Women Managers in Israel

by

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Submitted to the Sloan School of Management
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Master of Business Administration

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Abstract

The objective of the research is to examine Israeli women in management, and to illuminate the problems that characterize both women on their way to the top and those who have already reached the top. In order to see whether Israel is different from other countries in this aspect, I present a comparison between women managers worldwide, followed by a survey of the Israeli social infrastructures which deal with working women compared with those in the United States.

Four portraits of women executives illustrate characteristic struggles and conflicts in the career life of Israeli women. Regarding the comparison between Israeli and North American career women, in addition to a great deal of similarity I also find differences which result from both institutional and ideological attitudes concerning family roles. Finally, the research explores the explanations for lack of women in top management positions and offers recommendations.

Thesis Supervisor: Lotte Bailyn
Title: TWilson Professor of Management
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I would like to thank the four Israeli women managers who contributed of their time and shared their experiences and insights with me. I truly enjoyed the discussions and I hope that I have accurately reflected their thinking in this thesis.

I would like to thank Prof. Dalia Etzion from Tel Aviv University, who helped me gather information about this subject.

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I also would like to thank the wonderful people at Coca-Cola Israel, the company where I have been working for the past ten years, who gave me the opportunity to experience, and learn more about management at MIT and supported me all the way.

Finally, I would like to thank my beloved family, my husband, Moshe, my daughter, Ronnie, and my son Yair, for the sacrifices they have made to give me this educational opportunity at MIT.
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## REFERENCES
Chapter 1 – Introduction

Pre-state photos of Israel frequently show pioneer women working alongside the men, plowing the fields, and holding weapons in a dramatic show of gender equality. But even during the State's earliest days, reality did not always match the myth.

From the pre-state period until today, Israeli women have had less power and status than men in all aspects of life. Though Israel is far more family-centered than the United States, in areas like maternity leave and affordable day care Israeli women share most of the same problems that confront women in all industrialized countries.

While women constitute 44 percent of the work force, the wage gap between men and women doing comparable work is high compared to the Western world. In both politics and business, women are under-represented in positions of power. Though Israel is one of the few countries that has had a female Prime Minister, only six women have held cabinet positions since the founding of the State. Today's Knesset [the Israeli parliament, trans.] numbers only nine women among its 120 members - less than in the first Knesset - and there is only one female Cabinet minister. In management positions, women hold 21 percent.

1.1 Scope of the Study

The objective of this thesis is to examine, using Edgar Schein’s career anchor paradigm, the career motivations of women managers in Israel. Four career stories of Israeli women managers illustrate how women managers in Israel have carved their way to the top.
From a woman’s perspective, Israel is characterized by five major elements:

- Israeli law determines that women, like men, are obliged to serve in the Israeli Defense Force.
- Israel has an efficient support system for employed mothers.
- Women constitute 44 percent of the Israeli labor force.
- The education level of men and women is equal (12 years in average).
- The participation rate of women with 16 years of schooling or more in the work force is 78 percent, while the participation rate of men with the same level of education is 73 percent.

Seemingly the above five elements should have created better opportunities for Israeli women compared with women in other industrial countries. The reality, however, is different. This paper researches how Israeli women managers pave their way up to the top and explores the obstacles they face during their career.

1.2 Organizational Structure of the Thesis

In chapter two I present a worldwide survey of women in management. Although there are many studies on this subject, there is still no standardized information on the number of women managers in each country. Out of the existing data I chose to present two tables, each one relating to a different system of assessing women managers.

Chapter three describes how Israeli society deals with working women. The first section describes the effect of life in Israel – which has been fighting for its survival for the past
50 years – on working women. The second section describes the social infrastructures in Israel, which encourage women to work outside the home. In addition, I compare social infrastructures in Israel with that of the U.S.

Chapter Four deals with Israeli women in management. The chapter is divided into nine sections. The first section presents a general survey of the distribution of Israeli women according to occupation. The second section describes women managers in industry, the third – women General Managers and Deputy General Managers, the fourth sector – women who manage high-tech companies in Israel, a field considered to have the highest growth potential in the Israeli economy. The fifth section describes women who sit on a board of directors in government and publicly traded companies. The sixth section talks about women in academia, the seventh – women in the army. Since in Israel both men and women are required by law to serve in the army and since the army serves as a vehicle for social mobility, I examined whether women, too, enjoy social mobility following their army service. The eighth section compares the army service of Israeli women with that of American women.

Chapter Five is devoted to four Israeli women in senior management. The first section describes the interviewing method, the second presents the questions I asked, followed by the four portraits of the women managers whom I interviewed.

Chapter Six presents results and a discussion, with an analysis of the interviews. In the first section I present a general portrait which is characteristic of all four women. The
second section examines what motivates women to reach managerial positions. The third section presents and analyzes the career anchor of the four women managers I interviewed; this part discusses the differences between the women. The forth section is my personal impression of the four women whom I interviewed; here I discuss my personal learning from the interviews. The fifth section surveys the problems that women managers deal with, and the sixth tries to explain why there is a lack of women managers in Israel.
Chapter 2 - An Overview of Women in Management Worldwide

Although women constitute over fifty percent of the world’s population, in no country do they represent even close to half of the corporate managers (Adler et al 1988). A worldwide comparison between women in management is problematic. The International Labor Organization (ILO) has two International Standard Classifications of Occupations (ISCO), one from 1968 (see Appendix A) and the other a revised version from 1988 (see Appendix B).

The ISCO-1968 classifies administrative and managerial workers as belonging to group 2, but other types of managers are classified according to occupation. Sales managers, for instant, belong to a subgroup of group 4, which is “Sales Worker”, and government executive officials to a subgroup of group 3, which is “Clerical and Related Workers.” The ILO, however, publishes this type of data only according to groups, and not by subgroups, therefore it is impossible to extract accurate data on women in management for countries who use the ISCO-1968.

The ISCO-1988 is classified differently; group 1 classifies managers in all sectors and occupations, unlike group 2 in the ISCO-1968 which only partly categorizes managerial occupations. It can therefore be assumed that data from countries which use the ISCO-1988 is more accurate for purposes of identifying women in management.

Table-1 shows the percentage of women in management in countries that use ISCO-88.
### Table-1
Women in Management Worldwide 1997 - ISCO-88

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Women Managers as a percentage from Total Managers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>25% (*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>25% (*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>2% (**)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


(*) Data from 1996

(**) Data from 1995

In order to roughly estimate the percentage of women in management in countries that use the ISCO-68, I used only group 2 – defined as Administrative and Managerial Worker – for my calculations. This estimate is biased because it does not take into account women managers in other occupations and sectors, such as sales managers,
government officials and others. In addition, I compared all countries to the United States assuming that the percentages in other occupations and sectors in these countries are similar to those in the United States, an assumption that might be incorrect. Table-2 below presents women in management for countries that use the ISCO-68.

**Table-2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Women in Management Worldwide – 1997 - ISCO-68 (USA=1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>USA =1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahrain 0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile 0.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia 0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt 0.37 (*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland 0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy 1.21 (*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan 0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia 0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway 0.71 (*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines 0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swiss 0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand 0.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia 0.06 (**)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey 0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States 1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uruguay 0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela 0.52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(*) Data from 1995
(**) Data from 1996

Adler and Izraeli (1988) point out that any understanding of the barriers to advancement faced by women managers around the world must take into consideration four perspectives: individual differences, the organizational context, institutionalized discrimination and the influence of power. They conclude that cultural constraints on women's identities as well as their role in family life, help explain the differences
between the women managers’ experience in different countries. Whether it be the Confucian emphasis on family in Hong Kong, China, Singapore and Taiwan; the priyayi view of women in Indonesia: (which attributes a high station to women by virtue of the husband’s social rank); Muslim syariah law in Malaysia; the view of women as second-class citizens in the Thai tradition; traditional family roles in Western Europe; the symbolic status of the non-working wife in Japan; the ascendancy of conservative Catholicism in Poland; or male possessiveness and sexual harassment in Tanzania - all these illuminate the influence of culture on women’s experience. This influence seems to go well beyond the reductionist term “role” to include a deeper symbolic sense of what it means in any given culture to be a ”good” woman - often the antithesis of a "good" manager.

Based on the material presented, the experience of women managers worldwide can be described in several generalized statements. First, rapid economic expansion in some countries with an attendant need for an increased labor supply have opened up opportunities to women managers. However, in countries that have suffered economic hardship, women managers (as well as women workers in general) have been the first to go. Furthermore, situations that offer a supportive family policy may help mitigate conflicts for women managers between work and family, but they do not by any means remove them completely. Additionally, access to networks that traditionally lead to management positions in any given country may work differentially for women from different social classes and backgrounds. Finally, in several countries where statistics show that women constitute a significant percentage of management, they tend to be segregated in public and nonprofit arenas.
Despite the fact that in 1995 women in the United States held 43 percent of all management positions – up from 32 percent in 1983 – there is a paucity of women at the highest levels (Barr, 1996); a 1993 survey of Fortune 1000 companies found that only 9 percent of executive vice presidents are women. The number of women in the boardroom is also on the rise: eighty-one percent of all Fortune 500 companies have at least one woman director, and some thirty percent have two or more.

The largest companies in Canada significantly lag behind US companies in appointing women to serve as company directors (New York Times January 28, 1999). 6.2 percent of the board seats in Canada's 500 biggest firms are held by women, compared with 11.1 percent at the largest US companies.

A study conducted by the U.N. Development Program (UNDP) in preparation for the U.N. Conference on Women ranked Sweden highest on equality for women, with salaries averaging only 70 percent of men's salaries (Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1997).
Chapter 3 -- The Way Israel Deals with Working Women

3.1 Life in Israel and its Influence on Working Women

Pines (1989) stresses the importance of understanding the problems unique to working women in Israel. As opposed to the USA, life for the working woman in Israel is characterized by the following factors:

1. **Technical Difficulties**: Appliances like dishwashers, tumble dryers and microwaves cost less in USA and are more abundant than in Israel. Prepared food in USA is more varied and cheaper.

2. **Economic Difficulties**: Salaries are lower in Israel compared to the US. The Purchasing Power Parity (PPP), as estimate of GNP per capita, is 61.1 (USA=100) (World Development Report, 1997). This fact can be translated into incessant economic stress.

3. **Security-Related Stress**: Almost every family in Israel has at least one member who is a solider, whether son or husband. Security-related stress is a constant reality for the Israeli population. Israel has been fighting for its survival for 50 years.

In spite of the above difficulties, research conducted by Etzion and Pines (1986) on burnout among working women in Israel and USA reveals that Israeli working women suffer from less burnout than their American counterparts. One explanation for this surprising finding is that the constant security stress causes Israelis both to feel that their lives are meaningful and to keep things in proportion. Another explanation is that Israel is a small country and people know each other better than in the US. Israelis share a collective social feeling and common destiny, a feeling that reduces individual stress.
Relationships among Israelis tend to be more open, deep and stable than among Americans. Stability in family relations, in the neighborhood and in the community provide Israelis with a feeling of social belonging and security. One of the outcomes of high mobility in America is the tendency to develop social relations with acquaintances, rather than with real friends. On the other hand, Israeli relationships tend to be with relatives or with childhood friends. Therefore, relationships in Israel are much closer, intimate and more stable. Those relationships protect the Israelis against stress, and support them in times of crisis.

Another explanation of the difference between burnout among Israelis and American women may be rooted in coping methods. In stressful times, Israeli women tend to use direct assertive coping methods which are more effective in combating stress. They tend to be more open and direct with the sources of stress. On the other hand, American women use inactive and/or indirect coping strategies, i.e. alcohol, sleeping, sedatives and mental breakdown.

3.2 Social Infrastructures which Deal with Family Needs in Israel

Israel differs from United State both institutionally and ideologically concerning family roles. Within the Unites States, families/children are in the private domain (Auerbach, 1988). The choice whether to have children is entirely personal and should neither be encouraged nor discouraged. Hence, receiving any kind of government help in this area is viewed as a sign of personal failure, with an attached stigma. In Israel the issue is anchored in a different set of cultural assumptions. Children in Israel are viewed as essential for the continuing success of the society. Therefore, Israel has more universal
social infrastructure; health care and other basic family needs are provided for, independent of employment status. Parental leave, which is available to both parents (but not at the same time), is reimbursed by the state at 75 percent of salary for twelve weeks. The law states that after the first six weeks of mandatory maternal leave, a couple may choose which parent takes the remaining six weeks of parental leave. Expansion of leave without salary is available up to twelve months.

According to Israeli law, it is illegal to fire a woman during her maternity leave, as well as during the 45 days that follow, or to give notice for a date beginning in these periods. An employer is forbidden to fire a pregnant woman if she has been working in the same place of work or with the same employer for at least six months, except with a special permit from the Minister of Work and Welfare. Even then it is allowed only if the cause for dismissal is not related to the pregnancy.

Absence from work due to a child’s illness: Every parent to a child up to the age of 16 is permitted to be absent from work due to a child’s illness for 6 days a year, on account of his or her sick leave. The couple can decide who will take advantage of this right. (The couple together can utilize a total of 6 days of leave due to their children’s illnesses.)

Resignation: a woman employee who resigns within 9 months from the birth of her child in order to take care of her baby is entitled to severance pay. This right can be awarded to the father instead of the mother.

A woman worker who returns to work after maternity leave and is employed on a full-time basis, may be absent from work for one hour a day for a period of four months from the time her maternity leave ends, without her pay for this hour being deducted from her salary.
Some day-care centers are subsidized by the state, with progressive fees for working mothers. Others are privately owned, with government supervision. Another common alternative for working parents is to employ a nanny who takes care of the child. School hours for children during the first years of elementary school are from 8:00am to 1:00pm, six days a week. Families with two working parents usually have a nanny for a few hours a day who waits for the children when they come home from school, feeds them and stays with them at home until one of the parents arrives from work.

The law requires employers to treat men and women equally in hiring, promotions, and pay, including equal pay for comparable work. The law prohibits sexual harassment. As with other forms of discrimination, women may take complaints to the Equality Ombudsman in the Labor Ministry, the courts, or their unions.

Bailyn (1993) claims that as long as society neatly apportions its people in cells 1 and 4 (see Figure-1 bellow), with men given sole responsibility for the economic role and women for the private family roles, the work of both the private and the public domains can be accomplished without social disruption.

**Figure-1**
The Israeli Response Compared to the American

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Home (Domestic Sphere)</th>
<th>Paid (Public Sphere)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Cell 1</td>
<td>Cell 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Cell 3</td>
<td>Cell 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1 summarizes the Israeli response to cultural trends compared with the American response. In US only one boundary is becoming more permeable – between male and
female work roles (transition from cell 2 to cell 4). Israeli women have an easier time combining the conflicting demands of work and family, even though Israeli men are not finding it more ideologically appropriate to increase their time spent at home (transition from cell 1 to cell 2).

