

Formations and Transformations of Masculinity in the North of Ireland and in Israel-Palestine

Laurence McKeown & Simona Sharoni

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Introduction

Feminist scholarship on gender and conflict has focused primarily on women's experiences. Until recently, the experiences of men whose masculinities become mobilized and often highly militarized when a conflict escalates have been largely neglected. Even less attention has been devoted to men in conflict areas who either resist militarization from the outset or change their views and relationship to violence during the course of the conflict. The relative lack of attention to men and masculinity may be related, at least in part, to the tendency to use the terms 'gender' and 'women' interchangeably. If men are mentioned, in literature or media accounts, they are treated as a monolithic entity.

Feminist standpoint theorists have embraced this position, often done by equating the experiences of women with peacemaking and of men with war.¹ The argument is grounded in a broader theory about centuries of exclusion, subjugation, and discrimination, that have given women perspectives on social issues, which more insightfully reveal the underlying structures and actors of the world than do theories spun by representatives of dominant groups.² Many feminist standpoint scholars and activists contend that in order to uncover and transform inter-group conflicts that involve unequal relations of power one must look at the situation from the perspective of the subordinate, not the master.³

While it is understandable that men had to be pushed aside to create space for women, it would be impossible to understand the interplay between gender and conflict if the diverse experiences of men remain unexamined. Moreover, the lack of attention to masculinity is likely to backfire as the conflation of 'gender' with 'women', leaves masculinity, unproblematized and thus treated as the norm. As a result, the social and political status quo is reinforced.

The growing body of pro-feminist literature on men and masculinity challenges this simplistic equation, illuminating the diverse experiences of men and the multiple, often competing, conceptions of masculinity, which shape them.⁴

In light of this scholarship, we argue in this chapter, that it is impossible to understand, let alone transform, the relationship between gender, conflict, and peacebuilding without a serious examination of men and various conceptions of masculinity in different sociopolitical contexts. We need to carefully examine the varieties of both masculinity, femininity, and gender relations and the changes they have undergone over time and in relation to conflict and peacebuilding efforts.

Because much more has been written about women and gender relations compared to men and masculinity, this chapter focuses primarily on the experiences of men. Moreover, to emphasize that such a project must begin from the ground up rather than with a theory, which assumes universal applicability, we examine what happens to men and to conceptions of masculinity in the context of two political conflicts that shaped our lives - the conflict in the North of Ireland and in Israel-Palestine.

Men, Masculinity, and Political Conflict

The relatively new but growing body of literature on men and masculinity is quite diverse in scope, theoretical assumptions, and political implications. Most attempts to classify the literature tend to converge on broad similar categories ranging from "the recuperative (attempting to recapture men's traditional social roles) to the progressive (looking forward to the constitution of a new diversity of masculine expressions and more equal gender relations)."⁵ Regardless of where they stand on the continuum mentioned above, most scholars and activists insist that it is important to distinguish between the terms 'men,' 'male,' and 'masculinity.' Further, many prefer to use the plural form 'masculinities' over 'masculinity' as it underscores that being a man is neither a monolithic nor a static position.⁶

To capture differences among men, the plurality of masculinity and their fluidity, it is useful to think about masculinity as a discourse and examine it in relation to power structures.⁷ As Greig et al. point out "misogyny, homophobia, racism and class/status-based discrimination are all implicated in a 'politics of masculinity' that is developed and deployed by men to claim power over women, and by some men to claim power over other men."⁸ The treatment of masculinity as a discourse of power is particularly useful to the examination of men and masculinity in the context of political conflict.

Militarized masculinities in context: domination vs. liberation

The term 'militarized masculinity' refers to the processes and practices that turn ordinary men into warriors. Feminist literature on the topic underscores the fact that in most cultures to be manly means to be warrior.⁹ As a result, the link between masculinity and propensity to violence has been conceptualized as nature-given and unquestionable.

This chapter questions the simplistic association of men with conflict and war and the tendency of scholars and journalists alike to locate the cause of violent political conflict in male aggression. Such analyses often pay very little attention to social, political, and economic conditions that fit the definition of structural violence and often trigger physical violence.¹⁰ We begin from the position that conflict situations largely arise when injustices are practiced against people. Injustices do not just 'happen.' They are the result of policies maintained by governments and state bureaucracies. Therefore, rather than focusing our analysis on individuals, we look at the larger historical, sociopolitical and economic context within which individual and collective identities are formed and transformed. Moreover, we contend that political conflicts can militarize certain masculinities and at the same time open up space for critical exploration of different notions of manhood.

