in the early 1870s, and their business came to an end. The Leo connection with Boston remained, however, with the continued residence of the two unmarried daughters Abigail and Elizabeth, who were reported in the 1881 Census as having 'Income from houses and dividends' and in 1891 as 'Living on own means'. Elizabeth died in Boston in 1892 and Abigail in the same town in 1908.

To conclude this early history, a new name appeared in the 1871 Census; This was Szapira, a family to be associated with Boston for many years. Two Polish immigrants, Lewis Szapira and Annie Lave were married in the Boston Register Office in 1870. The groom had a curious history. At the 1861 Census he was an inmate of the Operative Jewish Convert Institution in Palestine Place, Bethnal Green. In 1859 he was baptised in the Episcopal Jews' Chapel, associated with the conversion institution. Yet his family was closely associated with the Jewish community, and he was buried in a Jewish cemetery.[7]

After their marriage in 1870 in Boston they apparently moved to the East End of London. According to the various Census reports, their first child, Moses, was born in London in 1870; yet curiously the birth of Moses Myer Szapira was registered in the Boston district in the December quarter of 1870. While the family had a continual association with Boston, at the 1871 Census Lewis was living in what is now Tower Hamlets, in the East End of London, as a general dealer (in the Census his name was recorded as 'Lewis Sypird') while his wife Annie was in Boston as a picture dealer. The husband must have returned to Boston quite soon as another three sons were born there by 1882. In the 1881 Census his occupation given as 'shop keeper general'. Lewis died in 1885 but it is interesting that his household, at the 1881 Census, included a 'servant', one Gambert Fitelson, from Courland (sc Latvia),who, as 'shop keeper's assistant', presumably worked in the Szapira's shop (rather than someone else's). Fitelson (renamed 'George') was to be an important figure in the soon-to-be-established Jewish community in Boston. Lewis's widow, Annie Szapira, remarried in 1895 and went to live in Cardiff with her second husband, Solomon William Joseph, a pawnbroker, with

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whom she was recorded there in 1901. But in the 1911 Census she was back in Boston, as a jeweller and antique dealer, with her son Samuel while her husband was in Cardiff. Another son, Moses Szapira, was also in Boston, as an antique dealer. He had nine children, all born in Boston. Annie's husband Solomon died in Cardiff in 1921; she died in Boston in 1924. I shall return to her.

In July 1892 the *JC* printed its first news of communal activity in Boston:[8]

> BOSTON. After a lapse of nearly a century, a Jewish Congregation has again been formed at Boston (Lincolnshire). Divine services were held for the first time a fortnight ago by Mr. W. S. Woolman. There are but five Jewish families in the town, and funds being small, and the expenses at the outset large, the congregation seek help from outside. Mr. G. Fitelson, the President, of Emery Lane, will gladly receive contributions.

A congregation was presumably organised quite quickly as, at a general meeting held in October, 1892 Latvian-born Fitelson (a draper) was re-elected President, and, Wolf Robinson (a picture frame maker, born in Poland) having retired as Treasurer, Max Goldstein was unanimously elected Treasurer and Secretary. In the following month the President of the Board of Deputies was authorised to certify for the first time, in the person of Mr Marks (sic) Goldstein, a Registrar for Marriages for the Boston Hebrew Congregation.[9] The congregation obtained a Sepher Torah at a cost of £12. More than that was raised, mostly from people living elsewhere, with surplus money was to be spent on a megillah.[10] I have managed to find four Jewish households in Boston in the 1891 Census: they were headed respectively by Annie Szapira, Wolf Robinson, George Fitelson, and the 77-year old Abigail Leo. I have been unable to find Max (or Marks) Goldstein or W.S. Woolman, unless the latter was a misprint for S. Wolman who may have formally been appointed minister at Boston, following an advertisement of the autumn of 1893:[11]

> 'BOSTON HEBREW CONGREGATION
>
> WANTED, for Boston, Lincolnshire, a YOUNG MAN (single), authorised to act as Shochet. Salary £30 per annum, which can be increased by an industrious person. Apply Mr. Cannin (sic), Secretary 51 Pen-street. Boston, Lincolnshire'.

This Secretary was Abraham Canin, who had been elected Treasurer and Secretary earlier in the year in the place of M. Goldstein who had resigned on leaving the town.[12] Canin was a shadowy character but was probably a brother of Leopold (Leo) Canin, who was in Annie Szapira's household in 1891 and who became an officer of the congregation in due course. Abraham Canin married Bessie Dight of Birmingham in 1893 and stayed in Boston for at least a year as a daughter was born in the town in 1894. Leo married Bertha Tudelowitz (or Judelwich) in Liverpool in 1896 and the family settled in Boston.

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In the meantime, although this was a small community, hopeful reports emanated from it. Thus in September 1893 the JC noted: 'BOSTON (LINCOLN.) This year, many persons who formerly went to Grimsby or Hull to attend service in synagogue preferred to pass the festivals in Boston. The services were conducted by the Rev. S. Wolman, assisted by Mr. Levy, of Hull. A choir trained by the Rev. S. Wolman added to the solemnity of the services'. And in the same issue of the newspaper the community's Chatan Torah (G. Fitelson) and Chatan Bereshit (Abraham Canin) were noticed. In March 1894 Abraham Canin became the Marriage Secretary in place of Goldstein.[13]

At the end of March 1894, 'A meeting of the Boston Congregation, for the purpose of reorganisation, was held on Sunday, and was presided over by Mr. M. L. Dight of Birmingham, who was on a visit to the town'. Dight was the father-in-law of Abraham Canin who was elected President. Mr. W. Robinson, and Mr. M. Marks were respectively elected Treasurer and Hon. Secretary. The Rev. S. Rudnitzky delivered an address, and arranged to give expositions of the Pentateuch on Sunday afternoons'.[14] Perhaps Rudnitzky was the new minister of Boston. Or he may have been a visiting minister, to replace Wolman. The latter must have left Boston as he was at Hull in 1894 and was married at Brynmawr in 1895 and became the minister of that town's congregation soon afterwards.[15]

Perhaps the highlight of the congregation's history was its first bar mitzvah in 1894. The *JC* reported:

> The congregation having been but recently established, a Barmitzvah which took place last Sabbath aroused more than ordinary interest. Many Christian friends attended the ceremony. Mrs. L. Szapira, the mother of the youth (who read the usual portion, a younger brother reading the Haphtorah), has resided in Boston for nearly a quarter century, and is much respected by the Christian townspeople.[16]

Yet any euphoria about these events were short-lived. Within a few months, as early as February 1895, there was a reference, at a meeting of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, to the 'transfer of one of the Marriage Register Books of the extinct congregation at Boston (Lincolnshire) to the Board' , and three months later the Board again referred to 'the Boston Congregation which had … become extinct'.[17] It had presumably lost members; Abraham Canin, obviously an active member, left Boston for Birmingham where a daughter was born early in 1896.

