Nation-Building Through Military Service*

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Abstract

This paper studies the role of compulsory military service in the process of nation-building. We pair original survey data covering 29 cohorts of conscripts in Argentina with random variation in service emerging from a lottery. We find that military service leads to stronger national identity and better attitudes toward fellow countrymen several decades after serving. We document complementary mechanisms that explain these patterns: First, using natural language processing techniques on open-ended responses, we find suggestive evidence that social integration and national attachment were actively inculcated during service. In line with value transmission, former conscripts also tend to adopt the ideology of the government under which they served. Second, exposure to diverse peers and developing a more diverse social network reinforce the baseline patterns. We find no evidence that these results materialize through other mechanisms, such as conflict exposure, labor market outcomes, religiosity, or family formation. Taken together, these results show that conscription can effectively contribute to nation-building.

JEL Codes: D91, H56, J15, P16, Z1

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1 Introduction

For over 200 years, emerging nations have faced the challenge of fostering a shared identity among their inhabitants. Failure to do so often resulted in fragmented societies, leading to internal conflict and stunted long-run development. Currently, growing concerns about social divisions and polarization in the developed world have also raised the question of what processes and institutions play an important role in "building a nation."[1]

Conscription (compulsory military service) has been a common feature of armies ever since modern nations emerged, enabling permanent, professionally trained armed forces. Beyond this strategic objective, some have considered conscription to be conducive to nation-building, given its potential to erode social cleavages and promote cohesion among those who serve.[2] Others have rejected this hypothesis, arguing that military leaders often engage in corruption and sectional politics, thereby reinforcing existing divisions.[3] The purported benefits explain why some have called for the reinstatement of compulsory enlistment in countries in which the mandate no longer exists, such as the United States.[4] Despite these conjectures, and notwithstanding the historical prevalence of conscription across the globe, there is scant evidence about the role that conscription has played in promoting nation-building.

This paper empirically evaluates whether conscription durably shapes beliefs and attitudes conducive to and consistent with nation-building. We identify causal effects by leveraging a policy in Argentina that mandated military service based on a lottery throughout the 20th century. The lottery generated random variation in service at the within-cohort level, allowing us to address endogenous selection into the military. We attempt to falsify the validity of our design in several ways and find no evidence of threats to identification. This historical experiment enables an assessment of conscription's long-term effect on beliefs and attitudes related to nation-building.

In February and August 2022, we conducted two online surveys with 3,086 Argentinian men born between 1944 and 1975. Participants provided their demographic characteristics and those of their ancestors, and they answered questions aimed at capturing different dimensions of national values, civic values, and social preferences. We asked participants

[1] See Michalopoulos and Papaioannou (2016) on fragmented nations and long-run development, and Iyengar et al. (2019) on the rise of affective polarization in the United States.

[2] This has been the position commonly held by modernization theorists, such as Johnson (1962). For a recent discussion of this view, see Shurkin et al. (2018).

[3] See Enloe (1980); Krebs (2004).

[4] See Kaus (1992); Bridgeland and DiIulio (2019). Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, other countries— especially in Europe— have also been debating its reintroduction.

whether they did military conscription and to share the last three digits of their national ID—a piece of information commonly shared in Argentina, and the variable on which the lottery outcome was determined. We combined this information with administrative data on lottery results, which we retrieved from Argentina's Army Historical Archive and from work by Galiani, Rossi and Schargrodsky (2011).

We document a large and statistically significant effect on a National Values index (+0.23 standard deviations), which combines two questions aimed at capturing national pride and attachment to the nation. In contrast, we find a small and statistically insignificant effect on a Civic Values index, which combines voting behavior, views on tax evasion, and views on taking the law into one's own hands to punish criminals. These suggest that conscription durably fosters national values without promoting better citizenship.

Do these long-run effects on national values merely reflect heightened patriotism, or do they reveal a durable mark on national cohesion? We address this question by examining proxies for social integration and openness to various out-groups. Conscription increases by 16% the number of Argentinians whom participants consider to be similar to "in what's most important," which we interpret as a reduction in perceived social distance (Shayo, 2009). Moreover, conscription reduces the likelihood that a participant reports being uncomfortable with a neighbor who is indigenous or who has a different sexual orientation by 6 and 9 percentage points, respectively. Consistently, conscription reduces the prejudice of individuals from high socioeconomic (SE) background against neighbors of low SE status by 12 percentage points.[5] All in all, these results suggest that compulsory military service durably fosters views and attitudes that are consistent with and conducive to nation-building.

We explore mechanisms using several complementary approaches. First, we ask all participants to describe in their own words what they believe were the main lessons inculcated during conscription in Argentina. We analyze their answers using natural language processing techniques and find that national values and social integration are frequent topics mentioned in the answers. Moreover, serving increases the likelihood that these topics are mentioned and the frequency with which participants discuss value transmission in the military with their acquaintances. These results suggest that national affiliation and social integration were values actively instilled in the military and that narrative repetition enacted through frequent conversations about these topics may help sustain these behaviors.

[5]We find no evidence that conscription impacted attitudes toward other nationalities, attitudes toward domestic or international institutions, or the characteristics of the participant's partner (among individuals who were not single at the time of the survey). We find weak evidence that military service may have increased internal migration.