Based on our examination of constructions and changes in conceptions of masculinity and the experiences of men in the North of Ireland and Israel-Palestine, we argue that there exists a multitude of masculinities. The meanings and practices associated with each notion of masculinity are influenced by both the broader context and the social location and political standpoint taken by men in relation to the conflict. We introduce a theoretical distinction that may be applicable to other conflict situations characterized by power inequalities. We suggest that there is a profound difference between masculinities that are shaped in the **context of domination**, and those shaped in a **context of liberation**.

A context of domination involves practices, policies and discourses informed by an ideology of superiority, control and power-over others. Men whose conceptions of masculinity are shaped in such a context have a vested interest in maintaining the political status-quo. A context of liberation, on the other hand, involves practices, policies and discourses designed to bring about freedom, justice and equality. Men whose conceptions of masculinity

are shaped in such a context seek to radically transform existing institutions and change the political status quo. Because of their different positions vis-à-vis the status quo, masculinities shaped in a context of domination are likely to be more rigid and resistant to change whereas masculinities shaped in a context of liberation have the potential to be more flexible, mobile and susceptible to change.

In the North of Ireland, for example, we examine differences between conceptions of masculinity of those in the state forces of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) and local militia and those on the republican side and loyalists. In the Palestinian-Israeli context, we look on one hand at the conceptions of masculinity of Israeli soldiers who serve in the Israeli military and of the security forces of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA). On the other hand, we examine the experiences of Israeli soldiers who have been imprisoned for refusing to participate in military operations, which uphold the Israeli occupation and systematic repression of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. We also highlight the experiences of Palestinians who have been trying to rid themselves of the Israeli occupation and at the same time to challenge the PNA.

Men and Masculinities in the North of Ireland

Far from acknowledging that change does occur in the meanings of masculinity across time and political context, even in the most militarized situations, the literature on the conflict in the North of Ireland centers around one dominant image: that of a man behind the mask. The obsession of the media with IRA men and their prevalent characterization as inherently violent, obscures the complexity of the conflict and its underlying structural causes. Instead of analyzing the militarized conditions, which shape militarized masculinities, the emphasis is on the behavior of particular individuals who engage in armed struggle. The image of the masked man serves a dual purpose: it dehumanizes the revolutionary and at the same time masks the structured power inequalities, which underlie the conflict.

Moreover, there seems to be a double standard in relation to men involved in armed struggle with men who participate in national liberation movements viewed as more macho and militaristic than soldiers in ordinary armies or police forces. Contrary to this view, we contend that one is likely to encounter more rigid masculine behavior and

resistance to change among soldiers and state police who are trained to view the use of physical force against others, including killing as part of their job. They learn about weaponry and wars, to be regimented, and to observe hierarchies and their place within those hierarchies. They have uniforms, insignias, songs, rituals, parades, marches, and ceremonies, which are all designed to reinforce their sense of belonging to a collective and to legitimize the use of force against those who appear to threaten that collective.¹¹

The ideology of domination and power over others often manifests itself in physical appearance. During the Blanket protest for example, Republican prisoners became conscious of the roles the prison warders adopted. They noticed that "prison warders newly recruited to the service or coming to work in the protest Blocks for the first time always appeared wary in the initial stages. They were friendlier, or at least not as hostile. After only a matter of days, however, their manner and behavior changed - often dramatically. They added a 'swagger' to their step, some began to wear shades even in the darkened environment of the Blocks, shirt sleeves were rolled up, steel clips were attached to the heels of their boots as if to give them a greater sense of their physical presence."¹²

Observing such a transformation in overt physical dress and behavior provided Republican volunteers with a valuable insight into how particular expressions of masculinity are synonymous with situations of power over others. Most IRA volunteers had a fundamentally different understanding of and relationship to power. They 'volunteered' to join a national liberation army and were repeatedly challenged to determine whether or not they really wanted to make such a decision. Unlike ordinary soldiers and police force personnel, IRA volunteers do not have a uniform and have very few collective rituals, none of them in the public-eye. In agreeing to take up arms against the state they are going against their moral (and state) upbringing that it is unlawful for them to do so. In carrying out such operations they know they can end up dead or in jail or on the run from their homes and families. Far from viewing their membership in the IRA as a profession, they believe the circumstances warrant their involvement and that their community require them to do so. Some would describe it as demonstrating a 'civic pride'.¹³