During the past twenty years, a significant amount of Israeli women have been promoted to managerial jobs, but only few have succeeded in breaking the glass ceiling to achieve top management positions (Izraeli, 1997). Even though in mid-level management women are now more conspicuous than in the past, the percentage of women is still smaller than the percentage of men in mid-level management.

Israeli women in management are more apparent today due to the increase in women managers, but also because the small number of women who have reached top management positions have experienced a great deal of media exposure. Their success has strengthened the “Golda Meir effect”, which is the common belief that any woman who is competent and strongly motivated can advance to a key position. This encourages the denial of exclusionary practices, legitimates the status quo and impedes the process whereby cumulative systematic discrimination may come to be defined as a structural and political problem. Lack of women in the “Senior Executive Class” in Israel, which earns the highest salaries, indicates that the blocking mechanisms, which impede women, are still firmly in place.
Chapter 4 - Women in Management in Israel

4.1 Israeli Women according to Occupations - General Overview

Israel is considered to be an industrial country. The following table represents the distribution of employment by occupations and gender.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic professionals</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate professionals and technicians</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical workers</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>29.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agents, sales workers and service worker</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>20.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled agricultural workers</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry, construction and other skilled workers</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled workers</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thousands</td>
<td>1,965</td>
<td>2,013</td>
<td>2,040</td>
<td>1,155</td>
<td>885</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table-3 reflects several facts:

1. Women constitute 44% of the Israeli labor force.

2. More than 50 percent of the employees in Israel are in the industrial, clerical and services sectors.

3. However, while males are concentrated in industrial jobs (37%), females predominate in clerical jobs (29.1%).

4. Out of some 11,520 managers, only 2,390 (20.7%) are women.

4.2 Women Managers in Israeli Industry

Research was conducted in 1998 by The Forum of Women Industrialists in the Manufactures Association of Israel with the aim of finding the rate of women managers in Israeli industry. In this research a manager was defined as "an employee who is in charge of other employees, and/or influences decision processes and policy making at different levels within the organization". The findings show the following:

A. Rate of women managers in Israeli Industry

A.1. The rate of women managers has significantly increased from 16 percent in 1994 to 20 percent in 1997. Forty five percent of companies have an all-male management.

A.2. In numbers, in 1994 there were 6,500 women managers out of a total of 39,500 (men and women) managers, and in 1997 – 9,000 women managers out of 44,500 (men and women).
B. Education of Women Managers

B.1. Forty six percent of women managers hold a first degree, 12 percent have a second and/or third degree and the others hold other certificates.

B.2. Sixty six percent of the academic women managers studied Social Sciences or Management, 24 percent studied Natural or Exact Sciences and 8 percent - Humanities.

C. Employment Terms and Salary Gaps

Despite the increase in the proportion of women managers, employment terms of women and men managers in Israel are unequal.

C.1. Women managers earn 30 percent less than their male counterparts. 73 percent of women managers earn up to $28,000 gross, 20 percent make between $28,000 to $43,000 gross and 7 percent earn $43,000 to $65,000 gross.

C.2. Among managers in equal positions, one third of women managers receive benefits (like a company car, car expenses and stock options) compared with half to two thirds among men managers.

4.3 Women CEOs and Vice Presidents in Israeli Industry

In 1997, only 2 percent out of all CEOs in Israel were women, and 19 percent Vice President.
4.4 Women Managers in High-Tech Companies

High-tech is the crowning achievement of Israel's economic development, indicative of the shift from military to commercial innovation and the gains that peace has brought. Israel's high-tech industry is booming. Homegrown entrepreneurial companies are flourishing in what has become known as "Silicon Wadi." Today, Israel is a recognized leader in high-technology development since capital invested in Israel has successfully grown numerous fledgling companies to maturity. Over 100 Israeli companies are listed on U.S. exchanges. Israel is second after Canada among non-U.S. companies that list their securities for public sale in the U.S. <http://greenhouseventures.com/focus.html>. Since the early 90’s, annual venture capital investments in Israel rose from barely twenty million dollars to over a billion dollars. Furthermore, investment in the high-tech sector is not slowing down. In the first half of 1998, investments in this sector rose to $276 million – 70 percent compared with the same period last year. Indeed, the capital risked in Israel has enabled local entrepreneurs to develop myriad products, from Internet telephony, Internet video, medical electro-optics, to computer-aided design software, all of which are in the forefront of their respective fields.

According to the Forum of Women in the Manufacturers Association in Israel, only six of the CEOs in the more than 300 high-tech companies are women. Out of 1,300 start-ups, only forty are managed by women. In the electronics industry, 13 percent of those in managerial positions are women, whereas in software companies they constitute 17 percent.
4.5 Women Board Members in Government and Public Companies

In March 1993, amendment number 6 (appointments) to the Government Companies Law 1983 was passed. According to this amendment, both sexes shall be suitably represented in boards of directors of government companies (Yizraeli, 1998). Until suitable representation is achieved, the ministers are charged with the mission of appointing "directors of the sex that is not suitably represented at that time in the company’s board of directors" (Article 18a).

Subsequently, in January 1994 The Israeli Women’s Network together with the Na’amat organization appealed to the Supreme Court against the government of Israel, demanding that the appointment of three men directors be canceled. In November ‘94, the Supreme Court handed down its decision canceling the appointments. The Supreme Court accepted the claims of the Forum, and in their ruling – which was a precedent – stated that only by implementing affirmative action will it be possible to achieve real and significant equality.

According to a recent law (June 1998) which amends the Companies’ Law, at least one woman will sit on the board of directors of a public company. Previous to the new law, of 700 public companies in Israel, half did not have women on their board of directors. The new law stipulates that if there is no woman in the board, and one of the seats reserved for board members representing the public falls vacant, a woman must be appointed to the position. Table-4 represents the percentage of women on boards of government companies in 1993 (previous to the new law) and in 1996-7.
Table-4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Directors (men and women) in government companies</th>
<th>Number / Percentage of women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>712</td>
<td>51 (7.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>796</td>
<td>187 (23.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>699</td>
<td>196 (28.8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.6 Israeli women in Academic studies

- Data from the 1995 Census on education of men and women age 25 to 64 shows that Israeli women are more educated than Israeli men; 51 percent of women hold a Matriculation Certificate or a higher degree, compared to 47 percent of men. 21 percent of the women and 17 percent of the men have academic degrees.
- Israeli women and academic degrees, 1884/5 compare to 1994/5:

**Figure-2**

![Percent of Israeli Women among Degree Recipients in Israel](image)

- First degree
- Second degree
- Third degree

[1984/5] [1994/5]
• Only two countries in the world – Norway and Denmark – rank higher than Israel in regard to the percentage of women who hold academic degrees.

• The distribution according to field of study of women with a first degree changed in the period between 1985 and 1995. The percentage of women who received a first degree in Humanities dropped from 41 percent to 31 percent, in Social Studies it rose from 27 percent to 33 percent, and in medicine and paramedical studies it rose from 6 percent to 11 percent. In other fields the decreases or increases were slight. In 1995, the percent of women who received a first degree in law was 6 percent, in Natural Sciences and Mathematics – 13 percent, in engineering and architecture – 5 percent, and in agriculture – 1 percent.

• Among persons receiving first degree in Humanities, 75 percent are women; in medicine and paramedical studies – 72 percent, and in Social Sciences – 60 percent. In law, Natural Sciences and Mathematics women constitute almost half of those receiving first degrees.

4.7 Women in the Israeli Defense Force

Israel is the only country in the world in which military service for women is mandatory (Jerby, 1996). Since the birth of the Israeli State 50 years ago, all 18-year-old women have been recruited in Israel, regardless of education level and background. There are, and were, exceptions. Religious women, married women, women with children are all automatically excluded. But most young women welcome the call-up. This fact in itself bestows an equalitarian image on Israeli society in public opinion at home and abroad. The predominance of the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) in Israeli society
enables the IDF to be a powerful factor in shaping norms and values. On the one hand, the army reproduces the existing social order, but on the other hand it is also an active participant in shaping it. The IDF influences the individual’s life course far after the service period. His or her military service influences the individual’s integration into civil life.

David Ben Gurion’s [The first Prime Minister of Israel, trans.] statement from 1948 expresses the ambivalent approach toward women’s integration into the military system. He said:

1. Motherhood is more important than security needs, and it is as essential to the nation’s survival as participation in military defense activities.

2. The purpose of the women’s military draft is to facilitate the men’s transition from the home to battlefield.

3. In emergency periods, it is always possible to reexamine women’s roles within the army.

Those principles are still valid today. There has always been an unequivocal taboo on women’s fighting role. Israeli women who serve in the IDF are not allowed to fight. Zuckoff (1973) claims that it is a well-known pattern in Jewish history. According to the pattern, whenever a threat is imposed upon Jewish existence, women are required to demonstrate courage and aggressiveness. When the threat is over, Jewish society reverts to patriarchy.

The Security Service Law from 1952 classified the jobs forbidden to women into three categories:

1. Fighting functions.
2. Functions in which environmental conditions are not suitable for women.

3. Functions that demand physical fitness.

In 1993 women in the IDF were occupied in the following jobs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table-5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women occupations in the IDF -1993</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job/Duty</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Officer's class</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computers</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Jobs</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driving</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical Work</td>
<td>39.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trainee</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1983, 70 percent of women soldiers worked in clerical jobs, almost twice their rate in 1993. In 1978 woman soldiers were employed in 210 jobs out of 709 available in the IDF, while in 1991 500 were open to women. One third of women soldiers work as instructors in the Armor Corps, Signal and Electronics corps, Combat Engineering and Artillery Corps. Those jobs became available to women after the Lebanon War in 1982. The women instructors work in combat occupations at military camps on the home front (Yediot Acharonot, 1991).

Jerby (1996) claims that the IDF does not contribute to the equality of Israeli women, but rather harms it. The position of women in the IDF, as individuals and as a group, is inferior to men in terms of jobs and promotion. Military service is a mobility vehicle for men only, it helps them advance in civil life. Women do not achieve communication networks and therefore do not receive prestigious jobs due to their military network. Izraeli (1988) points out that the dominant elite-producing institution in Israel is the IDF.
The structural arrangements resulting from the policy toward women soldiers virtually exclude women from the process of elite formations.

4.8 Women in the American Army (AVF) compared to the IDF

There are two main differences between AVF and IDF. Firstly, the AVF is a volunteers’ army and competes for human resources with other potential civil employers, while service within IDF is mandatory. Secondly, the service within the AVF is long range and involves a professional career, while the service in the IDF is short range (three years for men and 21 months for women). Those two reference points are significant in terms of women’s qualification and promotion. Furthermore, in the AVF there is no Women’s Army Corps (WAC) like in the IDF. The existence of WAC is indicative of the IDF’s perception of women service being a singular issue. Therefore, we should expect woman’s integration into the AVF to be more equal than in the IDF. Lack of comparative data about women officer promotions within the IDF makes it difficult to compare.

4.9 Summary and Transition

Chapter 4 illustrates that Israeli women are under-represented in powerful positions, although in average they are more educated than Israeli men are. Furthermore, Israeli women, who succeed in reaching mid or top level management positions, earn less that their male counterparts.

In the next chapter I represent four portraits of executive Israeli women who reached the top.
Chapter 5 – Interviews, Four Portraits of Executive Israeli Women

5.1 Interview Methods

Interviews were carried out with four women, all of whom hold top management positions in Israel. Three of the interviewees have chosen not to reveal their identity, therefore I have covered up identifying details. One interviewee gave her approval to publish her name and her company name.

All the interviews were conducted in person. Each interview lasted for about three hours. I opened each interview by telling the interviewees about my thesis and the purpose of the interview. I had two general areas of research interest. First, to understand how each one of the interviewees reached her position, i.e. her life events, consequences and motives. Second, to learn their analysis of the lack of women in top management in Israel. Each meeting was therefore divided into three sections:

1. Personal questions, i.e. early childhood experiences, educational background and work experiences.

2. General questions.

3. Career Anchor Questionnaire.

The purpose of the personal questions was to become familiar with each life story from childhood till today. The questions about their educational backgrounds and work experiences were taken from Schein’s (1990) booklet. The second set of questions deals with each interviewee’s personal point of view on women in management positions in Israel. (See interviews’ questions in Appendix C).
After introducing the purpose of the interview, I asked each interviewee about her preference regarding the order of the questions, and since all were indifferent in this matter, I started with the personal set. Since I had not met my interviewees before, I wanted to break the ice as fast as possible and I assumed that talking about themselves would be more interesting and challenging than discussing general issues.

The four interviews were tape-recorded with the approval of the interviewees. The interviews took place in Israel during January 99, in Hebrew. The interviews were transcribed and than translated into English.

Finally, at the end of the questions, the interviewee filled out the Career Anchor Questionnaire.
Miriam (alias) is the General Manager of a family company in Israel. Miriam’s grandfather established the business and afterwards her father took control. Today Miriam and her father are co-CEOs. She was born in the early 60’s and grew up in a Tel Aviv suburb. She is married and has three children.

Of her childhood:

“I had a normal childhood, I was in the Scouts, and then I went to high-school at the Gimnasia, where I majored in Sociology. In high-school I was wild, spent a lot of time at the beach. After I finished the army I improved the matriculation exams in the exact sciences. At that time my mother died. I registered at the Technion [Israel Institute of Technology, trans.] to study Industrial Engineering and Management. Crown princesses always go to study the right things. But my mother had just died and during the first year after her death I didn’t want to leave my father as well, so I went to improve my matriculation tests because with my certificate you couldn’t get into any school. At the Technion you could be accepted on the basis of entrance exams, but only if you had a matriculation certificate. So I completed 5 points [the highest level of exam, trans.] in Math and Physics. I didn’t care how much I had in the other subjects.

I studied Industrial Engineering and Information Systems Management. At the time this was considered exclusive.
Miriam relates that until second grade she was the type of girl who would be swept away with the tiniest wind. In second grade she became brave and began to hit back; this way she turned into the queen of the class. A tough queen, not a good one. In eighth grade, before high-school, she decided that she didn’t like this status any more, the kind that you have to constantly defend. She hated all the physical fighting, the Tel-Aviv suburban puritanism, where everybody knows everything about everyone. Basically, she says:

You have to be like everyone, you can’t grow up in that suburb and be different, colorful, because you become the talk of the town. That’s what I was all the time - what I wore, what I said, if my eyes were red or not - everyone talked about it.