Second, we elicit exposure to out-groups during conscription and the current composition of respondents' social network. We find that exposure to and bonding with out-group members reinforced the main outcomes. We show that the baseline patterns are stronger for those who had more contact with diverse peers during military service. Moreover, conscription increases the odds of having a close acquaintance from a different province, it makes it more likely for individuals from a low SE background to be friends with someone of high-SE status, and that non-Catholics are close with Catholics. Hence, the integration inculcated and experienced during the military fosters social networks that are more diverse, ultimately reinforcing the erosion of cleavages between different out-groups and contributing to its long-run persistence.

We also analyze heterogeneous experiences across cohorts to provide further evidence on mechanisms. In line with the argument that value inculcation in the military is a key mechanism, we find that conscripts adopt the values of the government under which they serve. Specifically, serving under a military government leads to worse civic values, serving under a protectionist government leads to a stronger preference for regulation, and serving under a pro-market government leads to a weaker preference for government intervention. As for other potential mechanisms, we show that our baseline results are not driven by cohorts of conscripts that served during wartime (if anything, results are negative for these conscripts). This finding suggests that exposure to conflict is not an explanation for the durable effect of compulsory military service on national affiliation and social integration. Likewise, the data do not support other plausible mechanisms that have been studied in the literature, such as educational achievement, occupational choice, family formation, or religiosity.

Our paper speaks to several strands of literature. First, it contributes to the literature that studies nation-building, both in developed and developing regions (Depetris-Chauvin, Durante and Campante, 2020; Alesina, Reich and Riboni, 2020; Alesina, Giuliano and Reich, 2021; Assouad, 2021; Blanc and Kubo, 2021). Our paper shows that conscription, which has been prevalent around the world throughout history, durably fosters a shared (national) identity. Importantly, our estimates rely on within-cohort random variation, which provides highly reliable internal validity. Relatedly, our paper contributes to the literature that examines policies that foster civic values (Bandiera et al., 2019; Bove, Di Leo and Giani, 2022). We show that conscription durably fosters social integration while it has no effect on other dimensions of civic values and civic engagement. This suggests that policies that foster national affiliation and homogenization may not be successful at promoting desirable civic behavior.

The paper also contributes to recent research investigating conditions under which in-

tergroup interaction may promote integration and cooperation (Bazzi et al., 2019; Mousa, 2020; Lowe, 2021; Cáceres-Delpiano et al., 2021; Bagues and Roth, 2022; Okunogbe, 2018). In particular, Cáceres-Delpiano et al. (2021) and Bagues and Roth (2022) leverage the random assignment of men serving in the military to different areas across Spain; they find that intergroup contact in the military fosters national affiliation among people from regions that feature a weak Spanish identity. We complement these studies by showing that intergroup interactions within the military may reinforce conscription's durable effects on social integration and national values. However, our results also show that these interactions are not the main mechanism behind conscription's persistent mark on national affiliation, which is strong even for conscripted men who were not exposed to out-groups during service.

We also contribute to the robust literature examining how military service affects outcomes in the short and long runs (Angrist, 1990; Blattman and Annan, 2010; Angrist, Chen and Song, 2011; Galiani, Rossi and Schargrodsky, 2011; Bingley, Lundborg and Lyk-Jensen, 2020; Greenberg et al., 2020), particularly outcomes related to beliefs and attitudes (Dahl, Kotsadam and Rooth, 2021; Cagé et al., 2021; Gibbons and Rossi, 2022; Ertola Navajas et al., 2022). In particular, Ertola Navajas et al. (2022) exploit the same natural experiment in Argentina to examine conscription's effects on personality traits and beliefs related to the military, finding that compulsory military service promotes a less tolerant and more authoritarian personality, and increases support for military interventions. Our paper shows that, despite promoting these traits, conscription fosters social integration and promotes tolerance toward out-groups who are part of the nation. It also shows that conscription had no long-term impact on educational achievement, occupational choice, religious affiliation, religiosity, or family formation. Instead, we show that direct inculcation of values and exposure to out-groups and subsequent social-network formation play a crucial role. Moreover, we provide novel evidence of significant differences between peacetime and wartime conscription, something that was not present in the literature so far due to focusing on other contexts or being under-powered.

Finally, our paper contributes to the set of papers that study the impact of narratives on beliefs and behavior (Shiller, 2017; Gibbons and Prusak, 2020; Michalopoulos and Xue, 2021) and how experiences may foster motivated reasoning and self-persuasion (Di Tella, Galiani and Schargrodsky, 2007; Huffman, Raymond and Shvets, 2019; Schwardmann, Tripodi and Van der Weele, 2022). We show that, relative to those who did not serve, conscripted men are more likely to talk about the military and the values learned in it (especially national values and social integration), suggesting that narrative repetition, motivated reasoning, and self-persuasion may be mechanisms that help sustain the effect of past events on views and

attitudes.

Our paper is structured as follows. Section 2 describes the historical background of conscription in Argentina. Section 3 presents our empirical approach, discussing how we collected data and showing that our sample is balanced and not prone to sample-selection issues. Section 4 discusses the baseline results, Section 5 examines mechanisms, and Section 6 concludes.