Contrary to British soldiers and the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), who like other professional soldiers and state police forces, have been trained to guard the status-quo, IRA volunteers and freedom fighters more generally strive for social and political change. This is particularly true for volunteers who spent significant periods of time in prison, where they were exposed to

popular education and other ideas and strategies of community transformation. This process has included an awareness of gender inequalities. More specifically, while on the blanket protest as well as during the hunger strikes and especially in their aftermath, Republican prisoners, informed for the most part by Paulo Freire's notion of critical pedagogy, organized popular education sessions to educate themselves on various social and political issues including gender issues and feminist theory. Amidst a relentless struggle for national liberation, Republican men were able to transcend their immediate conditions and challenge themselves to think critically about their power and privilege vis-à-vis women.¹⁴

The image of Irish Republican prisoners engaged in a critical dialogue about masculinity, sexuality, and gender relations in one of the most heavily guarded prisons in Europe challenges monolithic portrayals of IRA volunteers as hyper-masculine, violent and sexist, which have dominated both media accounts and conventional literature on the conflict.

portrayals of men can be found on the other side of the Nationalist-Unionist divide as well. In fact, until recently, few researchers have focused their attention on the Protestant community in general and its Unionist/Loyalists constituencies in particular.

Of the existing literature on Protestant/Unionist men, the vast majority explores their relation to violence and their adversarial relationship with men on the Republican side. But a few in-depth interviews conducted recently with leading figures in the Unionist/Loyalist community reveal a more complex picture. As Jonathan Stevenson points out, Loyalists who were in prison during the blanket protest and the hunger strikes give republicans a great deal of credit for their struggle and perseverance. For example he quotes Billy Hutchinson, a former member of the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), who spent 16 years in prison (1974-1990) and is currently a member of the Northern Ireland Assembly, representing the Progressive Unionist Party (PUP):

I think there was a grudging respect for those people who were willing to die to get special-category status. . . I thought that the whole special category thing in the blocks - the blanket, the dirty protest, and the hunger strikes-was something that should have been done by loyalists as well.¹⁵

While Hutchinson and other former loyalist prisoners claim that they did not join such struggles as the blanket protest and the hunger strikes because they were viewed as republican, others doubt that loyalists as a group could

have conjured the collective will to undertake and sustain such struggles. In other words, the unique republican masculinity that emerged during the blanket protest and hunger strikes cannot be simply attributed to the conflict, or to the imprisonment itself. Rather, there are other factors, which may have affected the different meanings attached to republican and loyalist conceptions and practices of masculinity during that period. Such factors involve the collective spirit of republicans versus the fairly individualistic orientation of loyalists, the fact that republican prisoners were well-disciplined and highly-organized compared to loyalists and the fact that Republican prisoners viewed education as a tool for liberation and social transformation.

We argue that because of the structure of the conflict, the dominant conceptions of masculinity within the Loyalist community and paramilitaries bear much in common with the masculinity of the state forces. Notwithstanding the differences between state forces and working class Loyalists men, by fighting to preserve the union with Britain, both conceptions of masculinity seek to preserve their power and privilege, interpreting any move towards equality as a potential threat. Nevertheless, one should not overlook differences within Loyalism. There are those who believe that they have been badly treated (as working class communities) over decades by the Unionist upper classes (their politicians and leaders) and are now trying to build a political base within their communities. Many of them are ex-prisoners who developed their politics within prison. Unusually for Unionism/Loyalism they now have several women within their ranks and who have stood for elections. Although they would express fundamental disagreements with Republicans they have also been prepared to engage in dialogue on such issues of mutual concern as that of political ex-prisoners. There are cordial relations between republican and loyalist ex-prisoner groups and regular and ongoing contact.

