



# Military Service in Israel: Challenges and Ramifications

Meir Elran and Gabi Sheffer, Editors

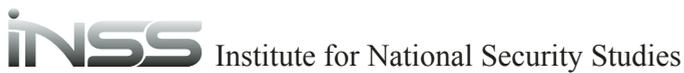
Memorandum

159



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**השירות הצבאי בישראל:  
אתגרים, חלופות ומשמעויות**

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מאיר אלרן וגבי שפר, עורכים

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**Institute for National Security Studies** (a public benefit company)

40 Haim Levanon Street

POB 39950

Ramat Aviv

Tel Aviv 6997556

Tel. +972-3-640-0400

Fax. +972-3-744-7590

E-mail: [info@inss.org.il](mailto:info@inss.org.il)

<http://www.inss.org.il>

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## Preface

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This volume contains seven articles based on lectures that were delivered during a research workshop conducted in 2013 and 2014 on civil-military relations held at the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS), in cooperation with the Association of Army-Society Researchers in Israel.

Like workshops held in previous years, this workshop was attended by researchers exploring subjects related to society and the military in Israel. All the presentations made during the workshop were followed by in-depth discussions among the participants. The discussions facilitated a broader understanding of the issues raised and helped authors develop their ideas on their topics of research. The essays contained in this volume are the products of this process.

The first article in this publication, “The Fundamental Concept of Human Resources in the Structure of the IDF,” by former head of the IDF Planning Directorate Giora Eiland, analyzes the sources and implications of the fundamental concept of IDF force structure from the perspective of a systemic planner. In this article, Eiland argues that the IDF’s approach – based on universal service, reserve duty, and an optimal ratio between regular service and reserve service – is the correct model, and that any alternative model would involve higher costs. In his view, the existing model is based not only on a fundamental moral approach but also on an analysis of the operational effectiveness that can be achieved with a given budget. In a supplementary argument to this fundamental assessment, Eiland maintains that the benefit of ultra-Orthodox conscription can be expected to be relatively low and that imposing civil service on all those who are not conscripted into the IDF would not be an effective approach.

In the second article, “Compulsory Conscription or Mobilization Using Market Mechanisms: Economic Aspects,” Yaakov Lifshitz posits that insufficient attention is paid to economic dimensions in the discussion regarding general conscription into the IDF. In his view, a stringent cost-benefit analysis

reveals that the compulsory military service is more expensive, and that a value-focused assessment indicates that voluntary army service provides more in return. In other words, the cost-benefit ratio of compulsory service is higher than that of voluntary service, which offers a better cost-benefit ratio. This difference reflects a disadvantage of the compulsory service and raises questions such as whether the compulsory service justifies its high cost, and whether it is truly possible to establish an effective volunteer-based army with a smaller pool of soldiers.

In the third article, “‘The People’s Army,’ Put to the Test,” Dov Tamari argues that as long as the Israeli army remains a “people’s army,” the IDF is a significant social entity. In this capacity, until the Six Day War it was considered to be the most successful organization in Israel, primarily because by means of compulsory conscription, it facilitated integration into Israeli society. The Six Day War was followed by a change in the IDF’s social and political positioning, as since then not all wars in which the IDF participated were major successes, and the IDF subsequently became involved in deep-seated social disputes in Israel. One example is the political debate concerning the conscription and status of ultra-Orthodox and religious Jews in the IDF. Still, Tamari believes that today the IDF continues to function as a social organization no less than as a fighting military organization. He also contends that as long as it can effectively serve as a force that contributes more to Israeli society than it receives, the IDF has the ability to survive as an accepted and desired entity within Israeli society. In his view, the IDF should not be thinking in terms of “what the IDF needs,” but rather, “what the IDF, as a people’s army, can contribute to Israeli society.” According to his analysis, the army must seek out meaningful social roles for itself, as failing to do so will endanger the people’s army.

The fourth article, “Motivation Levels for IDF Enlistment over the Years,” by Reuven Gal, deals with the historical development of the motivation for service in the IDF. The focus of the discussion is Gal’s distinction between the motivation for combat service and the motivation for conscription. The article identifies four types of motivating factors: a) the motivation of survival, which characterizes individuals in societies facing an existential threat; b) ideological motivation, which is influenced by national identity, the struggle over values, convictions regarding the justness of a specific path, and the desire to fight for that path; c) normative motivations, based on the principles that are generally accepted in society; and d) individualistic motivations,

stemming from the inductees' desire for self-fulfillment. Gal examines these issues as reflected in the history of the State of Israel prior to and since its establishment, and asserts that during each period most Israelis have been characterized by different motivations. According to Gal, the motivating factors are currently mixed and based primarily on individualistic factors, in addition to the ideological factors motivating some social sectors, such as the Jewish religious circles. Gal believes that this controversial situation carries with it the potential for a collision of values, which is a phenomenon better suited for a volunteer army – first, in which one soldier enlists to enjoy himself, second, to serve his homeland, and third to earn a salary – but is not suitable for the traditional conscription model of a people's army.

The fifth article, “Different Reflections of the Motivation to Serve in the IDF,” by Roni Tiargan, explores the motivation for conscription in the compulsory army and identifies an apparent gap in the answer to the frequently asked question of whether we are witnessing an increase or a decrease in the motivation to serve in the IDF. Whereas in many cases, as frequently reflected in the media, reference is made to a drop in the motivation to enlist in the IDF, surveys conducted by the IDF's Behavioral Sciences Department and other studies have found prolonged stability and perhaps even an increase in the motivation to enlist. Tiargan's article explains this gap using fundamental elements of the points of departure of the different analyses, such as the definition of the population of candidates for security service, the type of motivation under examination, the constitutional changes, the changes in IDF policy, and other such factors. For example, when we consider the overall young population of Israel, the number of new inductees has indeed declined over time, due primarily to the existence of large and ever expanding groups that offer no real conscription potential. On the other hand, when we consider only candidates for security service, as defined by Israeli law and IDF regulations and norms, a different picture emerges.

The sixth article, written by Pnina Sharvit Baruch and titled “What is the Appropriate Model for Female Service in the IDF?” argues that the IDF perceives female conscription as marginal and classifies it as “sectoral,” and therefore it is of interest primarily to the women who enlist or are called up for conscription. Sharvit Baruch maintains that the service of women in the IDF is of great importance for the organization itself vis-à-vis its values and the notion of the IDF as a liberal and egalitarian army. Broad non-integration of women into the ranks of the IDF constitutes a missed opportunity with

regard to a significant potential for the engagement of high quality personnel in the military and has a detrimental impact on the women serving in the IDF, as well as on the individual development of female soldiers following their discharge.

In the seventh and final article, “The IDF and the Ultra-Orthodox: Economic Aspects of Conscription,” Olena Bagno-Moldavsky addresses the IDF conscription of ultra-Orthodox Jews and considers the economic impact of military service on the future of the Israeli ultra-Orthodox men who serve in the military. Her conclusion is that ultra-Orthodox conscription has only a marginal economic impact on this group, despite its potential to forge close relations between different groups within the Israeli population, due in part to the legitimacy that is likely to be enjoyed by ultra-Orthodox Jews who serve in the army (this is comparable to the processes experienced by the national-religious sector in past years). According to Bagno-Moldavsky, even if it does not serve to improve their economic situation, this sharing of the burden may strengthen the political status of the ultra-Orthodox in Israel.

The articles compiled in this volume illuminate several major complexities regarding the appropriate model for service in the IDF at the present time. The IDF’s interest in maintaining the current model is clear and well known. It is based to a large extent on the fact that it enables the army to choose the practical format it finds most convenient, providing the military with substantial freedom to choose whom to enlist, where, and for how long. In so doing, it enables the IDF to engineer the most effective combination of compulsory army forces and reserve army forces. This issue, however, was not the focus of any of the articles in this volume.

Nonetheless, we believe that even maintaining the current model of IDF conscription obliges us to engage in critical assessment and, to a certain degree, to make changes. In this spirit, the articles presented here offer a long list of recommendations aimed at improving the return enjoyed by the IDF itself, as well as by Israeli society, the Israeli state (as reflected, for example, in reaping the maximum benefit from the conscription and service of women), and individual men and women. An open and public discussion of these recommendations can help improve the quality of the IDF, both in terms of carrying out its traditional operational tasks, and increasing its contribution as an organization that has social responsibilities and goals and exercises a meaningful impact on the character of the State of Israel.

We are grateful to all those who prepared articles for this volume. We would also like to extend our gratitude to Shlomi Ben-Meir, whose wise and diligent editing was of particular assistance in preparing this volume.

Meir Elran and Gabi Sheffer  
August 2016



## Introduction

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Issues related to the notion of a “people’s army,” and in particular, questions related to the nature, scope, and elements of service in the IDF, have been on the Israeli public agenda since the establishment of the State of Israel. In principle, from the outset to the present, Israeli politicians and the IDF command continue to attempt to maintain compulsory military service that is applicable to all citizens, subject to the law, and based on the criteria and the needs of the army itself. The underlying goal of this approach is clear: to enable the IDF to retain control over the conscription into its ranks. At the same time, there has also been a clear demographic phenomenon in this context, characterized by an ongoing decline in the relative rate of conscripts out of the overall population of civilians in their induction cycle, including all those subject to the law, completing full compulsory service. It is clear that the National Service Law of 1953 is not applied to all Israelis, and that large groups within the Israeli public – particularly women, ultra-Orthodox Jews, and Arabs – are consistently provided with the opportunity to refrain from completing full compulsory service.

Public awareness regarding the issue of “equality in sharing the burden” has grown in recent years, including the period of the Israeli social justice protests of 2011. Discussion of this notion has focused primarily on the exemption from military service enjoyed by ultra-Orthodox Jews. This issue was also deliberated by the Israeli government and the High Court of Justice (HCJ), with an emphasis on the effort to regulate the issue of military exemptions for the ultra-Orthodox in a realistic yet egalitarian manner. At the present time, in the twentieth Knesset, it appears that this issue will remain a focal point of division between different groups within the Israeli public and Israeli politics, and that the changing political reality in the country is what will ultimately shape the practices that develop. In parallel, a social and political discussion is underway regarding the format and scope of implementation of the National Civilian Service Law, which

primarily promotes the service of Arabs and Jewish religious women within the existing civilian frameworks.

In general, despite slow shifts in various directions, the developments that have taken place in recent years have not resulted in a meaningful change in the overall situation, which represents a clear reality that has been in place for years. Compulsory service in the IDF remains a burden borne by a relatively and increasingly small number of young Israeli men, while three sectors – women, ultra-Orthodox Jews, and Arabs – continue, at varying rates, to reflect the phenomenon of deficient participation in equal conscription according to the Compulsory Military Service Law.

Such a situation raises a number of various fundamental questions regarding military service. One frequently discussed question pertains to the dilemma between compulsory service and the possible alternative of voluntary service. In the discussion currently underway on this critical issue,<sup>1</sup> many still appear to be in support of the continuation of compulsory service as the basis for the conscription of young Israelis into the IDF, despite the high financial, social, and personal costs required by such service. To a large extent, this approach is based on a view of the security needs presented by the unique conditions of the State of Israel, despite recognition of the lack of full equality in the existing format of conscription. Indeed, the system that has been in operation in Israel for years enables the IDF to employ selective conscription and selective service, while maintaining the ethos of a people's army as an important tool in the sensitive relationship between Israeli society and the military.

The discussions regarding compulsory service have been closely linked to the motivation for military service among those who are obligated to complete compulsory service. Some researchers have defined a number of types of motivating factors for military service and have examined increases or decreases in the motivation for compulsory or civilian service based on a variety of criteria. Some of the researchers who have considered the question argue that overall, the motivation for compulsory service in the IDF is declining. Other studies, however, and particularly those conducted by government bodies or by the Research Unit of the IDF, hold that motivation – particularly among young men – is not declining, and most identify stability in the willingness to serve in the people's army, especially in combat units. This question, which is explored by a number of articles in this volume, remains unanswered to a degree, and appears to depend on the perspective

of the observer: whose motivation is being measured? Who is supposed to be conscripted? And so forth.

One of the questions asked pertains to the macro-economic implications, not only of the method of conscription for compulsory service, but also of service in the army reserves. Indeed, the economic dimensions of military service are worthy of open public discussion, which is currently conducted from two perspectives: one focusing on the national budget and the portion thereof allocated to the IDF budget; and the other examining the contribution of the IDF, and those serving in its ranks, to the Israeli economy during normal times and periods of military clashes.

Beyond these contexts, we have witnessed the emergence of normative questions with important legal-constitutional aspects. Who is, and who should be, responsible for deciding and planning the scope and structure of the human resources conscripted into the IDF and serving in its ranks, and what considerations should influence policy on these issues? Considering the social, economic, and ethical implications of this thorny issue, and the important considerations of IDF force design, should policy be set by the IDF itself or by the senior political leadership? The prevalent opinion in our discussions on the matter tended toward the view that the issue should not remain the sole domain of the security establishment, which by nature operates according to legitimate security considerations, but rather should be placed on the public agenda and ultimately selected by the government. The need for determining responsibility for this matter also stems from the far-reaching implications of the issue of conscription for all the members of Israeli society.

The examination of the many different issues analyzed and presented in this volume raises a major question: Do the articles assembled here enable us to generate general insights regarding conscription into the IDF and the army's status in Israel as a people's army, with its multiplicity of social significances? Although there are no clear answers to the questions raised above we can, nonetheless, and with all due caution, propose the following primary insights:

- a. Despite what is typically reported in the media, there does not appear to be a clear downward trend in the scope of young Israelis enlisting in the IDF in the relevant sectors, excluding the Arab and ultra-Orthodox sectors. The quantitative state of the scope of conscription appears to be relatively stable, and has remained so over the years.

- b. In light of the continuing growth of the Israeli population and the gradually increasing relative proportion of those two particular sectors in the conscription cycles, and the fact that conscription into the IDF within these sectors remains minimal and without any female component, their relative proportion among new conscripts appears to be on the decline.
- c. Another distinct but related question concerns the percentage of conscripts who complete their army service as required by law. In this category too, there appears to have been a numerical decline in the number of conscripts completing their required service in full, and an increase in the number of conscripts discharged early for various reasons, usually with the consent of the army.
- d. We are also witnessing a trend whereby the army, based on cost-benefit considerations, prefers to enlist for regular service all those individuals meeting the quality standards and professional needs of the IDF – or at least those who do not constitute a burden or require substantial social and budgetary obligations – and to ensure their maximal service. This means that overall, the army (and with only specific exceptions) prefers to refrain from forcing conscription or granting early discharge to young Israelis who, from the outset or in retrospect, do not fully meet these criteria.
- e. All these aspects raise the question of the extent to which the IDF is still a people's army, in the sense of an army that is fed by conscription from the entire Israeli population in an equal manner. According to some of the findings, the IDF appears to be moving away from this norm, which actually never completely existed in reality. Therefore, even if the number of conscripts in any given conscription cycle completing full service is on the decline (and in the years to come, the figure could dip below 50 percent), the IDF can, and should, be defined as a people's army in the future as well, for the following fundamental reasons:
  - i. Even from the narrow perspective of the number of conscripts, the IDF is still based on the main backbone of Israeli society (with its different strata) and will continue to be so in the future. From this perspective, the ultra-Orthodox Jewish sector and the Arab sector are actually excluding themselves (or being excluded) from the general Israeli society by refraining to enlist in the IDF.
  - ii. As in the past, it is clear that the IDF will continue to serve as a leading organization producing and maintaining deep and ongoing popular social connections with the broader Israeli public, which

continues to demonstrate significant support for the army as a distinct institutional expression of the State of Israel. Where the army is concerned, it is making an extensive effort to manifest itself as an army of Israeli society operating in the defense of the country and the entire people.

- iii. In order to maximize the army's ability to fulfill this aim, the IDF must be allowed to continue to rely on the considerable social legitimacy it currently enjoys, which is based in part on its ethos as a people's army. Even if this ethos is not entirely accurate, it nonetheless constitutes an important sociopolitical tool for maintaining the internal strength of the army.
- f. In conclusion, we recommend refraining from changing the existing public paradigm, which views the IDF as a people's army, although it may be necessary to rework the definition of this extremely general and abstract concept. At the same time, the army should be expected and permitted to maintain and bolster the social message covered by the existing concept. This expectation is intended for both the IDF and the state in general: while it is important for the army to be perceived as a people's army, this classification must also, and perhaps most importantly, be imbued with meaning in the current period. For this reason, the state must make a concrete effort to expand the conscription pool for both military and civilian service, including the participation of the sectors that currently do not contribute. The public sense of equality, or inequality, plays a meaningful role in preserving the status of the IDF. At the same time, it is also important that the Israeli security establishment and the IDF meticulously ensure full maximization of the conscription potential, while factoring in broad social considerations, along with budgetary and organizational considerations. To bolster the IDF's status as a people's army it is important to maintain, and even expand, projects of social involvement, although current trends call for reducing them on economic and religious grounds. Finally, it should be mentioned that such social considerations are applicable not only to questions regarding compulsory service, but also to the considerations involved with building a reserve corps.

## Notes

- 1 See, for example, Yagil Levy, ed., *Mandatory Service or the Duty to Serve? Scenario Analysis of Mandatory Civil Service in Israel* (Open University of Israel, 2015).



# The Fundamental Concept of Human Resources in the Structure of the IDF

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Giora Eiland

## **Background**

This article considers the fundamental concept of IDF structure from the perspective of a former head of the IDF Planning Directorate. In this context, it is important to differentiate between the Planning Directorate, which is responsible for human resources planning in the IDF, and the Manpower Directorate, which is responsible for implementation. More broadly, the Planning Directorate of the IDF is responsible for managing the resources at the army's disposal, including budget, infrastructure, and human resources. This article will therefore deal with the issue from the point of view of human resources planning, discussing four subjects: a) an examination of the current model, which I regard as a necessity; b) human resources planning by the army; c) universal conscription; and d) the question: to whom does this human resource belong? Does it belong to the IDF, which chooses whom it wants and whom it does not want, or does it belong to another social or political entity? Or perhaps it is primarily the domain of the IDF, but is also supposed to serve other national needs?

Before starting such a discussion, we must first define the human resource in question and understand the operative premise within the IDF regarding this subject. This issue consists of two principles. The first is that, as a rule, everyone is drafted; the reason for non-conscription is incompatibility, but the point of departure is that the army has the option to draft everyone. The second, and equally important, principle is that manpower formation is undertaken through simultaneous consideration of the use of the human resource during regular service and the needs of the reserve system. This approach can be explained by the operational need: approximately every five

years the IDF conducts a renewed situation assessment regarding concepts, needs, and priorities. This process facilitates a fundamental examination of the force structure of the IDF – the size and makeup of its ORBAT (order of battle). For this purpose, simulations are conducted to examine the number of divisions the army needs and whether, for example, a reduction in the number of divisions can be compensated by other means. Substitutions can potentially be made between the different components, although not in all cases and contexts. For example, substitutions can be made between fighter planes and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs or drones, as they are commonly known), or between fighter planes and tanks. Different combinations can be created but must be based on considered scenarios that the State of Israel could encounter on its different fronts while taking into consideration the different types of conflict possible. Only then is it possible to determine the minimal necessary ORBAT for the worst case scenario. These simulations enable planners to reach conclusions regarding the minimum fighting force necessary at sea, in the air, and on the ground, in relation to their exact structure, scope, and the means required to support them, with an emphasis on the inventory of munitions and spare parts.

### **Regular Service**

When the army examines its different tasks, it becomes evident that the regular army's human resources are insufficient to accommodate some of them. That is to say, those in favor of doing away with the reserve army or the model of the people's army and support the model of conscription on a volunteer basis, disregard the minimum size necessary for the IDF. As of today, the army's minimum necessary size dictates conscription of all those whom the IDF truly regards as suitable for conscription for regular service, based on consideration of the needs of the reserve force that this framework must support. At least in terms of ground forces, the optimal ratio is 1:3 or 1:4, or one regular brigade for every three or four reserve brigades. This structure is based on maximum efficiency, which ensures that a soldier engaged in regular service will not need to undergo special training in order to perform his service in the reserves.