So she decided to study at a high-school in Tel Aviv, at the Gimnasia, where she was very happy. There were numerous classes, eight in each grade, and everyone could find their social niche – she could be anonymous. The girls in the scouts always tried to throw her out and the boys protected her. She was the boys’ favorite, they said that she was not entirely a girl; she had a different way of thinking. She was very close to the boys, the girls didn’t like her.

When Miriam joined the army at the age of 18, she requested a clerical position in the Navy at Sharem [in the south of the Sinai peninsula, trans.], but they sent her to the Tank Corps. The moment she arrived on base, she claims, they understood that she was not suited to be the secretary of the Personnel Commander, so they connected her with the Division Psychologist and she did field diagnostics - she checked the motivation of soldiers in various courses. She says:

In the first year it was very interesting, during the second year I could already write the conversations on my own. That’s what I did for two years, I was in a
division on the Golan Heights. I learnt a lot from that experience. When you sit in a room with four psychologists for two years, you notice a lot and learn how to look at people, at their body language. That's one of my advantages today as a manager. This is what the IDF contributed to me.

Miriam's mother was a housewife. Miriam views her mother's generation as the one in which the revolution started:

They felt that they missed out - that was the generation that missed out. We were supposed to make their fantasies come true, of being independent, of not making the mistake that they made. In my mother's generation - she was born in Israel - if there were problems making ends meet the women would work in a bank or something like that. But most of them sat at home and raised children.

My mother always said to me: be an independent woman, don't be dependent on anybody. It's not that she tried to influence me to get married, but rather to be an independent woman, to have a profession, so that no matter what happens and no matter what you want to do, you can stand on your own two feet. My mother said that to me, and not to my sister. I think that she looked at me and at my sister and said - you can do it and she can't. And indeed my sister is married and doesn't work.

Miriam's father had less influence on her. He was a businessman and was not at home very much, he was always at work. Her grandfather established the business and her father followed in his footsteps. In her family, in each generation there is only one who
continues in the business. Miriam believes that children, who grow up in a businessman's home, have business in their blood.

As for the women of her generation, Miriam is very disappointed in them. She thought that her generation would be much better, but one morning, she says "I woke up and found that I was alone. Occasionally you find one who has a breakthrough, but that's because she got divorced and has to work." She thinks that women of her generation gave up, because it's hard, it's uncomfortable, it's much easier to complain than to do something about it. It's easier for them to blame their husbands:

I have girlfriends who are General Managers and their husbands help with the housework because they taught them to help. They explained that these are the limits, that this is what they want to do. The whole bit of "my husband won't let me"... that's just an excuse. If you really want it and say to your husband: "this is what I want and you have to be my partner", he'll give you his support. But it's really easy to say "my husband won't agree, my husband is not willing to come home early even one afternoon a week." The employers understand it too. I have a woman employee here who I promoted. Her husband works in high-tech, where they work long hours. He went to his boss and said to him: my wife got a promotion and that means that I have to be home early for the kids twice a week. The owner of the high-tech company said: "Nobody ever came to me with this kind of request, I think it's a very good thing and there's no problem." That's a good example of married life.
After the army service, Miriam studied Industrial Engineering and Management at the Technion, in Haifa. She graduated with a first degree cum laude, and then she packed her bags and went to America. At the beginning she did not want to go into the family business, she wanted to prove herself abroad. She flew to Palo Alto and started to look for work. She relates:

There was a guy there who had studied with me at the Technion, I gave my resume to someone to type up in American English, and then someone came into the room and they brought out my resume. She asked me if I knew C language [a computer language, trans.], and in my cheeky Israeli manner I said that it’s more or less my mother tongue... So through some student union I got a work permit. I had three weeks to learn C, I studied it at home without practicing and then I came to work. In this manner I sat at IBM from 1985 to ’87. I worked on the development of their first Unix system for a year and a half. Then a friend of mine went to live in Japan. She checked where there were openings in IBM around the world. During this whole period I was a temporary worker, I had no tenure. I submitted an application for Japan and moved there (87-88). I worked at the American headquarters there. When I arrived at work the Japanese politely informed their bosses that they don’t like the fact that I’m a woman engineer. They did it in a very Japanese way, not overtly, they simply said that they would give me all the material in Japanese, which is like saying we don’t want to work with you. They had to find me different job, and fortunately at that time they were supposed to draw up a budget. The Vice-President of the IBM headquarters in Japan came to me and asked me to do the allocated budget. He said: “this is
my budget, go learn the history.” So I found myself working as an economist. It was a very exciting experience. Afterwards he said that he had to prepare a presentation of IBM’s five-year investment plan, and he asked me to make the presentation. Suddenly I’m sitting opposite this Vice-President, and you have to understand, we’re cheeky Israelis. It is not easy for us to understand the cultural differences between Israel and Japan. When this Japanese Vice-President walked down the hall, everyone would scurry into his or her room, there was a lot of respect for hierarchy there. I worked with him on all sorts of jobs, not connected to high-tech or to the job I had come to do. I put it all on Lotus for him; it was an amazing experience.

Then he asked her if she would like to go to America with him, he was being transferred to the United State as an IBM representative. Miriam was at a crossroads. She had to make a decision whether to continue her wanderings or return to Israel. She knew that if she moved to Washington she would become an immigrant. She describes her feelings:

The Polish side took over [sort of like a Yiddish mama, trans.]: you’re 28, what’s gonna be, aren’t you going to get married? Raise a family? This led me to the decision to return. My grandfather was also putting a lot of pressure on me to return and enter the family business. My conscience dictated that I should return. Perhaps it was also the consideration of why should I immigrate when I had the family business here. I came back to Israel, did indeed get married, and started working in the business. In my family the going is tough, in the beginning they made me work as a programmer in the computer department.
Miriam says that she always knew that even if she was an employee, she would become a Vice President. She knew that she would go to the top, no matter where she was.

Her first job in Palo Alto gave her a lot of confidence in her abilities, the fact that she traveled alone with her suitcase and survived. She proved to herself that she could overcome any crisis, although the price she paid was loneliness. Working in an American company gave her a lot. She believes that everyone should work for two years in an American company.

When she came back to Israel from Japan she began studying towards a second degree in Business Management at Tel Aviv University. She finished it in 4-5 years, specializing in marketing and finance. She joined the family business and built budgets and started creating profit centers in the company. She brought all the knowledge she had accumulated in the field at IBM. "We weren’t given an order to do it", she says. So they began to let her manage the profit centers.

Miriam got married in 1988, upon her return from Japan and immediately became pregnant. She has three children, aged 9, 6 and 3.

Miriam and her husband employ a nanny, who is like a grandmother to the children. Once a week she stays till 7:00 in the evening, twice a week Miriam’s husband leaves work early and takes over, and twice a week she leaves early. She does not keep an au pair in principle. She is adamant that children need to see their parents; "It is the parents’ responsibility to raise them, they need to be with their parents, talk with them, and eat dinner together".
Miriam describes herself as the type of person who the moment she has achieved something, she looks at what she still has to achieve. Her goal is to do things. When something has been achieved her head is already busy with the next challenge: “I never sit on my laurels. The times when I sat around pleased with myself was the period when I was abroad, in the U.S. and Japan. The only time in my life when I was a free agent was then, when I had no roots. Here I have the continuous pressure and duties of the family. There I had a few friends, but the price I paid was in loneliness.”

Miriam says that a managerial job is sometimes very frustrating. She points out that there is a huge gap between the expectations of the worker from the employer and of the employer from the worker:

The employee is always dissatisfied. Whatever you give him is always taken for granted, he always wants more. On the other hand the feeling that the worker is not giving his all is very difficult. In America the worker’s soul belongs to the company. There, if we had a deadline we worked 14 hours to meet it and nobody said a word. Here we don’t have the American work ethic, but the workers demand American conditions. This expectation gap causes hard feelings, and it’s difficult. Maybe it’s harder for me because I’m a woman, perhaps men take it less to heart. With me, it goes to my guts. For example, with the recession we’re having this year, we couldn’t give the workers significant raises. We did give raises this year, though relatively small, but the workers didn’t appreciate it. We could have said that it’s a difficult period and that we aren’t giving any raises.
A while ago her father, who is close to his 70th birthday, suggested that she become the General Manager of the company. She told him that she has to prepare herself for the job, which is what she is currently doing:

I’m not prepared to take the title without being ready. The job is terribly demanding, I asked my father to let me move into it in a gradual process. From my experience it’s better to prepare yourself for the job rather than accept a title.

Regarding the future, Miriam is afraid that the day will come when she will not be able to realize a vision, that she won’t find time to work on the vision.

You have to know where to put the limits so as to have time to work on the larger vision. There are endless problems in the day to day wear and tear, and it’s very easy to get stuck in that. It’s not enough to manage the daily work, you have to do something real, something that makes a difference, something innovative, like a new sales philosophy. I don’t want to be known as just another manager who increased sales by 20%. That’s not enough for me. There are a lot of managers who are only interested in money and showing everyone how much they succeeded. If someday I’ll write an article that will be published in the Harvard Business Review, that will make me much happier than money.

Miriam’s long-term goals and aspirations have changed since she began her career. The moment she understood that she has the ability to be a merchant, then that was no longer enough for her.

If you had asked me a while ago I would have said that I want the company to double or triple in size. Today I would say, no, I don’t necessarily want the
company to grow. That may be important, but I want to do something real. It could be a product, for example, which I would develop.

Miriam very much wants her visions to come true. She recently developed a training system for agents together with a consultant. This made her much happier than a 20% growth in sales, because she realized that she did something different.

I hope I don’t sound megalomaniac. Unlike several years ago, today I believe that in 10 years I’ll bring in a General Manager from the outside and then I’ll deal with vision, pass on my vision to him. To follow up on visions after they have been assimilated in the field is not interesting. The General Manager will do that. The vision is more important than the business. It’s reciprocal - a business can’t live without a vision and vice versa.

Miriam is trying to promote values in her career. Honesty, fairness and creativity are very important to her. In the company she created a chosen group from the entire business. This group is working with a very interesting system for developing creativity. The principle of the method is to take an existing product and develop it into all kinds of directions using various systems. Last year they experimented with two of the company’s products and one of them did actually become a new product. This year, after she saw that it works, she chose someone from the company to be the mentor and to assimilate the system into the company. Every department will undergo the process this year. She hopes this method will create new products and she hopes that she will succeed this way in developing creativity. Miriam hopes that this will be her relative advantage - being innovative and creative. In terms of resources, she says, the company can not
compete globally except through creativity. Therefore, they have to find innovations that don’t cost billions, because on a worldwide level the company is small.

Miriam says that she is too emotional: “It’s not easy being at the top, you have to move on to another phase. I take everything to heart, it sometimes causes blow-ups. I think that I’m not effective when I take things to heart.

Miriam’s story depicts a woman who continuously seeks new challenges – the moment she reaches a goal, she aims for a new one. She lives in peace with the balance she has achieved between family and career. Miriam thinks that most women choose not to develop a career because they know that it is hard and therefore give up in advance.
5.3 Sarah – One of the Most Powerful Women in Israel

Sarah (alias) is the General Manager of one of the largest investment companies in Israel and serves as well as Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the fourth largest company in Israel.

Sarah was born in Tel Aviv in the late 40's, the youngest child of a family with two older boys. Her eldest brother was killed in battle when Sarah was 9 and her middle brother was 13, an event that played a significant role in her life. Sarah is married and has three children.

Sarah started our interview with the following words: “I would like to say that I have never played a part in promoting women’s issues. If you ask me about the situation of women today, I couldn’t tell you, I'm not much of an expert on this issue. All I know about is my own personal situation.”

Sarah’s parents immigrated to Israel from Eastern Europe. Throughout most of the years that she remembers her mother didn’t work. Her father was a building contractor. He had nothing when he came to Israel and achieved everything he had with his own two hands; Sarah describes him as her role model.

In elementary school and part of high-school she was a sportswoman in several subjects. She was Israel champion. Sarah recalls:

I was very ambitious and competitive. Being number one was an integral part of me from a very young age. I was an O.K. student. Throughout the years, from fourth to twelfth grade I was in the scouts, where I was among the leaders, a counselor and troop leader. In school I was also very active, head of the class
committee. In twelfth grade I left the scouts and enrolled directly in university, I didn’t go to the army. I was very young when I enrolled, 17.5, and I was unsure about which course of study to choose. I considered Applied Mathematics and then someone told me that there was something called Accounting. At the age of 17.5 I had no idea what this meant. I was curious about it, it had something to do with business and with math, so I thought it was close to mathematics. I was told that applied mathematics was too theoretical, so I said, O.K., I’ll study a more practical type of mathematics and I chose Accountancy. We were a class of 120 with only around 10 girls. We graduated 2-3 girls.

Her home has played a central role in her life, both when she was a little girl and since she has become a mother:

At home I absorbed both values and self-confidence. My mother played one part in forging my personality, and my father was a role model for me. My parents were very supportive and encouraging, they spoiled me, though with every grade that I would bring home my father would say that there’s room for improvement.

Even if it was 95 he would say, why not 100?

Sarah loved her studies and that whole period. She studied in the evenings and during the day worked full time, giving herself no discounts whatsoever. She wouldn’t let her parents pay for her tuition, even though they could well afford it. Sarah remembers those times as a period of blossoming. She was the youngest student there.

Sarah planned her career in advance. Her ultimate goal was to be an accountant, though at the time she wasn’t familiar with the profession and had no idea what could be done with it.
The day she finished her matriculation exams in high-school, she thought it would be brave to start supporting myself, so she started to work as a book-keeper in a garage. She describes this period:

I grew up in a Polish home and when my parents heard that I'm going to be a book-keeper in a garage, that their daughter is going to work in a garage, that was something special for them... But there I discovered the real world. In the garage, too, I received special attention, I was a young girl, 18 years old. I worked there for a short period of half of year and saw that I had realized my full potential there, so I made a plan of how to develop myself professionally. I thought it would be good if at first I would work in a small place, then move to a mid-sized accountant's office, then to a large one and then work in a company. And that's what I did. After the garage I worked in a small accountancy office for about three years, and there I advanced. I wanted to learn all the different types of work available, and when after three years I finished a full round of working on all the files and was supposed to start over again, I thought that it would be a shame for me to remain in the same office and that I should move on and learn something new. So I quit and started to work in a large accountancy office. I started each new job immediately after leaving the previous one, I never gave myself any discounts. I was on very good terms with the owner of the new office and worked there on different files in many fields, with different partners. I had good experience there with the clients. I was a very hard worker with a very strong work ethic, which is something you absorb at home. I never allowed myself to
make private phone calls, to leave early or come in late. I placed high demands on myself.