This new awareness within one strand of Loyalism, however, has brought it into conflict with the more extreme elements in the community. This internal conflict has led to seven deaths and many injuries over the last year, the displacement of several hundred families and an uneasy truce that currently exists between the warring factions. The results of the recent local council and Westminster elections also show that the protestant/unionist community has swung away from parties such as the PUP and voted for Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party, a Protestant fundamentalist party. This creates additional problems for the PUP and those elements within Loyalism, who are seeking to move their communities in a more progressive direction. The elements within the Unionist/Loyalist community who are

resistant to the type of change introduced by such groups as the PUP, want to maintain Protestant supremacy over Catholics within the North of Ireland and the preservation of a macho, militaristic lifestyle within their own communities is an important element of this project.¹⁶

Another example of resistance to change involves the reluctant if not angry reactions within the RUC to the proposed changes in its symbols and functions. In light of the changes recommended by the Patten Commission, established following a mandate inscribed in the Good Friday Agreement, the police force, which is predominantly Protestant, faces an uncertain future. This may include the reduction (perhaps by half) of the size of the force and a recommended shift in both image and operation from a heavily armed, repressive police force to a regular community-based police force.¹⁷ Many within the RUC perceived these recommendations as extremely threatening and as a consequence a fairly large number of senior ranking officers have tendered their resignations.

Moreover, many would ascribe the recent sizeable unionist vote increase in the recent elections to deep dissatisfaction with the level of change within the RUC. The Patten report recommended a new ethos based on respect for human rights and neutrality as regards the constitutional position of the north. This was to be expressed in neutral symbols and emblems. There was also to be a new commitment to policing with the community rather than the old obsession with state security and public order. The reaction of many within the force and in the unionist community more generally has been that these proposals are an affront to the role of the RUC during the war and an attack on the Unionist community, undermining their position within the United Kingdom.¹⁸

In sum, we would like to suggest that in the North of Ireland mobile masculinities correlate with, in addition to a commitment to social and political change, one's level of education, some understanding of structured inequalities and community support. These factors create a sense of confidence and control for men, which can replace the false sense of security and control derived from conventional conceptions of masculinity rooted in patriarchy. These factors seem to have more impact on men who do not enjoy positions of power and privilege vis-à-vis economic, social and political structures.

As is evident in the case of Republican prisoners and members of the Progressive Unionist Party (PUP), some men are more likely to depart from conventional conceptions of masculinity if they have access to education in general and exposure to literature about liberation struggles or

movements for social and political change.¹⁹ The other factor that may enhance transformations in conventional conceptions of masculinity is a support group. Because the sanctions against men who depart from behaviors and gender roles that are associated with conventional masculinity are high, being part of a community, which embraces non-conventional understandings of masculinity is an important factor. This may explain how Republican prisoners were able to transform conventional notions of militarized masculinity, while loyalist prisoners and loyalist youth were not able to engage in similar processes.

Men and Masculinity in Israel-Palestine

The distinction between masculinities shaped in a context of domination versus those shaped in a context of liberation seems applicable in the Israeli-Palestinian context as well. This also seems to be the case for the distinction between masculinities, which are grounded in the preservation of the status-quo as opposed to those which favor social and political change. More specifically, we argue that the masculinities of Israeli-Jewish men are shaped by an ideology of domination whereas Palestinian men's ideas about masculinity are shaped by an ideology of liberation. Thus, the masculinities of Jewish men in Israel tend to be less mobile and susceptible to change when compared with the masculinities of Palestinian men.

These differences can be explained at least partially by the centrality of the military in Israeli society. Military service is mandatory for both men and women and serves as an important milestone particularly for men. To be a man implies first and foremost being a soldier. Israeli-Jewish men are required to complete a three-year mandatory military service; after that they serve in the reserves and complete at least one month of military service every year until they are fifty-five years old. Military service in general and participation in combat in particular constitutes a rite-of-passage, for men to earn their place in Israeli society.

Thus, the military has become a major agent of socialization for Israeli men, complicating attempts to challenge the militarization of society. Militarization has been taken for granted by most Israelis because of their memories of persecution in the past and particularly the collective traumatic memories of the Holocaust. The horrors of the Holocaust, created a context in which the Israeli military, which defines itself as Israeli Defense Force (IDF) became an occupying army engaged in oppressing civilians. Moreover, there is no doubt that the history of persecution, which haunts the collective memory of Jews made acts of dissent very difficult.