The guideline, then, can be broken down into two components: determination of the minimum fighting force necessary and, in accordance with this, determination of the best combination of regular army forces and reserve army forces. The most efficient system, it should be emphasized, is

the IDF reserve division. There is absolutely no more efficient model from a cost-benefit perspective. From the perspective of benefit, in wartime, it is capable of doing exactly what a division in the regular army, or any other division in the world can do. The cost of maintaining a reserve division according to the IDF model is minimal, due to the fact that its primary mass – 90-95 percent of those serving in its ranks – consists of reserve soldiers who are not paid when not on active duty. The cost, then, is for a small core regular force that serves to maintain the framework and equipment of the entire division.

There are, therefore, two reasons for the model of the people's army. The first, explained above, has to do with the minimal size of the required ORBAT and achieving the optimal flow of forces from the regular army to the reserves. The second reason is qualitative. The IDF's major advantage lies in its capability to choose: that is, to determine whom it will and will not enlist and how these soldiers will be distributed. This freedom of choice is significant and facilitates opportunities for creating quality levels that do not exist in other armies in the world, such as the US army in Afghanistan or the French forces in Mali, and other instances of professional armies. Despite the experience and professionalism of the soldiers serving in these armies, there are evident problems in the quality of their junior command.

In contrast, it is this aspect – the quality of its junior command – that constitutes a major strength of the IDF, as reflected in the following account of the IDF's approach to the issue. Out of every one hundred people drafted into the Golani Brigade, the best thirty become squad commanders, and out of these thirty recruits, the best ten will most likely end up in officers' training school. Only seven of these ten will finish the program, again, representing the best of the lot. Of these seven, four will return to serve as platoon commanders, and the best of those four will most likely end up serving as company commanders. This state of affairs in which, at least in theory, the company commander represents the best out of one hundred, allows the IDF to attain an extremely high level of quality in its regular army forces and, subsequently, in its reserves.

In short, the current IDF model facilitates an ability to choose that does not exist in other armies. The ability to enlist the best individuals and to place them on tracks that will ultimately make them officers stems from the fact that they are compelled to enlist. After all, a large portion of these outstanding officers would have never enlisted in the first place had they not

been compelled to do so. The current system enlists the best and compels them to begin these tracks, and any transition to a professional army along the lines of those typical of Western countries would require foregoing this major advantage.

As for the planning processes within the IDF, the last 10-15 years have witnessed efforts to set in motion new processes in both the regular and the standing army that have enjoyed partial success. In the realm of compulsory service, the army is interested in conscripting candidates for service not only according to the principle of equality in sharing the burden but also based on other considerations, such as the resources at its disposal. After all, the army has a great need for combat soldiers, a smaller need for combat support personnel, and an ever smaller need for administrative personnel. To a certain extent, the numbers of available soldiers represent a different numerical breakdown, and perhaps even the opposite. Therefore, a need exists to transfer as many recruits as possible from administrative roles to combat support roles and from combat support roles to combat roles. The more combat frameworks there are in the regular army to serve as the “teeth” of the IDF, the more powerful the army will be and the stronger the regular army will be. Then, there will to some extent be a possibility of easing the burden on the reserve soldiers, if not by disbanding the reserve system altogether or lowering the age of discharge from reserve duty, at least in the sense of more economical operational duty.

Over the past 10-15 years, the army has attempted to start processes in this realm, partially through the service of women in the IDF – a source of personnel that for many years was not maximized. As an increasing number of positions in the realm of combat support have opened up to female soldiers, resulting in a flow of combat support personnel to replace combat soldiers, a situation has emerged that allows the military to reduce the number of days of reserve duty for combat soldiers. This is a process, although it is progressing too slowly. The Planning Directorate set targets for this process in the past, but for various reasons, they have met with only limited success. For example, the ease with which soldiers today can be released from combat duty for medical reasons that do not always justify their release has made it more difficult for the IDF to meet these goals. Still, the primary aim in the utilization of manpower in compulsory service remains unchanged: to move the maximum number of soldiers into more meaningful roles and to make optimal use of manpower that has traditionally not been utilized.

## **Standing Service**

In the area of human resource planning in the Planning Directorate, standing service is not a problem of human resources since the IDF has a wide variety of people at its disposal. It is a problem of finance. The Planning Directorate attempts to identify the optimal combination from among five kinds of manpower: a) pure standing army personnel; b) primary standing army personnel; c) civilian employees of the IDF; d) reserve soldiers; and e) outside consultants (outsourcing). The point of departure for planning the optimal combination of these kinds of human resources from a financial perspective is that the most expensive population is the pure standing service personnel. Therefore, an ongoing effort is underway to reduce the inventory of pure standing service personnel and to convert their positions into other types of work force.

In many ways, the IDF works in a better and more suitable and efficient manner than other civilian systems in Israel. In part, this is the result of systemic planning, which finds expression in the human resource management model for standing army service. This model has existed since Major General Shlomo Yanai's tenure as head of the Planning Directorate. When dealing with manpower planning we can clearly distinguish between three concepts: a) peak manpower; b) standard positions; and c) staffing. The concept of "peak manpower" reflects the maximum number of people belonging to a given group (for example, all those holding a certain rank) who can be paid a salary. For example, if it is decided that the air force will have a maximum of 100 lieutenant colonels, the air force is authorized to pay a salary to 100 or fewer lieutenant colonels. All that is important from the perspective of the Planning Directorate is that the average manpower inventory is less than or equal to the peak manpower. Of these 100 lieutenant colonels, at least 80 are filling standard positions, such as squadron commanders or branch heads. It is a question, for example, of 80 individuals, as opposed to 100, because there are always some away on study leave, in the midst of overlap training, or on sick leave, whereas others hold individual ranks, and, for one reason or another, some standard positions are simply not filled. It is therefore important not to standardize all 100 percent, because this will result in a deviation from the peak, which in turn will result in a deviation from the budget.

This model has four advantages:

- a. It assures that there will be no budgetary deviation, as the number of standard positions is always less than the peak. This facilitates flexibility.
- b. In the realm of the relations between the General Staff and the different branches of the army, this model allows a decentralization of authority controlled by the General Staff through regular discussions that assess the peak state vis-à-vis the manpower inventory in practice. For example, according to this model, without receiving approval from the General Staff, the air force is authorized to standardize additional manpower and to increase the number of standard positions from 80 to 81, as long as it is able to increase efficiency and assure that there will be no deviation from the maximum, which remains 100.
- c. Another advantage has to do with long term planning. Consider, for example, a situation in which there is a maximum of 100 lieutenant colonels in the air force and a maximum of 100 lieutenant colonels in the ground forces. When a new multi-year plan is formulated and the Chief of General Staff seeks, for example, to give priority to the air force, it can be decided to facilitate a five-year linear decline in the ground forces from a maximum of 100 to a maximum of 90, while leaving the peak in the air force at 100.
- d. The model also provides an incentive for efficiency. If a certain branch has a maximum of 100 personnel of a certain rank, it is authorized to pay salaries to 100 people, and no more. In the event that the average inventory in practice is lower, the resulting savings in manpower expenses remains in the budget of that branch which can use it for other purposes.

Despite the advanced nature of this model, there are deficiencies when actually utilized. When considering the issue of increasing the efficiency of the army in the realm of standing army soldiers, we find challenging problems in distinctions, methodologies, and fundamental premises. The IDF's fundamental methodology may be correct, but it fails to increase its efficiency in a sufficient manner because it is fixed in certain set premises. For example, when we consider the structure of a division in the IDF, we observe that it is similar and equivalent to most divisions in most armies around the world. The structure of a ground division is characterized by two principles: a complete chain of command (division commander → brigade commander → regiment commander → company commander → platoon commander → squad commander) and a narrow span of control. For example,

a company commander has three platoon commanders, where each commands three squad commanders. This structure is justified and logical, and we therefore see it in armies throughout the world. However, the IDF has taken this effective division structure and applied it to all its home front commands as well. Thus, on the home front, for example, we see colonels with three lieutenant colonels in their command, and narrow spans of control. But the home front commands are larger in number and more expensive, and there is therefore no reason for the home front commands to adopt the model of the combat division. Indeed, in such contexts, application of the combat division model is simply not relevant.

## **Conclusion**

The IDF's approach of universal conscription, reserve duty, and the optimal relationship between regular service and the reserves is the correct model. It is not only a fundamental question of principle, but an issue of the operational efficiency and effectiveness that can be achieved using a given budget. Any other model would be more costly. At the same time, however, there are a number of issues in which reconsideration and correction is in order. One is the fear of a mass conscription of ultra-Orthodox Jews, as this would likely create pressure on the army, for example, to create tracks of service with low benefits and high costs. If the army were to create special tracks for ultra-Orthodox recruits based on service in home front units without rotational duties or service on Saturdays (the Jewish Sabbath), and these recruits were all fathers with three children requiring commensurate salaries, the bottom line would be that the benefit to the military would be relatively low vis-à-vis the principle of universal conscription.

Another sensitive issue is the principle that everyone needs to serve and contribute – Arabs and ultra-Orthodox Jews included, if not in the army then through national service. In a democracy, however, it is problematic to take 18 year olds and compel them to work with the ill or the elderly. It is an inappropriate approach that is virtually nonexistent in other countries, as doing so would require applying stringent enforcement to individuals with no motivation to enlist and participate in civilian service. Furthermore, any compromise on this issue, whether in terms of conscription into the IDF or integration into the civilian service, will have a cost that is greater than its benefit. Such tracks would also preclude other individuals, who may be willing to perform these community services for low wages, from doing

so, as the positions would already be filled by national service participants. This, of course, is unjustified; if it is decided that it is important to decrease the number of yeshiva students in order to increase the number of Israelis serving in the army, this can be achieved using simpler methods than those that would lead to collision and ultimately result in nothing positive. The simplest way of doing this would be to limit the support provided to yeshiva students to three years (the same number of years for which men are obligated to serve in the Israeli army), which would compel yeshiva students to enter the work market. This model would lead more people to military service without creating confrontations, and presumably constitute a mechanism that is better suited for the State of Israel and the IDF alike.

# Compulsory Conscription or Mobilization Using Market Forces: Economic Aspects

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Yaakov Lifshitz

Discussions on the issue of conscription of soldiers into the IDF pay insufficient attention to economic aspects. Four decades ago economic aspects lay at the heart of a similar discussion then taking place in the United States. In 1970, a special commission appointed by the Nixon administration to consider the issue of the draft (the Gates Commission) issued a report that laid the basis for the US military's transition from compulsory conscription to an all-volunteer force. Commission members included prominent economists such as Milton Friedman and Alan Greenspan. As a result of the Commission's work, and in order to meet its needs, the new field of military personnel economics came into being. In this article, I will explain the economic aspects of the draft in the US and apply them to Israel. Note that there is no one single ideal model of conscription, and hence different models can be compared from different perspectives. One of these perspectives is the economic perspective; my intention here is not to argue that the economic assessment is in some way decisive or more important than any other.

The starting point of the economic discussion is the contrasting nature of the two methods of conscription: compulsory conscription mandated by law and voluntary enlistment based on market forces. The economic discussion compares the implications of both methods in two fundamental areas: distribution effects, or in less technical language, sharing the burden; and allocation effects, which refers to the impact on the effective use of the resources at the disposal of the economy. Another focus of the economic discussion is the cost-benefit analysis of the armies that have been conscripted using each method. For example, a professional army of volunteers inducted by means of market forces may be more expensive than an army of soldiers

engaged in compulsory service, but may also be more efficient in providing security.

The basic rule in manpower recruitment, it should be emphasized, is recruitment based on market forces. This is the underlying premise of employee recruitment for all positions in the public sector: police, nurses, tax collectors, and so on, and the military conscription of soldiers by the force of law is a prominent exception that an economic analysis is hard pressed to justify. In actuality, compulsory conscription can be justified from an economic perspective only in exceptional situations requiring unusually large numbers of manpower for an extended period of time, as in the case of long wars or as a result of some other ongoing state of emergency.

We can of course ask ourselves how it is possible to produce large reserves of manpower with suitable military training without the route of compulsory service. This question has to do with the role, size, and constitution of the reserve units during future conflicts, and it is not at all certain that compulsory service is the most effective solution for building the reserve forces that would be required in such situations.

The Gates Commission needed to deal, *inter alia*, with the question whether it would be possible to fill the essential quotas for the army through market mechanisms (after the termination of compulsory conscription). During the 1970s, discussions in the United States mentioned approximately 2.5 million soldiers, and there was understandable concern regarding the possibility that it might not be possible to recruit the required number of volunteers.

### **The Economic Implications of Conscription**

The economic discussion perceives compulsory military conscription as a sort of hidden tax. Those required to serve in the military are forced to relinquish a civilian income they could have been earning, but the hidden tax exceeds the loss of their alternative civilian income due to differences in convenience between a “normal” way of life and the physical and social conditions of military service. Without a doubt this tax is unique in nature. Typically, people are taxed for the compensation they receive in exchange for their work, whereas here, what is being taxed is the time of the individual. The tax is the work itself, not a portion of the income derived from the work.

Thinking of compulsory service as a tax prompts the question, as in other instances of taxation, whether it is progressive or regressive in nature, that is, whether it decreases or increases inequality in the distribution of income

(or the distribution of wealth) among the population. The answer is that it is a regressive tax that increases inequality, first, because at any given time it is paid by only a small portion of the population, and second, because no one else in society, apart from the soldiers, is subject to such a high rate of taxation. According to calculations undertaken in the United States, Belgium, and Holland, the tax is actually 60-80 percent of the alternative income the individual could have been earning if he were working in the civilian sector instead of performing compulsory service. Nowhere else do we find such a high rate of taxation. In this way, the fewer the people who take part in compulsory military service, the greater the inequality that results.

As noted, the other implication has to do with the allocation of resources in the economy, or the effective use of the resources at the economy's disposal, and this can be divided into two levels: the national economy level and the level of the country's security establishment. On the national economy level, an efficient allocation of production factors is achieved when people are permitted to select their own vocation: every person chooses the vocation in which he or she assesses that the marginal product would be the highest, resulting in more effective income. Freedom of choice in this context facilitates specialization according to relative advantage and creates a more efficient allocation of the production factors in the economy. Interference in freedom of choice prevents efficient allocation, or in economic terms, results in a waste of resources.

On the security establishment level, inefficient allocation stems from the budgetary cost of manpower. The security establishment reacts to the relative costs with which it is presented, and from its perspective conducts itself appropriately. It selects the combination of production factors with which it generates security in accordance with the relative costs, resulting in inefficient combinations of production factors, or in other words, combinations that result in less security. Specifically, more workers are used in capital development in comparison to situations in which there is no compulsory service and manpower is mobilized using market forces. In all armies that have moved from a compulsory army into a professional all-volunteer force, manpower was reduced and capital utilization increased. For example, when manpower is inexpensive, the army places an ambush to attack the enemy. When manpower is more expensive, it looks for alternatives, and for example, may use a satellite instead.

Distortions also result among different types of manpower. The army makes greater use of compulsory soldiers and less use of other types of manpower, resulting not only in fewer regular army personnel and civilian army employees but also fewer indirect workers, meaning employees of civilian companies engaged in selling products and services to the security establishment. In other words, when faced with a choice between production and acquisition, the security establishment prefers the option of self-production using the ostensibly cheap labor at its disposal. This usually results in the production of less security with a given budget.

### **The Economic Analysis of Cost versus Benefit**

Under the cost column, the cost of the conscripts must be considered, but not the direct cost, rather, the alternative cost. Additional components of cost that must be taken into account are the costs of training and exercises, the loss of resources as a result of inefficient allocation, and the administrative costs of conscription. With regard to all four of these components, the cost of a compulsory army is higher than that of a volunteer force:

- a. The alternative cost of the conscripts is higher because the market model is based on bottom-up conscription, which first drafts low cost inductees, and continues along the supply curve until reaching the desired quantity of individuals. In compulsory conscription, the process is top-down, with different selection tests aimed at choosing the best candidates. As the best candidates for military service are usually the best in the market, their alternative cost is higher and, as a result, the alternative cost of a compulsory army is higher.
- b. In terms of the cost of training and exercises, the relatively quick rate of turnover (in Israel, every three years) means that the army must be engaged in training new soldiers in ongoing fashion. In a compulsory army, at any given time, a greater percentage is engaged in exercises and a lower percentage is engaged in actual production (providing security). In a professional army, on the other hand, the cycle is longer, and the average period of service is much longer than three years, such that a greater percentage is engaged in producing output.
- c. In terms of the loss of resources, I have already noted the distortion of relative costs due to the low budgetary cost of compulsory soldiers, which results in the inefficient allocation and wasteful utilization of resources. This dynamic has no equivalent in armies mobilized by market forces.

- d. As a rule, administrative costs are derived from the number of conscripts, which is higher in compulsory armies, and to which special costs must also be added. In the context of compulsory service, these include enforcement costs (contending with draft dodgers), and in the context of market-based conscription, costs such as marketing and publicity, bonuses for conscription personnel, and others must be considered.

On the benefit column, the following factors must be considered: productivity that increases with experience (which in turn, is contingent upon duration of service) and greater availability for operational duty (stemming from the fact that at any given time in an all-volunteer force, a larger percentage is available for operational activity and is not related to training or exercises); a greater abundance of capital (resulting from the relative costs of labor and capital); and, according to some analysts, higher motivation (based on the argument that those serving in the military as a profession are more highly motivated than those on whom service is imposed).

That being the case, the components in the cost column indicate that a compulsory army is more costly, while the components of benefit indicate that a volunteer army is preferred. In other words, the cost of a compulsory army is higher than that of a volunteer army. This assessment is applicable when the number of soldiers is identical, and even more so, it is argued, in the case of a volunteer army with a smaller number of soldiers.

The economic debate also deals extensively with the process of transition from one model to the other, which should be gradual to enable the economy to absorb the relatively large number of young workers that a volunteer army would render unnecessary. It was in this manner that such transitions were conducted in Britain, France, and the United States.

Also related to the issue of transition is the question of whether a reduction in the duration of compulsory service is a desired stage on the road to an all-volunteer force. Compulsory service today may not be optimal, and it may appear possible to make do with less than three years. There are differences, however, between different kinds of military vocations. In an increasing portion of military vocations even the current duration of compulsory service is insufficient for acquiring the desired level of skill, and any reduction in this term would only exacerbate the problem. This is another aspect of the problem – training versus output: if the length of service is reduced, it can be assumed that the period of time devoted to exercises and training will exceed the time devoted to the production of output. As a result, the army

will have little time, if any, to reap the fruit of its investment, as the trained soldier will be discharged shortly after completing his training.

The transition between the current situation and an all-volunteer military force should involve what I call many “integrated tracks.” In integrated tracks, soldiers commit ahead of time to a certain number of years of service (at standing army terms). The best known example of this approach in the IDF is the pilots’ training course, and this should be expanded to other vocations as well. Integrated tracks appear to offer the best of both worlds. On the personal level, commitment to an integrated track enables individuals to influence the nature of their service. For example, a candidate for the IDF’s Center of Computing and Information Systems commits to a number of years of extra military service with the knowledge that in the course of his service he will also be acquiring a prestigious profession. He does so by choice in order to affect the nature of his service and acquire skills that will likely benefit him later on in life. From the perspective of the army, this extends the duration of service and enriches the experience of those serving. In addition, the combination of compulsory service and service according to regular army terms reduces the cost in comparison to an all-volunteer military force. Today, the IDF has many vocations that can be classified as integrated tracks, and the more there are, the smoother will be the transition to an all-volunteer force.

### **Concluding Remarks**

First, greater emphasis must be placed on the cost of manpower, as it accounts for approximately half of the country’s defense budget. It is impossible to discuss the defense budget and the possibilities of cutting the budget without taking into consideration the component accounting for half of the expenditure. The time has come to address seriously and thoroughly the method of conscription and the mode of service, if only to seek out ways to reduce the defense budget.

The second remark pertains to the issue of equality in sharing the burden. Transition to a volunteer army may offer a solution to this problem. No one refers to a problem of sharing the burden with regard to prison guards, police personnel, and nurses, as these are public professions for which recruitment is carried out via market forces.

The third remark pertains to the subject of civilian national service, which is typically depicted as an answer to the vexing problem of inequality in

sharing the burden. However, civilian service is an issue requiring a separate discussion in its own right.

In conclusion, military service in Israel suffers from an element of distortion, and using civilian service as a means of solving the problem of inequality in sharing of the burden is only likely to result in further distortion. In addition, we must remain mindful of the fact that civilian service may be detrimental to workers with low income and little education. Today, there are approximately 14,000 people taking part in civilian service in Israel, but if the program begins to accept entire age groups, the expanded scope of the program will cause injury to an entire strata of the population that is currently already living at or under the poverty line.



