

Men and Boys:
Representations of Israeli Combat Soldiers in the Media

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Abstract:

In this article we examine the representation of combat soldiers in Israel through their media image. Using two major national Israeli newspapers, we follow the presentation of the Israeli combat soldier over three decades. Our findings indicate that the combat soldier begins as a hegemonic masculine figure in the 1980s, shifts to a more vulnerable, frightened child in the 1990s, and attains a more complex framing in the 2000s. While this most recent representation returns to a hegemonic masculine one, it includes additional, 'softer' components. We find that the transformation in the image of the Israeli soldier reflects changes within Israeli society in general during the period covered and is also indicative of global changes in masculinity to a certain extent. We conclude by analyzing two possible explanations: the perception of the threat and changes in the perception of masculine identity.

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