Nevertheless, over the years, starting in the aftermath of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967 and the 1973 war, there have been several attempts by Israeli men to challenge the practices of militarized masculinity in Israel and their implications for both Israeli society and its victims. The first attempts in the 1970s came in the form of discussion groups of soldiers who participated in the wars and engaged in critical reflection about their actions upon their return home. These conversations culminated in the publication of a booklet titled *Fighters' Conversations* (*Siah Lohamim* in Hebrew), which triggered an unprecedented public debate in Israel. For the first time, soldiers engaged in public soul-searching, challenging, albeit only implicitly, military orders and practices. Perhaps because of its subversive potential, this conversation was muted soon after it has begun. Israeli society backed its military's claim that it is committed to a "purity of arms," that is to using force against civilians only when all other means fail. The individual soldiers, who prompted the conversation coined a new term in the Israel's political lexicon: "shooting and crying." In other words, they continued to take part in campaigns they opposed morally but reserved themselves the right to question those campaigns the moment they took their uniform off.²⁰

Some individuals, like the poet Yitzhak Laor, went further. In 1978, Laor, who was one of the first IDF reservists jailed for refusing to serve in the occupied territories, wrote the following poem, titled: "Don't go to their war:"

My young brother Eliyahu
Before you go to the next war,
think of the previous war or let me tell you
how Grandfather on Mom's side pulled out
all his teeth, anything so as not to go to Their war.
My young brother Eliyahu, don't go to their war.²¹

In a country where serving in the military, especially in war times, is the primary test of manhood, Laor's poem was considered an act of treason. Indeed, as Israel has a mandatory draft and does not recognize conscientious objectors, an individual decision not to comply with military orders is viewed as an act of treason on two grounds. First, there is the refusal to perform one's collective duty as an Israeli-Jew and second there is the refusal to comply with one of the primary practices associated with being a man in Israel.

With the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, as growing numbers of Israeli soldiers realized that the campaign was as act of naked and futile aggression in which they wanted no part, there was a need for both a support group and an

organizational framework for these soldiers. Thus, Yesh Gvul (Hebrew for "There is a Limit/Border") was founded. Comprised primarily of reserve soldiers, the movement forced the Israeli public for the first time since the establishment of the state to question the right of the government to send people to fight a war that they considered illegal from its inception.

During the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, 168 servicemen were jailed, some repeatedly, for refusing to serve in the campaign. But the actual number of refusals was far greater as the military authorities chose to accommodate rather than prosecute many soldiers, fearing the proliferation of the movement. Finally, over two thousand Israeli reserve soldiers signed the Yesh Gvul petition asking the government not to be sent to serve in Lebanon. During this period, Yesh Gvul confined its objection to service in Lebanon and avoided the issue of military service in the territories occupied by Israel in 1967. Nevertheless, the existence and *raison d'être* of the organization gave rise to serious public debate about the conditions under which a state is justified to send its army to war.²²

However, with the outbreak of the Palestinian *intifada* (Arabic for uprising) in 1987 and the increase in the numbers of soldiers who refused to partake in acts of aggression and repression in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Yesh Gvul shifted most of its attention to the occupied territories. During the current "al-Aqsa" *intifada*, which began in September 2000, scores of reservists have refused assignments, and for the first time, significant numbers of young conscripts have also refused to take part in the repression of the Palestinian revolt.²³

The refusal of young conscripts is significant as until recently it seemed that men had to first complete their mandatory service and prove their manhood before they could contemplate refusing to comply with orders they deem illegal and immoral. Nevertheless, while the mere refusal to obey military orders challenges, albeit only implicitly, conventional practices associated with Israeli masculinity, Yesh Gvul as a movement does not call into question dominant constructions of masculinity, which reinforce uncritical acceptance of military orders. In fact, in the past the movement has used the military credentials of its members to gain public legitimacy and challenge the accusation of treason, which has been associated with refusal. In so doing, they helped reinforce the very system - of militarism and military hierarchy -- which they seek to transform.

But despite the reluctance of Yesh Gvul to explicitly address the interconnectedness of masculinity and militarism, there were some individuals who dared to articulate a relevant critique. For example, on February 6,

1995 Nathan Krystall, a 26 year old American Jew who immigrated to Israel in 1991 was sentenced to 14 days for refusing -- on political grounds -- to enlist in the Israeli military. In a long and detailed letter addressed to the late Yitzhak Rabin, who was both Israel's prime minister and defense minister at the time, he wrote:

The IDF serves as an initiation rite into full Israeli manhood. It is these same Israeli men, though, who regularly beat and shoot to death their wives and girlfriends. Many feminists have drawn the connection between service in the Israeli army and the high level of male violence against women that exists in Israeli society. Also gay men, only recently allowed to serve in the IDF, do not fit into the norm of the Israeli Man and are subject to constant harassment.²⁴