In the 70's, at the age of 23, after Sarah received her accountant's license, she got married. At the time she was still working in the large accountancy office. She worked there for about 7 years. She says:

More than anything else I wanted to have a family, to be a mother, and by the age of 28 I already had 3 children. The children created a wonderful revolution in my personality and life, motherhood gave me a lot of confidence. I felt that I was actualizing the most natural, real, basic thing, and afterwards I felt free to forge ahead. Combining everything was very difficult. During the initial years, when the children were small, the load was very heavy, mainly the emotional load. I walked around with severe guilt feelings for years. I always worked full-time, long hours, even when the children were little. If there is anything I regret it's that my division of time between work and the children was wrong. I spent too many hours at work and too little time with the children. This is something that I still haven’t come to terms with. That’s the period which I feel guilty about. Throughout the years my husband was central to my success in a significant way, but not in the sense that he had to share the burden of the house and children. On the contrary, from the very first day I said to myself that I don’t want guilt feelings because I’m giving up my roles as a woman, a mother and a housewife. Therefore I never wanted to ask him for help, and all the house matters were on me. I had help from nannies, and I was lucky to have the same nanny for many years, I think 17-18 years. My husband was very supportive, especially
emotionally, and whenever I felt overwhelmed and didn’t know how to cope with everything, he always had a good word for me. In that sense I didn’t believe him anymore because I knew that no matter what I did, he would always say that he supports me or would justify me. But it helped. I made my own demands on myself - discounts I received from my husband. The children knew that their mother was very busy. They understood, however, that I was not sitting around in cafes and having fun, that I was doing something truly interesting and important.

I asked Sarah what gave her the strength to continue and do this, and her reply was:

It was a combination of two things: One a combination of personality traits, there’s nothing that can replace that. It’s not one characteristic, but a totality of a person’s personality which enables him to cope and to continue and not break down despite crises. Secondly, during the first years there was also a financial necessity. Slowly my financial contribution to the family became more dominant and this began to be obligating. I had climbed out on a very high limb.

In the 70’s she moved with her husband to the Far East for a year, for his work. There she gave birth to her youngest son. During that year she was pregnant, it was the only period of her life that she didn’t work. When they came back to Israel she began to work for one of the clients of the large accountancy office where she had worked - one of the big Israeli banks. They knew her from her work as an auditor for the accountants. She entered the department of the Accountant-General and her advancement there was very fast:

The bank has different levels of signatory rights, and between each level there is a timetable for advancement. A very short time after I started working, they wanted
to give me the third level of signatory rights, which was an unheard of precedent. The workers’ committee waged a big war against it. They sent me a letter saying that they have nothing against me personally, that they really respect my work, but they don’t want to create precedents... However they found a solution and I advanced there very quickly. I entered a field, and in that field I created the position. I saw that there was a vacuum in a particular realm, which was the handling of non-banking daughter companies. From this I created a position, a standing. I formed very good working relations with the directors of the companies. I was always interested in visiting and getting to know the managers, I always wanted to know who was at the top of the pyramid and to make the connection. I had a direct line of communication with the General Manager of the bank, with the Chairman of the Board, and it was natural that they turned to me on various subjects that I was handling. In this manner they skipped over the entire hierarchy of people who were above me and created a direct line to me. In effect they were constantly pulling me up, to them. It was very unusual. There are no women managers at the bank, it’s a bank with an oriental tradition. I always felt very flattered because I understood that this was not the natural place for me. I had great respect for this position and for the fact that I served in such a role. One of the owners, who was the Chairman, offered that I leave with him, to operate their investment company separately. I asked for time to consider the proposal, but he said: “You want to think about it, sit here in this room and think and give me your answer now.” I sat and thought about it and in the end said yes. It was very funny, one Friday they called me and said that the owner of the bank
wants to meet me and I said, "Sorry, I’m baking a cake." They said to me:

“There’s never been another manager who said to the owners that he’s baking a cake and can’t come to a meeting.”

So she moved over with them to the investment company, which has a varied investment portfolio in all types of business. Sarah started working there as Accountant-General in 1987, and again she was very curious to visit all the companies they dealt with, in commerce, industry, etc:

I also formed very good and dependable relationships with all the authorities whom we dealt with. They all knew that I would never mislead them and they trusted me, therefore I received everything I asked for from these people, something which made my work much easier and shortened procedures. I also loved the contact with people. I’m not sure which year it was, but I then became both CFO and Vice President of the investment company.

About three years ago, Sarah was appointed co-General Manager of the investment company. This is, in effect, the most senior position in the company. The chairman is the owner, not someone external:

That’s the highest I can go there. A year and a half ago I was appointed Chairman of the Board of another company, which is the fourth largest company in the country. I view this position as a great challenge. I fell in love with the job. It’s a very large company with a wide marketing umbrella, very competitive, with a very strong competitor in the market. I found room here for personal expression. I’ve also served as a director in other companies.
Sarah is the only woman on the Board of Directors. In the company where she serves as Chairman of the Board, she brought in another woman:

Throughout the years I’ve worked with men, managed men, sometimes men who are older than me. All these years no one was ever rude to me. The most stinging remark which I don’t like is “you’re as good as a man”. I know that men who I have to manage - especially if they’re older and more religious than me - are sometimes uncomfortable.

Once, when she was still at the bank, one of the workers tried to come on to her, verbally, and she told him that if it ever happened again, he would be fired:

And I meant every word I said. On the contrary, sometimes if I receive a compliment or a good word, I’m flattered. I make sure to always dress and look right, I enjoy being a woman among men. I never found it to be an obstacle, on the contrary, it can be an advantage.

Sarah recalls the three-month course she took at Harvard, Boston as one of the best periods in her career life: “I really enjoy studying, I always encourage the people who work with me to go study. During my career I enrolled three times for an MBA, but each time I gave birth to another child and it became too much, so I gave it up. I really wanted to do that, it’s something I’ve missed out on. Therefore when I had a break in work, when the stock regulation trial [following the crash of the bank stocks, trans.] ended, I enrolled at Harvard.”

Aside from that, every time she started a new job, she enjoyed the feeling of renewal. Every time she succeeded in actualizing significant things at work, realized ideas of hers,
Sarah had enjoyable periods, though they were usually short and then she was on to the
next thing:

When I was studying it was the intellectual challenge. In new jobs it’s the interest
in something new, the challenge in learning something new, the desire to succeed.
Sarah still has one aspiration that she has not achieved, of being self-employed. She finds
it hard to accept herself as an employee.

"One goal I have realized - a family, a home, children. As to my professional
aspirations - I think I’ve realized the maximum, being a General Manager of a
large investment company and at the same time serving as Chairman of the Board
of another large company, what more could I want? Only to be self-employed.
Sarah claims that the job that she is doing is not suitable for a woman. She explains:

The top jobs are not for women. There are a lot of situations in these jobs that go
against women’s nature. I think that a woman’s emotional world... Often I suffer
emotionally in these jobs more than men do, because I’m a woman. I’m more
easily insulted, take things more to heart, things that remain with me for a long
time, things that I lose sleep over. I think that this is because I’m a woman. And
the price that the children pay is very high.

If she could take herself back 15 years, she would have made a more rational allocation
of time between the children and the job:

I’m not one of those who says that men and women are the same. I think that I
pay a heavy price for the conflict between femininity and the functioning required
in high positions. I blush easily, you can see what I’m feeling, my moods are very
transparent. I don’t have a poker face. You don’t see this on men.
Sarah views her desire to succeed as the common pattern of her career. She relates:

Recently I was looking for a manager. I was told about a certain man: “He has succeeded throughout his career.” It’s built into a person’s personality that he’ll do everything he can to succeed in his next position. I remember the period that we lived in the Far East and I didn’t work. I used to play bridge and always wanted to win, to succeed, to do good things. If it’s cooking, then to make good food, if it’s setting a table, then it should be perfect.

Sarah feels that she has sacrificed her social life. “I pay the price in my social life. That’s one of the least developed areas of my life. I don’t devote enough time to my friends, and I feel it”.

Sarah’s story describes a woman who planned her career from the very beginning, yet she suffered severe guilt feelings for many years. As one of the most powerful women in Israel she claims that the job she is doing is not suitable for a woman.
5.4 Ronit Silon – General Manager & The Chairperson of the Forum of Women Managers at the Manufacturers’ Association

Ronit Silon is the General Manager of Olivex Ltd., Chairperson of the Forum of Women Managers at the Manufacturers’ Association and Chairman of the Board of the Bank of Agriculture. In addition she is a shareholder in two other companies. Ronit was born in Tel Aviv in 1952 and has one brother. She describes her parents as very ambitious and the home she grew up as one which instilled strong values of obedience and responsibility. Ronit holds a first degree in Mid-Eastern Studies and a second degree in Business Administration, both from Tel Aviv University. She is married and has two children.

In high-school she majored in Mid-Eastern Studies and later she served in the Information Corps of the army:

For a certain period I was interested in this field, until I saw that it wasn’t for me. After I completed my first degree in Mid-Eastern Studies I worked at the Dayan-Shiloah Institute, and afterwards in the Economic Branch of the IDF Information Corps. At the time there were no breakthroughs like there are today, it was just working with documents on historical research. The truth is that the move from the army to the institute was a drastic move, because in the army I dealt with current affairs while the institute dealt with historical matters, and this encouraged me to move on to my current life. I needed the switch to business. The activity in the army was deciphering daily items, not historic matters like in the Institute. I needed more adrenaline.
Following that, I studied for a second degree in Business Administration and moved over to working in industry. I moved from the academic sector to the business sector.

At the end of her period at the Economic Branch of the IDF Information Corps, she discovered that pure research was not for her:

> It was pure paperwork. I think that if not for my father’s death and my subsequent entry into the business, I would have left the Information Corps and turned to another field.

After Ronit’s father died, it was important to her family to preserve its share in the business. She began studying Business Administration while she was still working at the institute. At that time she was already married and a mother of two-year-old child. Upon her graduation, she entered the family business, Olivex Ltd. Olivex produces edible oil, oil seed, and lecithin. In the past it was a family business, today Olivex Ltd. has an American company as partner.

The move from the academic sector to the business one was in steps:

> When I entered Olivex, I didn’t start as General Manager. I studied and moved through all the different stages in order to learn. I’m not the only owner in this business, I have partners who could have said: you can be a shareholder but you can’t manage the business. People think that when an owner enters the business, it’s always to a top position. This is simply not true.

Twenty five years ago there were very few of us who chose Mid-Eastern studies, it was a very special thing since this was before the peace treaty with Egypt. It was a relatively small department and whoever studied back then is reaping the
benefits today. Most of the researchers at the institute became ambassadors and are very active politically on the regional level. I was aware that it was an important subject – unlike other academic subjects, it’s not just about research but rather a field that’s connected to political life.

Today I’ve come round in a full circle, I’m a member of the Friends of the Dayan Institute, and the current breakthroughs in the region take me back both from the business aspect and as a participant in the four recent regional congresses, making connections with business people. So, in effect, after 25 years I’ve come round in a full circle.

When Ronit was still in army service, she thought she would have a purely academic career:

I was very focused at the time on my work at the institute, which was the best of its kind in the country. So I began studying for a second degree. What I mean is that because of my close relations with the institute, it was the natural course for me to take.

Ronit says that everything in her life was highly planned, her family life as well. There’s a gap of five and a half years between her children, and this was planned so that they wouldn’t disrupt her career:

I got married when I finished my first degree, in 1975, had my first son three years later (1978), and then after five and a half years (1984), I had my second child. It was all planned. I wanted my boy to grow up before I had another baby. There are women who have their children at small intervals, I think that it’s harder and more limiting. It might be better for the children, but it’s harder for the
parents. I saw how it was with my friends who had their children all at once – it was much easier for me.

Ronit initiated the creation of the Forum of Women Directors at the Manufacturers’ Association:

Being responsible for creating something completely new, from scratch, and succeeding in both bringing forth and implementing a new idea, was both challenging and enjoyable. Another enjoyable period has been the most significant breakthrough in the multi-national area, in our negotiations during the past two years.

Ronit grew up in a family that was very active in public affairs:

It’s probably something that I learnt at home. After I established myself at work, I came round full circle to public activity, but only after I had worked for 15 years. People don’t understand that public activity contributes to the management of a business. It is more common in the U.S. than in Israel. Setting up the Women’s Forum in the Manufacturers’ Association taught me a great deal about the problems in this field. Even though I didn’t grow up in a poor home, I found myself very attentive to needs and problems, and I was amazed at how severe they were. The Forum is based on connections between women on a professional basis. We build the business tables on the basis of the comparable professional levels – for example a table for women Marketing Managers. Even though each one comes from a different industrial field, their needs are pretty similar. There
are many senior women managers who simply refuse to appear before women's forums.

Ronit does not like the invasion of her private life. Since she has had some media exposure, she would like to avoid further invasion of her private life:

.......and there's another issue here: women have their private life exposed more than men. There has not been a single interview where I wasn't asked about the family aspect – for men it's completely different. I would like to see less chauvinism, more support for women. The only thing I can say about all the changes I've undergone is that I've grown very resistant. It's very hard to hurt me today, things simply pass over me. It's very difficult, but otherwise it's impossible to survive. I'm also talking about sensitivity, which is stronger in women than in men. I don't mean the issue of managing one's personal life - that's already banal. Women go through many phases. Sometimes it's your children or husband who hurt you. I remember a long period when my daughter (today 16) would say horrible things to me. This was three years ago, today she is more mature. She would say things like: Why are you doing this? Do you think anyone appreciates your work? My son was not like that at all, but my daughter taught me a lot about life.

Ronit feels that she does not spend enough time with her family:

..... but today it's too late. Sure, I would like to do a lot of things that I don't have time for today. I would like to spend more time with my friends, travel more, things that I think I'll have more time for later.
From the very beginning of her career she was completely independent. The question of whether her husband supported her or not was never raised. It was clear that this is what she wanted, unlike other situations where her husband’s recognition was needed:

I was independent from the moment I got married and my independence was never put to test. Both my husband and I carried the load of the home, education and children. There have been many different situations. For example, we’ve just moved to a new house, and my husband dealt with the building process. There were a lot of situations when I decided in advance not to deal with something and he took it upon himself. Currently he is at home more than I am. I started the public activity when my daughter was four and my son was nine and a half. When they were younger I spent more time with them.

Regarding her future career, Ronit says:

I don’t think that I’ve had my final say at the plant because in the coming few years we have to see how we’ll fit into the activity of the multi-national company. It might be that we’ll wake up from our euphoria and find that the political situation has stopped in its tracks. On the business level there is a great deal to do in the coming 5-6 years. In regard to my public activity, I never plan more than two years ahead. I feel that in this field I’ve pretty much done the maximum I can, and in two years I’ll have to move on to the next stage.