2 Background

This section provides a short summary of conscription in Argentina and describes the lottery system which determined who was required to serve.[6]

On December 6, 1901, the Argentine Congress passed Law 4031, which established compulsory military service for Argentine men during the year they turned 21. The first cohort served in 1902 and the last one in 1994, when conscription abruptly came to an end after the murder of a conscript. Since 1994, only volunteers serve in the Argentine armed forces. The typical experience involved 12 months of service, including one to three months of basic military training. After that, conscripts would be assigned to a military unit, where they would do various tasks—from low-skill (such as painting, cooking, or cleaning), to more high-skill intensive ones (such as repairing trucks or building bridges). After discharge, they were not expected to serve again unless there was an international conflict.

The share of individuals from each cohort required to serve varied year to year at the discretion of the authorities. Crucially, a lottery determined who was required to serve from within each cohort, which took place around April of the year in which the cohort turned 20. It was a public event broadcasted on radio and television, which assigned a number between 1 and 1000 to each combination of last 3 digits of the national ID (which are between 7 and 8 digits long). At the beginning of the following year, authorities would determine a cutoff number, such that all individuals with a lottery number above it would be required to serve (individuals below the cutoff were exempted for service). Moreover, lottery numbers also determined to which force the individual was assigned: a first subset of numbers above the cutoff were sent to the Army, a following subset above it to the Air Force, and the remaining subset with highest numbers were sent to the Navy.

Around six months after the lottery, all men in the cohort had to take a health exam-

[6]For additional details about the implementation of this policy, see Rodríguez Molas (1983). For a discussion of the historical experience that influenced the design of compulsory military service in Argentina, see Garaño (2017).

ination, which would determine if they were "fit to serve." This was an important source of non-compliance with the lottery outcome and gave room for strategic behavior.[7] Despite potential selection into serving, Argentinians from all regions and backgrounds ended up serving, which provided fertile ground for intergroup interactions.

During the period we consider (1965–1994) there were two military governments: one from 1967 to 1973 and another from 1976 to 1983. Thus, half of the cohorts in our sample served under a military government. Moreover, although the vast majority served under peacetime, there were also two conflicts, one internal and one external, implying that some cohorts were exposed to the risk of being sent to combat. In 1975 and early 1976, the "*Operativo Independencia*" took place, where the armed forces fought internal guerrillas in the country. Anecdotal and journalistic evidence indicates that a minority of conscripts were exposed to combat. Cohorts incorporated at that time were those born in 1953 and 1954. In 1982, Argentina fought the United Kingdom in the Malvinas/Falklands war. Cohorts born in 1962 and 1963 were serving when it took place. Administrative data indicates that the share of conscripts who participated was 5.8%, and the shared who were killed was 0.1%.

There are three cohorts that we drop from the analysis because we don't have variability in lottery outcomes: cohort 1955 was required to serve virtually in full (it was up for service in 1976 when the military coup took place) and cohorts 1956 and 1957 were exempted from service, as in 1977 the age of incorporation was reduced by two years.

Finally, starting in 1985, lottery cutoff numbers were determined by each military district, implying that individuals' place of residence affected their conscription eligibility status.[8]

3 Empirical Approach

The analysis relies on data from two surveys that we designed and implemented, as well as administrative data on the military draft. We leverage these data to estimate two-stage least-squares (2SLS) models, which allow us to deal with selection into the military.

[7] The other source of non-compliance were volunteers who, unlike drop-outs, represented a small share of the population.

[8] Military districts were aligned with provinces for the most part. The province of Buenos Aires included the districts of Bahía Blanca, Junín, La Plata, San Martín, and Tandil; the province of Córdoba included Córdoba and Río Cuarto; and the province of Santa Fe included Rosario and Santa Fe. The military district of Santa Cruz included the provinces of Santa Cruz and of Tierra del Fuego (0.5% of our sample corresponds to this district. Note also in 1976 and 1984 cutoff numbers varied slightly across the five Army corps, which were very large divisions that cut through provinces. The range was 24 in 1976 and 72 in 1984.

3.1 Data

We collected data on the characteristics, beliefs, and attitudes of 3,086 Argentine men born between 1944 and 1975 (excluding 1955-1957, as explained in Section 2), through two rounds of online surveys that we designed and implemented in February and August 2022.[9] Because some questions were only included in one of the two rounds, we have can classify outcomes in three groups: those present in both rounds, for which we have 3,086 observations; those present only in the first round, for which we have 1,994 observations; and those present only in the third round, for which we have 2,058 observations. The latter two don't add up to the former one because in the second round we collected responses from a mix of new respondents (1,092) and recontacts from the first round (966).[10]

In both rounds we obtained personal characteristics, including year of birth, province of residence at age 16, educational achievement, occupational and civic status, religiosity, and socioeconomic background information (parents' education and country of origin, as well as number of immigrant grandparents). We also asked for the last 3 digits of the national ID, a key component to determine whether the individual was called to serve.[11] Table A1 in the Appendix presents summary statistics of the main sample.

We elicit the strength of national identity ("National Values") with the following two questions: "*How proud are you of being Argentinian?*" and "*How much do you agree with the following statement? 'Despite the problems it may have, Argentina is the best country to have been born in.'*" Both questions allowed for answers on a 4-item Likert scale. We build indicators for answering one of the two higher items, and obtain a standardized index following Anderson (2008).