Connections such as these between gender, sexuality, and the practices of the Israeli military have been unprecedented in Israeli political discourse. But in recent years, with the founding of a new group, *New Profile*, the interconnectedness between militarism, sexism and constructions of masculinity have become a topic of public discussion in Israel. The group, which includes both men and women, describes itself as a feminist group and calls for the civil-ization of Israel. Towards this end, its members work to challenge the social and political culture and educational system within which Israeli-Jewish men are socialized. *New Profile* has been actively working for the demilitarization of Israeli society in general and its educational system in particular. The group's mission statement stresses that "the predominance of military-based hierarchies [not only] constrict and impair equality and true participatory democracy [but also] tend to encourage violence and discrimination."²⁵ In seeking to change the educational system and working with parents of soldiers to be, *New Profile* is creating space for the transformation of masculinity. Their analysis and work, however, underscores the fact that masculinities cannot be demilitarized if the context in which they were constructed remains unchanged.

Despite our principle argument that Israeli masculinities are less susceptible to change than Palestinian masculinities, the examples we discussed above map possible avenues of transformation even for men whose identities were constructed in a context of domination. This transformation depends on one's ability to develop a critical political analysis of the context in which one operates. Political analysis, even when grounded in feminist literature, is not enough. Men should take responsibility for their own power and privilege both on a personal and on a structural level and refuse to play their part in hierarchies, which uphold systems of domination.

Israeli-Jewish men who seek to separate masculinity from sexism and domination face a multitude of obstacles. These obstacles, however, pale in comparison with those facing Palestinian men both past and present. Palestinian men, like Irish Republican men have been portrayed as inherently violent. These stereotypical and racist portrayals obscure the social, political and economic context within which Palestinian men operate. Indeed, one cannot examine formations of Palestinian masculinity without paying attention to changes in the context. We choose to focus primarily on three turning points - the 1987 intifada, the Oslo Accords and their aftermath, and the Al-Aqsa intifada.

The popular uprising of the late 1980s and early 1990s is associated with images of young Palestinian children confronting Israeli soldiers with stones in one hand and a Palestinian flag in the other. The children, or more correctly the boys, of the first intifada, were defiant and bold unlike their fathers who were still humiliated by the catastrophe of 1948. The masculinity, which emerged during that period was characterized by bitterness and courage on the one hand and by confidence and optimism on the other. But Palestinians were accused for sending their children to the frontline and depriving them of their childhood. Still, because the weapons of choice were primarily stones and flags, the masculinity, which emerged in that context was far less militarized, in comparison to Israeli masculinity and to Palestinian masculinities that were to emerge after Oslo.

Contrary to conventional media portrayals, the Oslo Accords in 1993, ushered in a new type of masculinity, which was far more militarized than the masculinity of the first *intifada*. This fact, however, went unnoticed as dominant media representations portrayed Oslo as peace, which most people associate with demilitarization. The reality was quite different. The aftermath of Oslo saw the creation of a Palestinian police force, which presently exceeds 30,000 people, making the Police the largest employer in Palestine.²⁶ Even though crime is almost non-existent in Palestine, there are more policemen per capita in the West Bank and Gaza Strip than in New York City. Ironically, an agreement, which was viewed by most of the world as a peace agreement resulted in the overt militarization of Palestinian society.

Because the police, like military is an hierarchical system, the masculinities shaped in this context were fairly rigid. Only months after its establishment, the Palestinian Police Force came under attack from both Palestinian and international human rights groups for an array of oppressive practices from violation of freedom of speech and association to torture of prisoners.²⁷ In addition, there has

been an increase in reports of violence against women - a phenomenon, which in conflict areas is often associated with the militarization of society.²⁸ In sum, the creation of the Palestinian Police Force after Oslo, with the blessing of Israeli security officials and the CIA has inspired a masculinity grounded in an ideology of domination. The meanings and practices associated with this masculinity are significantly different than the ones, which characterized the masculinities of the first intifada that despite being somewhat militarized were grounded in an ethos of liberation.