# **“The People’s Army,” Put to the Test**

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Dov Tamari

In an interview on the present and future path of the IDF, then-IDF Chief of General Staff Benny Gantz remarked that the public displays no empathy toward those who have lost their jobs in the military and that within the IDF, people are truly troubled by the hostile attitude of the public. This observation is reflective of the social reality. The point of departure of this article is that since its inception, just as it has been a military defensive force at the service of the Israeli state and government, the IDF has also always been a social organization. Whereas most consider the IDF in light of its ability to engage in combat in wartime, this article considers it from a strictly social angle based on the premise that, as long as it remains a “people’s army,” it will also be a social entity.

## **Is the IDF Still a People’s Army?**

The time has come for us to pose questions that have hitherto not been generally asked:

- a. What is the people’s army in Israel? Is there any truth to this notion, or is it merely an old, empty slogan?
- b. What is the meaning of the concept of the people’s army? Is it a universal concept or is it unique to Israel?
- c. What is the social significance of the IDF as a people’s army, and what is its social purpose?
- d. Is the people’s army also based on a volunteering spirit?
- e. Has the model of the Israeli people’s army eroded and been fractured over the years?
- f. And finally, is there an alternative military model that is perhaps better suited for Israel?

It is important to clarify these and other questions, as what was understood and accepted in the past may no longer suit reality and the changes over time. Every Israeli who is aware of the environment in which he or she lives is familiar with the concept of the people's army, or, to be more precise, the notion that "the IDF is the people's army." However, the term "people's army" has no universal definition, as every state and society interprets reality and its particular security needs in its own subjective way and, on this basis, determines the purpose, structure, and organization of its army accordingly.

The origins of the concept "people's army" reach back to the French Revolution when revolutionary France was fighting the empires and kingdoms of Europe. Until that point, armies had been the "armies of emperors and kings" and typically consisted of tens of thousands of men, usually 50,000 or 60,000, and in any event not more than 100,000. They were armies of hired mercenaries paid by absolutist rulers. In 1793, Lazare Nicolas Marguerite, the Count of Carnot and the French minister of the revolutionary regime, issued a law that obligated all French citizens, in accordance with their age, to serve in the army and to provide military service and financial resources. This included the participation of women and children to provide practical and moral support for the military.

Most senior military officers in the armies of Europe during the period preceding the French Revolution were appointed based on family pedigree and their membership in the upper class and the nobility, and not necessarily as a result of skill and ability. The French revolutionary army advanced junior officers from lower ranks to the rank of general and even marshal. In this context, the concept of "general conscription" emerged, and during the nineteenth century, came to characterize the armies of Europe and the United States. The process peaked during the world wars of the twentieth century, in which tens of millions of soldiers were conscripted and fought in the armies of the participating countries.

The people's army, therefore, is characterized by general conscription; the mobilization of the state's resources for the war effort; a regular army (compulsory and standing forces), whose size is determined by a state's economic resources and foreign and domestic policy; and the mass needed for a total war constituted of conscripted reserve soldiers. General conscription had the profound social effect of turning the civilian into a military subject who may end up sacrificing his life in battle. In return, he demanded and received civil rights he had not enjoyed in the past. General conscription

is what produced the modern reserves model. As a large standing army constitutes an untenable economic and social burden, the reserve army model emerged as a necessary compromise between security needs and the economic and social burdens they created. Standing in contrast to the notion of the people’s army is the model of the professional volunteer army maintained by many countries around the world, representing a modern return of sorts to the “armies of monarchs” of the eighteenth century.

The meaning and significance of the concept of the people’s army were already known to the leadership of the Haganah during the hostilities of 1936-1939. Among the Haganah’s commanders were theoreticians who discussed and published articles on the subject of the people’s army (Elimelech Zelikowich and Yehoshua Globerman). The Haganah’s security committee engaged in serious systematic discussion of the Jewish people’s army to be established when the Jewish state would be established in the Land of Israel. Between 1939 and 1941 the Haganah began establishing a regular army – the *Palmah* (Hebrew acronym for “strike forces”), and a reserve army – the *Khish* (acronym for “field corps”) and the *Khim* (acronym for “guard corps”). These three organizations constituted the foundation for the IDF during Israel’s War of Independence.

As the British Mandate over Palestine – and not the Jewish *yishuv* – was the sovereign in the country at the time, these organizations were based on volunteerism and binding social motivation. The social motivation for military service did not disappear after the War of Independence, and the institutionalization of compulsory military service reflects the fact that an army cannot exist and fight based on law alone.

The War of Independence established and shaped the character of the State of Israel. Immediately following the war, militarization was imposed on Israeli society by means of the most comprehensive compulsory conscription law for men and women implemented by any of the world’s democratic countries. There is no cause for alarm regarding use of the word “militarization,” which Uri Ben-Eliezer defines as a cultural phenomenon indicating the existence, and sometimes also the imposition, of a concept of reality whereby war, or organized violence, is a correct and fitting solution to political problems. Israel’s wars, and the conditions in which the State of Israel was shaped, have required total mobilization of its human and material resources. The quality of the IDF stemmed first and foremost from this total mobilization, which incorporated the full range of possible Israeli qualities. The total

quantitative mobilization of the resources and effective military organization doubled the army's ability based on the possible potential. In structure too, the IDF aspired to totality in light of the power relations between Israel and its neighbors, which appeared inferior. The totality of the issue of Israeli national security was based on broad consensus and the absence of almost any dissent.

The 1950s and the 1960s until the Six Day War were characterized by a sense of concrete existential danger. The country was under siege; personal and general security was not perceived as assured; and it appeared that wars would break out every few years, by surprise as well. In this context, general mobilization became a national standard. Compulsory service and reserve duty were accepted as self-evident and as needing no justification. The wars themselves, and the military actions that took place between them, were perceived as actions that Israel had no choice but to take, although some were clearly operations and wars of choice. During this period, the IDF was considered to be the most successful organization in Israel according to a number of parameters, including its relative success in its wars and military campaigns and its actions between wars. The IDF facilitated integration and unity within Israeli society through compulsory and reserve service, especially in the 1950s, which witnessed a major wave of Jewish immigration to the country on the one hand, and an unstable security reality on the other hand. The battle became a national symbol and value, and war emerged as the chief idea shaping Israeli society. This fact was visible on all levels, and in all aspects, of the country's way of life: the economy, national planning, building, literature, poetry, music, and reserve and military service. War became a force that shaped Israel's consciousness. The army stood at the center of the Israeli experience, and the prevalent military ethos was the civilian's obligation to the state. In this way, Israeli society anticipated President Kennedy's call to "ask not what your country can do for you" but "what you can do for your country." The consensus regarding national security that existed in Israel from the 1950s until after the Six Day War rested more on social conventions than on political agreements, to the point that the IDF was transformed from a means to Israel's existence into a value in itself. One manifestation of this change is the concept of "values of warfare," which is used widely in the IDF and which in truth is paradoxical, as all people and communities choose different values in this context. In

democratic countries values are not imposed, and a more accurate definition would be "military norms of warfare" that are binding on all.

The major change began after the Six Day War, but was not evident at the outset. Gradually, however, and up to the present, a profound change has occurred in the IDF's political and social positioning in Israeli society. The sense of siege and existential danger that was once characteristic of the Israeli public has subsided. Instead of war aimed at defense and maintaining the status quo, the IDF's aim has changed to that of holding the territories that were conquered in 1967 and, by so doing, to forever change the territorial formation of the State of Israel. In addition, as a result of the Yom Kippur War, the Lebanon wars, and the intifadas, Israel's sense of military superiority has been weakened. Israeli society observed that not all wars are successful, military supremacy is not assured, and that quite surprisingly, a major war with no resolution can actually give rise to reasonable security arrangements, as reflected in Israel's peace treaties with two Arab countries, and a coming to terms with the existence of Israel by part of the Arab world. This reduced the constant fear of war, although the "existential threat" continues to serve as a political and social tool of government control that, in recent years, has even intensified.

The same period witnessed an initially subversive and later overt stream of massive Jewish settlement in the heart of the Palestinian population, which was aimed at preventing a political resolution based on future territorial concessions. After the Six Day War, it was the IDF that led the process of Jewish settlement in the territories occupied during the war. It did so at first in the form of Nahal "outposts" in the Jordan Valley, the Golan Heights, the Gaza Strip, and the Sinai Peninsula (of 59 Nahal outposts, four were within the Green Line), initially in defense of the settlements in these areas, and later as an operational arm of the policy of displacing Palestinians in favor of Jewish settlement. This stabilized and reinforced the settlement enterprise and transformed the military frontier across the 1967 borders into territory linked to the State of Israel in all ways and walks of life.

After the Yom Kippur War, the IDF no longer defined for itself the purpose and the goals of expansion and Jewish settlement in the surrounding areas by means of military force. It now operated under the motto of "defending all Israelis, wherever they live," and was operated and regulated by Israeli governments that had not yet decided the future of the occupied territories, but that nonetheless conducted an active settlement policy and at the same

time stripped the IDF of its national and constitutional role as the bearer of sovereignty in the territories. The truth of the matter is that the IDF has served as the primary government tool for providing land for the settlements. In the Gaza Strip in the past, and in Judea and Samaria today, extreme interactions between Israelis and Palestinians in which the IDF is involved, and sometimes dictates, have become the norm.

These disagreements have undermined the consensus previously enjoyed by the IDF within Israeli society. The far left rejects the need for a large army in Israel and its excessive influence on society and foreign and security policy, especially in the context of IDF operations in the territories. The far right demands that commanders and soldiers adopt an ethical position consistent with its own with regard to the Palestinians and the future of the territories, and when this runs counter to the obligation of military service and military discipline, it calls on them to disregard the authority of their orders and refrain from following them.

Israeli society is internally divided between right and left, wealthy and non-wealthy, the Jewish majority and the deprived non-Jewish minority, secular Jews and ultra-Orthodox Jews, and along other lines, be they of principle or not. Two issues top the agenda of today's deeply divided and non-compromising Israeli society. The first is the future of Judea and Samaria and the establishment or negation of a Palestinian state. The second is the disagreement between secular and religious Israeli citizens who accept communal and personal responsibility for earning a livelihood and supporting themselves and for standard civil rights and duties, including military service, on the one hand, and ultra-Orthodox Jews who are unwilling to serve in the army under any circumstances, on the other hand. These two disputes have thrown the IDF unwittingly into the heart of the dispute.

Israel's economic strengthening and cultural connection with Europe and the United States gradually brought the "fighting nation and society" to make way for a Western style "consumer society." Such societies tend to reject militarism as a way of life. The Western welfare state needs financial resources that have, and continue to be, tied down in the country's defense budget, as reflected in its size in comparison to the budgets of the other government ministries and the needs of civilian society.

All of this reflects the many cracks in the current accepted social arrangement in Israel. From a national perspective, the concept of "society" once also constituted the framework of the term "nation." These terms, however, are

no longer synonymous. Inside Israel there are a number of sectors separated by differences that outweigh what they have in common. To be sure, this is not only true of Israel but is rather a universal phenomenon. In contrast to the mythological nationalism that was built on nation-based categories and concepts, we now bear witness to individual, isolated societies that are not connected by nationhood. Around the world, the separation between continents, cultures, and nations is disappearing, and the concepts in use are no longer suited to a reality in which borders are dissolving. Societies take shape on an economic basis, and national homogeneity is fractured by social concepts of a new kind.

For decades, the IDF has attempted to remain outside the manifest political and social debates based on the premise that it concerns itself only with issues directly related to security. As a result, the IDF has moved away from the social purpose that at its outset constituted an integral component and was part of the Israeli logic of the people's army. Today, it deals only with direct security. As the IDF is responsible for defining not only the threats, the needs, and its own purpose but also its budget, its sources of manpower, and the other civilian resources it requires, it plays a dominant role in Israel in every realm of life imaginable. This strict adherence to direct physical security has led the IDF to surrender its role as a people's army with a social purpose. However, as a result of the issue of control in the territories and control of the Palestinians, the IDF has not succeeded in remaining outside the political divisions, despite its more limited view of its role and its task as a people's army. At the same time, however, it experienced the onset of stagnation that is characteristic of large, cumbersome organizations lacking experience with extreme phenomena and massive failures, and it is currently difficult to identify efforts within its ranks to function as a social organization. What was self-evident in this context in the 1950s is no longer applicable today. The IDF's requests from the state, as expressed in the sentence "that is what the IDF needs," are missing their social dimension – what can and should the IDF contribute to Israeli society.

In this reality, several questions should be asked, such as: What should be the underlying notion shaping Israeli society? And, in this context, what should be the underlying notion shaping the Israeli army? Should it focus solely on maintaining security and developing military capabilities? Or, alternatively, should the IDF seek new proactive ideas so as to function in social realms as a people's army? What should be the purpose of the IDF's

social influence in Israeli society? Below are a few examples of deficiencies in the IDF's performance in the social realm.

- a. The IDF is responsible for safeguarding the country's borders. Had it wanted, it could have, from the outset, prevented the mass infiltration of thousands of people seeking jobs that arrived in the country in recent years, and not waited for the fence to be erected. The result is a social problem that the government has no realistic chances of solving. Were we unaware of what was happening on a social level in Europe, which is flooded by migrant laborers from Africa? In this context, the IDF displayed indifference and limited its actions to transporting the infiltrators to the bus station in Beer Sheva.
- b. With regard to the social justice protests of 2011 and their linkage to the IDF and the defense budget, the IDF should have already started cutting its budget at the time and should not have waited for a confrontation with the government.
- c. Another relevant issue is the IDF's intentional long term neglect of compulsory service for women. According to data published by the IDF on the conscription of women, approximately 43 percent of all Israeli female teenagers who are subject to conscription are not conscripted, and approximately 35 percent of those who evade service do so as a result of declaring a religious lifestyle. The army contends that a significant portion of girls lie to the IDF in order to evade conscription. In the media, synagogues, and the IDF, discussion of the matter focuses on the service of women in combat positions and administrative and command positions that were once the domain of men. Although this issue is worthy of discussion in its own right, and much has been done to advance the cause, the original idea of women serving in the IDF was not necessarily functional equality between the genders. The female soldier was also the mother of future soldiers: "I served in the army, and so will my son and daughter." Female service, therefore, bore a social message, and not only a functional one.
- d. Another relevant issue is the IDF's role in states of emergency on the civilian front. The Home Front Command is no less effective than any of the territorial commands, but the IDF has not fought for binding legislation to enable it to penetrate the space of the local municipalities in order to obligate them to make the necessary preparations for crisis situations and natural and human-made disasters through the massive

preparation of the civilian environment for active defense. In the past, the IDF set up and was responsible for a local area defense system ("*hagana merhavit*") in frontier areas. This entity was not particularly successful from a military standpoint, but it had significant irreplaceable value for the new settlements on a social level and from the perspective of morale. Today, in an age of rockets and missiles, the frontier encompasses every location and every settlement in Israel.

- e. The IDF should also have reduced the conflicts regarding social issues in Judea and Samaria, such as Jewish "price tag" attacks, settlers' uprooting of olive trees, and the hooliganism waged by part of the settler population. The IDF's forgiving approach, to the point of inaction on these issues, resulted in seepage of the "price tag" campaign across the Green Line and into Israel proper.
- f. In contrast to these issues, the positive case of Israel's disengagement from the Gaza Strip demonstrated the extent to which the IDF can play an effective role in preventing a violent social rupture in Israel. The manner in which the IDF carried out the evacuation should serve as a guiding light on how to operate with a sense of social-military mission.

The IDF must take on and promote national civilian service as an alternative to military service. If there is no need in the army for all members of a compulsory conscription cycle – men and women, secular and religious alike – civilian service should be developed as of equal value to military service, and the importance of civilian service for the general good should be instilled as a component of the development of a civilian ethos and social solidarity among maturing teens. The IDF can ease the burden on the community by providing inexpensive services that represent budgetary savings given the low cost of national/civilian service as opposed to the salary of an employee and, in the process, facilitate the initial employment of a young Israeli who did not serve in the IDF. Israeli governments have evaded their task of leading and managing civilian service. In practice, national/civilian service in Israel is not administered by the state but rather by seven non-profit organizations authorized by the Prime Minister's Office. As of January 2012, the teens subject to conscription participating in the national service program, serving as volunteers and not on a mandatory basis, included 3,885 ultra-Orthodox Jews and 2,399 Arabs. The number of individuals subject to military conscription who are not serving in the IDF is ten times higher.

IDF officers responded to these arguments with a description of the highly positive manner in which the IDF deals with its conscripted soldiers, whether they lack a basic education or come from a difficult socioeconomic background. But while true and important, this is not the crux of the matter. There is no doubt that the IDF takes good care of its soldiers. However, the questions that must be asked include: What does the IDF represent for Israeli society in general, and what is the nature of the interaction between the Israeli military and Israel's civilian entities? What is the IDF's purpose and role in society as a people's army? And, does the IDF have a social mission that extends beyond taking care of its conscripts?

### **Is There an Alternative to the People's Army?**

An alternative to the general conscription-based model of the people's army, as manifested in a regular army and a reserve army, is the model of a "professional army of volunteers" currently implemented by many countries. Prominent features of this model include a relatively small armed force in comparison to the country's social and economic potential; army service as a way of life until a relatively advanced age, as opposed to relatively short compulsory service; high wages, in comparison to the remuneration offered in the civilian labor market; and a strict, coercive, and constrictive military regime over all members of the military.

A professional volunteer army cannot operate alone, and all armies that are based on a professional volunteer force also maintain a relatively large reserve contingent. For example, in the United States the number of all military reservists, including the National Guard forces of the individual states, accounts for approximately 47 percent of the country's armed forces. The different kinds of reserve forces, which were meant to supplement the armed forces in wartime, must maintain a level of training and readiness similar to those of the regular forces, which is a requirement that is met, at best, only partially. In this way, the model of the professional volunteer army does not negate the need for reserves on the one hand, and does not ensure their fitness for war on the other hand. The reserve forces of some armies are based on volunteers alone. Such a model requires large budgetary resources in order to make volunteering for service worthwhile. Another phenomenon that accompanies professional volunteer armies is the gap and the social distance between civilian society and the armed forces, as

reflected in the sentiment that soldiers "are willing to endanger themselves, and that's their problem."

Some economists argue in favor of a professional volunteer army and emphasize that its cost and efficiency are preferable to those of the customary people's army model. Yet even if the figures and analyses are correct, they do not relate to the social dimension. For its part, the Israeli reality precludes the transition to a professional volunteer army for the following reasons:

- a. According to the published data, the entire IDF, including all its branches and corps, consists of a total of 620,000 personnel in the standing army, compulsory service, and the reserves. Even if we assume a massive 15-20 percent reduction in ORBAT, which appears unlikely in the foreseeable future, it will still be necessary to pay the high salaries, social benefits, and pensions of more than 500,000 professional volunteers.
- b. A significant portion of IDF soldiers serve in positions that put them in harm's way. In a professional army, those who volunteer for such positions will need to be paid extremely high salaries, and this raises great doubt regarding the claim of savings for the defense budget. The more the Israeli economy grows and benefits the Israeli employee, the less worthwhile it will be to enlist for extended service in the standing army. Moreover, relatively young Israelis capable of many years of service in a professional volunteer army have long since abandoned the physical work that is characteristic of soldiers. The Israeli laborer, who once built the country, has been replaced by foreign workers from many countries.
- c. Combat positions, primarily on land, are difficult and tiring, particularly for the lower and middle ranks, and cannot be held for many years. The result is frequent turnover, every few years. It is impossible to require the tank driver or infantry soldier who has been discharged after 15-20 years of difficult compulsory service to serve in the reserves. As noted above, a professional volunteer army is supposed to replace compulsory service. However, no army has thus far succeeded in establishing its armed forces without the significant addition of reserve forces, and volunteer reservists represent an extremely expensive form of service.
- d. A typical career standing army soldier in the IDF usually finishes his service at a much younger age than the average civilian retires from the work force. As a result, an army pensioner looks for alternative employment to earn a living and maintain his lifestyle. There are no good reasons for a civilian to volunteer for military service as a tank driver or an infantry

soldier, and in so doing choose not to pursue a civilian profession for 15 or 20 years, and then enter the civilian workforce with nothing but disadvantages. As a result, the professional volunteer army model will not be practicable in Israel in the foreseeable future.