We measure Civic Values with the following three questions: (i) "*How often do go to vote?*", (ii) "*How justifiable is it to evade taxes?*", and (iii) "*To what extent to you approve of people taking the law into their own hands when the State doesn't punish criminals?*" In the first two, possible answers included: 'never', 'few times', 'most times', and 'always'. We

[9]The surveys were distributed by Netquest, a panel provider company specialized in Latin America and frequently used in the social sciences. They recruit respondents and give them tokens for each survey they complete, which later can be exchanged for prizes. Importantly, the invitation to participate did not make reference to conscription—only that this was a study about "social and political perspectives." Moreover, participants had to pass a set of attention checks to be considered for the final sample.

[10]Ideally we would have collected all round 2 responses from new respondents, but the panel provider did not have such a large sample.

[11]In Argentina people are used to provide the last 3 digits of the national ID, which are between 7 and 8 digits long, so identity is not at risk of being revealed. For example, this is standard practice when participating in a raffle. In Figure A1 in the Appendix we show that there is no clear bunching in the distribution of IDs, which would have implied untruthful reporting and provides reassuring evidence that the data is of good quality.

use indicator variables for choosing 'always' in the case of voting and 'never' in the case of tax evasion, as most answers concentrate there. In the third variable, possible answers included 'completely disapprove', 'disapprove', 'approve', and 'completely approve'. We use an indicator variable for choosing one of the two disapproval options. We obtain a standardized index following Anderson (2008).

We analyze social integration from the perspective of a general measure of perceived social distance (Shayo, 2009) and concrete attitudes toward out-groups within the country. The former we elicit by introducing a novel question that asks: "*Out of 10 Argentinians, how many would you say are similar to you in the most important things?*" (Hencefort, 'similarity'). We interpret higher numbers as reflecting a smaller perceived social distance (that is, being more socially integrated.) The latter we measure with the widely-used question on neighbor preference: "*For each of the following groups, indicate whether you would NOT want them as your neighbors: Indigenous people; Low SES people; People of another sexual orientation; People of another religion; Immigrant workers.*" We build binary variables for each group, taking value 1 if they mention them.

We also included several additional questions to test for possible mechanisms. (i) We introduced an open-ended question, asking respondents: "*Some people think that conscription instilled a set of values and lessons to those who served, while others do not think that was the case. In your opinion, what values or lessons were transmitted to those who did conscription, and how? If you think there was actually no transmission of values or lessons, please say so and explain why you think that is the case.*" We also asked how often they talk about this topic. (ii) We documented respondents' social network size ("*With how many people that you know would you be willing to discuss personal problems?*") and composition ("*Out of the [X] persons you mentioned in the previous question, how many belong to each of the following groups? Former conscripts; from another province; college graduates; practicing Catholics; public sector employees.*")

We rely on administrative data for the results of the conscription lottery in every year covered by our sample. We obtain it from two sources: a dataset made available from previous work by Galiani, Rossi and Schargrodsky (2011) and our own archival work in the Argentine Army's Historical Archives.

From Galiani, Rossi and Schargrodsky (2011) we obtain lottery number assignments for all cohorts and cutoff numbers for every year until 1984. From 1985 onward, cutoff numbers varied across military districts, which are not included in their data. Thus, we obtained the district-varying cutoff numbers from the Argentine Army's Historical Archive for every year

between 1985 and 1994.[12]

3.2 Methods

We are interested in estimating the causal impact of doing conscription on a set of outcomes. The challenge we need to overcome is that individuals who served were not similar to individuals who didn't serve in ex-ante characteristics. We deal with this by exploiting the conscription lottery, which provides an exogenous source of variation for military service — an instrument— allowing the estimation of two-stage least-squares (2SLS) models (Angrist, Imbens and Rubin, 1996).

We estimate 2SLS models of the following form:

$$served_i = \alpha highnumber_i + \mu^{fs}_{c(i)} + \delta^{fs}_{d(i)} + \Gamma' X_i + \nu_i \qquad \text{(First stage)}$$

$$y_i = \beta served_i + \mu_{c(i)} + \delta_{d(i)} + \Theta' X_i + \epsilon_i \qquad \text{(Second stage)}$$

Where y_i is an outcome of interest, $served_i$ is an indicator for having served in the military, $highnumber_i$ is an indicator for having a high number in the conscription lottery (thus, being called to serve), $\mu^{fs}_{c(i)}$ and $\mu_{c(i)}$ are vectors of cohort fixed effects, and $\delta^{fs}_{d(i)}$ and $\delta_{d(i)}$ are vectors of district fixed effects.[13] The coefficient of interest, β, is an estimate for the Local Average Treatment Effect (LATE), which captures the average treatment effect on the population of 'compliers': the set of individuals who would only serve if they were required to do so (*i.e.*, had a lottery number above the cutoff).[14] We cluster standard errors at the ID-cohort level throughout the paper.

[12] In 1976 and 1984 cutoff numbers varied slightly across the five army corps. We did not collect these because many provinces belong to more than one army corps, so we cannot map individuals with their corresponding cutoff number. Instead, we drop from the sample all individuals that fall between the minimum and the maximum cutoff number, as we do not know whether they were called to serve or not.