Cecil Roth quoted the *Jewish Year Book* that 'two congregations existed at Boston at different times, one at the end of the nineteenth century'. He correctly averred that it was 'at one time … properly organised, with a marriage secretary under whose auspices a wedding between two local residents was solemnised in the Synagogue'. I take it that they were

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the Russian-born Abraham Lipman and Polish-born Lena Yansberg/Yansburg; the latter (as Johansburg) was Annie Szapira's housekeeper in 1891. They left Boston soon afterwards for Scotland where three children were born, and a fourth in Manchester in 1900.

Before the second Boston congregation was formed the town came into temporary prominence. The *JC* reported as follows:

> Thirty-five Russian Jews arrived at Boston (Lincolnshire) in a more or less destitute condition on Tuesday evening They were, in the first instance, expelled from Russia, travelled to Egypt, and were there sent to Alexandria, from which port they were despatched by a local Committee in a cotton vessel, the "Palatine" to Boston. They were landed on Wednesday morning, and received by Mrs. L. Szapira, who provided them with food and clothing. One family possessed sufficient money to proceed to America, but the rest were totally destitute, and in accordance with their wish were forwarded to London. One woman is left with seven children, her husband having remained in Alexandria, and a girl sustained a fractured arm on the voyage. There was practically no accommodation for the party on the vessel, and many of them slept among the ship's coal supply *en route*.[18]

Their sojourn in Boston did not last long. The majority had gone after a fortnight, leaving for the USA on 5th March apart from one couple who remained in the town and were to be set up in business. 'During their stay in Boston', reported the JC, 'they were provided by food by Mrs Szipire (sic) and Mr Robinson, with the help of other kind friends'. They were Mrs Annie Szapira and Wolf Robinson. (I have been unable to discover the identity of the couple who remained.) In the same issue of the *JC* there was a report of a meeting of the Russo-Jewish Committee at which 'Letters of acknowledgement were … ordered to be sent to Mrs Szapira, and the Mayor of that town in recognition of the humanity with which the refugees had been treated at Boston'. The episode ended with a court case at Newcastle upon Tyne Police Court at which 'swift and condign punishment has overtaken the captain who brought 38 Jewish passengers from Alexandria to Boston (Lincs) in the "Palatine", under circumstances which are most discreditable'.[19]

The second Boston congregation, to which Cecil Roth briefly referred, came into existence some time in the late 1890s. A notice in the JC in 1900 is tantalising in reporting that 'The New Year services were held *as usual* in Boston. Mr. T. Hoppenstadt, of Leeds, officiated'.[20] Clearly they had begun before this. From desultory newspaper reports, in subsequent years, it appears that a formal congregation was established but without a recognised building for prayer and meetings. Thus in 1904 there was reference to a President, S. Barnett, and that a hall had been engaged for services 'on the High Festivals'. Mr Hoppenstadt of Leeds had acted as Baal Korah and Baal Tokeah. He conducted the services again in 1905.[21] I take it that 'S. Barnett' was Soloman Barnett, a Master Tailor,

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an immigrant from eastern Europe along with his wife who had previously lived in Hull but whose first child in Boston was born there in 1903. He was still there at the time of the 1911 Census.

In the meantime, there was an event affecting Moses Szapira which is worth recording. In 1901 he was charged with attempting to commit suicide. The evidence at the preliminary hearing at the Boston Police Court was that he had drunk some laudanum and had to have his stomach pumped. His evidence was that, although a teetotaller, he had met some men, had had too much to drink and had taken the laudanum which he had bought to treat his wife's toothache. However at least two witnesses stated that he had threatened to commit suicide. At the Quarter Sessions he pleaded guilty, evidence being given that he had twice before threatened to commit suicide, in 1899 and 1900. The magistrates had dismissed the charges on the prisoner's promises — on the last occasion, to go to South Africa. He was sentenced to three months hard labour.[22] Apparently he settled down, produced several more children — three of whom died young (Frank aged 17 in 1919; Vera aged 21 in 1926; and Trixie aged 21 in 1930) — was bankrupt in 1914, and died in 1945.

There is stronger evidence of an organised community, to accommodate growing numbers (34 in 1901, 53 in 1911). Rev. Solomon Chaitowitz (born 1880) arrived in England in the early years of the century and settled in Boston where he was the minister in 1906. A son, Isaac, was born in the town in that year; he, and another son, Abraham, born after the family had left Boston, both became rabbis.[23] The obituary of the father says that he was in Boston until 1910 but there is only one reference in the *JC* to him in the town, mentioning that he had officiated at the Chanucah services in 1906. A report from nearly two years later refers to Rev S. Michaelson delivering an address to the congregation at a meeting held in the house of the Treasurer, Mr Jackson.[24] Moreover, from 1908 several children were born in Whitechapel to Solomon and Jane Chaitowitz.