The outbreak of the Al-Aqsa *intifada* in September 2001 has created a context for the fusion of the masculinity of the first *intifada* with that of post-Oslo. Unlike the bottom-up popular character of the first uprising, the present *intifada* resembles more a guerilla war. As such, it is much more militarized. Nevertheless, the masculinities that it inspires are clearly informed by an ethos of liberation. At the same time, the men at the forefront of the struggle operate within a semi-hierarchical system, which resembles that of a conventional army.²⁹

In sum, it seems that in the Palestinian-Israeli context, the rigidity or mobility of masculinity depends to a great extent on the rejection or acceptance of the political status quo on one hand and military hierarchies on the other. For Jewish men in Israel, the challenges are different in nature and the factors, which enhance or prevent transformation are therefore of a different nature. Men who refuse to serve in the Israeli military for example because they do not want to participate in the oppression of Palestinians, engage in an act of resistance against the Israeli government and military and at the same time in an act of solidarity with Palestinians. By disassociating themselves from their state's policies and practices, which shaped their identities, including their roles and behaviors as men, they endorse an ethos of liberation and thus transform conventional notions of militarized masculinity.

Palestinian men, however, operate at the moment within circumstances that are far from conducive to the transformation of masculinities. The failure of Oslo to deliver a just and lasting peace in Israel-Palestine has left Palestinians with very few choices. The outbreak of the Al-Aqsa *intifada* represents a reassertion of masculinity for the individual men who carry out the struggle and for the Palestinian national image more generally. At the same time, because most Palestinian men are not directly involved in the rebellion, the re-surfacing of the masculine ideal of armed resistance is likely to create some frustration among men. Still, we would like to suggest that the masculinities of the Palestinian men who lead the rebellion are less rigid

than those of their Israeli counterparts because the intifada is inspired by an ethos of liberation.

Conclusion

While our analysis in this chapter focused primarily on two particular contexts: the North of Ireland and Israel-Palestine, we believe that some of the insights we gathered are applicable to other cases as well. Thus, we conclude with some general propositions.

The relationship between men, different conceptions of masculinity, and various political conflicts is far more complex than the unproblematic association of men with war-making. Political conflicts can militarize certain masculinities and at the same time open up space for critical exploration of different notions of manhood. Moreover, the masculinities constructed in the context of different political conflicts are far from being static or monolithic.

Differences, shaped by age, class, religion, and other modalities of identity and mitigating circumstances exist not only between men in different regions and or different sides of a conflict but within each group as well. Paying attention to these differences is crucial to understanding possible changes in conceptions of masculinity shaped by the conflict or by various attempts to resolve it.

Nevertheless, changes in the meanings and practices associated with masculinity are not simply a matter of personal decisions or choice nor do they take place in a vacuum. They are shaped and in turn inform one's political views and vision for the future of the community one is a member of. Men who believe in and are involved in work for social and political change are more likely to embrace less rigid conceptions of masculinity than those who are actively engaged in safeguarding the status-quo.

Thus, efforts to transform masculinities must coincide with struggles to eradicate social, economic and political inequalities. In addition to individual awareness and commitment to change, such efforts depend on structural conditions. Non-militarized, non-sexist mobile masculinities are more likely to emerge in the context of struggles to eradicate all forms of violence, physical as well as structural. These new masculinities are both the result of and the energy behind efforts to re-build communities from the ground up on the foundations equality and justice for all.

¹ For examples see Brock-Utne, Birgit, *Feminist Perspectives on Peace and Peace Education* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1989), Reardon, Betty, *Sexism and the War System* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1985),

1993, Ruddick, Sarah, *Maternal Thinking: Toward a Politics of Peace* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1989).

² (cf. Hartsock 1985; Harding 1991).

³ Use Haraway quote

⁴ For examples of pro-feminist literature on men and masculinities see Connell, Robert. *Masculinities* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), Kimmel, Michael (ed.) *Changing Men: New directions in research on men and masculinity* (Newbury Park, Calif. : Sage Publications, 1987), Kimmel Michael (ed.), *The Politics of Manhood : Profeminist Men Respond to the Mythopoetic Men's Movement (And the Mythopoetic Leaders Answer)*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995), Messner, Michael, *Politics of Masculinities : Men in movements* (Thousand Oaks, Calif. : Sage Publications, 1997), Tom Digby, (ed.) *Men Doing Feminism (Thinking Gender)*, (New York: Routledge, 1998). For web resources on pro-feminist men, go to:

<http://www.erraticimpact.com/~feminism/html/profeministmen.htm>. Check also <http://www.erraticimpact.com/~feminism/html/profeministmen.htm> for useful information about and links to pro-feminist men's group around the world

Lingard, Bob and Peter Douglas, *Men Engaging Feminisms: Pro-feminism, Backlashes and Schooling*, (Philadelphia, PA: Open University Press, 1999), p. 32.