[13] Since cutoff numbers could vary across military districts starting in 1985, we also consider including fixed effects at the district-cohort level for those years, even though there weren't substantive differences across districts within each cohort: The largest districts used cutoff numbers that were not far apart from each other — Province of Buenos Aires, City of Buenos Aires, Córdoba, Santa Fe, and Mendoza (where 69% of the population resided in 1991 according to the census) display mean and median ranges of 232 and 224 throughout the 1985-1994 period. Moreover, this specification implies estimating 230 additional coefficients. For these reasons this is not our preferred specification. However, we replicate all main analyses in Appendix B and show that all results are largely unchanged.

[14] An important remark here is that not every conscript was a complier, as there could be volunteers or individuals who would have served later in life but were forced to do so earlier by the lottery. Thus, even though we refer to 'conscripts' throughout the paper, it should be kept in mind that the effects we estimate are only identified from conscripts that were also compliers.

In our preferred specification we include a set of additional controls to improve precision. These include a set of individual characteristics determined before the lottery: indicators for having a father who served in the military, for the educational level of the father and of the mother, and for each possible number of immigrant grandparents. When the outcome was measured in both survey rounds we also control for a round indicator.[15]

Table 1: Balance test

	High-number				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Father served in military	-0.019				-0.019
	(0.017)				(0.017)
Father: Secondary educ.		-0.015			-0.016
		(0.019)			(0.020)
Father: Higher educ.		-0.022			-0.033
		(0.022)			(0.026)
Mother: Secondary educ.			-0.017		-0.007
			(0.019)		(0.021)
Mother: Higher educ.			0.009		0.025
			(0.024)		(0.028)
One immigrant grandp.				0.003	0.003
				(0.025)	(0.025)
Two immigrant grandp's				0.024	0.024
				(0.023)	(0.023)
Three immigrant grandp's				0.007	0.006
				(0.032)	(0.032)
Four immigrant grandp's				-0.013	-0.016
				(0.024)	(0.024)
Cohort FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
District FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Control mean	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55
Obs.	3086	3086	3086	3086	3086

Note: Each column regresses the instrument (high-number) on sets of ex-ante characteristics, controlling for cohort fixed effects.The control group is low-number individuals. The F-statistic for joint significance in the last column equals 0.75 (p=0.66). Standard errors clustered at ID-cohort level. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

We attempt to falsify the validity of our design in several ways. First, we run a balance test using covariates determined before the lottery. Table 1 reports the coefficients and clustered standard errors of regressing the instrument ($highnumber_i$) on different subsets of covariates, controlling for cohort and district fixed effects. We find no evidence that these

[15]We also observe country of origin of the parents, but we don't use it for being highly correlated with the number of immigrant grandparents, which in turn is more informative overall.

ex-ante characteristics can predict the instrument. In particular, the F-statistic for joint significance in the last column is 0.75 (p=0.66).

Second, we test for differential selection into the sample by instrument status. If we observed that the frequency of individuals with high lottery number was different in our sample compared to the population, we would be concerned that the lottery outcome affected the probability of participating in the survey, which would imply high- and low-number individuals are not comparable in our sample. Table A2 in the Appendix shows that the share of individuals in our sample who received a high lottery number is similar to the population share. This implies that having been called to serve does not affect the likelihood of answering our survey, which is consistent with the instrument being randomly allocated within our sample as well.

4 Results

In this section we present the results on the main outcomes in the paper: positive and statistically significant effects on national values and social integration, and very small and statistically insignificant effects on civic values.

4.1 National Values and Civic Values

Historians, sociologists, and political scientists have long debated over whether conscription, besides providing a stable military force, also helped to promote national integration and better citizens (Krebs, 2004). We test this hypothesis by asking whether serving in the military leads to stronger long-lasting national values and desirable civic attitudes. The former is measured with a standardized index that collects the questions on "pride in nationality" and "best country to have been born in." The latter is measured with a standardized index that collects the questions on voting, justifying evasion, and taking the law into one's own hands.

Table 2 starts by showing that the instrument strongly predicts the regressor of interest (columns 1–2). We see that including district fixed effects and ex-ante characteristics doesn't affect the size and precision of the coefficient of interest. The Kleibergen-Paap F-statistics equal 487 and 492, respectively.

Table 2: First stage, National Values, and Civic Values

	Served (First Stage)		National Values Index		Civic Values Index	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
High-number	0.39***	0.39***				
	(0.02)	(0.02)				
Served			0.24**	0.23**	0.02	0.02
			(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.10)	(0.10)
Cohort FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
District FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Add. controls	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Control mean	0.12	0.12	-0.04	-0.04	-0.05	-0.05
Obs.	3086	3086	3086	3086	3086	3086

Note: Columns 1–2 show estimates for the first stage (the Kleibergen-Paap F-statistics equal 487 and 492, respectively), columns 3–4 show 2SLS estimates for the effect of serving in the military on the National Values index, and columns 5–6 show the analogous estimates for the Civic Values index. The National Values index is a standardized aggregate of two questions ("pride in nationality" and "best country to have been born in"). The Civic Values index is a standardized aggregate of three questions ("justify evasion," "going to vote," and "taking the law into own hands"). Additional controls include indicators for having a father who served in the military, for each possible educational level of the father and mother, for each possible number of immigrant grandparents, and for survey round. The control group is low-number individuals. Standard errors are clustered at the ID-cohort level. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Columns 3–4 show that serving in the military has a positive, large, and statistically strong effect on the National Values index: +0.23 standard deviation units (p=0.032) under our preferred specification. On the other hand, columns 5–6 show that there is an economically and statistically insignificant effect on the Civic Values index. Table A3 in the Appendix shows that these effects —or lack thereof— are similar across the individual components of each index.