There does not appear to be a third model of military service, although there are secondary possibilities. One is selective conscription, which was implemented in the United States until the end of the Vietnam War. The reason for adopting such a system lies in the fact that there is still a need for compulsory conscription and reserve service, although the need for manpower is significantly less than the number of candidates for military service according to the law. The disadvantages include an infringement on the equality among citizens and a convenient basis for evasion. Another possibility, customary in Germany, entails giving the service candidate the option of military or civilian service, representing a model that is more social in essence than purely military. In practice, without intending to be so, the IDF is also based on selective service. Arab citizens of Israel are not called up for military service and are not obligated to engage in civilian service. Most ultra-Orthodox Jews enjoy the same situation, as do almost half of the country's women. In this way, all of Israel's social disadvantages are embodied in the Israeli model of selective service.

### **Does the Value of Volunteering for the IDF still Exist in the People's Army Model?**

Ostensibly, a professional volunteer army is based on the civilian's free desire and agreement to engage in extensive service for many years – or in other words, on volunteering. This is in contrast to an army of compulsory conscripted soldiers and reserves, which is based on binding legislation. Senior officers in the IDF praise the spirit of volunteerism for military service, particularly among its reserve soldiers. Instructional examples include the reserve soldiers who answered the call to mobilize for the Second Lebanon War and for Operations Cast Lead and Pillar of Defense. The rate of mobilization exceeded 100 percent and sometimes reached 120 percent among reserve soldiers who had already been released from active duty.

By the late 1930s, the Haganah leadership was already troubled by the issue of social volunteering for military service as, above all else, the organization was based on social motivation. Its members engaged in countless discussions regarding how to train a reserve army and maintain its fitness

over time; the role and value of volunteering as a force motivating civilians for multi-year service in a military framework; and whether legal obligation offered the exclusive mechanism for achieving this goal. In 1937, during discussions on planning the defense of the Jewish state, were one to be established, Haganah leader Eliyahu Golomb argued that the value of the sense of volunteerism among the people should not be exaggerated, and that the one way to educate the Jewish people for defense positions was through compulsory service. In late 1947, just before the outbreak of the War of Independence, senior Haganah commander Zvi Ayalon maintained that the solution to the anticipated situation was partial enlistment of the country's forces into security and defense roles, as is customary around the world in situations where a particular country fears the possibility of attack. According to his approach, experience had taught them that this was not realistic under the conditions of government prevalent at the time. Such action required volunteering, large sums of money, and discipline of the *yishuv* to follow instructions, whereas the past had shown that the *yishuv* would wake up only during the events themselves, and not before. Even then, there was an understanding that a willingness to be mobilized for war and for battle did not ensure the existence of a reserve army prior to or between wars.

The War of Independence was a difficult experience for the military leadership of the young state. The notion that "the entire country is the front, and the entire people is the army" was actualized neither rapidly nor at the necessary pace, because compulsory conscription was not declared in time and volunteering could not compensate for the deficiencies. This was the reason for the compulsory conscription following the War of Independence for a regular army dictated by the legislation and for obligatory reserve service under the law. Volunteering can be helpful in the event of belated awakening to meet a concrete threat but is not well suited for the ongoing maintenance of armed forces based partially or primarily on reserves.

### **The Challenge of Military Leadership**

What is the challenge facing the IDF as a people's army in the current reality? The original centrality of the IDF within the social experience that was characteristic of the first generation cannot be restored. Still, the IDF in its current form remains no less a social organization than a fighting military organization. The IDF can still survive as an accepted, agreed upon, and desired entity in Israeli society by virtue of its being a body that

contributes no less than it receives in the social realm, and no less than in the realm of direct security. The IDF and the General Staff need to think not in terms of what the IDF needs but rather what the IDF, as a people's army, can contribute to Israeli society. The army as a social organization must seek out roles reflecting a sense of social mission in all possible areas. The era of the people operating on behalf of the IDF may have reached an end; we now live in an age in which the IDF must operate on behalf of all sectors of Israeli society. Otherwise, the gap will continue to widen until it poses a threat to the people's army.

The Israeli government is not expected to do much for the IDF's status and role in Israeli society. Some statesmen and government ministries will erode the status of the IDF, whether in the context of budget battles or struggles over political power. This article has offered a number of examples of the lack of IDF success in this realm in recent years, including the infiltration of migrant laborers, the IDF's response to the social justice protests, the military service of women, the work of the Home Front Command, and the IDF's soft response to the "price tag" campaign. The commanders of the IDF would do well to learn from their own failures in these areas and derive the necessary lessons to ensure better performance in the future.

# Motivation Levels for IDF Enlistment over the Years

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Reuven Gal

## **General**

A distinction must be made at the outset between two central concepts, or categories, that despite their significant difference are often confused with one another. The first category is combat motivation, or the motivation to fight,<sup>1</sup> and refers to that which inspires the soldier to charge the enemy in the battlefield. This motivation will be discussed only briefly in this article. The second category and the focus of this article, the motivation to enlist,<sup>2</sup> pertains not to the soldier's behavior on the battlefield, but to the factors that led him to join the military in the first place. Within this framework, a number of questions arise: What makes people want to join a military framework? What factors influence their willingness to be enlisted, whether for compulsory or volunteer service? What are the sources of these motivations, and do they change over time?

Since the establishment of the State of Israel, the motivation to serve in the military has undergone huge changes that in many ways reflect the many transformations that Israeli society has undergone. The impetus of young Israelis to enlist in the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) over the years can be divided into four types of enlistment motivation: survival, ideological, normative, and personal. The article begins with a description of each kind of motivation and then considers the changes that have affected these motivations in Israel over the years, from the inception of the IDF up to the present.

## **Survival Motivation**

Survival motivation occurs when there is no alternative but to enlist and fight. It characterizes situations when societies, or states, struggle for their own existence and survival. It is present not only in states in their infancy, but also in societies such as Great Britain during the Nazi bombings in World War II, or the Soviet Union during Operation Barbarossa and its defense of its territory against the German invasion. These are just two of many historical examples. The Jewish community in Palestine during the War of Independence (1947-1949) is a closer example. The entire Israeli society then felt a threat to its very existence, and the motivation to enlist was the default.

Barring a small number of exceptions, this kind of motivation is characterized by total dedication to the struggle, which tops the list of public and social priorities. Individuals enlist based on the understanding that they are facing a matter of life and death and that they have no choice but to join the struggle. In such situations, those who do not do so are referred to as “evaders.” Conscriptio evasion not only lacks public legitimacy but is also frequently regarded as treason, and the society in question prosecutes such evaders. In such societies, military conscription is non-selective and total – “All able bodies – to arms!” (“*Kol bachur vatov laneshek*,” as the Hebrew song goes) – and sometimes also involves the mobilization of women, youth, and even children as fighters.

In such societies, there is almost no need for means to compel individuals to enlist, as the existential state of affairs causes the public to reach the conclusion that it is a matter of life or death, creating the strongest incentive possible. The individual’s personal interests are subordinated to the collective interest, and the individual serves the nation and is willing to sacrifice himself on its behalf. Because motivation of this kind is so extreme and intense, it is also extremely draining and cannot be expected to remain strong for an extended period of time (despite exceptions such as the Soviet Union during World War II where it lasted for four years).

## **Ideological Motivation**

Ideological motivation, which is usually an extension of survival motivation, is based on national identity and a struggle over values, and is not necessarily related to a sense of existential threat. During the Spanish Civil War, for example, there was no existential threat but rather a problem of national identity

and a struggle over values such as freedom and democracy. Enlistment in the militia army that took part in the Spanish Civil War was based primarily on ideology, as citizens of different countries around the world joined the struggle. Another example is the Vietcong Army of North Vietnam (PLAF), where enlistment during the protracted Vietnam War was cultivated by the communist ideology inspired by Ho Chi Minh. Although the PLAF was a mandatory army, characterized by conscription that reached 95 percent of every age group,<sup>3</sup> the motivation for enlistment was mostly ideological. Other examples include the Red Army during the period following World War II and the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in Northern Ireland. Hezbollah and Hamas, as well as several other terrorist groups, can also be viewed in a similar manner, since the motivation to join such militant groups is distinctly ideological, whether based on values (such as democracy or the liberation from tyranny), theory (communism or socialism), or religion (Islamic fundamentalism or Catholicism versus Protestantism).

Belief in the “justness of cause” is a central element of ideological motivation that provides complete legitimacy for almost any action. An army based on ideological motivation becomes a sacred cow within its society, and history is full of examples of serious crimes being committed in the name of such ideologies. Most notably, ideological motivation contains an extremely powerful emotional element characterized by love of country, land, and – at times – a spiritual father or ideological leader whom everyone worships. The individual is perceived as serving the collective, and the stronger the ideological identification of the individual, the higher his status. Consider, for example, the political commissars (*politruk*) of the Russian army, whose importance exceeded that of the senior commanders, because they operated under the flag of ideology.<sup>4</sup> In the case of this kind of motivation, there is also no need for a means of coercion for compulsory conscription, as the source of motivation is moral and emotional in character.

### **Normative Motivation**

Normative motivation differs from the two types discussed above. Normative motivation is manifested by individuals doing what is regarded as acceptable, customary, and legitimate according to the social conventions of the society in question – but not necessarily as a result of ideology or existential need. Nevertheless, normative motivation can be equally as powerful as ideological motivation or survival motivation. In many cases, such motivation can

be the derivative of the ideological or survival motivation that preceded it. Typically, it is difficult to identify the exact point that perpetuates the motivation through the transition from an ideological or survival basis to a normative basis.

Non-military examples of normative motivation include youth movements in Israel, which continued to operate on the basis of inertia alone for a number of years after they had been emptied of ideological drive, because youth movement membership was still considered customary, admirable, and proper. Another example is the kibbutz as a settlement type, which continued to exist, seemingly without change, many years after its ideology had weakened or disappeared altogether.

Normative motivation is also characterized by the collective's impact on the individual, not due to ideology or an existential threat, but rather because of the social pressure of the norm. Norms possess immense power in societies and groups. One interesting example is the norm of young Israelis to take backpacking trips to the Far East or South America following their discharge from the military. The pressure to take such a trip is so great that those who deviate from this norm are considered the exception. Still, normative motivation also contains an element of changing fashion. In this way, it can exist for a period of time, sometimes even a prolonged one, and then give way to one of a number of alternatives, including: reinfusion with existential need or ideology (as we will see below), replacement by another fashion, or disappearance.

### **Individualistic Motivation**

Referring to Maslow's theory of the Hierarchy of Needs, the origin of this last type of motivation is the "need for self-actualization."<sup>5</sup> The need for self-actualization, or self-fulfillment, is an extremely powerful psychological need. Maslow positioned it at the top of his hierarchy of human needs, ascribing it the same importance as other basic needs. In the case under consideration here, the individual uses a resource of society – in this case, military service – to fulfill his or her own personal needs. Although the individual is officially conscripted and contributes to society through his military service, he is serving primarily because doing so suits his personal needs and furthers his individual development. From the perspective of society, such motivation on the part of the individual is also typically perceived as

legitimate and acceptable. When individualistic motivation is shared by a large community it may also contribute to society as a whole. This dynamic is reminiscent of Max Weber's theory regarding the Protestant ethic,<sup>6</sup> in the sense of an individualistic motivation that serves not only the individual, and not only a particular society, but humanity as a whole.

### **The Evolution of Motivation in Israel**

How are these four kinds of motivation manifested in Israel? What follows is an historical overview, from the War of Independence up to the present, which highlights the changes that have occurred over the years in the different aspects of motivation for service in the IDF. Before we begin, however, there are a few points to remember. First is the fact that the changes delineated here were not abrupt, or revolutionary changes, but rather evolutionary and gradual changes that occurred through extended processes. It is therefore difficult to determine the exact date when one period ended and another began. For this reason, the years used henceforth are meant only to indicate relevant eras. Second is the fact that we can speak of at least three types of changes: periodical changes, generational changes, and sectoral changes. A *periodical* change refers to a situation in which one period differs in an extreme manner from the previous one, as in the case of the period preceding the Six Day War and the one that followed it. *Generational* changes, on the other hand, refer to situations in which, during the same period, one generation acts in accordance with one kind of motivation and another generation acts in accordance with another. For example, during any given period, reserve soldiers in the IDF belong to one generation while regular soldiers (conscripts) belong to another, and their motivational characteristics vary by generation, not by period. Finally, *sectoral* changes refer to the fact that during the same period, within the same age group, and within the same generation, the motivation for one sector of the population may be ideological whereas the motivation for another sector may be individualistic or normative.

No period is necessarily characterized purely by one kind of motivation. Moreover, there are cycles: that is to say, a particular type of motivation may be characteristic of a period in the past, but may reemerge in a later period and become predominant again. For example, the Yom Kippur War resulted in upheaval and dramatic changes and for a period of time brought the reemergence of a sense of existential threat and a renewed sense of survival

motivation that had all but been forgotten. Later in this article the non-linear trends of these different motivations at the present time will be discussed.

The first period covers (approximately) the first two decades of Israeli statehood, from 1948 until the Six Day War (1967), and was characterized, alternately, by the two first types of motivation. Early on during this period, primarily during the War of Independence, members of the Jewish *yishuv* perceived the situation of the newborn state as one of “the few versus the many” and experienced the frightening sense of having their back against the wall. Even if these were partially subjective feelings, they were dominant and powerful, and constituted the basis for enlistment to the pre-state militia (Palmach, Haganah, or the Irgun and Lehi), or to the new IDF. In the background lay the memory of the Holocaust, and the Jews in the country felt as if they were fighting for their very existence.<sup>7</sup> It was the motivation of survival: “All able bodies – to arms!” – men and women, old and young, long-time inhabitants (*vatikim*) and new immigrants (*olim*) alike. This motivation continued to be influential for a few years after the War of Independence and ultimately merged with ideological motivation – as the IDF established by David Ben Gurion in 1948 was a distinctly ideological army. Ben Gurion maintained:

The IDF must serve not only as a military training apparatus but also as a state school that imbues the youth entering its ranks with knowledge of the language, the country, Jewish history, the fundamentals of general education, neatness and order, and, most importantly, love of the homeland.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, the IDF emerged as an ideological platform for the fundamental values of Zionism, settlement, Jewish immigration to the country, and pioneering activity. This ideology outlasted the War of Independence and persisted into the 1960s.<sup>9</sup> The ideological element drew not only on the issue of survival but also on the concept of the IDF as a national melting pot and, in practice, the site of the creation of a galvanized people.<sup>10</sup> In this way, the motivation for enlistment in the IDF was ideological, and not just compliance with law and order.

This powerful ideology was also accompanied by an emotional element. The young Israelis “of handsome forelocks and countenance” who enlisted on the basis of this type of motivation loved their homeland, its nature trails, and its landscapes. They enlisted in the army with a sense of sacrifice

made willingly and with love, and whoever failed to do so was considered a shirker or a traitor and had low social standing. This view was commonly manifested in phrases such as “the entire country is the front” and “the entire people is the army.” The emotional expression of this view was Yosef Trumpeldor’s well known proclamation that “it is good to die for one’s country,” which was still considered valid many years after the clashes at Tel Hai.<sup>11</sup> Representing the young generation of the period, Yoram Kaniuk offers an illustrative account of this dynamic in his novel *1948*:

We walked and sang about how we would die at Bab el-Wad.  
 We sang with yearning and with power. What idiots we were.  
 We thought that it would truly be wonderful to die at Bab el-  
 Wad, and we imagined how they would pour armor-piercing  
 bullets down on us.<sup>12</sup>

The second period began with the Six Day War and also lasted approximately two decades. All of a sudden, the struggle for survival ended and the sense of existential threat passed. Even the ideology of love of the homeland weakened. Nonetheless, motivation during this period remained extremely high, even though it was no longer existential or survival motivation. According to surveys conducted during this period,<sup>13</sup> some 80-90 percent of Israeli youth expressed the desire to enlist, even if they were given the (hypothetical) option of not doing so. In other words, the motivation of youth to enlist in the IDF during this period was not ideological, and was certainly not based on concerns about the survival of the country. It stemmed, rather, from the fact that army service was customary, normative, and prestigious. This normative motivation remained high throughout this period not only just with regard to enlistment in the IDF but also in terms of the more specific willingness among the young conscripts to volunteer for combat and elite units. This norm found expression in the negative connotation of the term “*jobnik*” (Israeli slang for a non-combatant soldier), while terms like “*kravi*” (combatant), “*sayeret*” (commando unit), and “*shayetet*” (Israeli navy seals) became buzzwords that warmed hearts, especially the hearts of young women. Prominent examples of this sentiment are found in songs of the period, such as “I have a Beloved in Sayeret (recon-unit) Haruv” and “My Sailor (*malakh*) is My Angel (*malach*),” and slogans such as “*hatovim latayis*” (the best – to aviation). The desirable norm was to enlist and be a combat soldier, preferably in an elite unit. Deviations from this norm were

not considered to be legitimate and were met with a critical and hostile attitude, almost like the attitude toward evaders during the period of survival or ideological motivation.<sup>14</sup>

The normative motivation to serve – especially in combat units – remained intact for approximately two decades after the Six Day War, despite immense changes in the Israeli political system. The political turnover of 1977, after 29 years of Labor-led governments, had no impact on this type of motivation, even among conscripts from the labor collective and cooperative settlements (i.e., kibbutzim and moshavim).<sup>15</sup> Even a controversial war like Operation Peace for the Galilee, which was conducted outside the Israeli consensus, failed to reduce the motivation to enlist,<sup>16</sup> providing additional evidence that the normative motivation was based on social norms that crossed political and social sectoral lines and were not in need of ideological reinforcement.

The third period began with the first intifada in the late 1980s and lasted until the Second Lebanon War in 2006. During this period Israeli society grew increasingly utilitarian and individualistic,<sup>17</sup> as did the primary motivation for youth to enlist in the military. For a large portion of post-Oslo adolescents,<sup>18</sup> the dominant motivation to enlist in the IDF has been of the individualistic type, satisfying the desire for self-actualization; they are still willing to enlist, but in a manner that serves their own interests, will benefit them in their future civilian lives, and will further their personal advancement.<sup>19</sup>

Some seek self-actualization in the most prestigious combat units that put them in harm's way and that demand physical effort and present them with physical challenges. Others, who are no less willing to serve in the IDF, seek their self-actualization in "intellectual" units in which the challenges are thought-based and tackled in an environment of computers or sophisticated electronic systems. Service in such units ensures integration into the rapidly developing hi-tech industry in Israel. Indeed, it is no coincidence that during this period, Unit 8200 of the Intelligence Corps came to occupy a very high position among the elite units of the IDF. The IDF understood this individualistic motivation and began marketing itself through advertisements for units and exhibits at its central Absorption and Selection Base. This period also witnessed the onset of an era of remuneration and differential salaries, the unionization of reserve soldiers, and an emphasis on processes of professionalization. At the same time, more and more positions were made available to women, not necessarily because of any existential need but rather due to struggles for equal rights, which, from a sociological

perspective, is a distinct expression of individualistic motivation. Thus, during this period, the IDF found itself adopting more and more features of an “occupational” army in comparison to the “institutional” feature that characterized it since its inception.<sup>20</sup> This period also witnessed the first expression of – and legitimatization for – voices calling for a reexamination of the “people’s army” model,<sup>21</sup> whose primary essence is the universal compulsory conscription, and consideration of the alternative model of a volunteer professional army, based primarily on individualistic motivation.

The fourth and final period (to date) covers, more or less, the last decade, from the Second Lebanon War up to the present, in the aftermath of Operation Protective Edge (July-August 2014). Today, the configuration of Israeli youth motivation for enlistment in the IDF is of a mixed nature: in addition to the individualistic motivation that still characterizes many groups in Israeli society, we are currently witnessing a return to ideological motivation, at times even accompanied by glimpses of survival motivation. This is the case primarily among youth from the Zionist national-religious sector, particularly adolescents from the Jewish settlements in Judea and Samaria, and “hesder” students (yeshiva programs that combine advanced religious studies with military service) and other yeshiva high schools. Today, an increasing number of soldiers from these sectors serve in the most active combat units in the IDF and hold command positions in field units. Their motivation is based not on an individualistic motivation or a universal age-based norm. Rather, it is clearly an ideological motivation, based on love of the Land of Israel and a sense of responsibility for its existence and its defense.<sup>22</sup>

At the same time, in some sectors within the Israeli left, the prevailing ideology nowadays is one of refraining from serving in the IDF, or refusing to serve in certain regions. This motivation is also ideological and enjoys partial legitimacy. In parallel, a strong normative motivation also continues to underlie the enlistment of many adolescents in Israel – those who enlist in the IDF simply “because that’s what all my buddies are doing.”