However, despite the existence of an organised congregation it was deficient in one respect: it did not have a cemetery. Those who died in Boston were necessarily buried in cemeteries in other towns. Rosina Myers (1847) was buried in Hull as were her daughter Mary Pamela Leo (1872) who died a year after her husband Henry Lewis Leo, and their two unmarried daughters, Elizabeth (1892) and Abigail (1908), Lewis Szapira (1885) and his wife — after her second marriage — Annie Joseph Szapira (1924). Annie's brother, Baresh Kathinsky (1915) was also buried there. In addition four (unnamed) others were buried in Grimsby.[25]

The 1911 Census saw the largest number of Jews living in the town; there were eight families and a total of at least 53 people. Of that total, 35 were accounted for by four families of 11, 9, 8, and 7 persons. Only one household head, and his wife, had been born in Britain (Moses and Beatrice Szapira, and they had lived in Boston as a married couple since

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at least 1894); most of the others were born in eastern Europe, but had been in the UK for some time — one (Annie Szapira Joseph) had been married in Boston in 1870. Five of the immigrant families had been in Britain for over a decade, one of them (Solomon Barnett) having lived in Hull before arriving in Boston; and only two less than a decade, one (Harry Brookfield) first settling in Leeds. Whatever their history, they were mostly occupied in typical immigrant trades. A general draper; a traveller (pedlar); a picture frame maker; an antique dealer; another antique dealer who combined that trade with jewellery; a tailor; a merchant tailor (with a live-in domestic servant); and the market trader, selling lace curtains, already mentioned.

Such a number might be thought to have laid the foundation for a small but organised congregation, but there is little evidence that that was so. References to 'Boston' in the *JC* are certainly very numerous, but almost all refer to Boston, USA. In the years up to the Great War one comes across the occasional bar mitzvah of a Boston boy but held at the Grimsby Synagogue. There are letters from Boston children in the 'Young Israel' section of the *JC* indicating the continuing residence there of some Jews. At least three men, all Boston born, served in the Great War: a Pte S. Canin, 4 Lincolnshire Regiment, was listed in the *JC*, 2 April 1915 page 11. I take him to be Solomon Canin, son of Leo. Two members of the Boston Szapira family served. Cpl S. Szapira was mentioned in the *JC* 25 September 1914 p. 13, as serving in the Lincolnshire Yeomanry, and in the Medal Roll at The National Archives, he was a Sergeant in that regiment. He was Samuel Szapira, son of Annie, and his pension papers have survived at The National Archives (WO/364). He was a pre-war soldier, having joined the Lincolnshire Yeomanry on 7 November 1912. His papers give his age as 31 and occupation as jeweller. These are consistent with his entry in the 1911 Census, which shows him as aged 30, and working as an assistant to his mother, who was a jeweller and antique dealer. Despite illness, which resulted in his being medically downgraded in 1916, he remained in the army. The third soldier was Leo David Szapira, son of Moses, and nephew of Samuel. His papers have also survived at The National Archives and they show that he had been in the Territorial Army and that he joined the Royal Scots, at Manchester, on 5 November 1914, aged 20. He had an undistinguished and very short army career. He was discharged a few weeks later, on 16 December 1914 on medical grounds, for 'internal derangement of knee joint'.

The large number of 1911 did not prevent the rapid ending of the formal community. The report of the Board of Deputies on defunct communities, completed in March 1915, included Boston among the 12 congregations that it studied.[26] Perhaps the last word was said by Cecil Roth. In an article on the history of Jews in Penzance, he lamented the ending of some historic communities. 'It is hard to believe that

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synagogues once functioned — and not so very long ago — in places like Boston, Bedford. Ipswich, and Falmouth.'[27] The major reason for the decline was an exodus from the town. Sophia, daughter of Wolf Teper, wrote in 1914 to 'Young Israel':[28] 'My parents have just left the town for Hull'. Sophia explained that she was staying in Boston for the time being to finish her schooling, but continued, 'I have five younger brothers. and my father has left Boston, where there are very few Jewish people, in order that they may be brought up amongst Jewish people, so that they shall become good and true members of the Jewish community'. The wife of Moses Szapira had two children in Boston and nearby Spilsby, Lincolnshire, in 1911 and 1913 but the 1914 army papers of their son Leo David Szapira give his parents' address as 58 Petherton Road, Highbury New Park, London, and indeed they had two children born in Islington in 1915 and 1917. In 1919 Leo was in Hove and the Szapira family married and scattered. Moses and his son Leopold David changed their surname by Deed Poll to Napier.[29] But Moses's brother Bernard retained for a time the name Szapira; the births of his three children were registered in that name.[30]

However, a few other Jews remained in Boston. In 1914 S. Barnett, Boston, advertised in the *JC*.[31] A list of towns in Britain and the colonies which had contributed to the 'Fund for the Relief of Jewish Victims of the War in Russia', published in 1915, included Boston.[32] Two of the children of Harris Rappaport, who died in Birkenhead in 1917, were mourners, mentioned in his death notice as 'Miss Sophia, Boston', and 'Isaac, Boston'.[33] Harry Brookfield's family were still in the town in 1919,

TABLE 2.
Birthplaces of Jews of Boston, in the decennial Censuses, 1851–1911

Birthplace	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911
United Kingdom							
Boston	2	4	4	3	8	11	23
Grimsby					1	1	
Lincoln	1						
Hull	1						4
Leeds							2
London	2	1	1	1	1	3	2
Southampton							2
Sunderland					2		
Abroad							
Germany/Austria	5			1?		1	2
Eastern Europe			1	4	6	17	18
Totals	11	5	6	8 +1?	18	33	53

NOTES
1. The 1851 Census was the first in which countries and towns were individually identified.
2. The extra 1 in 1881 refers to Lina Frank, who may have been Jewish.

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appearing in the *JC Supplement* as sending their New Year Greetings. As mentioned earlier, Annie Joseph (formerly Szapira) died in Boston in 1924, and Leo Canin's daughter Hilda — born in Boston in 1905 — was married there in 1929.

In the period of large-scale immigration of Jews from eastern Europe, from about 1870 to 1914, very few of them settled in the southern part of Britain, apart from London. They went to the industrial towns of the north and to south Wales. As Table II shows, while the numbers from eastern Europe coming to Boston increased in the latter part of the period, they amounted to only a handful. Some had lived in other towns in Britain before coming to Boston. In 1901 half the Jewish population had been born in eastern Europe, amounting to 17; ten years later, in 1911, virtually the same number (18) formed about one-third of the population. The trouble is, we have no idea what attracted them to the town — as distinct from others — or why they left. Notably, the largest contingent in 1911 was born in Boston. Of the 23 born in Boston, as many as 14 were accounted for by two families: Moses Szapira and his wife (both born in Britain) had 9 Bostonian-born children; as mentioned above they had four more children after the 1911 Census. At that Census, Wolf Teper and his wife (both born abroad) had five.