These results provide evidence that conscription contributed to promoting a stronger national identity in the long run, in line with the fundamental objectives of nation-building (Alesina, Giuliano and Reich, 2021). However, unlike other institutions such as universal education (Bandiera et al., 2019), we find no evidence that conscription shaped better citizens. Moreover, this disconnection between national and civic values implies that the former does not necessarily lead to the latter.

4.2 Social integration

Rather than a strong national identity, perhaps an even more important outcome for nation-building is social integration, given its direct implications over internal conflict. Precisely in connection to this, besides its potential for value-transmission, conscription had the distinctive characteristic of pooling together individuals from diverse backgrounds and characteristics. The "contact hypothesis" in social psychology predicts that collaborative contact with out-group members can reduce the strength of social cleavages and improve attitudes towards them (Allport, 1954; Lowe, 2021). These effects may be even stronger and long-lasting when the experience takes places during young adulthood (the "impressionable years" hypothesis; Krosnick and Alwin (1989)).

We exploit two complementary questions on social integration. One asks to how many out of 10 Argentinians the individual feels similar "in the most important things." We interpret this as perceived social distance to other Argentinians (higher values imply lower distance), which has a direct connection to group identity and the strength of social cleavages (Shayo, 2009). The other question reflects concrete attitudes toward different groups of people by asking whether they would *not* want them as neighbors. This is a widely used question in the social sciences and regularly included in public opinion surveys.

Table 3 shows that conscription had positive effects on our two complementary measures of social integration: perceived social distance ("similarity") and attitudes toward specific out-groups from within the country ("neighbors"). In column 1, we see that serving in the military had a positive effect of 0.65 (p=0.04) on the number of people the respondent feels similar to. This represents a 16% increase over the control group mean (low-number individuals), who report feeling similar to around 4 people, on average.

Columns 2–7 present results from regressions with binary dependent variables, which indicate whether the respondent rejects neighbors from that group. Columns 2 and 3 show no significant impact of serving in the military on rejecting immigrant workers or people from another religion. The former implies that social integration did not extend to foreigners, while the latter is likely a consequence of the lack of religious diversity during the 20th century in Argentina. Both results are consistent with lack of exposure to these groups during conscription. On the other hand, in columns 4 and 5 we see that serving had a negative impact on the rejection of indigenous people and people of another sexual orientation. Finally, in column 6 we see a small, negative, but statistically insignificant effect on the rejection of low-SES individuals; however, this hides a strong heterogeneity depending on the socioeconomic background of the respondent. Middle and high SES individuals —those

with at least one parent who finished high-school— are considerably less likely to reject low SES individuals if they served in the military.[16]

Table 3: Social Integration

	Similarity	Neighbors (rejection)					
	(1)	(2) Immig. workers	(3) Other relig.	(4) Indigenous	(5) Other sex. or.	(6) Low SES	(7) Low SES
Served	0.65**	0.03	0.03	-0.06**	-0.09*	-0.04	0.06
	(0.32)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Served x HS-grad par.							-0.17**
							(0.07)
HS-grad parent							0.12***
							(0.03)
Cohort & District FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Add. controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Coef. int. group							-0.12*
							0.06
Control mean	4.12	0.08	0.07	0.05	0.16	0.17	0.11
Obs.	1994	1994	1994	1994	1994	1994	1994

Note: The control group is low-number individuals in columns 1-6 and low-number individuals with no high-school graduate parents in column 7. Additional controls include indicators for having a father who served in the military, for each possible educational level of the father and of the mother, and for each possible number of immigrant grandparents. Standard errors clustered at ID-cohort level. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

4.3 Other outcomes

We also considered other outcomes relevant to nation-building that could have been affected by conscription. These include trust in other nationalities (Chileans, Paraguayans, Uruguayans, and English),[17] trust in domestic and international institutions (the Church, the Armed Forces, the Supreme Court, and the International Monetary Fund), internal migration, and, for those who are currently not single, background characteristics of their partners.

We find mostly no significant effects along these dimensions, although some coefficients are of a considerable magnitude and marginally significant. Table A4 shows that, although

[16] 61% of respondents have at least one parent who finished high-school.

[17] Paraguayans are the largest group of immigrants in Argentina. Uruguayans are a culturally and ethnically similar group. Argentina's external conflicts during the 20th century were with Chile (although war never took place) and the United Kingdom (the Malvinas/Falklands war).

there are positive coefficients in trust on other nationalities, only the one on Paraguay is significant at the 10% level. We also see very small and insignificant coefficients on trust in institutions.