Finally, we turn to the ultra-Orthodox sector, which maintains an ideology of “*torato omanuto*” (Torah study as a man’s primary occupation). Based on this ideology, young ultra-Orthodox Israelis have enjoyed sweeping exemption from military service for many years. Only in the past decade have an initial few thousand ultra-Orthodox Israelis enlisted in the IDF – within the ultra-Orthodox Nahal framework or the Shahar track – in accordance with the Tal Law. Those examining the motivation of these pioneers will

discover a combination of individualistic motivations (the ability, following the completion of the military conscription, to enter the labor market and acquire a profession and a source of income), alongside the early beginning of a new social norm penetrating the ultra-Orthodox population. The annulment of the Tal Law by Israel's High Court of Justice (February 2012) – which in itself was the product of public ideological motivation under the slogan of “equality in sharing the burden” – raises serious questions regarding the motivation for enlistment among ultra-Orthodox Israelis in the near future.

A situation conceiving a number of different motivations for army service carries with it a potential risk. Today, in the same tent, under the same hangar, and on the same deck, groups of soldiers serving in the IDF are motivated by different drives (which at times can be contradictory or hostile to one another), draw legitimacy for their service from different ideologies (some of which are completely external to the IDF), and view the IDF as a means to achieve different goals. Not only does the melting pot model that once characterized the IDF no longer exist in practice, but Ben Gurion's declaration that “the IDF must serve as a state school” is also coming under a significant threat to the hegemonic statehood (from which the IDF is supposed to draw its legitimacy). The previous hegemony is now being replaced by diverse, at times even clashing attitudes toward the state: religious patriotism, ultra-Orthodox non-state faith, individualism alone, or simply a normative position devoid of any ideology or vision.

Yet the most prominent and surprising fact emerging from this multi-year survey is the enduring high level of motivation for enlistment in the IDF among Israeli Jewish youth, which has remained almost unchanged over the years.<sup>23</sup> More than six decades have passed since it was in need of an overall survival motivation to fill its ranks, yet the IDF still enjoys a surprisingly high level of motivation.<sup>24</sup> Reports to the effect that “for every open position in Golani Brigade there are four candidates,” and that “more than 70 percent of the candidates fit for military service have requested to serve as combat soldiers”<sup>25</sup> appear repeatedly in the media today, as they have in the past, and it sometimes even seems as if there is an upward surge in the motivation to serve. It therefore appears that quantitatively, the level of motivation for enlistment in the IDF has not changed over the years. What has changed, primarily, is its makeup and its profile. Perhaps in this sense, as in many others, the IDF constitutes, first and foremost, an accurate reflection of the Israeli society that feeds it.

## Notes

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# Different Reflections of the Motivation to Serve in the IDF

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Roni Tiargan

## Introduction

Compulsory service in the IDF is a topic that frequently finds its way into Israeli public discourse for cultural, social, and historical reasons, in part given the perception of the State of Israel as subject to an ongoing security threat.<sup>1</sup> Upon its establishment, the State of Israel decided on general compulsory conscription. This decision stemmed from two major factors: the need for a broadly structured force to face the armies of the neighboring hostile countries, and the desire for military service to serve as a unifying experience and a framework for shaping national identity in Israel as a Jewish and Zionist state.<sup>2</sup> The second reason was based on the fundamental analysis of Israel as a deeply divided society in the process of being established while absorbing waves of immigrants.<sup>3</sup> This model of conscription, referred to in the literature as a “people’s army,” imbued military service with normative social meaning and made it a prominent component of the national experience and the shaping of the character of the nation. Military service became an entry ticket into Israeli society and a route to social mobility.<sup>4</sup>

All these factors positioned the IDF as a meaningful force shaping the socialization of the citizens of Israel.<sup>5</sup> For this reason, military service, and the choice to refrain from serving, has a significant impact on Israelis and Israeliness, on the level of the individual and on the level of society as a whole, by virtue of its connection to the social, political, cultural, and economic attributes of Israeli society.

The academic discourse on the subject indicates that in the early 1990s, the high status enjoyed by the IDF and the concept of Israeli society as “a nation in uniform” or a “people’s army” began to weaken and change.<sup>6</sup> Social

and economic trends in Israel and around the world, and internal trends within the Israeli military, caused a change in the concept of the IDF and its work among part of the Jewish Israeli population. Whereas in the past the public and the media had refrained from criticizing the actions of the army, over the past few decades, such discussions have become routine. In this context, we have grown accustomed to criticism of different aspects of IDF activity, from its conduct as a public organization (including the demand that it operate with transparency and economic efficiency),<sup>7</sup> to its use of force, its training exercises and state of fitness, its budgetary management, and other realms.

Against this background, recent years have witnessed ongoing struggles over the identity and symbols of the state, as different groups in Israeli society view the essence of the army and the field of security in different ways.<sup>8</sup> There are also those who believe that economic processes have displaced collective stability in favor of the welfare of the individual and have led to a decline in the status of the army.<sup>9</sup> In addition, new geopolitical processes – such as changes in the features of warfare, peace treaties as an alternative to military activity, and changes in the operational strategy of the IDF – have reshaped the concept of the threat facing the Israeli population and have reinvigorated discussion of the concept of military expectations.<sup>10</sup> These and other matters are at the base of the ongoing public discussion and reassessment of different subjects related to the essence of the IDF as a people's army, including the meaning and relevance of this longstanding definition. Part of the discussion also contains criticism of the IDF and the manner in which it operates.

Within this context, the issue of conscription and/or evasion of conscription into the IDF is extremely important. The issue is raised periodically in different contexts, and the media serves as the major arena of public discussion. As we understand it, the media discourse occurs on a variety of levels. It is sometimes cursory and sometimes in-depth, and at times takes the form of accusations that serve as a basis for the reflection or intensification of conflicts between different groups in Israeli society. These conflicts are also sometimes manifested in the political realm.<sup>11</sup>

Tracing the media and academic discourse over the years suggests a lack of clarity regarding the issue of “the motivation to serve.” On the one hand, claims abound that “the motivation for military service is declining” or that “we are in the midst of a crisis in motivation.”<sup>12</sup> On the other hand,

academic scholars, IDF researchers, and various journalists argue persistently that this is not the case, and that the motivation to enlist and serve is stable, at the very least.

This article explores the disputes and its sources (at least from a research perspective) in an effort to illuminate the debate. It begins by presenting statements and findings from studies and publications that claim “a decline in motivation,” and then considers studies that argue that no such decline has taken place and studies advancing complex arguments on the subject. Focusing primarily on the methodology of measurement, it looks at explanations for the resulting lack of clarity.

### **Claims of a Decline in Motivation to Serve in the IDF**

As noted above, Israeli academics and the Israeli media have published studies, articles, reports, and analyses supporting claims that indicate an ongoing downward trend in the motivation of security service candidates to enlist in the IDF. Some of the information on which many of these studies and reports<sup>13</sup> are based was provided either directly or indirectly by the IDF, typically by its Manpower Directorate. Most analyses are based on actual enlistment data and demographic trends, which ostensibly reflect a decline in the number of conscripts, or the percentage of conscripts, out of all Israeli youth, and an increase in the percentage of those not enlisting in the IDF, including those sometimes referred to as “evaders” of military service. In this framework, the evasion of military service is attributed to a variety of factors, led by religious reasons, e.g., “*torato omanuto*” – Torah study as a man’s full-time occupation, which exempts military service); “low draft thresholds” (i.e., those candidates the IDF is not interested in enlisting due to low selection data or unsatisfactory medical data); a variety of personal problems; and those residing abroad for extended periods of time. Most of these articles point to an ongoing decline in the number of conscripts, which is sometimes reported as a decline in the motivation of security service candidates to enlist in the IDF.

At the same time, data and analyses have been published on the related issue of trends in the enlistment for combat units. Here too the articles in the media rely principally on data originating from the IDF (primarily the Induction Administration within the Manpower Directorate), which point to a decline in the willingness to actually enlist in combat units.<sup>14</sup> Data from surveys initiated and conducted by civilian researchers affiliated with

academic and research institutes have also identified a decline among Israeli teens in the motivation for military service in general and combat service in particular, primarily during the 1990s and the early 2000s.<sup>15</sup>

Other studies also consider surveys that provide data regarding the issues in question and examine general social trends within the broader Israeli population regarding military service – among youth in general and civilians who have served in the IDF. According to Yagil Levy,<sup>16</sup> in a long term process of assessing ties to the IDF, the attitudes toward military service among secular middle class army retirees have gradually deteriorated.

In our view, these studies and data have fueled the public discourse and academic analyses that have frequently arrived at the general conclusion that due to a variety of social, cultural, and other factors (discussed in greater detail below), the prestige of service in the IDF has declined over the years, and that during the same period negative changes have occurred in the different kinds of motivation for service.<sup>17</sup> It is also evident that concepts regarding the attributes of the decline in motivation are complex.

For example, some researchers argue that recent years have witnessed an intensification of the individualistic approach at the expense of the collectivist-state orientation, which revolves around the state and its institutions.<sup>18</sup> Values that lay at the heart of the liberal approach stress themes such as individualism, competition, ambitiousness, efficiency, and an emphasis on the rights of the individual. These values create tension between the concept that views service in the IDF as a condition for civil rights and the concept of individual entitlement to universal rights, regardless of whether or not the individual in question has fulfilled his obligations to the state. Levy maintains that these changes in approach have resulted in a crisis in motivation that has found expression in contractual discourse (i.e., a give-and-take relationship) between soldiers and their families on the one hand, and the IDF on the other, and not necessarily in a decline in the percentage of those enlisting.

According to Levy, this change has developed primarily among Ashkenazi Jews, secular Jews, and members of the middle class. It has been manifested in two primary realms of bargaining: collective protest and personal. Levy suggests that this extended process of decline in motivation, which is anchored in social and cultural processes, has the potential to bring about a change in the current conscription model of the IDF, which is based on universal

scription and compulsory service, to the model of a professional army, like that maintained by other Western countries.<sup>19</sup>

Reuven Gal examines the issue of motivation for military service from different angles,<sup>20</sup> and proposes a discussion of the issue of the motivation for military service based on a number of aspects: the motivation of survival; ideological motivation; normative motivation (that is, a sense of proper versus improper conduct); and individualistic motivation. After analyzing these different types of motivation, Gal concludes that there has in fact been a decline in young Israelis' motivation to serve in the IDF.

### **Claims of Stability or an Increased Motivation to Serve**

Claims contradicting the above conclusions are advanced consistently in the findings of official surveys conducted by the IDF among security service candidates. The surveys are carried out by the IDF's Center for Behavioral Sciences, which, for a number of decades, has engaged in measuring the willingness (motivation) of Israeli teens (male and female alike) for military service and for different service tracks in the IDF.<sup>21</sup>

The measurement conducted by the Center for Behavioral Sciences is based on surveys of large samples of Israeli teens (including many hundreds, and in some cases thousands, of interviewees each year). It considers rich and diverse subject matter and explores the willingness to serve in general, the willingness to serve on different tracks, factors that impact on the willingness to serve, and other such issues. On this basis, the surveys of the Center for Behavioral Sciences can be regarded as having provided, for many years, the most consistent gauge in Israel regarding the motivation to serve among security service candidates.

The Center for Behavioral Sciences conducts its surveys among security service candidates it defines as "teens who reported for their first [draft] notice." In other words, their assessment does not include teens who are known to the military system as being of conscription age but have been designated by the IDF as not viable candidates for service for a variety of reasons, such as teens with health problems that preclude service; teens who fail to meet the minimum conscription requirements according to the selection data ascertained by the IDF; teens who are not subject to conscription due to factors such as religious lifestyle, i.e., ultra-Orthodox; and non-Jewish teens who are not subject to conscription.

The IDF Center for Behavioral Sciences presents a consistent account whereby the “level of motivation for enlistment” among security service candidates has remained stable in recent decades, with the exception of minor fluctuations in the willingness to enlist resulting from specific, passing current events. Indeed, recent years have even witnessed an upward trend in the willingness to serve among the teens surveyed. In all the surveys conducted since the year 2000, the level of willingness to serve was extremely high (80-90 percent of men and 70-90 percent of women) and usually stable. The surveys also reflect differences in the assessment of the motivation for different tracks of service (willingness for combat service, officer positions, and specific service tracks) between different populations (based on gender, socio-demographic background data, etc.). Here, too, the data is typically stable, with changes that can be attributed to the impact of current events.

The Center for Behavioral Sciences specifies a wide variety of issues that influence motivation: the obligation to serve; the “desire to contribute to the country and to society” as an expression of membership in the collective; understanding of military service as a formative experience; and responses reflecting that combat positions and officer positions enjoy “high social prestige” in comparison to other positions.

Support for these findings, based directly or indirectly on the above-mentioned surveys of the Center for Behavioral Sciences, has been presented over the years by a number of academic researchers.<sup>22</sup> A few argue that “the decline in motivation” referred to in the media discourse is not “real,” and that such statements are biased and aimed at securing political gain. Other researchers<sup>23</sup> regard such statements as cyclical discourse and “rituals of those responsible for enlistment,” aimed ultimately at increasing the motivation of teens to enlist in the IDF (in other words, the creation of “moral panic”). Another interpretation,<sup>24</sup> containing reverberations of the arguments above regarding the impact of the interface between collectivism and individualism, maintains that the individualistic and collectivist discourses exist side by side and actually serve to increase the willingness to serve. In addition, two other studies present a complex analysis of the motivation to serve.

Blumenfeld’s study maintains that the period 2007-2010 witnessed an increase in the rate of Israeli teens not enlisting, and that “although there is an indisputable decline in the rates of service among the general population, it appears the motivation to join combat units for those who do serve in the military is rising steadily.”<sup>25</sup> According to a similar claim<sup>26</sup> based on

“official information” and a survey, although the rate of enlistment is sharply declining, the motivation to enlist has not undergone dramatic change among non-ultra-Orthodox teens.

### **Who is Right? Is “Motivation” Declining or Increasing?**

The question, then, is who is right, and what is the “real” state of affairs? Are we, or are we not, witnessing a decline in motivation, as argued by some researchers?

The following interpretation serves to clarify the picture. It can be argued that the lack of clarity in assessing the motivation for enlistment stems from three major factors. The first is a media discourse shaped by elements with an interest in the matter. The second is the non-systematic and imprecise measurement of the willingness to serve. And the third is the use of different tools of measurement and the differential definitions of motivation, willingness to serve, and other related terms – most prominently the evasion of military service or the evasion of meaningful military service, in the sense of the opposite of the motivation to serve.

In what follows I explore only the third reason for this lack of clarity and discuss the methodology of measuring Israeli teens’ motivation for military service in the IDF in an effort to illuminate better the foundation of the data.<sup>27</sup> I am aware that this is a “basic” discussion as far as the research thought process is concerned and that researchers will easily understand its significance. Still, as will be explained below, the context – that is, the population in question, the importance of the subject, and the disputes on the issue – makes its discussion meaningful.

To this end, this article will not consider important related topics such as the motivation of reserve soldiers and issues related to the conscription and service of standing army personnel, which also stem from a variety of factors (such as economic and professional factors, and factors related to the conscription and service model). Nor will it propose sociological or other kinds of explanations for the state of the motivation to serve. Instead, it will demonstrate how, quite frequently, it is our “view” – that is, the tools of measurement and the definitions employed by the researchers – that determines whether or not we observe a change in the motivation for military service among Israeli youth and the ostensible direction of this change, and that this element must therefore be considered as playing a major role in the existing lack of clarity.

Below, I will discuss examples of the issues that may impact on the definitions of motivation in the studies – that is, how differential definitions and differential measurement may change the manner in which motivation is reflected in the surveys. Although the issues presented below do not contradict each other and are not necessarily interconnected, I will argue that their separate observation may explain the complexity characterizing this subject.

### ***“Security Service Candidate” or Teenager?***

The central, fundamental issue that must be considered here is the basic definition of the term “security service candidate” (known in Hebrew by the acronym “*malshab*”) or, in other words, who is supposed to serve in the IDF and when?

First, we must consider the criteria defining security service candidates. One critical and fundamental claim is that whether or not an individual who belongs to a specific community is officially obligated to enlist in the IDF has a significant impact on his or her attitude toward service. On this basis, we can assume that a teenager who is obligated to serve in the IDF will have a more positive attitude toward enlistment than one who is not obligated to enlist at all. In other words, we assume that the decision whether or not to include a teenager who, according to the definition of the system, is not supposed to enlist for service will influence the overall understanding of the desire to serve.

A security service candidate should be understood as an individual who meets the legal and administrative criteria of the IDF. According to this concept, most non-Jewish Israeli citizens and all ultra-Orthodox Jews who are students of the independent educational institutions are not defined by the IDF as viable security service candidates from the outset. On this basis, we can conclude that such individuals will not be included in the security service candidate population surveyed.

An alternative approach could be to conduct position surveys regarding the motivation for military service among the overall teen population in Israel (or among the overall Jewish teen population in Israel). Such surveys would be based on a very different definition than that described above in that they may include ultra-Orthodox Jews or non-Jewish adolescents. Such a study would be extremely sensitive to demographic changes stemming

from population growth rates, which vary significantly among these groups in comparison to those characterizing the overall Israeli population.

For a variety of reasons, researchers choose to use other, partial population definitions (at times for reasons pertaining to the accessibility of the sample), such as adolescents from state schools, adolescents from schools in a specific region or city, etc.

In addition, knowledge pertaining to issues related to conscription (both on the individual level and the systemic level) develops over time and with increased encounters with the military system. Therefore, the age at which the security service candidate is defined as such by the military is a major factor in defining the candidate. When is it decided that an adolescent is a security service candidate? When is the definition relevant? Some maintain that Israeli youth are security service candidates beginning at childhood and for this reason the IDF maintains a presence in the Israeli education system beginning at a relatively young age. Another option is to define a security service candidate from a specific age; for example, one year prior to conscription, with the first encounter with the military system taking place when the adolescent is in eleventh grade (after the individual receives his or her first draft notice) and initial actions are taken for enlistment in the IDF, and so forth.<sup>28</sup>

It is also important to pay attention to gender. Does the study in question encompass security service candidates of both genders, or only males? Due to the major differences in the service tracks for men and women, the gender distinction is important.

### ***Who is an “Evader”?***

It is also interesting to consider the common definition in public discourse as to the evasion of service in the IDF. Or, in more colloquial terms, who exactly who is this “draft dodger”?

Discussion of this issue in the media attributes the phenomenon of evasion to a number of groups, including: “north Tel Avivians,”<sup>29</sup> yeshiva students, ultra-Orthodox, religious women (young women proclaiming their intention to live a religious lifestyle), the non-Jewish population, and, in some cases, even populations that enlist for desk jobs and who do not complete their military service. However, we know that for legal reasons from the outset some of these populations are not at all meant to be conscripted. Therefore, any definition that includes one or more of these groups, or, alternatively,

that excludes them from the discussion on the “motivation to serve” affects the manner in which this quantity is assessed by the surveys.

### ***Conscription Policy and Human Resource Management***

Over the years, the State of Israel and the IDF have periodically changed the policy regarding conscription and, in doing so, have changed the policy regarding who will and will not be included in the population of adolescent Israelis designated for military conscription. This is done through legislative changes on the political level or by internal IDF changes in policy stemming from various considerations.

Perhaps the most prominent example of legislative changes that stand to impact on conscription policy and the definition of “who is a security service candidate” relate to the issue of ultra-Orthodox conscription (the Tal Law<sup>30</sup> and subsequent related legislation). Additional examples may be found in differential changes in the duration of service or changes in the salary policy vis-à-vis soldiers, which also currently emerge in the public discourse. Such changes may impact on the manner in which the motivation to serve is reflected among different population groups. Moreover, they also have the potential to influence our overall understanding of the willingness to serve and must therefore be taken into consideration when examining future surveys.

Changes in internal IDF policy can be achieved by decisions regarding changes to the definition of the “conscription threshold” and IDF exemption policy.<sup>31</sup> One example is the policy of lowering the drop-out rate followed during the tenure of Chief of Staff Gabi Ashkenazi which, in practice, served to increase the number of conscripts and include weak (from a sociodemographic perspective) populations. A second example is the changes made to the policy of integrating women into the IDF in general, and into different service tracks in particular, that stand to impact on the willingness of women to enter different service tracks, with an emphasis on combat service.