NOTES

[1] Daphne and Leon Gerlis. *The Story of the Grimsby Jewish Community*, Humberside Heritage Publication, No. 10, Hull, 1986. *Jewish Chronicle* (henceforth JC), 15 January 2010, Community Section, p.C2: '…communities in the north, like Darlington and Grimsby … had functioning, viable communities. Now they are hanging on by their fingernails'. For the current Progressive congregation: www.jewishgen.org/JCR-UK/Community/lincoln1/index.htm; and http://www.bbc.co.uk/lincolnshire/asop/people/jewish_community.shtml.

[2] Cecil Roth, *The Rise of Provincial Jewry,* 1950, pp.33–4.This is available at http://www.jewishgen.org/JCR-UK/community/Boston/index.htm. Aubrey Newman (compiler), Provincial Jewry in Victorian Jewry, sv 'Boston', n.p.

[3] JC, 27 February 1857, p. 913. There was no Jewish Secretary for Marriages in Boston and the ceremony was carried out by officiants from Nottingham and thus was registered in that town. Rosina was born in Hull and was probably named after her grandmother, Rosina Myers (wrongly called Rosina Lyons in Roth's book, page 34), who died in Boston in 1847: *JC*, 31 December 1847, p.379.

[4] Strangely, the notice of his death on 10th March 1871 describes him as 'MRCP, of Bevis Marks, London'. Roth (page 33) notes that his father was 'Dr. Lewis Leo of Bevis Marks'. It is likely that the death notice was garbled and was meant to read that he was the son of Dr Leo. The death

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notice is reprinted from the *JC* in Doreen Berger, *The Jewish Victorian: Genealogical Information from the Jewish Newspapers 1871–1880,* Witney, Robert Boyd Publications, 1999, p.313.

[5] *Boston and Louth Guardian,* 14 November 1855. An abridged version was published in the *JC*, 23 November 1855, p. 389. I have checked this with the Boston Library who have consulted many publications on the history of Boston. They all agreed that the Mayor in 1855–6 was Frederick Cooke and there is no reference to Leo in that position. I am grateful to Lisa Brown of the Library for her assistance.

[6] I wish to acknowledge the help and advice of Pat Pomeroy of the Boston branch of the Lincolnshire Family History Society. She also suggested that there was no Guild of Wormgate; rather it was a diner's club at the Dog & Duck hotel.

[7] The baptism is listed in http://search.ancestry.co.uk/search/DB.aspx?dbid=1558. At least two sons had synagogue marriages and a grandson was bar mitzvah.

[8] *JC,* 8 July 1892, p. 17.

[9] ibid., 14 October 1892, p. 16; ibid., 25 November 1892, p. 11.

[10] ibid., 24 February 1893 p.1; 17 March 1893, p. 3.

[11] ibid., 25 August 1893, p. 15.

[12] ibid., 31 March 1893, p. 19.

[13] Synagogue report., ibid., 29 September 1893, p. 14; chatan torah etc. ibid., p. 16; marriage secretary, ibid 23 March 1894, p. 9.

[14] ibid., 30 March 1894, p. 18. He then went to the Oxford synagogue: ibid., 11 October 1895, p. 18 and 1 October 1897, p. 20. Also, David M. Lewis, The *Jews of Oxford,* Oxford, Oxford Jewish Congregation, 1992, p.106.

[15] Hull, Wolman 'late of Boston'; ibid., 23 February 1894, p.16; Brynmawr, ibid., 13 March 1896, p.22. For a brief mention of Wolman see Harold Pollins, 'The Jewish Community of Brynmawr, Wales', *The Jewish Journal of Sociology,* vol.50, nos. 1 and 2, 2008, pp. 12–13.

[16] ibid., 20 July 1894, p. 22. I take it that the bar mitzvah was Sampson (also called Samuel) who was aged 13 in 1894. Perhaps the older brother was Solomon, born 1872, or Moses born 1870. Soon afterwards Sampson and another brother Bernard was pupils at Isidore Berkowitz's Tivoli House School, Gravesend, Kent; ibid., 29 January 1897, p. 24., in a list of pupils at the school who had passed the examination of the College of Preceptors. They are named as S. and B. Szapira, of Boston.

[17] Marriage Register Books, ibid., 22 February 1895, p, 7; congregation extinct, ibid., 17 May 1895.

[18] ibid., 22 February 1895, p. 13.

[19] food supplied, ibid., 8 March 1895, p. 8; Russo-Jewish Committee; ibid., p. 10; court case, ibid., 23 March 1895, p. 7.

[20] ibid., 28 September 1900, p. 26. My italics.

[21] President, ibid., 16 September 1904, p. 6; services, ibid, 13 October 1905, p. 31.

[22] *The Boston Independent,* 23 March 1901; ibid, 13 April 1901. Supplied by Pat Pomeroy.

[23] *JC,* 20 May 1966, p. 23. Obituary of Rev Solomon Chaitowitz; ibid., 24 July 1936, p.12, profile of Isaac Chaitowitz.

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In 1948 Isaac obtained his rabbinical diploma, after having served as a chaplain to the forces in the Second World War. He had earlier changed his name to Chait. *JC*, 16 July 1948, p. 17.

[24] ibid., 18 September 1908, p. 27. This was presumably Harry Jackson, who had arrived with his family from Russian Poland at the turn of the century and had probably settled immediately in Boston — a child was born there in 1902. He was a market trader, selling lace curtains, according to the 1911 Census.