Table A5 shows that serving in the military did not affect the probability of moving to another province and had a marginally significant effect on moving from larger to smaller localities or vice-versa. This effect is economically large: +9 p.p. (p=.08), which represents a 45% increase over low-number individuals. Finally, Table A6 shows that former conscripts are not more likely to enter a relationship with people from a different background in terms of province, religion, and socioeconomic status.

We also test whether conscription impacted deeply ingrained cultural values, including generalized trust, positive and negative reciprocity, altruism, and moral universalism. We use experimentally validated measures for all of them (Falk et al., 2018; Enke, Rodriguez-Padilla and Zimmermann, 2022).

5 Mechanisms

In this section we present suggestive evidence on the mechanisms through which conscription may have long-lastingly shaped national values and social integration. We start by implementing text analysis tools on an open-ended question, which reveals that these outcomes were directly inculcated during military service. Moreover, we also find that conscripts tend to adopt salient ideological features of the government under which they served. We then move on to show how the exposure and interaction with out-groups during conscription, and the formation of a more diverse social network, are complementary mechanisms that reinforced the main outcomes.

5.1 Inculcation

In this subsection we show that direct inculcation of values was one of the mechanisms through which conscription shaped national identity and social integration in the long-run. We asked respondents the following question: "*In your opinion, what values or lessons were transmitted to those who did conscription in Argentina, and how? If you think there was actually no transmission of values or lessons, please say so and explain why you think that is the case.*"[18] Open-ended questions have been shown to provide a valuable window into

[18]This question was asked in the first round only and its order in the survey was randomized, with the objective of priming half of the respondents to think about conscription before answering about national

understanding rationales that may be hard to observe in other ways (Ferrario and Stantcheva, 2022). We obtained rich answers in general: After translating them into English, the median and mean answers were 15 and 21 words long, respectively, with a standard deviation of 20.

We implement two complementary approaches to extract information from the answers: We estimate a Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) (Blei, Ng and Jordan, 2003), allowing us to retrieve the topics that respondents refer to in an unsupervised manner. Under an LDA, each answer is modeled as a mixture of latent variables (topics), which in turn are probability distributions over words. The variance-covariance matrix of all words in the corpus identifies the model parameters, such that words that tend to occur together tend to receive higher weight under a given topic. Second, we build bags of words related to the concepts we want to analyze, which provides higher precision measures of the topics mentioned in the answers. Finally, we measure sentiment on a positive–negative scale using a model based on Bidirectional Encoder Representations from Transformers (BERT), which we use to evaluate whether serving affects how positively individuals feel about conscription.

Figure 1 presents word-clouds of the main terms associated to each of the three topics we extract using the LDA.[19] Overall, terms related to national values and social integration are among the most prevalent ones in the topics that evaluate positively the type of lessons transmitted in the military (Topics 1 and 2). We observe that Topic 1 (36% average prevalence) focuses on traditional military values, including 'respect,' 'discipline,' and 'order,' but also 'homeland' and 'comradeship,' which are indicative of national values and integration. Topic 2 (34% average prevalence) weighs heavily on the latter two, featuring terms such as 'country,' 'patriotism,' 'homeland,' 'companionship,' and 'solidarity,' among other. Finally, Topic 3 (30% average prevalence) captures negative opinions, especially around time-wasting, being removed from work or studies, not learning anything, and mistreatment. In the Appendix, subsection .1 presents, for each topic, the 3 responses where they are most prevalent. Finally, it should be noted that there are virtually no terms that can be related to civic values, which is aligned with the fact that we find no effects on that outcome in the first part.

We implement a complementary analysis where we specify what we want to measure by building bags of words (word lists) related to different topics.[20] This approach provides

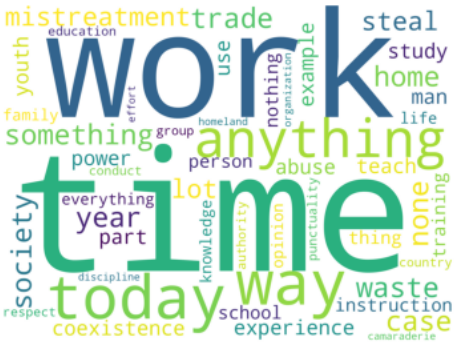
and civic values. We find very small and statistically insignificant effects on the priming treatment.

[19]We pre-processed texts following standard procedures: We translated them into English using DeepL; removed punctuation and special characters; converted contractions; removed stopwords, tagged parts-of-speech (POS) to estimate model only on nouns; and lemmatized using POS tags to improve accuracy.

[20]The process of building the bags of words involved two steps: First, each coauthor listed terms related to each topic (independently). Second, we classified responses on whether they mentioned each topic or

(a) Topic 1

(b) Topic 2



(c) Topic 3

Figure 1: Topic word-clouds

Note: Each word-cloud reflects the main terms associated to topics estimated from a 3-topic Latent Dirichlet Allocation (Blei, Ng and Jordan, 2003). The mean prevalence of each topic is, respectively, 36%, 34%, and 30%.

precise measures of the prevalence of each topic, which we use to estimate the impact of serving in the military on the probability of talking about them in the answers. We consider the following topics: 'national values,' 'social integration,' 'civic values,' 'authoritarianism,' 'discipline,' and 'time-wasting.' The list of terms included under each topic can be found in subsection .2 in the Appendix. We consider indicator variables that take value 1 if at least one of the terms is mentioned in an answer, and estimate 2SLS models following the baseline specification in the paper.