Ronit is a highly planned woman. She combined her family and career so that they integrate with each other. Despite her planned life course, she feels that she does not spend enough time with her family. Her career involves public affairs together with management of a privately owned company.
5.5 Susan — Four Careers on Her Way to the Top

Susan (alias), Ph.D., is the founder of a management consultant firm in Israel. She was born in the early 40’s and grew up in Tel Aviv. She is married and has three children and two granddaughters.

She was the first-born daughter of parents who immigrated to Israel in the thirties, as young pioneers from Europe. They left their entire family behind. Susan was the oldest, and for many years, the only daughter. Her brother was born when she was seven years old. She describes her home life:

If I were to go back and try to define what prepared me for what I am today, I would have to say that of all the values I was taught at home, first and foremost was a very high esteem for studies and education. I was also raised on stories about a disappearing world. Around the time that I was born, the first rumors appeared about the family that was disappearing in Europe. There was a postcard that my father didn’t show my mother, which my grandmother somehow managed to smuggle it out of the ghetto. She wrote hinting that my grandfather had died of hunger. My father didn’t show the postcard to my mother until after she gave birth, because he was afraid of its effect on her. But I was raised on stories of my grandfather, the superb scholar — always a great reverence for studying. The intellectual side of my family is very strong. I can say that both my mother and father had great abilities and potential that they didn’t realize because of circumstances. I was an excellent student, in both elementary and high-school, with a lot of encouragement from home. If I brought home a grade of 90, they would ask me why it wasn’t 100. A lot was expected of me. I think this was
characteristic: expectations of me were very high, and also I knew that my mother and father were very talented and could have been university professors. Another inseparable part of my childhood is the fact that I lost my mother when I was a teenager. She was 40 years old when she died. So I found myself taking responsibility. Apparently she was the dominant one between them, my father loved her until his dying day. He died few years ago. When she died I guess my instincts were to protect him, even though I didn’t have a mother and I had a little brother. I found myself taking responsibility, becoming a little manager. I had to take care of my father’s and little brother’s health, and of many other different matters. On the other hand, it also set me free. My mother was very domineering and from this aspect the fact that she died paradoxically gave me greater independence. As a teenager, I found myself making my own decisions, not only for myself but also for my brother and father, who was a charming man, the classic intellectual, but with a very soft personality.

After Susan’s mother died, it was perfectly clear to her father that even though Susan had to help out in all sorts of things, there was never any question of her going to night school and taking care of the house and her brother during the day:

Looking back today, I think that first and foremost the emphasis was on my continuing my studies in the best possible manner. It was hard to continuously search for nannies and housekeepers. My brother, after all, was only 6.5 years old.

In many ways I owe my father a lot for his understanding.

After graduating high-school, Susan served the IDF. She was sent to a course for professional librarians and after the course served as librarian.
I was the youngest person in the course, all the others were citizens who worked for the I.D.F. or government workers. It was a government course for professional librarians. I was only 18, and it was very interesting. Afterwards I was responsible for the legal library in the office at my military basis, and it was my first significant job. However it wasn’t enough for me because I felt I should be studying at the same time. In those days, 1960 to 1962, the only places that soldiers were allowed to study in the evenings were teacher’s seminaries – there was a terrible lack of teachers at the time.

Susan got married when she was about 20. When she finished the army she was married, a certified teacher and also pregnant with her oldest daughter:

Afterwards I studied for a first degree in the one of the universities in Israel. I told myself that I already had a teaching license, so I’ll teach something and be a high-school teacher, even though when I was a girl I never dreamt of being a teacher. I didn’t know exactly what I would want to do. I met my husband at the teachers’ seminary, he was a teacher and I didn’t want to study for a profession, which would cause me to overshadow him. So I said to myself that I’ll also be a teacher and it will be nice, we’ll raise our children. After one year of marriage, when I began studying at the university I was already a mother. Then, after one year at the university I received a temporary teaching license for high-school. I was 22, and I taught twelfth graders who were 18-19 years old. It was like being in a youth movement, but it was a great challenge. I always took on great challenges. When I made the choice of being a teacher, I knew that it was a compromise. It was a period of the “good woman”, teaching was considered a good profession for
the family, the husband, the children, and I also knew that I was great at it. I was an outstanding seminary student, and when I graduated I received a prize. I finished my first degree and planned to continue for a second degree in literature. I completed one year, but I felt it was wrong for me, so I stopped. In the meantime I had two more children. There is a gap of ten years between my first and second degrees. In the meantime I taught only 11th and 12th grades. I enjoyed the educational side much more than the actual technical teaching. I loved influencing young people, the connection with them and with the parents, their careers and with preparing them for life. In the background were the 6 Day War, the War of Attrition and the Yom Kippur War, and I was a teacher of 11th and 12th graders. I was sending children to the army, students who were killed in wars, as well as teachers who worked with me.

Soon she began feeling that she wasn’t realizing her full potential, that she could do so much more:

It was a very suffocating feeling. Within the school framework I became part of the administration and I also assumed responsibility for Social Education in the high-school. I became a member of the High-School Educational Committee in the Ministry of Education, and headed the Committee for Social Education. This was the first time that I came face to face with the whole issue of women principals. In the field it’s all women, but when I came to the first meeting of the High-School Educational Committee in the beginning of the 70’s, there were twenty-something people there and aside from me and one other, they were all men. I was amazed. Something seemed wrong to me. That was the first time I remember that I became
aware that something was not right. I couldn’t explain it. I was still a young woman, in her early thirties. It didn’t lead me to any kind of feminist activity, I always felt very successful myself, but the first awareness was created. Women carry out all the fieldwork, but men set policy. At the same time I was doing my Masters degree at the University, and I decided that I should switch from Humanities to Social Sciences because I’m interested in people. It was a great challenge, I had to make up various courses because of the switch from Humanities to Social Sciences. At the same time I was working part time in the Ministry of Education and part time in the high-school administration, and right away I began teaching courses in Social Education at the university. In this manner I began being exposed to academia. When I was doing my second degree, on the one hand I had three children and on the other hand young students came to study with me. I finished my Masters with distinction. Then I said to my husband and children, listen, I don’t want to wait 10 years for another degree, I want to do my doctorate. It was a natural craving – since I felt somewhat stifled as a high-school teacher I thought that I would become a university professor. It seemed appropriate – a natural conclusion. My dream goes back to my father and the whole family – my father could have been a university professor, but he didn’t have the chance. He read scientific books that my husband and I brought home from the university during our undergraduate studies. My father would read them for fun. To his dying day he was a student. It was very clear to me that I was going to continue in academia.
At the beginning of her career, it was clear to Susan that she had to put her husband's career before hers. It never occurred to her to put herself first. Susan started her Masters degree after her husband finished his Masters. While she was studying for her Masters degree, teaching was only a small part of what at she did. At the same time she was in charge of Social Education and a member of the administration of one of the largest high-schools in Israel. Concurrently she served in the management of the Ministry of Education, and taught courses about Social Education, and raised three children:

The intervals between the children are large. I owe my career to a supportive husband and understanding children, mainly to my eldest daughter, who is like a friend to me. I owe my career to her, she raised her little brothers. When I finished my Masters with distinction and I saw that despite the 10 year gap in my studies, my mind was still fresh, I said: straight to a doctorate.

Susan was accepted to a doctorate program in the United State. So she and her family moved to the USA. It was the first time that she put her career before her husband's.

After one semester at my Doctorate program I got a job at the university. I taught, and everything was wonderful. So, there I was, a mother of three children, off to the United State with my husband.

The big change in Susan's career happened during her doctorate studies, when she accidentally met a woman who introduced her to the consultant profession:

Twice a year the head of the department would hold departmental weekends. They would hire a motel for all the doctoral and masters students together with the staff, graduates and guests from other universities. I was sitting at breakfast at one of these seminars and a young woman sitting there says that she has her
doctorate, she finished something like a year ago, so I ask her: where do you teach? She answers: I don't teach. I ask her: what are you doing with your doctorate? And she answers: I am a management consultant. I asked her what that was and she invited me to come and see. She was working at the time with a group of managers. I went to visit her in her office a few days after our first meeting and I saw what she was doing and I said: wow, this is me! Academia was too much like high-school. The students were very young, I didn't feel that a dramatic difference. When I wandered around the halls of the university, surrounded by all these young people, I was a married woman, they were all children. And there she was standing, a young woman, in front of a group of experienced managers and they're eagerly awaiting every word that comes out of her mouth, it was something. In short, I became a management consultant.

That's the story.

Susan claims that her success is a combination of luck and opportunity – the big difference between those who succeed and those who do not is that everyone has opportunities, but only those who succeed do something with them.

Because I deal in values I have insights about myself. One of the characteristics of an entrepreneur is that when the opportunity arises, you flow with it, not against it.

The young woman told me to come to her office on Monday and I did, and then I was reborn into a new profession. Right away I began working with her.

When Susan finished her Ph.D., she was already a consultant. Before Susan came back to Israel she and her American associate checked out the consulting market in Israel. They met with representatives of all the big Israeli companies in New York in order to
check if the Israeli market is ready to accept management consultants. She and her family came back to Israel and Susan started her attempts to set up a business. At that time there were a few professionals who had started to work in organizational consulting.

I came with the perception of management consulting, the clients are the managers.

I started by setting up the business in the porch of my house, but since I had the American model in front of my eyes, I followed the exact model of the consulting company that I had worked with in the United State. I had a royalty agreement with my American associate, because I worked with her and used her materials. All my life I had been an employee... It was an enormous change. I knew how to do business in United State, but I didn't know how to do business in Israel. I had to start over. But it wasn't really starting from scratch because I built on all the connections I had made in the United State. The activity grew by word of mouth, I left the house and opened an office and the business grew more.

The growth came through partners. It's always said that whoever doesn't know how to manage becomes a consultant, so we decided to show that we know how to be managers and business people ourselves – even though managing a firm of consultants is also being a manager – and we established a magazine, which was and is very successful.

When Susan decided to leave the academic world and go into the business world, she left in order to succeed, she says that she knew she would succeed.

Susan has had four careers: the first - the teaching career, second - administration in the Ministry of Education, the third is academic and the fourth is the current one - consulting and management of consulting.
I became a classic entrepreneur. When I see an opportunity I never let it go by. It also comes from what I do. I didn’t get into the strategic field by chance, it grew out of it being a challenge. A person who comes into an organization from the outside, like I do, can make a difference only if he or she works with the top management, and not with mid-level management. Top management should be dealing with strategy, with the future. That’s how I got into the strategic direction. When you work with the strategic aspect all the time, you have to implement it on yourself, and then you find yourself thinking about yourself and your career in strategic terms. You develop a sensitivity to opportunities, your mind works like a radar. Today every person is an opportunity.

I’ve learnt over the years, in my fourth career, the latest one, not to be a perfectionist, I learnt to take chances. I became a business woman. I know how to look in the mirror and say what I’m good at. I don’t get involved with anything that I’m not good at. What makes this period so fun is that I’m doing what I love and succeeding at it. When I was a teacher, I didn’t like to correct tests and suffered from it. When I was a young consultant and didn’t have partners and employees, I was forced to do things that I didn’t like. Today I do only what I like.

Susan has men partners in the business. She chose male partners consciously, because she was afraid that if the business was built only on women partners – with most of the clients being men – it will be perceived as some sort of feminist office.
In recent years I've become more confident. I have a lot of women in my office and also at Status. I've become open to that.

Susan’s story presents a woman with strong needs for self-fulfillment. She went through four careers, each time moving to a new career because of an inner drive. Although her first career as a teacher was a compromise and she put her husband's career before hers, after a while she could not compromise any more and broke through to realize her personal ambitions.
Chapter 6 – Results, Discussion and Recommendations

6.1 Who are you, the Israeli Female Senior Executive?

 Similarities and differences can be found in these four life stories, enabling one to build a portrait of the senior Israeli female manager:

1. All have experienced more than one career course. Susan switched from teaching to consulting, Miriam left the field of computers for managerial auditing and then management, Ronit moved from intelligence to management and Sara – from accountancy to management.

2. They enjoy their positions. The moment they feel that they have fulfilled their potential in the job, they search for a new challenge. Susan experienced psychosomatic phenomena from her teaching, Ronit felt she was bored with her work at the Shiloah Institute, and Sarah left several jobs at the beginning of her career the moment she felt she had exhausted her potential in the position.

3. They are all achievement oriented, it is clear to all of them that they are searching for self realization. For example, even though at the beginning of her career Susan placed her husband’s advancement higher in her priorities than her own career, at a certain stage she forged ahead and went to study for her doctorate, leaving the ideology of the husband’s advancement behind and going to the United State with her family to realize herself.

4. They are all well-planned, they set themselves long-term goals and plans. Although the long-term aspirations are very general, in the closer range their
plans and goals are much clearer. The moment they achieve their goal, they set themselves a new close goal.

5. Three of the four have a "pure challenge" career anchor. I will discuss this in a separate chapter.

6. All of them work very hard, none takes her position for granted. They work long hours, sometimes even at the expense of their families.

7. All are daughters to mothers who were not career-oriented, even if they worked.

8. They are all married and have mothered two or more children. Motherhood did not hamper the development of their careers.

9. Both they and their husbands work. They all have dual-career marriages.

10. They all have supportive husbands.

11. Guilt and some regrets: Sarah and Ronit have guilt feelings about the balance between career and family. Susan and Miriam are at peace with what they do and are aware of the need for balancing their time between work and home. For example, when Susan’s children were young she was a teacher and combined teaching, additional administrative jobs and homemaking. The teaching profession is considered relatively convenient for a working mother because when the children are on vacation, the mother is too. Miriam has an arrangement whereby twice a week she leaves work earlier in order to be with her children, from the belief that parents should find time to communicate with their children.
12. Parents’ influences and expectations: Three of the women interviewed had a father who was a business manager or close to the field. The influence of the fathers is apparent in the intellectual and educational field. The closeness to the father and the identification with him apparently encouraged the expansion of the masculine parts in their personalities. Moreover, they grew up in ambition homes and their parents urged them to excel.

13. All are academic degrees, three have a second or higher degree.

14. All were born and raised in Israel, but their parents or grandparents immigrated to Israel from Eastern Europe.

15. They all share the death of a family member within their nuclear family. The death in three cases influenced their lives. Sarah lost her eldest brother when she was 9 years old and grew up in a bereaved family. Susan lost her mother at the age of 14 and took responsibility for her younger brother and her father. Ronit lost her father and right after his death she moved from the academic world to the business world.