[25] For Hull: http://data.jewishgen/wconnect/wc.dll?jg-jgsearch-model2-[jowbr]j-England. To access this one needs to go to http://www.jewishgen.org/uk and then login. For Grimsby: Gerlis, op. cit., p. 75, which relate to the period beginning February 1896. Mrs Annie Szapira, although buried in Hull, apparently had close connections with Grimsby. She raised money from 'friends in Grimsby' for the Sepher Torah (*JC*, 24 February 1893, p. 2) and she also presented a stained-glass window to Grimsby synagogue in memory of her mother and husband (*JC*, 8 June 1906, p. 37.)

[26] *JC*, 26 March 1915, p. 17, stated that the report on defunct communities had been completed but would not be issued yet; ibid., 7 July 1933, p. 10, a letter mentions the report and lists the defunct communities which included Boston.

[27] ibid., 2 June 1933, Supplement, p. iii.

[28] ibid., 20 February 1914, 'Young Israel', p. 3.

[29] Deed Polls in the *London Gazette:* Moses Myer Szapira/Napier, 10 December 1918, p. 14,606, living in Highbury,

London; Leopold David Bernhard Szapira/Napier, 28 February 1919, p. 2,908, living in Hove.

[30] They were Lewis P., 1923, Nottingham; Barbara A, 1927, Finchley, London ; and Shirley, 1929, Blackpool. The *JC*, in announcing the last two births, referred to the parents as 'Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Bernard (Szapira)', 25 March 1927, p. 1, and as 'Mr. and Mrs. Bernard (Szapira)', 12 April 1929, p.1. The engagement of 'Miss Bernard (Szapira)' to an American air force man was announced in the *JC* on 18 January 1946, p. 11. She was Shirley, described as 'youngest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Bernard'. I have found no entry in the *London Gazette* for a change of name by means of a Deed Poll from Szapira to Bernard.

[31] *JC*, 7 April 1914, p. 3. This was probably Soloman Barnett.

[32] ibid., 24 November 1915, p. 15.

[33] ibid., 3 August 1917, p. 2.

NOTE ON AUTHOR: Harold Pollins is now retired. He was Senior Tutor at Ruskin College, Oxford. His recent research has been on Jews in the British armed forces in the First World War and on Provincial Communities in Britain.

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JEWS AND ELECTORAL POLITICS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM A CONTEMPORARY NOTE

Geoffrey Alderman

The purpose of this note is to draw attention to certain features of the London mayoral election of 4 May 2008 and the United Kingdom parliamentary election of 6 May 2010 and their outcomes insofar as these relate to and reflect upon the UK's Jewish population.

Jews — however defined — comprise less than one per cent of the population of the UK and of its electorate.[1] However this minute population is heavily concentrated in the Greater London and Greater Manchester conurbations. Indeed, well over half of the UK's Jews are to be found in Greater London. These distinctive residential concentrations mean that Jewish voters have, historically, been able to exert an influence disproportionate to their mere number.

Historically, Jewish voters in the UK have demonstrated a propensity to behave along sectarian or ethnic lines given the political circumstances. The votes of Jewish electors played a pivotal role in the epic struggle of Lionel de Rothschild (1847–58) to enter the House of Commons as a professing Jew, because the constituency for which he repeatedly stood — the City of London — contained several hundred Jewish businessmen who qualified for the mid-19th century property-related franchise.[2] The parliamentary career of the Yiddish-speaking banker Samuel Montagu was built on his relationship with his Jewish electors in that most Jewish of constituencies, Whitechapel (in London's 'East End'), for which he sat as Liberal MP 1885–1900.[3] The near-defeat of the Labour candidate at the Whitechapel by-election of November-December 1930 was a significant factor in the decision of Ramsay Macdonald's minority Labour government to ditch its anti-Zionist policy in Palestine.[4] The Jewish vote was pivotal to the 1945 victory of Britain's last Communist MP, Phil Piratin, in Mile End (adjacent to Whitechapel), and it was equally pivotal to the defeat of Maurice Orbach (a self-proclaimed Labour Zionist who, however, had conspicuously failed to support Israel during the Suez crisis) at East Willesden in 1959.[5] In February

1974 his Jewish electors saved the gentile Zionist John Gorst from defeat at Hendon North, in the heart of 'Jewish' north-west London. Four years later, on the other side of London, the Jews gave the Conservative candidate a resounding victory at a dramatic by-election at Ilford North, where Sir Keith Joseph had openly — and most successfully — campaigned for his Jewish brethren to support Thatcherite economic and immigration policies.[6]

The East Willesden, Hendon North and Ilford North results reflect the fact that, although British Jews have never — certainly since Emancipation — voted as a monolithic block, they have demonstrated an ample capacity to behave in a distinctive way, most notably (though not only) on the issues of Zionism and Israel, by rewarding candidates whom local Jewish electorates perceive as friendly, and by punishing those perceived as unfriendly, even when this has meant voting against socio-economic, regional or national expectations. This is well illustrated through an examination of the contest for the London mayoral election of May 2008, when the incumbent maverick Labour demagogue Ken Livingstone (who had held the office ever since its establishment eight years previously) was challenged — successfully as it turned out — by the maverick Conservative candidate Boris Johnson.

I have dealt elsewhere with Livingstone's numerous anti-Jewish and anti-Israeli indiscretions, both as leader of the Labour-controlled Greater London Council in the 1980s and much more recently as London mayor.[7] What part did the Jews of London play in ousting him from City Hall in 2008? The circumstantial evidence is compelling, and points to a vindication of the claim made by his (Jewish) deputy, Nicky Gavron, that a Jewish backlash made a significant contribution to his loss of office.[8]

The office of Mayor of London is elected under the Supplementary Vote electoral system, whereby voters express first and second preference votes only, irrespective of the total number of candidates standing for election.[9] In terms of first-preference votes, Livingstone actually did better in 2008 than in 2004 — as a proportion of the total of first-preferences, he polled 36.4 per cent in 2008 as against 35.7 per cent four years previously. So the core 'Livingstone' vote held up remarkably well. But holding onto core voters was never going to be enough to win in an election in 2008 radically different from the contest of 2004. Voter turnout in the London mayoral election had been rising ever since the first poll in 2000. Then just over one third of registered voters bothered to vote. In 2008 this proportion increased to 45 per cent. In some areas of Greater London turnout was even higher — almost 50 per cent in Bexley & Bromley, 49 per cent in Croydon & Sutton, and in West Central London, 48 per cent in Barnet & Camden, 46 per cent in Havering & Redbridge. And whilst there are not that many Jewish voters in Bromley or Croydon, there are a great many in Barnet, Redbridge and West Central (Westminster and Chelsea).

