

Israeli Defense Force

Want to recruit IDF soldiers? Don't wear a mini skirt
<http://www.haaretz.com/news/israel/.premium-1.623466>

Food for Thought:

Institutions in the Article and Presentation Questions

Why are representatives forced to dress modestly?

How does this affect the soldiers? (Does it give them one perspective of a firm while diminishing a potential second perspective of the firm/of the occupational world?)

Do you believe that there is more argument against this rule than the article presents?

How does this create a difference in advertisement in Israel vs. advertisement in the United States? How does it create a difference in advertisement at the Fair vs. advertisement in daily life?

Institutions:

Defense Ministry (Misrad HaBitahon): Moshe Ya'alon is the current minister; it is in charge of all defense related things within the country including the structure and function of defense, social security, and rules and procedures for defense and emergency; it was created after the British Mandate of Palestine ended and it is in charge of interior and exterior military risks, plus the management of all security forces within Israel (IDF, Israeli Military Industry & Israel Aircraft Industries)

<http://www.mod.gov.il/>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ministry_of_Defense_\(Israel\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ministry_of_Defense_(Israel))

Israeli Defense Force (IDF): this is the military branch (and also the most well known part of the Israeli defense forces); it was established on May 31, 1948 and it integrated Haganah, Palmach, Irgun, and Lehi; it reaches into all aspects of life and service is compulsory for all at age 18;

<http://www.idf.il/1503-en/Dover.aspx>

Guidance Unit for Discharged Soldiers: this branch of the IDF focuses on giving guidance/helping soldiers that have been discharged become working class citizens; it provides occupational opportunities and helps soldiers find work/decide their future while they integrate into the community as a whole (and leave the society of soldiers of which they had been a part)

Israel Trade Fairs and Convention Center in Tel Aviv: this is the "largest and most sophisticated complex in Israel for organizing conferences"; <http://eng.fairs.co.il/>

Analysis:

This article is clearly about one reach of the IDF in society. The IDF is prevalent in almost all aspects of society, but this article shows just how important service in the IDF is for social mobility. While we have read other articles about the IDF's reach into life: such as for immigration (as we read about in the reading in Week 4 talking about the Ma'abarot) and social stratification (as in Week 11 Helman), this article shows the *gateway* that the IDF is into society after service.

As an overview of the article, you read about how the Ministry of Defense has limited the clothing and the advertising ability of firms that have paid to come to the Israel Trade Fairs and Convention Center in Tel Aviv in order to recruit soldiers for their companies. Why does the Ministry of Defense feel the need to do this? Any representative attempting to recruit workers should plan on dressing professionally, but limiting even the “scandlousness” of the advertisements seems to be an infringement on free speech. I believe that the Ministry of Defense does this for a few reasons. One is to appease the more traditional and religious soldiers in the army. If it is against their beliefs to view people in such a manner, than it seems fair to create an environment in which everyone feels comfortable while exploring the options available to them for their future. Another reason for this may be to prevent recruitment officers from attracting soldiers to their booths through sexuality: by being slightly provocative in look, it may draw more people in that direction, distracting them from other paths due to sexuality. This convention may truly be one of the most important events for soldiers, because it is their first step into the world outside of service – into their future.

The article continues by explaining the mandatory lectures that soldiers attend about ‘real life’ things such as the “National Insurance Institute, the Income Tax Authority, career development and so on” (Want to recruit IDF soldiers? Don’t wear a mini skirt). These are basically lectures that teach soldiers how society works...how to transition into becoming a self sufficient adult once their compulsory service ends and they join the reserves.

The article also talks about the two different types of companies that come to this event. The first are educational programs. These are here to provide a means to those soldiers to obtain the education that they want post-service: whether it be entrance exam preparation, pre-college academies, professional schools, or universities. The second type of company is occupation based: HMOs, banks, and private firms.

One interesting paragraph in the middle of the article talks explicitly about how firms are also prohibited from advertising *anything* that has to do with staying abroad: for studies, trips, work, or just to live are not allowed to be advertised even indirectly. Understanding the importance of this paragraph comes from the help of Helman’s article: The Military and Militarism of Israeli Society. This article talks about soldiers that refused to join the reserves and how this stratified and ostracized them from society. After reading this article, you understand the importance of the reserves in Israel. The reserves make up around 65% of the IDF and

include a mandatory month of training once a year until the age of 55. Understanding this, we can now understand why the Ministry of Defense would prohibit the advertisement of all abroad programs: they do not want to put the idea of being abroad into the minds of their soon-to-be demobilized soldiers because they need these soldiers in the reserve units. These soldiers are going to be the youngest group in the reserves, which means they are also the most likely to be called upon if reserves are needed in a time of emergency (because they are young and were fairly recently discharged and therefore still retain the majority of their training).

It is necessary to look at the different voices and groups that this article includes. Haaretz has a left wing bias in its reporting. Therefore, one would think that it would take into account more opposition to this prohibition of immodesty. Yet the article did not attempt to argue with the IDF's rule, nor did the article actively seek dissidents. Rather, the spokesperson for the Israel Trade Fairs and Convention Center chose not to comment on this rule. This is an example of the IDF's reach into every aspect of Israeli society. There are very few questions as to why the Ministry would create such a rule as 'prohibition of immodesty' when the rule is an infringement on the free speech of both the representatives (in their dress) and the companies (in their advertisement).

There are also two different voices represented in the article. The first is that of the IDF. It is the voice of the Defense Ministry and its power over anything relating or close to relating to the IDF and its soldiers. This includes the voice of the more tradition or religious soldiers who may be opposed to the immodesties that have been banned. It also includes the small (but at least to me one of the most important prohibitions placed upon the companies) paragraph prohibiting the advertisement of any and all opportunities abroad. The second voice is that of the companies. There is mention that it is unclear as to why they must prohibit immodesty in their representatives and their advertisements but it is not a focus of the article, and does not appear to be something that they fight with the Ministry of Defense about. The companies' lack of protest in the restriction of their freedoms further shows the reach, importance, and respect of the IDF in Israeli society.

Overall, this article shows both the importance and the power of the IDF in Israeli society. It shows how service leads to access and mobility in society. It also shows the control the IDF maintains over even small things such as the clothing worn at their convention. The IDF

provides opportunity to its soldiers, but also is a prevalent part of their lives for the majority of their lives.

Works Cited

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