6.2 Motivations, drivers, Characteristics and Talents

What are the forces driving women to do more than work in safe, comfortable, not very demanding careers, which allow plenty of leisure time for family and other pleasurable activities?
American literature clarifies achieving women’s characteristics and talents. In terms of women in management, Israeli and American realities are similar. Therefore, American literature regarding this subject is valid for Israeli women.

Corsini (et al, 1982) identify two important aspects of human behavior. The first is direction, which derives from striving toward goals. The second is activity, in which individuals constantly and consistently move toward goals.

Abi-Karam & Love (1984) claim that achieving women tend to be independent, unconventional, and nonconformist. Women achievers’ profiles reflect leadership, with a strong ability to influence their environment.

Bachtold (1976) states that professional women behave in ways that indicate good mental capacity; do not conform with traditional sex-role expectations; have a low reactivity to threat; and are assertive and inclined to experiment with problems.

Kozmetsky (1989) claims that success takes more than initiative, sacrifice, and hard work. There is one key ingredient which every successful woman must have: a strong instinct for survival. With this quality – a sense of “surviving no matter what” – comes endurance, the capability to hang on. These are almost primitive female strengths, and they are fully expressed in women who become leaders. In these women the survival instinct extends beyond themselves to those depending on them. Survival aptitude goes hand in hand with the degree of ambition necessary to be a successful leader.

A feminine advantage is the lack of “macho” quality, which is compensated by hard work. Since most women do not have the self-assurance to wing it, they prepare thoroughly: gather facts and use preparedness as a security blanket. Women are usually not completely sure of their own self worth and the absolute correctness of their opinions,
so they are more flexible. Women prefer to change directions when they see that their
chosen course is heading towards disaster. Because most women do not have the luxury
of total self-satisfaction they keep on striving, for the benefit of both themselves and their
companies.

Time conservation also characterizes successful women, who become more efficient
through constant practice, always striving to save a minute or two in order to improve
their productivity. These women are careful planners, who have become extremely good
at conserving their physical and mental energy so as to achieve to their fullest
capabilities.

For some women, there is a constant striving for perfection – an inherent unwillingness to
get by on the necessary minimum. There is no desire to leave anything to chance. As
Miriam said:

I take responsibility for everything. If someone does a bad job, instead of sending
him back again and again to do it over, I do it myself. The higher up I go, the
harder time I’ll have. I don’t teach them to think. This is exactly what scares me,
what leaves me stuck in the day to day affairs. I won’t have time for the vision.

Another motivator is money. Kozmetsky (1989) claims that money is the principal
motivation for women who become entrepreneurs. Women may perceive that they are
motivated by some higher-minded factors than “just” making money, but when they
probe deeply and honestly, they will almost always acknowledge that money is their most
powerful motivation. The desire for more money drives some women to achieve
management positions; others it drives out of the corporate world and into
entrepreneurship, where they can escape the limitations. After they succeed, money for its
own sake may become secondary to the work satisfaction and ego gratification they experience.

In addition, an appreciation for “style” – and what it conveys to the world – is a characteristic of the most successful women. “Style” can be explained as the sense of distinction and aura that separate a woman from those around her, that make her stand out in a group.

For some women the motivation to achieve a leadership role is internal gratification.

Northcutt (1991) sampled 249 career women who have been recognized as successful by their peers, professional organizations, civic groups, and employers. She found that:

1. Successful career women have a high degree of self-esteem.
2. Women have a different pattern of career development from men.
3. Women define themselves as “hardworking” rather than as “achievement-oriented.”
4. Women are generally not rigid goal setters. Many of the women in the sample stated that they had entered their field “by accident.”
5. Women define success differently than men. While men define success as having corporate management positions, receiving a high salary or winning power or fame, women define it as achieving one’s personal goals, receiving recognition from others, enjoying one’s work and contributing to others.
6.3 Career Anchors

Schein (1990) explains that the term “career” encompasses the total development over time of any individual’s work life. The career anchor reflects each person’s “internal career”, i.e. how the career is perceived by that person, while the term “external career” reflects the views of others in regard to that person’s work life, i.e. the actual steps required by an occupation or an organization in order to progress. The career anchor is the one element in a person’s self-concept that he or she will not give up, even in the face of difficult choices. It is the self-image; it can remain remarkably stable even without the opportunity to exercise it.

Schein identified eight career-anchor types. Each career anchor represents a different set of talents, values and motives that are uppermost in one’s personal hierarchy.

This thesis uses the career anchor questionnaire along with a personal interview. My assumption was that my interviewees’ career anchor is Pure Challenge (CH). CH people anchor their career in the perception that they can conquer anything or anybody. They define success as overcoming impossible obstacles, solving insoluble problems, or winning out over extremely tough opponents. For some, this takes the form of seeking jobs in which they face increasingly difficult problems; for others, the challenge is defined in interpersonal and competitive terms.

Most people seek a certain level of challenge; for the person anchored in pure challenge, it is the one thing that matters most. These people are highly motivated to develop themselves, and are probably very loyal to organizations that provide them with adequate opportunities for self-tests.
My hypothesis, that most career women in Israel are anchored in Pure Challenge, arises from the following assumptions:

A. Women can choose whether to invest in a career, men must do so. Since in Israel the man is perceived to be the head of the family and the main provider, and since a considerable percentage of the women managers are married and have children, women have the option of staying at home or working part-time. Even though women in Israel constitute 44% of the work force, a large part of them work part-time for purely economic reasons, since they chose to invest more of their time and strength at home. However, women who choose to invest more in their careers must, according to my premise, have an inner motivation, which pushes them to advance.

B. A management position requires an investment of great personal resources, both in time and energy. In order to survive in a management job for any length of time I assumed that the source of that inner energy is a continuous aspiration to search for new challenges, and management as a profession continuously supplies new challenges.

The result of the questionnaire for the four women managers is presented in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Career Anchor</th>
<th>Average Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Susan</td>
<td>Pure Challenge</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>Sense of Service</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ronit</td>
<td>Pure Challenge</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miriam</td>
<td>Pure Challenge</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Susan, Ronit and Miriam are anchored in Pure Challenge, and Sarah in Sense of Service (SV). Miriam, with average score of 7.4 represents the most significant CH person among the four women.

Figure-3 shows the Average Score for each of the interviewees, for each career anchor.

Figure-3

Sarah’s anchor surprised me. On one hand, as a former athlete with a sense of being first in everything, I expected her to be anchored in CH. Sarah’s career anchor did not emerge unequivocally during the interview. But when I asked her about periods in her career, which she enjoyed less, her reply implies Services-to-Others anchor. She described:

In 1987, after the crash of the bank stocks in Israel, the bank owners were forced to leave. There was one very difficult period that I enjoyed a lot less, the years that I accompanied the owners of the bank in the stock regulation trial. The work was demanding emotionally, I was very loyal to the people and felt that I was on trial along with them. I knew that I was contributing to them throughout the
process in terms of thinking, understanding, analyzing what should be done, what
can be done. The circumstances turned it into a very unpleasant period.

Furthermore, when she was offered to move with the bank’s owners to operate the
investment company, she accepted their offer.

I asked her if she ever refused a promotion or turned down a job offer. Her answer was:

Over the years I turned down job offers that came from outside the system. Each
offer - for its own reasons. The only common line was my loyalty to what I was
doing, and that it wasn’t easy to leave the place where I was.

All the above imply that Sarah anchors in Service-to-Others motivation.

Susan, Ronit and Miriam feel obvious pleasure in mastering the challenges they face.

They are driven to be continually challenged in their work.

Miriam’s employment history of refusing to enter immediately after university to the
family business but to prove herself abroad and her future fear of getting stuck in the day
to day wear and tear, anchored her in continual challenge.

Susan’s constant craving toward self-fulfillment and Ronit’s public activities and her
move from one job to another due to lack of challenge anchored them also in Pure
Challenge.

While CH Anchor is self-oriented, SV Anchor is other-oriented. Since Sarah is anchored
in SV, that may explain why she feels guilty about her life balance between career and
family. While she was working all those years in a demanding job, she could not realize
her need to dedicate herself to her family.

Another interesting finding among the interviewees was the way each one prioritizes her
anchors. Although Schein claims that each person can have only one career anchor,
ranking the results of the career anchor questionnaire can provide an indication of what motivates people and what priorities they have in their career life. Figure-4 ranks each interviewee's anchors:

**Figure-4**

Score eight was given to the career anchor, seven to the second and so on. If we look, for example, at Sarah’s ranking, her career anchor is SV (Sense of Service, Dedication to a Cause), second priority is GM (General Managerial Competence) and the last is SE (Security/Stability).

Susan, Ronit and Miriam share the same first, second and last priorities. Their career anchor is CH (Pure Challenge), the second priority is AU (Autonomy/Independence) and the last is SE (Security/Stability).

Sarah’s Life Style (LS) anchor is the highest among the four women (see Figure-4, third priority at Sarah’s graph.) LS anchor represents people that believe that career must be
integrated with total lifestyle; a matter of finding a way to integrate the needs of the individual, the family, and the career.

While Schein (1990) claims that career anchors do not change over time, the question is whether other priorities have been changing. As shows in Figure-4, the four women share only one common result: SE (Security) is their last priority. In most cases, when a young person starts his or her career, he or she has fewer financial, emotional and knowledge resources than at the middle or end of the career. Therefore, it is possible to assume that young people may seek more security and stability than those who have already achieved high positions.

6.4 A Personal Impression

I chose the subject of Israeli women in management because of my personal interest. Being a woman and mother and having a career in a company where all the senior managers are men, as well as my own manner of dealing as a woman with the business world which is primarily male, inspired in me curiosity to examine how other women deal with these kinds of problems.

I chose to study four Israeli women who reached the top. I preferred Israeli women because my understanding of the Israeli cultural codes is greater than my understanding of other cultures. The language, symbols, small nuances of body language – all these are far more familiar to me among people of the culture in which I grew up, studied, served in the army and raised a family. Even though there are many similarities between Israeli
and American culture, the differences are also great. Therefore I chose to study women
with whom it was easier for me to identify.

Before I began my MBA studies, I viewed my year at M.I.T. as a great privilege and an
opportunity to make an intellectual, rational leap. I didn’t expect that the yearlong break
that I would take from work would constitute another kind of breakthrough for me — an
emotional one. The intellectual ivory tower, after all, represents analytic thinking, but it
was here that I reached the conclusion that intellect by itself is not worth anything if it
comes directly from the brain, without the participation of the emotions. This is my
personal conclusion and, of course, the reader may choose not to agree.

The business world is very competitive. From the sidelines it may seem like a place with
no room for feelings, a rational place only. But since the business world is made up of
people, and people are motivated by both their rational mind and their emotions, feelings
do have a role in the business world. Ambition, joy, love of creation, love of the
profession, openness and sensitivity to other people’s needs, the ability to give the people
you are in charge of space to grow - all these, in my opinion, are what make a manager
into a leader and enables him or her to get up every morning with the ability to energize
and motivate the people beneath him or her, and, together with them, reach achievements.

It sounds so simple.

All the above mentioned qualities that turn a manager into a leader are not rational
qualities, they are emotional qualities which characterize emotional maturity. A person
who is not connected to his or her feelings, needs and desires, has no chance of activating
other people.
Every one of the women I interviewed constituted a kind of conceptual mirror for me. Their course of advancement, the manner in which they combine careers and private lives, the transitions they made from stage to stage, the self-questioning and the decisions – all led me to examine myself and my own decisions. I was particularly interested in checking the inner motivation of these women, i.e. the main motive that causes them to get up each day with renewed spirit.

In these interviews I met four intellectual women, but even before the interviews I knew that I was going to meet wise women. Their wisdom did not surprise me. What surprised me was the intensity of emotion I discovered during the interviews, far beyond what I had expected. I do not mean sentimentality or feelings in the negative sense. On the contrary. The emotion that I met arises from a person’s connection with the soul, from the openness that exists in each of these women between the soul/feeling and the rational mind: from our meetings I learned that when there is openness between the mind and the soul, the mind knows how to direct it in the direction that the soul desires. This openness is in my opinion one of the main keys to success.

When people do what they love and enjoy every day, it is reflected onto their surroundings. When people are at peace with themselves and their road, they are more open to others. When people are connected to themselves, they can connect to others. And what is management theory and leadership if not connecting to other people? True, the manager always has the option of rewarding with money, but people who are motivated only by external sources such as money and status miss out on a large part of the meaning of human existence.
There are, indeed, additional factors in success, such as luck, hard work, etc. However, without understanding emotional needs – which begins first with understanding of one’s personal needs and only then those of others (boss, colleague, employee, family member, etc.) – without “emotional intelligence”, one functions like a machine, i.e. one can be a manager, but has no chance of becoming a leader.

The spark in the eye, which I found in all the women managers, the desire to succeed and advance, all these do not originate in the mind. The rational mind can explain, analyze, invent, and choose between alternatives. There is, however, something more basic pushing her to do all those things, and that is the connection between the mind and the emotions. Ambition to succeed that originates from the soul, causes the brain to think and search for options to succeed. The intellectual will know how to direct the ambition in positive directions. Without that same basic desire to succeed and advance, there would be nothing to activate the brain to think and choose goals and challenges.

Fear, which also arrives from the soul, may paralyze the rational system, and on the other hand cause hate and jealousy. On a managerial level, the manager who is afraid is the one who persecutes the workers he is in charge of and humiliates them, because each one constitutes a potential contender for his job. His workers are afraid to consult with him and will ask his secretary whether he’s in a good mood before they go in to a meeting with him. This kind of manager denies his workers space to act, and requires constant reporting, whether because he does not believe them or because he is afraid of losing control of his system.

Joy of creation, which comes from the heart, stimulates the brain to find creative solutions. On the managerial level, this is the kind of leader who can activate and direct
others, and the others will be willing to do anything for him. These are the charismatic managers who are capable of providing their workers with encouragement, support and help when necessary. The workers respond out of a basic feeling that their work is appreciated, and therefore they constantly make efforts to do their work in the best possible manner. A manager who is propelled by love of life and not by fear gives his workers space to act, which enables them to learn by experiencing; they will ask his advice and seek his proximity and wisdom.

It is strange that I had to fly many miles from Boston to Israel and interview Israeli managers to remember this basic truth. It is a shame that in our daily race we forget to connect with our inner truth and occasionally ask ourselves where we are running, and whether we like and enjoy the race.

6.5 Women Managers’ Problems

Hening (1977) explains that women managers find themselves in an inferior position compared to men managers due to not being automatically connected to an Old Boys Network. Women managers do not meet other women managers in the swimming pool or at an exclusive club, and therefore they are not part of the impact cycle. Women managers are absent from places in which business networks are established and important decisions are made. Kanter (1977) describes it as being a minority in non-traditional situations.