Livingstone needed to attract most of these extra votes. He failed to do so. The Conservative share of first-preference votes rose from 28.2

per cent to 42.5 per cent — a full six percentage points ahead of the Labour first-preference total. Boris Johnson then delivered the coup-de-grace by attracting almost 258,000 second-preferences, whereas in 2004 the Tory candidate had polled only 222,000 second-preferences. To eject Livingstone from City Hall, Boris Johnson needed to find extra votes, and many of these were potential Jewish Tory votes — if only they could be enticed into the polling booths. The 2008 London mayoral contest was in fact decided by around 150,000 electors who might otherwise have stayed at home but who were 'got out' by a ferociously efficient election machine — dubbed by the media 'Boris's Barmy Army.'

In Barnet (north-west London), where the 'Barmy Army' was out in force, Livingstone did not bother to put in one media appearance during the entire campaign. Both in Barnet and in adjacent Brent, and in Jewish Redbridge (north-east London), the message was tailored to play on Jewish fears of what Livingstone might do if given another four-year term. Large numbers of Jewish voters do seem to have gone out of their way to vote for Johnson; in so doing they helped eject Livingstone from City Hall.

Unfortunately, no discrete survey of Jewish voters was carried out either in connection with the 2008 London mayoral contest or at the time of the parliamentary election two years later. In January and February 2010, under the auspices of the Institute for Jewish Policy Research, a telephone survey of a sample of 1,000 self-identifying UK-based Jewish adults was carried out with the object of ascertaining — inter alia their 'general political leaning.'[10] It is not my purpose to enter here into a detailed discussion of this survey, the results of which can be accessed at the IJPR website.[11] The key political findings of the survey may however be summarised as follows:

- Within the sample, sympathy for the Conservative and Labour parties was evenly split (at 30% and 31% respectively), but 15% declared themselves to be undecided, whilst another 11% favoured the Liberal-Democrats.
- Jews with a 'Secular' outlook preferred Labour; those with a 'Religious' outlook preferred the Conservatives.
- Respondents belonging to orthodox synagogues were more likely than members of non-orthodox synagogues to support the Conservatives.

In some respects these findings echo those of earlier researchers — for example the likelihood of a link between political leaning and synagogue affiliation[12] — but it must be remembered that the IJPR survey did not ask respondents which party they actually intended to vote for in the forthcoming general election (which was, even then, widely expected to be held on 6 May, the date already fixed for local elections in England.

As the date of the general election approached, the broad consensus of national opinion polls suggested that the outcome would be — as it

was — a 'hung' parliament, with no party having an overall majority. In this atmosphere there was much talk of 'tactical voting,' especially by Labour activists intent on preventing the formation of a Conservative government even if this meant voting Liberal-Democrat (rather than Labour) in a marginal constituency. In the event, the total Lib-Dem vote increased (from 5.9 millions in 2005 to 6.8 millions), as did the Lib-Dem share of the vote (from 22.1% to 23.0%). But because this increase was so evenly spread across the constituencies, the number of Lib-Dem MPs returned to Westminster actually fell, from 62 to 57.[13] Elsewhere, Labour/Conservative marginal seats were fiercely contested, and in some of these it is likely that Jewish voters, casting their votes along ethnic lines, had a distinctive role to play in the outcomes of the contests.

In 2001 the United Kingdom's decennial census contained a voluntary question designed to elicit the religious affiliations of respondents. Based on these returns the Office for National Statistics was able to compile lists of parliamentary constituencies ranked by declared religious affiliation. The following table is taken from this compilation:

Table 1
UK Parliamentary Constituencies by Highest Jewish Religious Affiliation[14]

	%	**Rank**
Finchley & Golders Green	19.6	1
Hendon	17.3	2
Hertsmere	11.3	3
Harrow East	10.3	4
Ilford North	10.3	5
Hackney North & Stoke Newington	9.0	6
Bury South	8.9	7
Hampstead & Kilburn	8.1	8
Chipping Barnet	7.5	9
Leeds North East	7.0	10

Although some constituencies underwent boundary revisions following the 2005 general election, these are judged to affect neither the ranking order nor the rounded percentages. Of the constituencies in which Jews accounted for at least ten per cent of the population seven were Labour held prior to the May 2010 contest. One of these — the heavily Jewish Finchley & Golders Green seat — was so highly marginal that it was bound to be lost to the Conservatives — as it was — irrespective of any special Jewish factor. But in the adjacent Hendon seat, which could have fallen to the Tories on a conventional swing of about 3.8 per cent, there was a purposeful battle for the Jewish vote. Andrew Dismore, who had held the seat for Labour since 1997, had impeccable Zionist credentials (he would not otherwise have become MP for Hendon) but his constituency standing had been undermined by the Labour's government's failure

to amend the 'universal jurisdiction' law, which currently permits private citizens in the UK to apply for the arrest of prominent Israeli politicians who set foot on British soil, and by the Labour government's condemnation of Israel over the alleged use of fake British passports in the Dubai assassination of a senior Hamas terrorist earlier in the year. It is therefore entirely plausible that the defection from Labour of a few dozen Jewish voters handed the seat to Dismore's Conservative challenger, Matthew Offord (also a non-Jewish Zionist) by a mere 106-vote margin.

We might also note two other results. In East Renfrewshire (Glasgow) the incumbent Jim Murphy, a leading member of Labour Friends of Israel, came under sustained Muslim attack but managed to retain his seat with a much increased share of the vote. In Bury South (the most heavily Jewish of the Manchester constituencies) the incumbent Jewish Labour MP, Ivan Lewis, Foreign Minister in the Labour government, fought off a challenge from the Jewish Conservative candidate, Michelle Wiseman (chief executive of Manchester Jewish Community Care) but suffered a slump of over 10% in his share of the vote; the swing here was over 8% from Labour to Conservative, compared with the Labour-to-Conservative national swing of 5%, and anecdotal evidence suggests that, as in Hendon, Jewish voters punished Labour for its perceived negativity towards Israel, irrespective of the personal popularity of the candidate with Jewish voters.