⁵ Lingard, Bob and Peter Douglas, *Men Engaging Feminisms: Pro-feminism, Backlashes and Schooling*, (Philadelphia, PA: Open University Press, 1999), p. 32.

⁶ Greig et al. "Men, Masculinities and Development: Broadening our work towards gender equality." UNDP/GIDP Monograph # 10, May 2000. This report can be downloaded at

http://www.undp.org/gender/programmes/men/UNDP_Men_and_Masculinity.doc

⁷ Connell, *Masculinities*, p. 71

⁸ Ibid. p. 10.

⁹ See especially Cynthia Enloe's recent book *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

¹⁰ Most references to violence tend to refer to physical violence, that is use of force whose implications can be clearly observed. Structural violence, on the other hand, is not always visible. It may include political violence such as lack of democracy and human rights, social violence in the form of racism, sexism and homophobia and economic violence, which can manifests itself in such conditions as poverty, homelessness and unemployment.

¹¹ Peter Taylor, *Loyalists: War and Peace in Northern Ireland*. (London: TV Books, 1999).

¹² Laurence McKeown quoted in Simona Sharoni, "Gendering Resistance in an Irish Republican Prisoner Community," *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, Vol. 2, No. 1, (Spring 2000), p. 110.

¹³ For a detailed accounts of the lives of IRA volunteers, their political motivations and the change in their perspectives over time see Peter Taylor, *Behind the Mask: the IRA and Sinn Fein*, (New York: TV Book, 1997). For an insider's perspective in these issues see Laurence McKeown *Out of Time: Irish Republican Prisoners Long Kesh 1972-2000*, (Belfast: Beyond the Pale, 2001).

¹⁴ "Gendering Resistance," pp. 116-118.

¹⁵ Hutchinson quoted in Jonathan Stevenson, *'We Wrecked the Place: Contemplating an End to the Northern Ireland Troubles* (London: The Free Press, 1996), pp. 140.

¹⁶ See for example Alan Finlayson "Loyalist Political Identity After the Peace" *Capital & Class Special Issue: Northern Ireland between Peace and War* Issue No.69 Autumn 1999

¹⁷ For the full text of the Patten Report see <http://www.belfast.org.uk/report.htm>

¹⁸ For examples of Unionists reactions to the Patten Report see the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) web-page at <http://www2.uup.org> and Chris Marsden, "Patten Report on Reform of Royal Ulster Constabulary Provokes Unionist Outcry," at <http://www.wsws.org/articles/1999/sep1999/ruc-s17.shtml>

¹⁹ To learn more about PUP's platform and community involvement see <http://www.pup-ni.org.uk>

²⁰ The booklet has been long out of print, a fact that does not diminish its impact more than three decades after its publication.

²¹ The poem is taken from the Yesh Gvul brochure. It also appears on the movement's web-page at: <http://www.yesh-gvul.org>

²² These figures are taken from Yesh Gvul literature and web-page.

²³ Conversation with Peretz Kidron, founding member of Yesh Gvul, East Jerusalem, June 2001.

²⁴ The full statements written by Nathan Krystall are available from the authors.

²⁵ These quotes are taken from the group's web-page at: <http://www.newprofile.org>

²⁶ For further information about the Palestinian police force and for exact numbers of people in the force see http://www.arts.mcgill.ca/MEPP/unsco/pip/police/police_sp.html

²⁷ For more see the web-page of the major human rights organization in Palestine at <http://www.alhaq.org>. Also see the annual reports of Amnesty International about the Palestinian Authority at <http://www.amnesty.org>

²⁸ See Suzanne Goldenberg, "Perilous time in Palestinian families as siege adds pressure to old injustices," *The Guardian*, March 9, 2001 (online edition).

²⁹ To learn more about the nature of the Al-Aqsa intifada see The special Issue of *Middle East Report* titled *Beyond Oslo: The New Uprising, Middle East Report*, No. 217, Winter 2000. Selected articles from the issues and other relevant information can be found on their web-page at: <http://www.merip.org>