A second problem is different job expectations among women and men managers. Women managers were educated to view their careers as a source of self-fulfillment and
development, a place in which they will be able to do things that are really interesting for them. Men were educated to view their career as a way to go up the ladder, and therefore they expect to have different kind of jobs and increasing evaluation and earnings. According to women, each job is an opportunity for self-fulfillment. As Susan describes:

At the end of my first career, as a teacher, I began to have psychosomatic symptoms of choking. It was very real. It followed the well-known Maslow scale – I felt I was choking, that I have to take another step in self-realization. So I started looking for a way to advance within the world of education and it was easy, but I still had my childhood dream of being a university professor. I grew up with the image of the outstanding student, and the ultimate goal of the excellent student is the university. It was somewhere in the background, a question of time, that I would reach it. At the same time I was also working in administration in the Ministry of Education, but I wasn’t considering becoming a principal. The dream remained and it was clear to me that I would continue with it. I moved to academia. Then there was a process of de-mystification – something that you want very badly, and when you achieve it you see that it’s not what you thought. I discovered that it was too much like teaching. Once again I was in a big institution, true it was both for teaching and for research. It was too similar. And then the chance meeting with the female American consultant... I guess that if I hadn’t met her, I would have met someone else... there is no doubt that I was ready. I became a consultant and at the same time I finished my doctorate.
Jenik (1998) explains that fulfilled women have several characteristics. First, they do not compare themselves to others or to any objective measure, but examine their success according to an internal achievement measure, compatible to their own goals, mainly goals that relate to their balance in life and to self-fulfillment. Secondly, they do not see any contrast between competitiveness, aggressiveness and gender identity. Thirdly, women managers declare that family is their top priority, but at the same time they do not give up their career, and invest a great deal of their time and energy in their careers. Fourthly, they cope with career difficulties in three ways:

1. They look for meaning in everything that they do, along with commitment to their job and way of life.

2. Women managers feel that they control their lives and also believe that they are able to influence and shape their destiny.

3. They sense a perception of challenge and fun from varied actions and cope with changes and problems in the course of permanent learning.

A third problem is that typical features of the managerial job (i.e. complexity, challenges, success) that are challenging and satisfying to men, are sources of dissatisfaction and burnout for women (Etzioni, 1987). Moreover, while for men success and self-fulfillment on the job do not preclude success in private life, for women a compensatory pattern emerges: success and influence on the job are associated with failure and dissatisfaction in private life. This pattern is consistent with the finding that, though holding very similar positions, fewer women were married.

A fourth problem is the conflict that women experience between career and family demands. Working women carry the burden of two full-time jobs: a career and a home.
They are harassed, conflicted and feel guilty about compromising both the quality of their work and the relationship with their family (Pines, 1989). This conflict is one of the main reasons for burnout among women.

Sarah describes this problem as the feminine-masculine conflict. “On the one hand the very masculine career, on the other hand the children. My conscience bothered me all these years”.

Sarah’s description leads us to the fifth problem which was described by Schein (1975). She claims that women managers live with an incongruence between a female self-image and a managerial job that is defined as “masculine”. Power is consider masculine attribute and frailty a feminine one. Namely, a woman manager, in order to succeed in her job, must act in non-feminine ways. But at the same time, a woman whose behavior is masculine arouses antagonism. Jenik (1998) rechecked this issue twenty-three years after Schein (1975) and she claims that women in top management today do not see any contrast between competitiveness, aggressiveness and gender identity. I tend to agree with Jenik. I think that women in management today have succeeded in overcoming the gender conflict.

Pines (1989) points out that coping is easier for women managers who internalize the androgyne approach. Androgyne behavior is free from sexual stereotypes. It combines masculine and feminine characters, an expression of executive ability. Both male and female androgynes react according to their personal needs and the specific situation, and not in a way which is seemingly “male” or “female”. Because they are not bounded by sexual stereotypes, their behavior is unique and unpredictable and allows them to fully exercise their personal potential.
A sixth problem is the absence of role models (Kozmetsky, 1989). There are not many women leaders in business management against whom women can measure their own achievements. The lack of role models who serve as emulating models and touchstones for success has had a peculiar side effect: women learn more quickly from their failures than from their successes. Women do not always recognize and advance from their successes. Women in management tend to become "invisible", not only because of their paucity in numbers (Leonei, 1994). They are either ignored by male colleagues who have not been "trained" to even consider women as managers, or to realize that there may be different experiences in management based on gender. Women, themselves, also contribute to their "invisibility" through their actions of dressing and acting in such a manner so as to not draw attention to their sex - that is, their "difference". This tendency to minimize accomplishments was reflected in Miriam's words as:

I find that I tend to lower my profile, try not stand out. When people ask me what I do in my job, I generally react in the wrong way. I quietly say that I manage a company. I can't say that I'm General Manager, I can't get the words out of my mouth. Women are apologetic about being managers, it's not right. That's one of my failings. I always joke that if you ask a man what he does he would say out loud: I'm the General Manager. My PR office could have gotten me great headlines: a young, educated woman. But I won't agree to it, probably because it's a family business. Besides, afterwards, when I go to the grocery store, everyone will tell me what they read in the newspaper about me.

I asked Sarah how she describes her job to other people, and her answer was:
I always answer that I am a mother of three children. I don’t like the exposure. If it’s in a social setting, I say that I work in a public company, and if they’re still curious, I say that I’m a Joint General Manager of an investment company, or the Chairman of the (XXX) Company.

Having a role model does not always help other women. Ely (1994) hypothesized that in firms that appeared not to restrict women’s access to senior positions, women were able to use their identification with women partners as a source of validation and support. By contrast, in firms that appeared to restrict women’s access to senior positions, women partners not only failed to be the kind of women on whom junior women could rely for support, but failed as well to be the kind of partner whose authority junior women could respect. These women were less satisfied with the image of women their partners portrayed and found them difficult to emulate as role models.

6.6 Explanations for the Lack of Israeli and Non Israeli Women in Top Management Positions

6.6.1 Results and Analysis of the Interviewees’ General Questions

The general questions’ (see Appendix C, Second set) purpose was to examine how women who reach the top analyze lack of women in top management in Israel.

Table-7 shows four points of view of each interviewee. Apparently, women at the top are in disagreement about the existence of glass ceiling. Moreover, while three of them think that women have to work harder in order to reach the top, Miriam thinks that women have to work as hard as men.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Miriam</th>
<th>Sarah</th>
<th>Ronit</th>
<th>Susan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. According to your opinion, why are only 20 percent of the managers in Israel female?</td>
<td>It's women's blame. It's hard to reach the top, and women don't want to work hard.</td>
<td>It is a combination between two things: first, women make less effort to become managers due to the alternative of being a homemaker, and also because they have someone to depend on, the husband is the main provider. Second, the historical fact that women receive less exposure and opportunity of reaching top positions.</td>
<td>Many women don't understand management values beyond functional management. They are very professional, they have more education that the men, but they tend to remain in one job.</td>
<td>Due to the glass ceiling and women's fear to succeed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Do you think that working women have to work harder than men in order to receive promotions?</td>
<td>No, they have to work hard. Not harder than men. I think that women discriminate against themselves.</td>
<td>Yes, much harder. Because of the social gap, the sociological process. A woman must stand out, and she'll do that if she works a little bit better.</td>
<td>Yes. If two people, a man and a woman, work in the same job for 5 years, it will take the woman two years more than the man to advance.</td>
<td>Yes. I believe in the slogan: &quot;It takes twice as hard for a woman to get half as far as a man.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Do you think that there is a glass ceiling for women?</td>
<td>Yes, but a woman who wants to, can break through the ceiling.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes, it's still there, but it's changing for the better.</td>
<td>Yes. Appointing a woman to a top position is considered a riskier move than to appoint a man.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. How many female managers are there in your company? What percentage of the top management in your organization is female?</td>
<td>The General Manager is a woman, at the intermediate level: 3 out of 5, at the lower levels: a lot of women. Product managers are women. In this company the men complain that they are discriminated against.</td>
<td>About 50% of the top management.</td>
<td>There are ten people in the management team, only the Accountant General – is a woman</td>
<td>My two partners are men. I did that consciously because I was afraid that if the business was built only on women partners – with most of the clients being men – it will be perceived as some sort of feminist office. I have a lot of employee women in my office.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.6.2 Explanations for the Lack of Women in Top Management Positions – according to Literature

Valian (1998) in her book *Why so Slow* eloquently discusses how “gender schemas” affect our expectations of men and women, our evaluation of their work and their performance as professionals. Both men and women hold the same gender schemas and begin acquiring them in early childhood. The most important consequences for their professional life is that men in top roles are consistently overrated, while women in the same positions are underrated. Whatever emphasizes a man’s gender gives him a small advantage, a plus mark. Whatever accentuates a woman’s gender results in a small loss for her, a minus mark.

A computer simulation of promotion practices created an organization with an eight-level hierarchy, staffed at the bottom level by equal numbers of men and women. The model assumed that that over time a certain percentage of workers would be promoted from one level to the next. It also assumed a tiny bias in favor of promoting men, a bias accounting for only one percent of the variability in promotion. The researchers, (Emrich et al, 1996), ran the simulation through a series of promotions. After many series, the highest level in the hierarchy was 55 percent male. The model shows clearly that even a minute disadvantage can have substantial long-term accumulative effects.

The “gender schemas” and other barriers that result from institutional and psychological practices, create the Glass Ceiling. The Glass Ceiling refers to invisible, artificial barriers that prevent qualified individuals from advancing within their organization and reaching
full potential. These are the invisible barriers in the corporate culture itself that keep women from obtaining the jobs with line responsibility that lead to the executive suite.

The term originally described the point beyond which women managers and executives, particularly white women, were not promoted. Today it is evident that ceilings and walls exist throughout most workplaces for minorities and women. <http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/library/e_archive/GlassCeiling/> and <http://www.wwork.com/Work/Catalyst.htm>.

Susan, one of my interviewees, explains the lack of women in top management as follows:

In order for one to be chosen to a position of board member or General Manager, someone has to make that choice. As things stand today, it's usually men who make those choices, because women are in the minority there. Appointing a person to a top position is considered a strategic move, and by definition a strategic move is one that involves a high risk of errors. Naturally, people look for every possible way to minimize the probability of errors and to subconsciously cover themselves in the case that they make a mistake. When one appoints a Marketing Manager or General Manager everyone knows that he might make mistakes. If a man was appointed, everyone will say, he made a mistake. If it was a woman, then you’ll say: why did we appoint a woman? It’s perceived as a taking a greater risk. That’s the glass ceiling. For that reason it’s both a ceiling and also made of glass, because it’s not directed discrimination.

The risk the Susan talks about is actually the same minus mark that Valian (1998) describes. Therefore, if women want to erase the invisible minus mark that accompanies
their professional career, they have to work harder. The invisible barrier between the minus and the plus mark is the glass ceiling.

Izraeli (1982) has studied woman managers in Israel. She explains the lack of Israeli woman managers as a consequence of several social forces:

1. **Adjustment to Low Expectations**: Behaviors that are considered feminine, like low career commitment, low ambitions, avoidance of risk taking and lack of initiative are partly results of socialization processes. But they are also influenced by socialization processes within the work place and from the exposure to other women’s positions. Therefore, those “feminine behaviors” are not innate traits, but adjustment to low expectations and low rewards.

2. **Giving Priority to Men’s Promotions**: Men join organizations in which the promotion of men is a traditional and holy norm. Women join organizations in which their promotion is relatively rare. Because of the assumption that women don’t go very far, they have to prove that they are worthy of any kind of promotion. The “burden of proof” is imposed upon those who are not expected to be promoted. Thus, women have to work harder in order to receive acknowledgment. In a modern society, the normative rules within the labor market define qualifications as the main consideration in determining one’s promotion. But at the same time, the social norms obligate men to earn more than women. Men are considered to be the head of the family.

3. **Womanly Stereotypes and Management Positions**: A research among Israeli students at Tel Aviv University about gender stereotypes (Eilam, 1984) exposed that male stereotypes include the following characteristics: leadership, assertiveness,
ambitious person, authoritative, powerful and initiator. In other words, male stereotypes are associate with leadership. Female stereotypes are tenderness, dressy, gutless, worrier, gossip and emotional. Those characters are far from a portrait of a successful manager!

4. **The Sleeping Beauty Syndrome:** Like the sleeping beauty, women are waiting to be promoted. They believe that the organization will reward and promote those who are suitable employees. They avoid demanding what they deserve. This strategy is flawed. They activate informal personal relations in their own interests far less than men. Women do not implement exchange relations.

Ronit Silon, the chairperson of the Forum of Women Directors at the Manufacturers’ Association, argues that women do not understand the difference between functional management and staff management:

I think that many women don’t understand management values beyond functional management. They are very professional, we found that they have more education that the men, but they tend to remain in one job. For example, if a woman is a Finance Manager, then she remains in that position and has a very hard time rising above that. Maybe nobody enables them to make that leap. We also found that very few women managers are board members in their companies.

For this reason they don’t have a broad overall view of the business.

Ronit states that the lack of Israeli women in high-tech companies results from two causes:

1. Women acquire their technological knowledge in the army, not the university. Even though fifty percent of university graduates are women, only in this past year
has there been a twenty percent increase in women students in the engineering fields relevant to high-tech. In the past women were concentrated in architecture, industrial engineering, management and food engineering, and not in subjects relevant to high-tech. Fifty percent of computer engineering students are now women, but in communications and electronics it’s still only twenty percent.

2. The high-Tech industry demands enormous mobility. Israeli women still spend their lives in a culture and general atmosphere that demand them to be very family oriented, mothers and teachers – not exactly very mobile. I think that this will change. Today there is more sharing in day to day married life, and these things will change. I believe that today if a woman wants to go abroad for work purposes, her husband will join her. In the past this wouldn’t happen. In the army, for example, for all the high women officers there is no question about their traveling, and their husbands join them. In the army there are a lot of mobile women.

6.7 Conclusions and Recommendations

During the last twenty years, women in management have become a more frequent phenomenon. Although today only two percent of top positions are held by women in Israel, women in mid-level management are more widespread. I believe that progress takes time. The social revolution of women’s progress does not happen in one day. Many social and psychological barriers have to be smashed. In some countries there are religious barriers, which makes the progress harder for women.

The literature is replete with suggestions and recommendations for career women. This research does not pretend to suggest a recipe for success, but to lighten the process by
increasing the awareness of the problems that characterize women both on their way to the top and already at the top. No doubt that women have to work harder in order to make career progress. The minus sign that women carry (Valian, 1998) simply because they were born females classifies them in an inferior position compared to men, and the burden of proof that they are equal or even better than their male peers falls on women only. The burden of proof is translated into strenuous efforts, both psychologically and in practice.