During the election campaign there was a concerted effort by the Muslim Public Affairs Committee (MPAC) to mobilise Muslim voters against candidates — especially MPs — who were perceived as being 'anti-Muslim,' perhaps by having supported British military action in Iraq and Afghanistan or by having evinced Zionist sympathies. I have elsewhere considered in some detail the likely impact of the MPAC campaign,[15] but it is worth repeating here that in my view MPAC claims to have single-handedly unseated three Labour MPs (in the Bradford East, Watford and Hendon constituencies) are wild exaggerations. Moreover the Labour defeats at Watford and Hendon brought into Parliament Tory MPs who are firm and open Zionists. It is possible that MPAC efforts had some bearing on the outcome at Bradford East. MPAC ran a vicious campaign against the Muslim Labour MP Khalid Mahmood in the Birmingham, Perry Barr constituency, but notwithstanding these efforts Mr. Mahmood increased his majority from 7,948 to 11,908, and his share of the total vote from 47 per cent to over 50 per cent. At Ilford North Muslim activists (not necessarily associated with MPAC) campaigned against the incumbent Jewish (and Zionist) Conservative MP Lee Scott: despite this his total vote increased by almost 3,000 and his share of the vote by some two per cent.

In all, some 23 self-identifying Jews were returned as MPs in 2010, compared with 21 in 2005. Self-identifying Jews thus comprise just under four per cent of the House of Commons. The 2010 Jewish cohort at

Westminster now consists of two Lib-Dems, nine Labour MPs and twelve Conservatives, the latter including John Bercow, the first Jewish Speaker of the Commons. There are currently no Jewish members of the Cabinet but Oliver Letwin (Conservative), who played a key part in the negotiations that led to the successful formation of the present coalition government, attends Cabinet meetings and Grant Shapps (Conservative), Jonathan Djanogly (Conservative) and Lynne Featherstone (Lib-Dem) all hold ministerial appointments.[16] Mrs Featherstone is one of only four Jewish women MPs, the remaining three being in the Labour party.

NOTES

[1] David Graham, *The Political Leanings of British Jews* (Institute for Jewish Policy Research, London, 2010), 2. Using the IJPR's figure of 'approximately 300,000' Jews in Great Britain, the Jewish proportions both of the UK population and of its registered electorate compute to around 0.5 per cent.

[2] Geoffrey Alderman, *The Jewish Community in British Politics* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1983), 22–26.

[3] *Ibid.* 44–45.

[4] *Ibid.* 112–14.

[5] *Ibid.* 117–18, 133.

[6] *Ibid.* 145, 148–9.

[7] Geoffrey Alderman, *The Communal Gadfly* (Academic Studies Press, Boston, USA, 2009), chapter 3, *passim.*

[8] *Jewish Chronicle*, 9 May 2008, 1.

[9] http://www.londonelects.org.uk/election_quick_guide/my_vote_mayoral.html [accessed 27 May 2010]

[10] *Political Leanings*, 1. The survey addressed many issues, of which 'political leaning' was only one.

[11] http://www.jpr.org.uk/publications/publications.php?id=231 [accessed 27 May 2010]

[12] Alderman, *The Jewish Community*, 206.

[13] Though this reduced total was still sufficient for the party to hold the balance of power, resulting, after some days of negotiation, in the formation of a Conservative –LibDem coalition government.

[14] From Julian Anseau, 'What does the 2001 census tell us about the new parliamentary constituencies?' in *Population Trends* (Office for National Statistics, Spring 2009), 35.

[15] Geoffrey Alderman, 'CST sledge-hammer, MPAC nut,' *Jewish Chronicle*, 21 May 2010, 25.

[16] Additionally, one Jewish peer, Lord (David) Freud, also holds ministerial office.

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BOOK REVIEW

JEREMY STOLOW, *Orthodox by Design: Judaism, Print Politics and the ArtScroll Revolution*, 288 pp., University of California Press, Berkeley, 2010, £41.95 (hardback), £16.95 (paperback)

'ArtScroll' is the imprint of Mesorah Publications, which was founded in 1976 by two New York-based Haredi rabbis, Meir Zlotowitz and Nosson Scherman. The event was celebrated with the publication of a translation of the Book of Esther. The ArtScroll catalogue now runs to over 800 volumes, ranging from handsomely-bound editions of the Talmud to prayer-books for everyday use, biographies of orthodox-Jewish scholars, novels, self-help manuals and even cookery books. As Dr. Stolow (a media and communications scholar who teaches at Concordia University, Canada) explains in this first critical examination of the ArtScroll 'revolution,' since its founding 'ArtScroll has enjoyed a stellar career, in many ways parallel to a broader cultural shift that has seen an increasingly confident and unapologetic form of Orthodoxy assume a central position on the Jewish public stage. Defined by some as "Jewish fundamentalism" or "ultra-Orthodoxy" but better referred to as Haredism, this movement promotes stringent interpretations of Jewish law, intensive study of Jewish texts, and submission to the authority of a narrowly defined rabbinic elite.'

ArtScroll has both reflected and profited from this cultural shift, and has played a pivotal role in its dynamic. Those who would understand ArtScroll must also, therefore, inquire into and understand the Haredi world and its evident contemporary appeal, especially its special interest in and special appeal for the *baalei teshuva* movement — the return to Orthodoxy of Jews born and bred into less observant backgrounds. In its classic form, rabbinic Judaism — the Judaism, say, of the medieval period — was never a fixed canon, a set of immutable tenets. Rabbis — and their congregations — differed over what prayers to say and when to say them, over what foods to eat and when to eat them, and over what books might be read, and how to read them. The average *baal teshuvah* does not want to be bothered with such controversial intricacies (knowledge of which might indeed impede his or her return to Orthodoxy), but is looking, rather, for incontestable order and indisputable certainty. ArtScroll exists to meet this need. And in so doing it has tapped into and exploited another theme in this history of post-Holocaust Jewry, namely

the rejection of Western intellectual values which (Haredim argue) promised so much but led only to Treblinka and Auschwitz.