A third example lies in the fact that based on operational, budgetary, and other considerations, the IDF can decide to reduce or expand conscription to specific units or service tracks and thereby affect the supply and demand for enlistment for these units or tracks. Such measures can result in the presentation of an excessive or deficient desire to enlist for one type of service or another.

### ***What is Being Measured?***

Terms such as “motivation” and “evasion” are sometimes all encompassing terms incorporating a wide variety of issues and questions, and it is therefore extremely important to define precisely the subject being studied and the tool of research. For example, the term “motivation to serve” can, in practice, be used to depict conscription or non-conscription. The measure, in this case, is numerical, as described in some of the sources above. How many people enlisted? What percentage of the overall population do they constitute? This measure is not comparable to reported motivation for military service measured by the questions in position surveys. In other words, a survey response indicating a desire to enlist is not the same as actual enlistment for service, which may be the product of a desire to serve, but also of the decisions of the military system and/or the policy of the authorities.

Another issue in this context is the type of service for which motivation exists, which has a significant impact on the responses of adolescents. Based on the surveys of the IDF Department of Behavioral Sciences and the implications of the studies of Reuven Gal,<sup>32</sup> we can conclude that there are different reasons for security service candidates to declare their motivation for military service in general, as well as their motivation for combat service. The former is based primarily on the legal obligation of every security service candidate as well as on its current conception as a “condition of good citizenship.” The latter requires volunteering and greater efforts from the perspective of the individual and his family. For this reason, the motivating factors for enlistment in the army and enlistment in different tracks of service may be distinct and influenced by different considerations.<sup>33</sup>

### ***The Date of Measurement***

In the attitude surveys, the date of each survey and the events occurring in close proximity have a significant effect on the attitudes they chart. This is even more accentuated when it comes to measuring the motivation to serve.

The status of male and female adolescents as security service candidates is not static, as the criteria for security service is frequently updated. During the 12-18 months preceding their conscription, security service candidates undergo a meaningful process of preparation for the IDF, during which they learn about military service, receive draft notices, report for service, participate in activities aimed at preparing them for the IDF, take tests, and are introduced to the different tracks of service open to them. Some are

also invited to take part in selection processes to assess their candidacy for specific service tracks.

Together, these elements draw security service candidates into a process through which they learn more and more about military service in general and their ability to be assigned one position or another. In other words, at any stage of the process, attitudes regarding the chosen service track can change to some extent as a result of the information acquired about the service and the personal abilities of the security service candidate. This being the case, the measurement of attitudes conducted among teens at different stages of the enlistment process results in different reflections of motivation, in accordance with and based on an understanding of these influences. The monitoring of the attitudes of security service candidates, therefore, involves a significant “seasonal” element that must be understood and taken into consideration when analyzing the findings of surveys assessing the “motivation” for military service.

## **Conclusion**

Due to the importance of compulsory conscription in the IDF to Israeli society in general and to the service track of young Israelis in particular, and in light of Israel’s unique security situation, public debate in Israel over the years has displayed extensive interest in teens’ “motivation to serve.” This interest has been characterized by divided opinion and a lack of clarity regarding the trends and changes in the motivation to serve over the years and in accordance with social changes. The major argument of this paper is that, despite its seemingly simple appearance, the motivation for military service is a complex, multifaceted issue that is extremely sensitive to measurement.

An analysis of the documents used to write this article indicates that on the one hand, and based on a crude observation that fails to take specific effects into consideration, the motivation for military service and significant service on the part of the young men and women whom the IDF regards as (at least) potential conscripts has not declined over the past two decades. At the same time, the number or percentage of Israeli teens who do not, from the perspective of the IDF, constitute a potential for military service may have increased, primarily due to demographic developments, the administrative decisions of the IDF, legislation, and other factors. We can also say that an examination of the attitudes among other population groups (such as Israeli teens under the age of 17 and teens from other sectors) is

likely to generate an understanding that is more complex in comparison to the two described above.

Therefore, when we discuss measurement of the “motivation to serve,” we must first consider the basis of the research, as it is impossible to discuss the motivation for military service without discussing the way in which it is measured, and thoroughly clarifying the definitions of the relevant terms. Those engaged with, or interested in this subject, are encouraged to consider a number of main issues when approaching the issue:

1. *Whose motivation?* When we refer to security service candidates, to whom exactly are we referring? Within this framework, we must take into account a range of variables, such as age, educational stream, official IDF definitions, and other factors. We must also take into consideration that these are fluid definitions that may change in accordance with legislative and policy changes.
2. *The question under examination.* When considering the issue, it is essential to define whether we are concerned with the individual’s attitude toward enlistment or with an analysis of all those enlisting for military service and their sociodemographic attributes.
3. *Reported motivation – yes, but why?* In the event that we are dealing with the motivation of the individual, it is worthwhile to clarify the exact issue under discussion: military service in general, combat service, or some other track of service.
4. *The motivation to serve – when?* The date of conscription has a major impact on the reflection of motivation in the attitude of those serving. When was the study data collected – before or after the candidates’ receipt of their first draft notice? To what extent were the respondents aware of their options for military service when they completed the questionnaire?
5. *Who is an evader?* It is important to keep in mind that this is a term with ethical aspects regarding which there is no social consensus.

## Notes

I would like to thank the editors of this volume, Meir Elran and Gabi Sheffer, for their ongoing advice, encouragement, and active participation in the writing of this article.

- 1 See, for example, Asher Arian, *Security in the Shadow of Threat: Israeli Public Opinion on Questions of Peace and War* (Tel Aviv: Papyrus, 1999); Ofra Meizels and Reuven Gal, *The Motivation of Boys to Serve in the IDF – Israeli Adolescents during the Intifada* (ZichronYaakov: Israeli Institute for Military Studies, 1990); Dan Horowitz and Moshe Lissak, *Trouble in Utopia: The Overburdened Policy*

- of Israel* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1989); Roni Tiargan, Meytal Eran-Yona, R. Moshe, "On the Conception of Morality of the IDF," in *Sociological and Psychological Aspects of Warfare in the Civilian Realm*, ed. Meytal Eran-Yona (IDF Department of Behavioral Sciences, 2012); Roni Tiargan-Orr and Meytal Eran-Yona, "The Israeli Public's Perception of the IDF: Stability and Change," *Armed Forces and Society* 42, no. 2 (2016): 324-43.
- 2 Stuart A. Cohen, "The Social Meaning of Military Service in Israel: A Reassessment," *Democratic Culture: Army and Society in Israel* 4-5 (2001): 131-50.
  - 3 Udi Shani and Yossi Kucik, *The Changes Underway in the State of Israel and their Implications for the Model of Military Service and the Social Role of the IDF* (Jerusalem: Israel Democracy Institute, 2007).
  - 4 Moshe Lissak, "The Security Ethos and the Myth of Israel as a Militaristic Society," *Culture and Democracy: Army and Society in Israel* 4-5 (2001): 187-211.
  - 5 *Social and Cultural Processes in Israeli Society*, Army and Society Project (IDF Department of Behavioral Sciences, 2002).
  - 6 Gad Barzilai, *Democracy in War* (Tel Aviv: Sifriat Hapoalim, 1992); Efraim Inbar, *War and Peace in Israeli Politics: Labor Party Positions on National Security* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1991).
  - 7 Shani and Kucik, *The Changes Underway in the State of Israel*.
  - 8 Baruch Kimmerling, *The End of Ashkenazi Hegemony* (Jerusalem: Keter, 2001).
  - 9 Orna Sasson-Levy, *Identities in Uniform* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2006); Yagil Levy, *From the People's Army to the Army of Peripheries* (Jerusalem: Carmel Publishing House, 2007).
  - 10 The occurrence of major security events and operational failures has resulted in the emergence of a discussion regarding the vitality and benefit of patterns of IDF activity in the war against terrorism. See, for example, Yael Hadar and Anna Knafelman, *Between Economics and Security: Public Opinion in Israel, 1969-2009* (Jerusalem: Israel Democracy Institute, 2009); Ofra Meizels, Reuven Gal, and Eli Fishoff, "Worldviews and Positions of Israeli High School Students regarding Issues of the Army and Security," research report for the Israeli Institute of Military Studies, 1989; Helena Syna-Desivilya and Reuven Gal, "Cumulative Impacts of the Experience of War," research report for the Israeli Institute for Military Studies, 1992.
  - 11 Udi Spiegel, "Youth Motivation to Serve in the IDF," submitted to the Knesset Education and Culture Committee, Research and Information Center, June 2001.
  - 12 L. Pomerantz and Y. Sher, "No One Wants to Serve Anymore," in *Sociology of the People's Army: A Look from Within* (Society for Military Sociology, 2009).
  - 13 Jaclyn Blumenfeld, "Conscription and the Marginalization of Military Values in Modern Israeli Society (1982-2010)," Master's Thesis, Department of Middle Eastern Studies, Emory University, 2010. For another example, see Yoav Zeitoun, "Embarrassment in the IDF: A Decline in the Motivation for Combat Service," *Ynet*, November 7, 2013.

- 14 This data is based on the number of actual requests to serve in combat units as received by the Enlistment Administration, and not on attitude surveys, for example, on the August 2007 Induction Cycle, Hanan Greenberg, "Less Combat Motivation," *Ynet*, July 16, 2007.
- 15 Avi Degani and Rina Degani, "Attitudes and Behaviors among Youth in Israel," Geocartography Institute, February 2000; Y. Katz, "Attitudes of Youth and their Parents regarding Service in the IDF," School of Education, Bar-Ilan University, 2000. In "*Post-Oslo*" *Youth: A Profile* (Zichron Yaakov: Carmel Institute, 1996), Reuven Gal points to a decline in the motivation of youth from state schools between 1988 and 1994.
- 16 Yagil Levy, "Is There a Motivation Crisis in Military Recruitment in Israel?" *Israel Affairs* 15, no. 2 (2009): 135.
- 17 Cohen, "The Social Meaning of Military Service in Israel"; Levy, "Is There a Motivation Crisis in Military Recruitment in Israel?"
- 18 Levy, "Is There a Motivation Crisis in Military Recruitment in Israel?"
- 19 Levy, "Is There a Motivation Crisis in Military Recruitment in Israel?"
- 20 Reuven Gal, "The Motivation for Serving in the IDF: In the Mirror of Time," *Strategic Assessment* 2, no. 3 (1999): 11-16.
- 21 Surveys of security service candidates conducted by the IDF Center for Behavioral Sciences from the 1970s to the present, as presented, for example, by Captain Medad Avidar in his lecture "The Motivation for Service over the Years" at the joint conference of the Association of Civil-Military Studies and the Institute for National Security Studies, 2013.
- 22 Stuart Cohen, "The False 'Crisis' in Military Recruitment: An IDF Red Herring," *Perspectives*, Paper No. 33, July 23, 2007, Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies; Baruch Nevo and Yael Shur, "The Contract between the IDF and Israeli Society: Focus on Compulsory Service," in *The Contract between the IDF and Israeli Society: Compulsory Service* (Jerusalem: Israel Democracy Institute, 2002), pp. 15-24.
- 23 Pomerantz and Sher, "No One Wants to Serve Anymore."
- 24 S. Bahir and M. Avidar, "Between the State and Me: The Complexity of the Discourse of Service among Youth in an Era of Ethical Changes," *Bein Hazirot* 12 (2014): 28-41.
- 25 Blumenfeld, *Conscription and the Marginalization of Military Values*, p. 54.
- 26 Dan Soen, "All Able-Bodies, to Arms! – Attitudes of Israeli High School Students," *American Journal of Social Issues & Humanities* 2, no. 3 (2012).
- 27 Cohen, "The False Crisis in Military Recruitment"; Pomerantz and Sher, "No One Wants to Serve Anymore."
- 28 In "When I Grow Up I Will be a Soldier," Z. Englander (2001) analyzes the difference between the trends of the findings of the Center for Behavioral Sciences' security service candidate surveys and the February 2000 Geocartography surveys of Avi

Degani and Rina Degani, and shows, inter alia, that the definition of the latter population encompasses adolescents age 15 and above, unlike in the IDF.

- 29 This refers to an Israeli stereotype of a north Tel Aviv, generally secular population, of high socioeconomic standing, who are more individualistically minded and thus removed from the collective sense of Israeli purpose.
- 30 A controversial law, subsequently repealed, regulating the conscription of ultra-Orthodox men.
- 31 Motti Spry, "Routes of Exemption," Department of Behavioral Sciences, IDF Manpower Directorate, 2002.
- 32 Gal, "The Motivation for Service in the IDF over the Years."
- 33 The picture is, of course, more complex, and some also regard the willingness for combat service as a "condition for good citizenship."

## What is the Appropriate Model for Female Service in the IDF?

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Pnina Sharvit Baruch

In Israel's 2013 election campaign a great deal of attention was paid to the subject of ultra-Orthodox conscription into the IDF. However, although this subject has direct implications for the service of women in the IDF, due to the demands for separation in the course of military service between ultra-Orthodox soldiers and women, the issue of service of women in the IDF was hardly the subject of public discussion. Moreover, when a ministerial committee headed by Minister Yaakov Peri<sup>1</sup> was established to examine the issue of ultra-Orthodox conscription, a female minister was appointed to the commission only in response to the protest of women's organizations.<sup>2</sup> As a result, Minister Limor Livnat was appointed as a member of the committee, and at her initiative and urging, the issue was discussed by the committee, with the participation of Brigadier General (res.) Gila Kalifi-Amir, former Women's Affairs Advisor to the Chief of the General Staff, and myself.<sup>3</sup> As a result of the discussion, the committee's conclusions included a clause stipulating that the conscription of ultra-Orthodox men be conducted in a manner that does not impact detrimentally on the status of women in the IDF, and a provision to this effect was introduced in the draft bill on the subject deliberated by the parliamentary committee chaired by then-MK Ayelet Shaked.<sup>4</sup> This clause was also included in the final wording of the Law in Section 26, which stipulates: "The status and integration of female military entrants in the security services will not be infringed upon due to the security service of yeshiva graduates and the graduates of ultra-Orthodox educational institutions under this Chapter."<sup>5</sup> Another directive pertaining to the service of women that was included in the bill is the proposal to extend the service of women by four months, to 28 months, in parallel to

the reduction of service for men from 36 to 32 months. This proposal also appears in the final version of the law itself but its implementation has been postponed to a later date, as will be discussed below.

This introduction illustrates a number of typical aspects of the issue of women's service in the IDF. The first is the fact that it is an issue that is regarded as marginal. There are always more pressing issues on the Israeli agenda in general and in the security realm in particular, as reflected in its discussion as a peripheral topic in the context of the "major" issue of ultra-Orthodox conscription. Second, the issue is always classified as a "sectoral" matter of interest primarily to women. Had it not been for the work of Limor Livnat it is doubtful that the issue would have been advanced in the government. Indeed, the issue was also raised in the Knesset primarily by women's organizations and female Knesset members. Men sometimes provide support and backing, but it is rare for them to take the initiative on such issues. A third aspect is the typical perspective underlying the discourse, whereby women need to be protected and their rights must be balanced against the security interests of the system. In other words, the presence of women in the military is to a certain extent perceived as a "burden" and obstacle to the fulfillment of national interests. While the enlistment of all ultra-Orthodox is defined as an essential interest, the need to protect the rights of women and find a solution for their needs is regarded as a burden with the potential to hinder the fulfillment of the primary interest.

These aspects have a direct impact on the motivation of women to serve in the IDF. Like all people, women are not interested in being where they feel less valued. Increasing the motivation of women to serve is therefore linked to the broader issue of the advancement of the status of women in the IDF. The question, then, is what should be done in order to reach this goal. One option is the use of a discourse of rights, meaning, an emphasis on the right of women to equality and equal opportunity. Realization of this right requires working via public channels, women's organizations, female politicians, and female media figures, and simultaneously through legal channels such as the High Court of Justice (HCJ). This is a legitimate and important course of action that has achieved most of the advancement on this issue thus far. Prominent in this regard is the HCJ judgement in the petition of Alice Miller, submitted by the women's lobby more than a decade ago, which resulted in the opening up of the Israeli Air Force's pilots training course to women.<sup>6</sup> An alternative approach is the discourse of interests, i.e., emphasis on the

fact that the service of women in the IDF is in the interests of the security system itself. In this way, the discussion is not framed as an effort to find a balance between national security and women's rights, but rather that the service of women in the IDF is understood, in and of itself, as advancing the basic interests of the IDF and the State of Israel. The advantage of the latter strategy lies in the fact that it is not based on viewing women as passive players who need to be protected but rather on the understanding that what benefits women benefits the system, and that there is a shared interest in promoting the issue. Of course, one approach does not preclude the other, and it is possible and preferable to employ both simultaneously.

### **The Enlistment of Women in the IDF since the Establishment of Israel**

Upon the establishment of the IDF it was decided to enlist women, and a women's corps was set up based on the concept of the IDF as "an army of men assisted by women." In accordance with this approach, 70 percent of the women conscripts served as clerks and in other traditional auxiliary positions. Until the mid-1970s, 44 percent of the service positions in the IDF were not open to women. Between the 1970s and the 1990s, there was a massive process of force re-organization whereby more men were directed toward combat positions, resulting in the coining of the phrase "women substitute for men," referring to the training of women for professional positions to solve the manpower shortage in positions that had been vacated by men (combat instructors, armorers, drivers, airplane mechanics, radio and signal operators, etc.). Beginning in the mid-1990s, and as a result of the 1995 H CJ ruling in the matter of Alice Miller, military service began to be perceived as an issue of rights, and the demand for official equal opportunity increased, alongside a rejection of the bureaucratic and economic excuses used to justify the failure to afford equality.<sup>7</sup>

In 2007, then-head of the IDF Manpower Directorate, Major General Elazar Stern, appointed a committee headed by former Manpower Directorate head General (res.) Yehuda Segev, comprising senior male and female officers and selected academics. The purpose of the committee was to engage in shaping the service of women in the IDF for the decade to come. The committee's conclusions, submitted in September 2007, included far-reaching recommendations aimed at achieving fundamental equality between men

and women in the IDF. However, many of these recommendations have yet to be implemented.

Today, women account for approximately 30 percent of all those serving in the IDF. More than 40 percent of the women in Israel do not enlist, including ultra-Orthodox women (with the exception of an extremely small number), most religious women, Arab women, Druze women, women falsely declaring themselves as religious, and women who are not conscripted due to a lack of suitability.<sup>8</sup> According to the IDF spokesperson, 92 percent of all positions in the IDF are currently open to women.<sup>9</sup> However, in practice, many of these positions are only theoretically accessible to women and are not actually filled by them. Positions that used to be considered male positions are staffed by women at a rate of 28 percent.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, there are still some positions in which no women, or very few, serve, and not only in distinctly combat units such as special units and infantry units, which are completely closed off to women. On the other hand, administrative positions that were once considered to be female positions are now assigned with equality, and many men today serve as clerks.<sup>11</sup> Despite this progress, and although women make up 50 percent of the officers in compulsory service, the percentage of women drops among the higher ranks, to approximately 25 percent of all captains and majors and 13 percent of all lieutenant colonels. Continuing up the ladder, we find only 24 female colonels, 13 female brigadier generals, and one female major general (out of hundreds of officers holding the rank of colonel and above). The figures are those of mid-2013.<sup>12</sup>

### **Utilizing Female Human Resources in the IDF and the Duration of Service**

The Segev Report offers proposals and solutions for changing the public discourse and thereby leading to a perception of women in the IDF as a resource that should be cultivated out of the interests of the security system itself. The report's recommendation for significantly advancing the integration of women in the IDF is based not on an effort to fulfill women's rights to equality, but rather on the rationale of a more effective use of resources that will benefit women and the military alike. According to the report, the realization of this vision must proceed by changing the principle of utilization of human resources to a principle of "the right person in the right place," whereby "men and women are utilized in their service in an identical manner, according to relevant criteria reflecting the needs of the

IDF and the motivation, abilities, and individual qualities of the enlistees, and not according to their gender.” To this end, the Segev Report recommends merging the human resources systems and equalizing the duration of service of women and men in the IDF.<sup>13</sup>

Actualization of the vision articulated by the Segev Report, therefore, requires the merger of the IDF’s HR systems, which are currently separate for men and women, into one unified system, beginning with the selection and placement systems. Today, when men and women undergo separate and different selection processes, gaps exist. Still, the merger of systems is not enough. Concrete change also requires equalization of the duration of the service of men and women holding the same positions. As long as significant differences remain in the duration of service, women will not be assigned the vast majority of significant positions that require extensive training. Although in some cases women have the option to volunteer to extend their service so that it is equal in length to the service of men – and thereby attain such positions – this is not a systemic solution, as it saddles the young women in question with the burden of making the difficult decision to volunteer for considerable extended service. Moreover, from the systemic perspective, the IDF has no way of anticipating the number of women that will agree to volunteer. It is therefore unable to rely on female resources and has no reason to invest in making the necessary modifications for absorbing them into a unit (such as suitable living quarters, adjustments in the weight of equipment, etc.). For this reason, some positions remain inaccessible even to female volunteers.