I do not think that the glass ceiling will be smashed in the coming ten years, but more women will skip over it and reach the top. Maybe the best way for career seeking women is to pretend that the glass ceiling does not exist – and by doing so they will avoid wasting enormous amount of energy. Instead, they will be able to invest their energy in their real job.

Finally, I would like to quote Ronit Silon, the chairperson of the Forum of Women Directors at the Manufacturers’ Association in Israel, regarding the Israeli glass ceiling:

The glass ceiling is still there, but it’s changing for the better. We found that many general managers now view men’s reserve duty [Israeli men serve in the reserve corps of the IDF about 30 days a year till the age of 45-50, trans.] as being more of a problem than maternity leave. They finally understood that a month’s reserve duty times twenty years is more than three months times three children, on the average. In Israel there have been developments in this area. There are now couples in which the man stays at home after the birth and the wife goes back to work.
This optimistic view portrays an improvement in the position of women, but it is obvious that the way to full gender equality is still long.
Appendix A

International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-1968) ¹,²

Major Group 0/1 Professional, technical and related workers

0-1 Physical scientists and related technicians
0-2/3 Architects, engineers and related technicians
0-4 Aircraft and ships’ officers
0-5 Life scientists and related technicians
0-6/7 Medical, dental, veterinary and related workers
0-8 Statisticians, mathematicians, systems analysts and related technicians
0-9 Economists
1-1 Accountants
1-2 Jurists
1-3 Teachers
1-4 Workers in religion
1-5 Authors, journalists and related writers
1-6 Sculptors, painters, photographers and related creative artists
1-7 Composers and performing artists
1-8 Athletes, sportmen and related workers
1-9 Professional, technical and related workers not elsewhere classified

Major Group 2 Administrative and managerial workers
2-0 Legislative officials and government administrators
2-i Managers

Major Group 3 Clerical and related workers
3-0 Clerical supervisors
3-1 Government executive officials
3-2 Stenographers, typists and card- and tape-punching machine operators
3-3 Bookkeepers, cashiers and related workers
3-4 Computing machine operators
3-5 Transport and communications supervisors
3-6 Transport conductors
3-7 Mail distribution clerks
3-8 Telephone and telegraph operators
3-9 Clerical related workers not elsewhere classified

**Major Group 4 Sales workers**
4-0 Managers (wholesale and retail trade)
4-1 Working proprietors (wholesale and retail trade)
4-2 Sales supervisors and buyers
4-3 Technical salesmen, commercial travelers and manufacturers' agents
4-4 Insurance, real estate, securities and business services salesmen and auctioneers
4-5 Salesmen, shop assistants and related workers
4-9 Sales workers not elsewhere classified

**Major Group 5 Service workers**
5-0 Managers (catering and lodging services)
5-1 Working proprietors (catering and lodging services)
5-2 Housekeeping and related service supervisors
5-3 Cooks, waiters, bartenders and related workers
5-4 Maids and related housekeeping service workers not elsewhere classified
5-5 Building caretakers, charworkers, cleaners and related workers
5-6 Launderers, dry-cleaners and pressers
5-7 Hairdressers, barbers, beauticians and related workers
5-8 Protective service workers
5-9 Service workers not elsewhere classified
Major Group 6 Agriculture, animal husbandry and forestry workers, fishermen and hunters

6-0 Farm managers and supervisors
6-1 Farmers
6-2 Agriculture and animal husbandry workers
6-3 Forestry workers
6-4 Fishermen, hunters and related workers

Major Group 7/8/9 Production and related workers, transport equipment operators and laborers

7-0 Production supervisors and general foremen
7-1 Miners, quarrymen, well-drillers and related workers
7-2 Metal processors
7-3 Wood preparation workers and paper makers
7-4 Chemical processors and related workers
7-5 Spinners, weavers, knitters, dyers and related workers
7-6 Tanners, fellmongers and pelt dressers
7-7 Food and beverage processors
7-8 Tobacco prepares and tobacco product makers
7-9 Tailors, dressmakers, sewers, upholsterers and related workers
8-0 Shoemakers and leather goods makers
8-1 Cabinetmakers and related woodworkers
8-2 Stone cutters and carvers
8-3 Blacksmiths, toolmakers and machine-tool operators
8-4 Machinery fitters, machine assemblers and precision instrument makers (except electrical)
8-5 Electrical fitters and related electrical and electronics workers
8-6 Broadcasting station and sound equipment operators and cinema projectionists
8-7 Plumbers, welders, sheet metal and structural metal preparers and erectors
8-8 Jewelry and precious metal workers
8-9 Glass blowers, potters and related workers
9-0 Rubber and plastics product makers
9-1 Paper and paper-board products makers
9-2 Printers and related workers
9-3 Painters
9-4 Production and related workers not elsewhere classified
9-5 Bricklayers, carpenters and other construction workers
9-6 Stationary engine and related equipment operators
9-7 Material-handling and related equipment operators, dockers and freight handlers
9-8 Transport equipment operators
9-9 Laborers not elsewhere classified

**Major Group X Workers not classifiable by occupation**
X-1 New workers seeking employment
X-2 Workers reporting occupations unidentifiable or inadequately described
X-3 Workers not reporting any occupation

**Armed Forces: Members of the armed forces**

**Notes**
1. Major and Minor groups only. This Classification consists of Major groups (one-digit codes), Minor groups (two-digit codes), Unit groups (three-digit codes) and Occupational categories (five-digit codes). For full details, see ILO: International Standard classification of Occupations, revised edition, 1968 (Geneva, 1969).
2. The revised International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-88), which was approved by the 14th International Conference of Labour Statisticians 1987, was published in 1990.
Appendix B

International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-88)

Major, Sub-Major and Minor Groups

Major Group 1 Legislators, senior officials and managers

11 Legislators and senior officials
   111 Legislators
   112 Senior government officials
   113 Traditional chiefs and heads of villages
   114 Senior officials of special-interest organizations

12 Corporate managers\(^1\)
   121 Directors and chief executives
   122 Production and operations department managers
   123 Other department managers

13 General managers\(^2\)
   131 General managers

Major Group 2 Professionals

21 Physical, mathematical and engineering science professionals
   211 Physicists, chemists and related professionals
   212 Mathematicians, statisticians and related professionals
   213 Computing professionals
   214 Architects, engineers and related professionals

22 Life science and health professional
   221 Life science professionals

222 Health professionals (except nursing)

223 Nursing and midwifery professionals

23 Teaching professionals
231 College, university and higher education teaching professionals
232 Secondary education teaching professionals
233 Primary and pre-primary education teaching professionals
234 Special education teaching professionals
235 Other teaching professionals

24 Other professionals
  241 Business professionals
  242 Legal professionals
  243 Archivists, librarians and related information professionals
  244 Social science and related professionals
  245 Writers and creative or performing artists
  246 Religious professionals

Major Group 3 Technicians and associate professionals
31 Physical and engineering science associate professionals
  311 Physical and engineering science technicians
  312 Computer associate professionals
  313 Optical and electronic equipment operators
  314 Ship and aircraft controllers and technicians
  315 Safety and quality inspectors
  32 Life science and health associate professionals
  321 Life science technicians and related associate professionals
  322 Modern health associate professionals (except nursing)
  323 Nursing and midwifery associate professionals
  324 Traditional medicine practitioners and faith healers

33 Teaching associate professionals
  331 Primary education teaching associate professionals
  332 Pre-primary education teaching associate professionals
333 Special education teaching associate professionals
334 Other teaching associate professionals

34 Other associate professionals

341 Finance and sales associate professionals
342 Business services agents and trade brokers
343 Administrative associate professionals
344 Customs, tax and related government associate professionals
345 Police inspectors and detectives
346 Social work associate professionals
347 Artistic, entertainment and sports associate professionals
348 Religious associate professionals

Major Group 4 Clerks

41 Office clerks

411 Secretaries and keyboard-operating clerks
412 Numerical clerks
413 Material-recording and transport clerks
414 Library, mail and related clerks
419 Other office clerks

42 Customer service clerks

421 Cashiers, tellers and related clerks
422 Client information clerks

Major Group 5 Service workers and shop and market sales workers

51 Personal and protective services workers

511 Travel attendants and related workers
512 Housekeeping and restaurant services workers
513 Personal care and related workers
514 Other personal service workers
515 Astrologers, fortune-tellers and related workers
516 Protective services workers
52 Models, salespersons and demonstrators
521 Fashion and other models
522 Shop salespersons and demonstrators
523 Stall and market salespersons

**Major Group 6 Skilled agricultural and fishery workers**
61 Market-oriented skilled agricultural and fishery workers
   611 Market gardeners and crop growers
   612 Market-oriented animal producers and related workers
   613 Market-oriented crop and animal producers
   614 Forestry and related workers
   615 Fishery workers, hunters and trappers
62 Subsistence agricultural and fishery workers
   621 Subsistence agricultural and fishery workers

**Major Group 7 Craft and related trade workers**
71 Extraction and building trade workers
   711 Miners, shotfirers, stone cutters and carvers
   712 Building frame and related trades workers
   713 Building finishers and related trades workers
   714 Painters, building structure cleaners and related trades workers
72 Metal, machinery and related trades workers
   721 Metal molders, welders, sheet-metal workers, structural-metal prepares, and related trades workers
   722 Blacksmiths, tool-makers and related trades workers
   723 Machinery mechanics and fitters
   724 Electrical and electronic equipment mechanics and fitters
73 Precision, handicraft, printing and related trades workers
   731 Precision workers in metal and related materials
   732 Potters, glass-makers and related trades workers
   733 Handicraft workers in wood, textile, leather and related material
   734 Printing and related trades workers

74 Other craft and related trades workers
   741 Food processing and related trades workers
   742 Wood treaters, cabinet-makers and related trades workers
   743 Textile, garment and related trades workers
   744 Pelt, leather and shoemaking trades workers

Major Group 8 Plant and machine operators and assemblers

81 Stationary plant and related operators
   811 Mining and mineral-processing-plant operators
   812 Metal-processing plant operators
   813 Glass, ceramics and related plant operators
   814 Wood-processing-and paper-making plant operators
   815 Chemical-processing plant operators
   816 Power-production and related plant operators
   817 Automated-assembly-line and industrial-robot operators

82 Machine operators and assemblers
   821 Metal- and mineral-products machine operators
   822 Chemical-products machine operators
   823 Rubber- and plastic-products machine operators
   824 Wood-products machine operators
   825 Printing-, binding-and paper-products machine operators
   826 Textile-, fur-and leather-products machine operators
   827 Food and related products machine operators
828 Assemblers
829 Other machine operators and assemblers

83 Drivers and mobile plant operators
831 Locomotive engine drivers and related workers
832 Motor vehicle drivers
833 Agricultural and other mobile plant operators
834 Ships' deck crews and related workers

**Major Group 9 Elementary occupations**
91 Sales and services elementary occupations
911 Street vendors and related workers
912 Shoe cleaning and other street services elementary occupations
913 Domestic and related helpers, cleaners and launderers
914 Building caretakers, window and related cleaners
915 Messengers, porters, doorkeepers and related workers
916 Garbage collectors and related laborers

92 Agricultural, fishery and related laborers
921 Agricultural, fishery and related laborers

93 Laborers in mining, construction, manufacturing and transport
931 Mining and construction laborers
932 Manufacturing laborers
933 Transport laborers and freight handlers

**Major Group 0 Armed forces**
01 Armed forces
011 Armed forces

**Notes**

1 This sub-major group is intended to include persons who - as directors, chief executives or specialized managers - manage enterprises requiring a total of three or more managers.

2 This sub-major group is intended to include persons who manage enterprises on their own behalf, or on behalf of the proprietor, with some non-managerial help and assistance of no more than one other manager.
Appendix C

Research Questions

C.1 First set – personal questions

- Where did you grow up?
- In what way has your parents' house influenced your personality?
- (*) Education: What did you concentrate on in your university and postgraduate education?
  - (*) Why did you choose these areas?
  - (*) How do you feel today about having chosen those areas?
- (*) First job: What was your first real job following your studies? (If you did not start out working, what was your first major life event after your studies?)
- (*) What were you looking for in your first job or life event? Why did you make that choice?
- (*) Goals. What were your ambitions or long-range goals when you started your career?
- (*) How did the first job work out in terms of your goals?
- (*) Next job or major life event. What was your first major change in job or employing organization?
- (*) How did this come about? Who initiated the change? What were the reasons for the change?

(*) From Schein, (1990) – Career Anchors booklet.
• (*) How did you feel about the change? How did it relate to your goals?

• (*) Please continue to analyze what you consider to be the major changes in your job, organization, career, or life. List each change and analyze the reasons as well as the consequences.

• (*) As you look back over your career and life so far, do you see any major transition points, times when the change seemed more than routine? Please describe each of the times.

• (*) What was the transition? How did it come about? Who initiated it?

• (*) How do you feel about it? How was it related to your goals?

• (*) As you look back over your career and life so far, can you describe some times that you especially enjoy?

• (*) What was it about those times that made them enjoyable?

• (*) Were there times that you especially did not enjoy?

• (*) What was it about those times that made them not enjoyable?

• (*) Have you ever refused a job or a promotion? If yes, can you describe it? Why did you refuse?

• (*) As you look ahead at your career, are there things that you would like especially to avoid? Are there things you are afraid of?

• (*) Have your ambitions or long-range goals changed since you started your career? When? Why?

• (*) How would you now describe your long-range goals?

(*) From Schein, (1990) – Career Anchors booklet.
• (*) As you look ahead at your career, what are the things you are especially looking forward to?
  • (*) Why are you looking forward to these things?
  • (*) What do you think your next job will be?
• (*) What do you think will actually happen in the next ten years of your career?
• (*) How would you describe your occupation to others?
  • (*) What are you really good at?
  • (*) What do you most want out of your career?
  • (*) What values do you especially try to uphold in your career?
• (*) As you think over the answers you have given, what patterns or themes do you see?
  • (*) What inconsistencies, contradictions, or conflicts do you see in what you have identified?
• How have your husband and children been integrated in your career life?
• How do you balance family and career?
• Do you have any other comments about yourself that you would like to make at this point, before we move to the second set of general questions?

(*) From Schein, (1990) – Career Anchors booklet.
C.2 Second Set - General questions

- According to your opinion, why are only 20 percent of the managers in Israel female?

- Do you think that working women have to work harder than men in order to receive promotions?

- Have you been working harder than your male peers?

- Do you think that there is a glass ceiling for women?

- If other women ask you “how did you make it?” what would be your response?

- If you were looking for an executive in your company, what would be the three most important characteristics for leadership?

- How many female managers are there in your company? What percentage of the top management in your organization is female?
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