Take the ArtScroll prayer books. They tell you not merely what prayers to say and how to say them — parrot fashion — but dispense with the need even to understand the Hebrew you are mouthing. 'Do you wish you could pray in Hebrew and understand what you are saying *as you are saying it?*' asked the ArtScroll Catalogue (2006). No need to worry. 'It's easy to pray in Hebrew with the new interlinear format developed by ArtScroll to give you maximum comprehension with minimum effort.' As Dr. Stolow makes clear (page 14), at the heart of current debate about ArtScroll and its worth are more fundamental debates about 'the shrill voice of demagoguery and intolerance of difference … debates about the manner and extent of the power of Haredi rabbinic authorities to overtake personal memories, local customs, and autonomous powers of reasoning through the promulgation of new modes of knowledge and practice learned 'by the book'.'

Admittedly, ArtScroll treads a fine line. When it began publishing the Talmud in English, in 1990, and mindful of Haredi strictures against reading the work in any language other than the Hebrew and Aramaic in which its volumes were originally compiled, it took great care to refer to the project as an 'elucidation,' not as a translation. It is indeed difficult to disagree with Dr. Stolow's verdict (at page 33) on this particular, truly mammoth task, that what the ArtScroll Talmud amounts to is an attempt 'to both vulgarize and enlighten.' Or, as one respondent — an ArtScroll fan — enthusiastically confessed to Dr. Stolow, 'they make it basically like *Talmud for Dummies*.' On the other hand, it would be churlish not to acknowledge and celebrate the immeasurable contribution that ArtScroll has made to the study of Jewish religious texts — especially of the Talmud. Due to the accessibility that ArtScroll has facilitated to these texts, both in Hebrew and in English, it is undoubtedly the case that more people are studying the Talmud today than ever before.

ArtScroll has been involved in a number of celebrated controversies. By its own admission, the so-called 'translations' that it offers of texts of the Hebrew Bible sometimes descend into bald interpretations taken from selected rabbinic sources: they are not really translations at all. Its English rendition of the *Shir HaShirim* (Song of Songs) included in its prayer books follows Rashi's metaphorical explanation of this work of soft pornography, omitting the intimate description of heterosexual intercourse that is — and was surely designed to be — at the heart of the poem. The ArtScroll works of biography — particularly biography of rabbinic sages — follow (consciously or not) a familiar template: a Haredi boy is discovered to be a Talmudic genius; he spends virtually all his waking hours studying (only) permitted sacred texts; in time a suitably modest maiden is found to marry him; she keeps a (naturally) strictly kosher home and bears him many (naturally) Haredi children

while he takes charge of a Yeshivah; in time he is venerated as a sage, whose word is law, and ascends to Torah Greatness.

In other words, little if any attempt is made to critically examine the life of the subject of any particular ArtScroll biographic work. Occasionally actual censorship is employed. In its English translation of the famous commentary on the Torah written by rabbi Zalman Sorotzkin (1881-1966), ArtScroll famously omitted to translate a paragraph in which Sorotzkin, dilating upon the meaning of 'the agony of solitude,' referred to the novel *Robinson Crusoe*, written by Daniel Defoe in 1719, and which the good rabbi had obviously read and enjoyed.[1] Why? Almost certainly because, in the Yeshivish world in which ArtScroll is located, a *Torah Godol* is not supposed to ever read secular works, certainly not works of *goyishe* fiction. In his book *Aleppo — City of Scholar*s, which ArtScroll published in 2006, rabbi David Sutton was apparently permitted to omit, in his translation of the work of the 19th century Syrian rabbi Abraham Dayan, a reference, by the controversial 16th century scholar Azariah dei Rossi (in his heretical *Me'or Eynayim* ['Light of the Eyes']), to St. Augustine's *City of God*.[2] Why? Almost certainly because in the Yeshivish world in which ArtScroll wishes to locate itself, esteemed 19th century Syrian rabbis are not supposed to have read heretical works (*Me'or Eynayim* was upon its publication widely condemned in rabbinic circles), less still to have accepted as credible the word of a Christian saint!

In the world of ArtScroll publishing, in other words, image is paramount. And there are signs that the religious fundamentalism that informs this world is moving even further to the right. In its 'expanded' *Siddur* published in 2010 (too late, unfortunately, to be included in Dr Stolow's study), there are prayers to be said at various gravesites, including one –included apparently at the behest of Bratislav Hassidim — to be recited at the grave of rabbi Nachman of Bratislav at Uman (Ukraine). Whilst I would not agree with those who have characterised this inclusion as the appeasement of idolatry, I do have to point out that it is yet another attempt on the part of ArtScroll to project Haredism as normative Judaism.[3]

On this subject much more clearly remains to be written, as Dr Stolow admits. Whoever follows him will have to acknowledge their debt to his pioneering work, and to his painstaking analysis of how a sophisticated design and marketing exercise by a relatively small group of Haredi Jews has made an impact on the Jewish world so intense that even non-orthodox communities have been forced to follow its lead. All those interested in and wanting to understand contemporary Orthodox Judaism will need to read this book.

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NOTES

[1] ArtScroll reproduced the entire Hebrew text, but omitted all reference to Crusoe in its translation. See 'Undercover Kofer' at http://undercoverkofer.blogspot.com/2010/10/artscroll-censorship-unmasked.html [accessed 6 November 2010]. See also 'ArtScroll Censors Reference to Robinson Crusoe' by the blogger 'Failed Messiah' at http://failedmessiah.typepad.com/failed_messiahcom/2010/10/artscroll-censors-reference-to-robinson-crusoe.html [accessed 6 November 2010].

[2] 'What's Bothering ArtScroll,' at http://elucidation-not-translation.blogspot.com [accessed 7 November 2010].

[3] David Wilensky, 'ArtScroll's borderline idolatry,' at http://davidsaysthings.wordpress.com/2010/09/26/artscrolls-borderline-idolatry/ [accessed 6 November 2010]