As already noted, the possibility of extending the duration of service for women was discussed by the Shaked Committee appointed to deal with the legislation relating to ultra-Orthodox conscription. The draft bill contained a proposal to shorten the service of men to 32 months and lengthen that of women to 28 months, leaving only a four-month gap between the compulsory service of men and women. In a discussion in the Knesset, Major General Orna Barbivai, who was then heading the Manpower Directorate, explained that the reduction in the duration of male service required extension of the duration of female service in order to prevent insurmountable gaps in human resources. That is to say, the extension of female service came at the initiative of the IDF in pursuit of the interests of the system. In the course of the committee discussions, IDF representatives guaranteed that if the duration of service were extended, the selection and placement processes for

men and women would be almost completely equalized for most positions. In addition, it would be possible to standardize the service of women in different positions that today, due to the long period of training, require them to volunteer, so that in practice, women would be assigned additional meaningful positions (without requiring them to volunteer). Still, the IDF representatives did not agree to commit to immediate equalization of the selection, standardization, and placement processes prior to the passage of the legislation.

In the Shaked Committee discussions, the proposal to extend the service of women was opposed by a number of voices that addressed the issue from various perspectives.<sup>14</sup> The motivation of some opponents was ideological, as in the case of some of the religious Zionist representatives who took part in the discussions, whose position was that the presence of women in the IDF only weakens the military and prevents fulfillment of the concept of “our camp will be pure.” Others based their opposition on the desire to protect the women themselves, as with MK Merav Michaeli, who maintained that the service of women should not be extended until the military guaranteed them full equality. This, she stipulated, would involve opening up all positions (including combat positions) to women and fundamentally changing the perception of women in the IDF. Another position articulated in opposition to the proposal, for example by MK Elazar Stern, held that the extension of women’s service would mean placing a greater burden on those already serving, who account for only approximately half of the women in Israel, instead of focusing on expanding conscription and drawing in elements who are not already serving.<sup>15</sup> Instead, it was argued, the best route to facilitate the integration of women into additional jobs is not in the extension of regular service but rather in the allocation of standard standing army positions for jobs requiring a longer duration of service.

Proponents of the proposal to extend the service of women in the current legislation maintained that it already made sense to implement the extension of four months as a first step to full equalization of the durations of service of men and women. The main reason cited by the supporters of this approach was the fact that such immediate implementation through legislation, while making sure that the military made good on its commitment to equalize the tracks of placement and standardize new positions, would propel the system toward greater equality of opportunity for women now, instead of waiting for the system to change and only then equalizing the duration of service.

According to this approach although the IDF might ultimately extend the service of women without guaranteeing them equal opportunity, this is a calculated risk that needs to be taken. Because the army has explicitly committed itself to equalize its selection and placement tracks, it would subsequently be possible to criticize, and even challenge in court, failure to fulfill this undertaking. The underlying premise of this position is that as long as a significant gap exists in the duration of service between women and men there will be no gender equality in the IDF. Women will not be assigned meaningful positions and will continue to be considered “second class” soldiers, to use the words of the former female head of the Manpower Directorate. The idea of standard standing army positions sounds promising; however, the chances of funds being allocated for this purpose, particularly in the present era of cuts to the security budget, are slim. This approach is consistent with my position on the matter as I presented it during the committee discussions.

The debate on the duration of service of women is related to the question whether the IDF should transition into a system of differential service, that is, one that sets a different duration of service for different positions, as recommended by the Segev Report. One argument offered by opponents of extending the duration of women’s service is that military service is, in any event, a waste of time for many of the women (and men) serving in the IDF, and that there is therefore no justification for extending service instead of discharging this personnel to enter the labor force and the realm of academic study, where they can make more substantial contributions. Differential service based on the position and nature of service, as opposed to gender, will solve this problem. The weighty questions raised with regard to differential service require separate analysis, and for the sake of the present discussion, whether the duration of service remains uniform for all or whether differential service is set according to the position in question is of no consequence; what matters is to put an end to the distinction based on gender so that instead of the existing separate provisions in the law for the conscription of men and women, there will be one provision dealing with all conscripts, regardless of gender.

To date, the duration of service for women has not been extended. Although a clause was introduced into the law stipulating a four-month extension of service for women and empowering the defense minister to decide on equalization of the assessment, selection, and placement processes for

men and women, this clause's implementation was made conditional upon the enactment of regulations on the subject that can only be presented to the Foreign Affairs and Security Committee between July 2016 and July 2019.<sup>16</sup> This strange arrangement means the rejection of the idea, at least at present. One hopes that it is only a delay, and that the required regulations will ultimately be enacted, the necessary changes made, and the duration of service extended.

### **The Nature of the Positions that are Open to Women**

Discussions on the service of women in the IDF tend to focus on the suitability of women for combat positions. This was also true in the Shaked Committee, where some participants limited their focus to the question of whether women could serve as fighters in the General Staff Reconnaissance Unit or Golani – and answered negatively. This aspect of the discussion is typically heated and emotionally charged and includes points that are pertinent, such as the fear of women being taken prisoner, as well as others that reveal the prejudices of those making them, such as the assertion that women would endanger the forces due to their “hysterical” and “cowardly” nature, or the charge that the presence of women would weaken the men and harm the cohesion and the sense of brotherhood that exists in such units.

Without going into depth, or, to be more precise, into the shallow nature of such arguments, it is important to point out that the question of the integration of women into infantry units is not the essence of the discussion, and the tendency to divert it in this direction in order to decide it on this basis reflects an element of demagoguery. It is clear that this is not truly the crux of the issue, as most positions in the IDF are not actually field combat positions in infantry units. There is a wide variety of extremely meaningful positions – including combat positions – that do not require the soldier to carry 70 kilograms on his or her back for 50 kilometers. The rule should be that women can hold any position unless there are objective prerequisites that women cannot fulfill, and that only then is it justified to refrain from integrating them into such positions. This issue does not need to be resolved by legislation, but rather within the framework of the professional criteria of the military itself.

According to the remarks made by Women's Affairs Advisor to the Chief of the General Staff Brigadier-General Rachel Tevet-Weisel in the course of the Shaked Committee discussions, positions are closed off to women based

on three parameters taken together: inability to carry out the operational mission; inability to endure the operational environment, meaning the field conditions in which the mission is supposed to be carried out; and limited scope, meaning that in the event of an insufficient potential pool of suitable female candidates, there is no reason to invest resources in making the required adaptations to enable women to serve in the position in question. On the surface, these parameters appear to be reasonable. However, when we decide what constitutes an obstacle to a woman by virtue of her being a woman, it is important not to introduce prejudices into the discussion, including claims regarding “hysteria” and lack of toughness. Women should not be kept away from the front lines in general, nor do I find the concern of a woman soldier being taken prisoner convincing. Although concerns regarding sexual abuse are serious, male prisoners may also be subjected to abuse and torture, including sexual assault, and the injury they sustain as a result is not necessarily any less serious.

Another argument against the integration of women into combat positions is the lack of worth in investing in the effort due to the small number of women who are actually interested in service of this kind. Indeed, men and women are characterized by physical differences. Moreover, boys and girls are treated differently from birth, and face different social conceptions regarding what is expected of them. This reality undoubtedly has an impact on the motivation of women to hold combat positions. Nonetheless, the path to such positions for suitable female candidates who, despite everything, are interested and may succeed in them, should not be blocked as a matter of course. Furthermore, women who do manage to attain such positions must endure an extremely difficult process of contending with a male environment that is not always friendly, to say the least. This requires mental fortitude that not all men (or women) possess, and in part explains the reluctance of many women to undergo this experience. Still, this was true of every new area that women have joined. In this context, we need only recall how difficult it was initially for women to go from being secretaries to being managers, from being nurses to being doctors, from being actresses to being directors, and so forth. The presence of women in these professions is now taken for granted, and their contributions in these fields undeniable. In light of the above, the small number of potential candidates for various positions may initially justify a technical solution, such as their concentration in a specific conscription cycle. However, the placement of women in such positions must

not be completely prevented and the necessary adaptations must be made to facilitate their placement and service. Otherwise, the result will be a vicious cycle that ensures the continued exclusion of women from these positions.

The process of making the changes necessary to accommodate women in different positions is known as “gender mainstreaming” and involves adapting the system and the working environment for the integration of women. An example of such an adaptation might be the installation of a switch or a handle that is appropriate for the proportions and the strength of the arm of an average woman. Awareness of such elements are necessary from the planning stage in order to prevent a small switch from becoming a physical obstacle to the possibility of integrating women, which is a missed opportunity not only for women but also, and more significantly, for the military organization as a whole, which is thereby rendered unable to effectively utilize its manpower. This recommendation also appears in the Segev Report and, to a certain extent, is already implemented by the IDF.<sup>17</sup>

### **The Treatment and Advancement of Women in the IDF**

Another recommendation of the Segev Report has to do with the institution of a “gender code” to define behavioral norms to ensure the equal and respectful treatment of women. According to IDF representatives, there has been improvement in the IDF with regard to the awareness and treatment of cases of sexual harassment.<sup>18</sup> Without detracting from the importance of this issue, however, it is also necessary to undermine chauvinist and sexist conceptions and attitudes that do not reach the level of harassment. Moreover, although it is important to increase awareness of the issue among men, it is no less important to reinforce women’s awareness of their right (and obligation) to insist on receiving equal and respectful treatment. This requires an educational process beginning in school and even in preschool. Women need to be able to demand appropriate treatment, and there must be internal legitimacy within the IDF to raise complaints regarding such issues.

This aspect is also related to another subject mentioned above – the “appropriate integration” between women and religious soldiers in the IDF. With regard to ultra-Orthodox soldiers, as mentioned above, the new law explicitly stipulates that their conscription should be undertaken in a manner that has no detrimental impact on the status of women. At the same time, claims of the exclusion of women and their diversion from various positions and locations have also been made in the context of their encounter with

religious soldiers who are not classified as ultra-Orthodox. This dynamic is the product of the larger number of religious soldiers in the IDF and the intensification of religious extremism among some of them, and, in relation to the present discussion, has been visible particularly in the context of various demands for modesty and separation.<sup>19</sup> This is not an abstract concern and it is essential to remain on guard: all acts of removal, exclusion, or excessive downplaying or concealing of women must be halted, and religious considerations should not be permitted to influence assignments and promotions. This matter is addressed by an updated order regarding “appropriate integration,” known as the “joint service” order, which is meant to resolve such issues with greater resolve. This order should be approved as soon as possible. The violation of the basic rights of those serving in the army cannot be justified without appropriate justification simply in order to protect the “feelings” of a different population.

Another important aspect has to do with the advancement of women within the military system. The state of affairs today is unsatisfactory, to say the least. The number of women holding ranks of colonel and above is extremely low. This situation exists not only in combat units but also in distinctly rear formations, such as the Home Front Command and other such bodies. Opening up a larger number of meaningful positions to women is likely to improve the situation in the long run but is not, in itself, a sufficient solution. It therefore also makes sense to consider instituting quotas, or at least affirmative action, so that in cases in which two candidates meet the criteria to an equal extent, preference will be given to the appointment of women. The Segev Report likewise recommends setting quantitative targets for the advancement of women to senior ranks, based on the premise that there is sometimes no choice but to start changes from the top, instead of waiting for them to emerge gradually, from the bottom. Breaking through glass ceilings without external assistance is extremely difficult and sometimes impossible.

Beyond its significance for actualizing the right to equality and increasing the motivation of women to serve in the IDF, the integration of women into senior positions can serve to directly advance the interests of the IDF. Women and men do not necessarily always think differently about everything, but they do sometimes have divergent perspectives, and the more points of view represented in a decision making forum, the better the resulting process.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, the mere inclusion of a larger portion of the population within

the pool of people competing for senior positions increases the possibility of finding and appointing high quality individuals, and, in this case, high quality women.

It is important to emphasize that the ball is not only in the men's court; women must also make demands of themselves – to reach the most demanding jobs and compete for command positions. Although it is no easy task to hold a senior position in the IDF while at the same time bearing most of the responsibility for the family (and today most women bear the majority of the burden in this context), there is also a significant trend in which husbands are willing and interested in playing a more significant role at home, which may serve to ease the burden on women.<sup>21</sup> In addition, in order to encourage women to compete for senior positions, and based on recognition of the contribution made by women holding these positions, the military system would do well to take family considerations into account and to ease, to the greatest extent possible, the combination between family life and service in the IDF (this would also be beneficial for men serving in the IDF, who frequently miss out on spending time with their children at critical stages of their lives). For example, greater efforts to adhere to the timetables for meetings – both in terms of refraining from unnecessary rescheduling and starting and ending meetings on time – would save the army many wasted man (and woman) hours<sup>22</sup> and would also allow for the better combination of professional and family obligations on the part of IDF personnel. Moreover, my own experience has taught me that, at least for those serving in headquarters positions, a more efficient working framework during the day can enable getting home at a reasonable hour most days, without necessarily detracting from the quality or quantity of the work being done.

## **Conclusion**

The motivation of women to serve in the IDF is directly related to their status in the IDF: the way in which they are treated, their ability to hold meaningful positions, and their horizon of advancement. All these are in need of improvement.

In every discussion on this issue, it is important to understand that the service of women in the IDF is important for advancing the interests of the IDF as a whole, beyond its significance for the women themselves. From the perspective of the IDF, it is first and foremost a question of the values of the IDF and its classification as a liberal and egalitarian military. In

addition, the failure to completely integrate women into the IDF reflects a missed opportunity to effectively utilize significant potential for high quality personnel that can contribute to the efforts of the IDF to achieve its goals. From the perspective of women themselves, what happens in the IDF has an impact on them not only during their service, but also in terms of their opportunities after their service, in light of the great impact that military service has on professional opportunities in civilian life, and in light of the access enjoyed by senior officers after their discharge to power centers in the realms of business, politics, and society in Israel. This issue may also have implications for the personal development of women and their self-esteem and self-identity during a decisive period in their life. When a woman is given the message that from a professional perspective she is unimportant and insignificant during her military service, this conception is likely to have an impact on other areas of her life.

In addition to the benefits that the IDF can derive from actualizing meaningful service for women, such a process would also undoubtedly benefit the public service sector and the labor market in Israel. The state benefits significantly from the high quality human resources discharged from the IDF, which receives training through a wide variety of channels, contends with complex challenges in the course of military service, and subsequently puts skills to use in civilian life. It would be a shame if high quality women were not also able to undergo these processes, as this would mean a failure to make effective use of their full potential, not only during military service but afterward as well.

The State of Israel is currently facing many challenges on both the domestic and the international level, some of which have proven difficult to solve in a satisfactory manner. The advancement of women in the IDF is a challenge with solutions that are known, clear, and implementable. All that is required is the decision to implement them. Hopefully, the security and government establishment will succeed in making the right decisions.

## Notes

- 1 The Ministerial Committee “To Promote Sharing the Burden in Military Service, Civilian Service, and the Labor Force,” led by Minister Yaakov Peri, was appointed by the Israeli Government in April 2013.

- 2 Gili Cohen, "Female Reserve Officers to the Prime Minister: A Woman is Needed on the Committee to Determine Equality in Sharing the Burden," *Haaretz*, April 8, 2013, <http://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politi/1.1988162>.
- 3 We were invited to the discussion as representatives of Forum Dvora – Women in Foreign Policy and National Security, a voluntary forum of women engaged with these areas.
- 4 The Special Committee to Discuss the Bill Regarding Equal Sharing of the Burden in Military Service, Civilian Service, and the Labor Market, and to Resolve the Status of Yeshiva Students, hereinafter the "Shaked Committee."
- 5 In addition, as part of the amendment in question, Section 26.28(4) of the Security Service Law obligates the Defense Minister to update annually the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee regarding the impact of the law's implementation on military service in the past year, including issues pertaining to the status and integration of women in military service. It was also determined that a report in accordance with this section would be delivered to the Knesset Committee for the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality.
- 6 H.C.J. 4541/94, *Alice Miller v. Minister of Defense*, PD 49(4), p. 94 (in Hebrew); for an English translation of the ruling, see <http://www.dindayan.com/rulings/94045410.z01.pdf>. In the spirit of this ruling, an amendment was introduced to the Security Service Law in 2000 (Section 16a) that stipulated that every woman possesses an equal right to that of a man to fill any position in military service, unless such differentiation is required by the essence and the nature of the position.
- 7 This description is drawn from the September 2007 report of the Committee for the Design of Women's Service in the IDF in the Coming Decade, chaired by Major General (res.) Yehuda Segev (hereafter, the Segev Report). The report was never officially released but was leaked to the media and has been quoted in other public reports and publications.
- 8 The provision of an automatic exemption to any woman who declares herself to be religious is a problematic issue that also has impact on women's motivation to enlist and serve. It is also an issue clearly in need of legislative correction, but this is beyond the the scope of this article. With regard to the conscription of religious women, the IDF is working toward encouraging expanded enlistment within these groups through the provision of suitable conditions. Michal Gelberd, "'Serving in Skirts: In the IDF, the Effort Continues to Enlist Religious Girls,'" IDF website, November 8, 2013, <http://www.idf.il/1133-19844-HE/IDFGDover.aspx>.
- 9 Rotem Pessó, "Indications in the IDF of Progress in Improved Integration of Women in All Realms, with an Emphasis on the Technological Realm: Sources in the Manpower Directorate Stress that the Trend Will Continue," IDF website, March 8, 2013, <http://www.idf.il/1133-18483-he/Dover.aspx>.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Ibid.

- 12 The above data is based on the remarks of Brigadier General Rachel Tevet-Weisel, Women's Affairs Advisor to the Chief of the General Staff, at a conference held in June 2013. Rotem Pessó, "Women's Affairs Advisor to the Chief of the General Staff: Supports the Extension of Women's Service in the Name of the Principle of Equality," IDF website, June 8, 2013, <http://www.idf.il/1133-19406-he/Dover.aspx>.
- 13 For details regarding the conclusions and recommendations of the Segev Report, see the document "The Service of Women in the IDF," published by the Knesset Research and Information Center on May 16, 2013, <http://www.knesset.gov.il/mmm/data/pdf/m03209.pdf>.
- 14 The committee's main discussion on this subject took place on August 28, 2013, although the minutes of this session have not been posted on the Knesset website. See: [http://www.knesset.gov.il/protocols/heb/protocol\\_search.aspx](http://www.knesset.gov.il/protocols/heb/protocol_search.aspx). The above information is therefore based on my own personal notes from the discussion. A brief report of some of the proceedings appears on the Knesset website in the committee announcements of August 28, 2013, [http://main.knesset.gov.il/Activity/Committees/ArmyService/News/Pages/pr\\_280813.aspx](http://main.knesset.gov.il/Activity/Committees/ArmyService/News/Pages/pr_280813.aspx).
- 15 A similar argument was made by attorney Mike Blass, who appeared before the committee during its meeting of October 29, 2013, the minutes of which appear on the Knesset website. See *Ibid*.
- 16 Sections 2 and 15 of the Security Service Law (Amendment No. 19), 2014.
- 17 On this subject, see, among other sources, Brigadier General (res.) Gila Kalifi-Amir's article "Assimilating a Gendered View – A New Strategy in the IDF for Promoting Equality of Opportunity," *Maarachot* 436 (2011): 28-35, <http://maarachot.idf.il/PDF/FILES/1/112901.pdf>.
- 18 Rotem Pessó, "A Troubling Matter: An All-IDF Campaign to Address Awareness of Sexual Harassment," IDF Spokesperson Website, February 10, 2013, <http://www.idf.il/1133-18265-he/Dover.aspx>. See also Michal Gelberd, "The IDF Marks the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women," IDF Spokesperson Website, November 26, 2013, <http://www.idf.il/1133-20027-HE/IDFGDover.aspx>.
- 19 See the analysis offered in Karmit Haber and Pnina Sharvit Baruch, "The Service of Women in the IDF – A Continued Focused Effort or Regression?" a position paper of the Institute for National Security Studies and the Israel Democracy Institute, 2013, <http://heb.inss.org.il/index.aspx?id=4354&articleid=96>.
- 20 For the sake of comparison, in July 2011, the financial newspaper *Globes* reported that in the three largest sectors of the economy, the companies that stood out in terms of their rate of return for 2011 had relatively more women on their boards of directors. Yael Gruntman, "A Study Indicates that Boards with More Women Have Higher Returns," *Globes*, July 17, 2011, <http://www.globes.co.il/news/article.aspx?did=1000663862>.

- 21 Hila Weisberg, "Changing Directions: More and More Men are Willing to Forego Advancement at Work for the Sake of the Family," *The Marker*, March 5, 2014, <http://www.themarker.com/career/1.2261737>.
- 22 See, for example, the opinion piece by Major Ariel Amichai, "It's A Waste of Time," *Maarachot* 437 (2011): 83-85, <http://maarachot.idf.il/PDF/FILES/0/112980.pdf>.

# The IDF and the Ultra-Orthodox: Economic Aspects of Conscription

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Olena Bagno-Moldavsky

## **The IDF and Religious Conscripts**

While the religious sector in Israel is highly heterogeneous, the overwhelming majority of its members practice Orthodox Judaism. Within this diversity, there is a rough distinction between two Orthodox publics – the ultra-Orthodox and the modern Orthodox or national-religious. The two groups differ in their relation to the state and their approaches to participation in the labor market and in the IDF.

The national-religious sector consolidated relations with the IDF in the late 1960s, and since then, the influence of religious functionaries within the IDF has grown, along with the scope of religious conscripts' involvement in all army units and ranks. Since the late 1990s, the IDF has been tasked by the government to design programs of integration for ultra-Orthodox men that replicate or adapt practices employed to accommodate national-religious soldiers.<sup>1</sup>

Military service, rather than an end unto itself, is perceived as a means that may help the ultra-Orthodox public to acquire skills and knowledge that can later on translate into economic gains. This paper addresses two opposite views on the economic achievement of veterans: one holds that the IDF only reinforces existent inequalities and does not push economic growth among veterans. The opposite belief is that the IDF increases upward economic mobility. This study analyses the impact of military service on the economic status of the ultra-Orthodox veterans. Specifically, it gauges the ability of the IDF to narrow the economic gaps between ultra-Orthodox, religious, traditional religious, traditional non-religious, and non-observant Jews. Based on data from representative surveys conducted in 2006-2012 within

the framework of the INSS National Security and Public Opinion Project (NSPOP), this paper examines the influence of IDF service on the economic position of the groups that constitute the Israeli Jewish sector. Empirical evidence is taken from a unique dataset that includes ultra-Orthodox army veterans – a group that is very small and difficult to survey quantitatively.

### **Economic Distance, the Ultra-Orthodox, and the IDF**

An old maxim holds that in the short run, actors create policies, while in the long run, policies create actors.<sup>2</sup> The state support for the religious sector started as a low cost, mostly symbolic compromise between the secular leadership and the religious establishment. In 1948 Rabbi Yitzhak Meir Levin petitioned Prime Minister Ben Gurion, responsible for the defense portfolio, to exempt a total of 400 full time yeshiva students from military service. Ben Gurion agreed, although certainly the country's Jewish population could not possibly envision the economic implications of that decision. Four hundred ultra-Orthodox yeshiva students in 1948 constituted less than .07 percent of Jewish residents of Israel, or .36 percent of the IDF force. However, six decades later, this religious sector is burgeoning and politically strong. Today, the number of ultra-Orthodox who were not drafted has grown from 400 to about 65,000 men. Based on data from 2012, approximately 55,000 of Israeli Jewish men reach the military age of 18 every year; 15 to 20 percent of them are excluded under the *torato omanuto* arrangement – Torah study as a man's primary occupation.

In 2013, ultra-Orthodox Jews made up almost half of the Orthodox public. The ultra-Orthodox community is very poor (60 percent poverty rate), very young (on average, 34 years old), and remains the fastest growing group in Israel (on average, seven children per woman). In the early 1980s, non-Orthodox Jews constituted 80 percent of the population. Since then, that percentage has dropped by some 12 points, despite the arrival of almost a million of primarily non-Orthodox immigrants from the former Soviet Union in the 1990s (some 16 percent of the population). The aggregate growth rate of the ultra-Orthodox sector in 2012 was between 225 and 250 percent over the three decades. A moderate forecast by the CBS suggests that in 2059 the ultra-Orthodox public will have grown by 453 percent (from 2009), while the rest of the Jewish population (modern Orthodox, traditional, and secular together will have grown by 49 percent), and the proportion of non-religious Israelis will have actually declined. The high growth rate forecast

suggests that ultra-Orthodox will increase by 689 percent (vs. 89 percent among other Jewish publics).

In 2012, 30 percent of children in primary schools were ultra-Orthodox. In their state-supported schools, there is a minimal curriculum of non-religious subjects that ceases to be mandatory in lower grades, which means that the skills learned in such educational institutions cannot be easily adapted to the modern labor market. In all, the separate school system, the exemption from civic obligations other than the draft, and entitlement to a range of direct and indirect social benefits has developed reliance on the welfare state<sup>3</sup> and strengthened the community's symbolic<sup>4</sup> and actual<sup>5</sup> alienation from the mainstream society. At the same time, rapid growth rates accompanied by poverty make the economic circumstances of the ultra-Orthodox a major concern.<sup>6</sup>

Non-ultra-Orthodox policymakers<sup>7</sup> and academics<sup>8</sup> assert that the practical skills acquired during the military service are instrumental for ultra-Orthodox men to help them break the circle of poverty. Their position is informed by the past, as the army has proven effective in preparing recruits from various undereducated populations for professional lives. Moreover, evidence from abroad suggests that ultra-Orthodoxy is not structurally alien to productive economic participation: ultra-Orthodox men outside Israel enter the labor force after spending 3-5 years in yeshivas; in Canada, 80 percent of working age ultra-Orthodox men are employed, and the figures are similar for the US and the UK.<sup>9</sup>

Ultra-Orthodox leaders oppose the idea of conscription on the same grounds that underlie the optimism of the non-ultra-Orthodox policymakers. They fear that conscription might potentially promote entrance to the labor market and the world outside of the sector, which “is liable to damage the unique identity of the next Haredi generation.”<sup>10</sup> Critics<sup>11</sup> who do not belong to ultra-Orthodox circles cite qualitative evidence that IDF practices designed to accommodate religious needs by crafting special arrangements for religious soldiers change the impact of army service on these conscripts.

Against this background, I examine the ability of the IDF to influence the economic position of ultra-Orthodox conscripts.

## **Data, Models, and Measures**

The analysis draws from data pooled from four representative surveys (N=2681) conducted in 2006-2012 for the National Security and Public

Opinion Project.<sup>12</sup> The results are presented first for all Jewish Israelis and then separately for men. The focus is on male respondents because the legislature plans to recruit only men from the ultra-Orthodox sector. In the NSPOP sample, 40 percent of ultra-Orthodox men reported serving in the military. Men aged 40 or younger and those born in Israel (as opposed to immigrants) reported serving at a lower rate (34 percent). Among the non-ultra-Orthodox, 84 to 89 percent of all men stated they had served in the military; among the Israeli-born public, the rate is higher than that of immigrants.

The hypothesis about the impact of IDF service on household expenses is tested in Models I-V. Models I-II are estimated for a joint sample of all non-Arab Israelis, to measure the economic standing of the religious sector compared to the remaining groups (model I) and the effect of the IDF service on veterans across the groups (model II). Models III through V are estimated for men.<sup>13</sup> Model III and IV, respectively, repeat models I and II, while model V is estimated for a truncated sample of older men (>44 years old in 2006) and shows the influence that military service had on religious veterans in the past.

Economic distance was measured with the self-reported “monthly household expenses” variable, namely, a 5-point scale of average family household expenses. As to controls (table 1):

- a. Religiosity was measured with a single item 5-point scale: “Would you describe yourself as Haredi (ultra-Orthodox), religious (modern Orthodox), traditional religious, traditional non-religious, or non-religious?” This measure of religiosity is more appropriate than questions on the level of observance or strength of religious belief because it splits the modern Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox groups that both indicate “full observance” of religious rituals but differ in their attitude toward the IDF and the state.
- b. Ideology: 7-point scale of political preferences based on self-reported vote in the last elections.
- c. Ethnic origin: 4-point nominal scale: “Asian-African origin,” “East European origin,” “Western origin,” “Israeli born.”
- d. Age: continuous 18-94.
- e. Male/female: 1-male, 2-female.
- f. Education: 1-academic degree.
- g. Army service: 1-veteran.

## Results

First, I estimate the effect of army service on the self-reported monthly expenses. Negative signs before the coefficients in all models show that the variable has a negative impact on household expenses, i.e., reduces them. The higher the value of the coefficient (usually distributed from 0 to 1, if not stated otherwise), the stronger the impact of the variable on the household expenses. The methodological imperfections of the model<sup>14</sup> may be alleviated by comparison of the military service effect across religious groups.

Overall, military service relates positively to household spending. For all Jews (men and women), the negative effect on household expenses of belonging to the ultra-Orthodox community ( $b=-.4728$ ) is two times higher than the positive effect of military service ( $b=.2647$ ), and almost as large as the effect (positive) of academic education ( $b=.5898$ ) (model I). In the presence of interaction (model II), belonging to the national-religious sector and serving in the IDF associates with a decrease in household expenses (in comparison with secular IDF veterans), i.e., when these two factors come in contact with each other they produce a negative impact on the household expenses, whereas the effect of the service is trivial among the remaining groups. Models III and IV present the results for male respondents. Estimates from model III are similar to those from model I, while model IV shows that the interactive effects of military service and religious sector are positive (though insignificant) for less religious publics, but negative for the religious (figure 1). Thus, data suggest that there is no evidence that IDF service will extract ultra-Orthodox households from poverty.

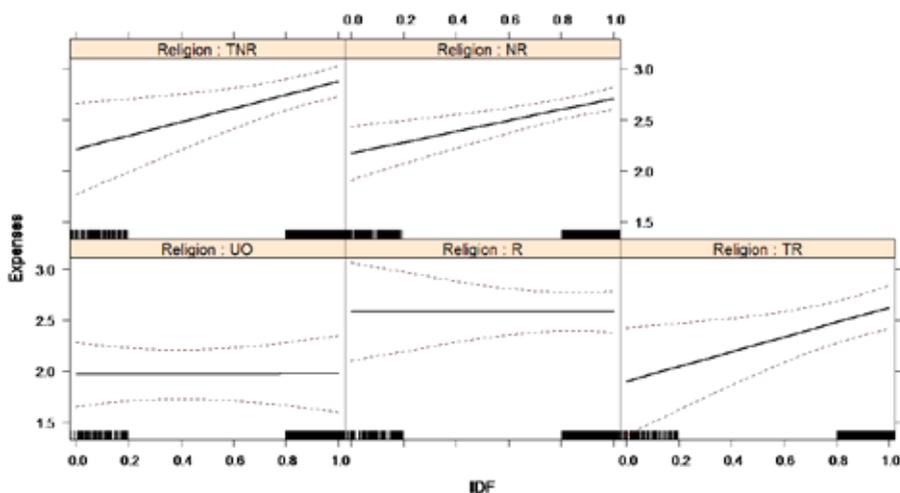
**Table 1.** Monthly Household Expenses (outcome)

Covariates	Model I (all Jews)	Model II (all Jews)	Model III (men)	Model IV (men)	Model V (men >44 years old)
<i>b (unstandardized coefficient), (SE)</i>					
Academic degree (1=yes)	.5898*** (.0639)	.5814*** (.0639)	.6495*** (.0755)	<b>.5972***</b> (.0755)	<b>.7322***</b> (.1079)
Age	-.0039* (.00189)	-.0044* (.0019)	.0011 (.0021)	.0014 (.0021)	-.0204*** (.0064)
Origin: Eastern Europe	-.1514 (.1061)	-.15512 (.1063)	-.1878 (.1461)	-.1668 (.1302)	-.1573 (.1552)

Covariates	Model I	Model II	Model III	Model IV	Model V
	(all Jews)	(all Jews)	(men)	(men)	(men >44 years old)
<i>b (unstandardized coefficient), (SE)</i>					
Western	-.1488 (.1249)	-.1557 (.1249)	-.1518 (.1744)	-.0619 (.1546)	.0474 (.1864)
Born in Israel	.0666 (.0932)	.0702 (.0933)	.0732 (.1316)	.09843 (.1144)	.27537 (.1343)
Army Service (1=yes)	.2647*** (.0743)	.2257* (.1122)	.3566*** (.1034)	.45931** (.1511)	.4771** (.2175)
Ultra-Orthodox (1=yes)	-.4728*** (.1158)	-.5171*** (.1546)	-.4193*** (.1438)	-.1754 (.2146)	.1208 (.6123)
Religious (1=yes)	-.0759 (.0981)	.1527 (.1719)	-.0143 (.1104)	.4887 (.3034)	.1424 (.4534)
Traditional-religious (1=yes)	.0967 (.0959)	-.0410 (.1699)	.0329 (.1216)	-.1271 (.3562)	-.2245 (.5584)
Traditional non-religious (1=yes)	.1352 (.0783)	.0369 (.1508)	.2472** (.0924)	.1227 (.2734)	-.0566 (.3594)
Ideology	.0089 (.0238)	.0067 (.0239)	.0162 (.0319)	.0131 (.0319)	-.0256 (.0482)
Gender (2=female)	-.1183 (.0639)	-.1255* (.0641)			
Ultra-Orthodox x IDF		.1043 (.2384)		<b>-.4704*</b> (.1919)	-.7590 (.6902)
Religious x IDF		-.3607* (.2013)		<b>-.5799*</b> (.3258)	-.0241 (.4808)
Traditional religious x IDF		.2066 (.2023)		.1765 (.3772)	.3155 (.5849)
Traditional non-religious x IDF		.1360 (.1743)		.1349 (.2899)	.2914 (.3831)
Intercept	2.518*** (.338)	2.562*** (.231)	2.039*** (.1698)	1.965** (.2061)	1.944** (.2338)
F-statistic	14.31***	11.16***	13.59***	9.234****	6.325***
R <sup>2</sup> adj.	.09	.09	.09	.09	.12
Total N	1693	1689	836	805	519

\*p<.05; \*\*p<.005; \*\*\*p<.000

The estimates were calculated on the basis of OLS regression model.



**Figure 1. Effects of Army Service on Household Expenses by Religious Sector for Jewish Men**

**Legend:** 0 – no service, 1– IDF veterans. NR – non-Religious; TNR – traditional non-religious; TR – traditional religious; R – modern Orthodox (religious); UO – ultra-Orthodox.

Several conclusions follow from the analysis. First, when policymakers develop the idea of economic integration of the ultra-Orthodox through military service, they presumably derive their policies from prior experiences with traditional and non-religious groups (figure 1, top line of graphs and the bottom line, graph on the right). Indeed, non-religious and traditional veterans are better off compared to non-veterans from their respective groups.

However, the economic position of the ultra-Orthodox and the modern Orthodox (religious) does not improve dramatically as a result of their service in the IDF. Military experience for the ultra-Orthodox associates with lower household expenses later in life (compared to other groups of veterans), and they are slightly better off compared to men from their own sector. Furthermore, model V, which analyzes men recruited before the mid-1980s, reports no influence of the army on economic position of these religious veterans.

What is the overall conclusion? Military experience in its present form (including a widespread network of the special programs for the religious)

does not have consistent positive influence on the economic position of the ultra-Orthodox. At the same time, higher education has a direct positive influence on economic performance for all groups. If the purpose is to increase upward economic mobility among the ultra-Orthodox, the decision makers may need to consider a “detour” policy that would allow this group to acquire productive skills while bypassing the military service.

## Conclusion

This paper suggests that massive mobilization of the ultra-Orthodox may have two implications. Contrary to the expectations, the data does not indicate improvement in the economic position of ultra-Orthodox veterans. However, military service may still increase social cohesion of the Jewish Israeli public, but on a different plane. Shared military experience raises the legitimacy of the ultra-Orthodox lifestyle for the general Jewish Israeli public. This social integration already occurred between the national religious sector and the general public in the 1970-1990s.

Thus, participation in the “national burden” will strengthen the political position of the ultra-Orthodox community in Israel without necessarily improving its economic performance.

## Notes

- 1 Nahal Haredi, the IDF unit for the ultra-Orthodox population, was founded in 1999.
- 2 Recent advances in complexity theory have empirically confirmed this statement. See for example, John Padgett, “From Chemical to Social Networks,” in *The Emergence of Organizations and Market*, eds. John F. Padgett and Walter Powell (Princeton: University Press, 2012), pp. 92-113.
- 3 The ultra-Orthodox sector manages considerable budgets that come from both the Israeli government and Diaspora philanthropists. According to OECD data, net private transfers from abroad to Israel in 2008 amounted to 1.5 percent of GDP and were largely addressed to ultra-Orthodox institutions. “Poverty and Employment Issues for Minority Groups” (OECD, 2010), p. 169.
- 4 The ultra-Orthodox community sees its values and lifestyle as superior over the values and lifestyle of others. Nachman Ben Yehuda, *Theocratic Democracy: The Social Construction of Religious and Secular Extremism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).
- 5 The ultra-Orthodox tend to live in distinct areas, and Israeli planning authorities accommodate and maintain this reality by subsidizing the construction of low-cost neighborhoods for this fast-growing group. One recent example is the construction of a new city in Katzir-Harish in the Wadi Ara area.

- 6 In the last ten years, official statistics have shown an increase in the labor force participation of ultra-Orthodox men, with a share of employed reaching 38 percent in 2011. However, the Bank of Israel makes its estimates on the basis of the Labor Force Survey, which does not permit the identification of ultra-Orthodox respondents. The estimates are biased upward because they are based on the “last academic institution” attended by the respondents, where yeshiva graduates are counted as ultra-Orthodox. This conflates the ultra-Orthodox and national religious sectors into a single category. Using this technique (of the National Economic Council), 39 percent of ultra-Orthodox men were employed in 2009, and the proportion rose to about 45 percent in 2011. Another, more conservative technique, which still overestimates the working ultra-Orthodox, counts yeshiva graduates who reported studies at yeshiva for two consecutive years; according to this estimate, 31 percent were employed in 2009 and some 38 percent in 2011.
- 7 See Meir Elran and Yehuda Ben-Meir, eds., *Drafting the Ultra-Orthodox into the IDF: Renewal of the Tal Law*, Memorandum No. 119 (Tel Aviv: Institute for National Security Studies, June 2012), pp. 41-42.
- 8 Guy Ben Porat, *Between State and Synagogue: The Secularization of Modern Israel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Guy Ben Porat and Omri Shamir, “Days of (un)Rest: Political Consumerism and the Struggle over the Sabbath,” *Politics and Religion* 5 (2012): 161-86.
- 9 OECD, “Poverty and Employment Issues for Minority Groups,” in *OECD Reviews of Labour Market and Social Policies: Israel* (2010) <http://goo.gl/RNdzhH>.
- 10 Elran and Ben Meir, *Drafting the Ultra-Orthodox into the IDF*, p. 30.
- 11 Yagil Levy, “Is the IDF Becoming Theocratic?” Working paper series N20, The Open University of Israel 2012, Source: <http://www.openu.ac.il/policy/download/maamar-20.pdf>.
- 12 Pooling data allows the comparison of groups whose proportion in the population is small (e.g. ultra-Orthodox who served in the IDF). Year fixed effects were insignificant.
- 13 From the state’s point of view, the economic position of ultra-Orthodox women and their mobilization in the IDF are not an issue, because they are employed at only slightly lower rates than non-Orthodox Jewish women. Most are employed in low-paid or part-time jobs, but this topic deserves a separate discussion, which exceeds the scope of the present paper. OECD, “Poverty and Employment Issues for Minority Groups,” (2010).
- 14 The model contains a series of potential weaknesses. First, the outcome variable is a self-reported level of household expenses, whereas individual wages in NIS and types of employment would be preferred estimators of the effect. Second, the explanatory power of models is relatively weak, and many individual characteristics that may have influenced earnings/expenses, such as number of children, locality, occupation, number of hours worked per week, and sector of employment are not available.

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