If a value was inculcated during conscription, we expect to find one of two things: a high probability that individuals mention that value, or a low probability among individuals in the low-number group with a statistically significant positive effect of serving on that probability. The former would take place if the information that certain value is inculcated became common knowledge in the society, while the latter would take place in the presence of information frictions, so those who served are relatively more likely to know about it.

Table 4 presents the results, with columns 1–6 ordered by their mean prevalence in the control group (low-number individuals). Columns 1 and 2 show that 'authoritarianism' and 'discipline' are very prevalent topics: 44% and 35% of responses among low-number individuals mention them, respectively, and this probability is not significantly affected by serving in the military. Columns 3 and 4 show that 20% and 16% of responses mention terms related to 'national values' and 'social integration' in the control group. In this case, serving in the military substantially increases the probability of talking about these topics: +5 p.p. (25%) in the first case, although noisily estimated, and +11 p.p. (69%) in the second case, significant at the 5% level. In column 5 we see that 'time waste' follows a similar pattern: 14% of responses in the control group make reference to this topic, which goes up by 5 p.p. (36%) due to serving, although it is also noisily estimated. Finally, in the last column we see that 'civic values' is the least prevalent among these topics: 9% of individuals make reference to them, which barely changes with conscription.

In column 7 we see that, despite having no incentives to do so, former conscripts wrote significantly longer answers (+21% number of words). This is in line with former conscripts being more informed of what types of values are transmitted in the military, and caring more about the subject. Finally, immediately after the open-ended question we also asked "*how often do you talk about these matters?*," allowing for a 4-item Likert scale that included: never, almost never, occasionally/at most once per year, and frequently/more than once per

not, and checked for a random subset of responses whether the classification was accurate or not. Based on the second step we included additional terms and modified existing ones to avoid contamination with other terms that share the same root or ending.

year. We find that serving in the military significantly increases the probability of saying 'occasionally' or 'frequently" by 17 p.p., which represents a 33% increase over the mean for low-number individuals (column 8). This repeated narrative could help explain why these effects persist for more than 30 years.

Table 4: Bags of words

	Topics						Log-Length	Freq.
	(1) Authorit.	(2) Discip.	(3) National V.	(4) Integration	(5) Time Waste	(6) Civic V.	(7)	(8)
Served	-0.07	-0.00	0.05	0.11**	0.05	0.02	0.21**	0.17***
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.10)	(0.06)
Coh. & Dist. FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Add. controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Control mean	0.44	0.35	0.20	0.16	0.14	0.09	2.71	0.52
Obs.	1994	1994	1994	1994	1994	1994	1994	1994

Note: Columns 1–6 regress indicator variables for mentioning at least one term related to that topic, Column 7 regresses the log of the number of words, and column 8 regresses an indicator for reporting to talk "occasionally/at most once per year" or "frequently/more than once per year" about the types of values transmitted in the military. Additional controls include indicators for having a father who served in the military, for each possible educational level of the father and of the mother, and for each possible number of immigrant grandparents. Standard errors clustered at ID-cohort level. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Finally, Table A12 in the Appendix show that conscripts not only incorporated values related to national attachment and social integration, but also the ideology of the incumbent government. In particular, we observe that serving before v. after 1983's democratic transition has significantly different impacts on civic values. The democratic transition radically changed the attitude of society and major political parties with respect to military coups: before 1983 it was frequent that the armed forces took the government by force, something that has not happened again ever since. We also observe that serving in the 1983-1989 period, under Raúl Alfonsín's interventionist government, led to a long-lasting higher demand for regulation (+0.21 p.p. probability of agreeing to the statement that the government should regulate the economy to guarantee its good functioning). On the other hand, serving in the 1990-1994 period, under Carlos Menem's pro-market government, led to a decrease in the demand for regulation (-0.84 p.p.). These findings reinforce the evidence that value inculcation was an important mechanism that was taking place in the military.

5.2 Exposure to out-groups

We also elicited exposure to out-groups during military service. We asked former conscripts in what province they served, which we use to build an indicator for having served in a different province to theirs. We also asked to what extent they were exposed to and interacted with different out-group members: "*Thinking about your fellow conscripts, do you remember if there were... People from another province? Indigenous people? People of low SES? People of high SES? Gay people? People of a non-Catholic religion?*" Answers allowed for four options: (i) "*Yes and I had frequent contact*," (ii) "*Yes, but I didn't have frequent contact*," (iii) "*There were none*," and (iv) "*I don't know/Don't remember*" We build two sets of indicators, one set for selecting option (i), and another set for selection options (i) or (ii). We build standardized indices based on each set of indicators.

Table 5: Exposure to diverse peers

	National Values				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Served	0.23**	0.34***	0.34***	0.33***	0.20**
	(0.11)	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.08)
Served x peer div. index, freq. contact			0.07**		
			(0.04)		
Served x peer div. index, any contact				0.08**	
				(0.04)	
Served x diff. province					0.38**
					(0.17)
Cohort & District FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Add. controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Control mean	-0.04	-0.09	-0.09	-0.09	-0.09
Obs.	3086	2058	2058	2058	2058

Note: Additional controls include indicators for having a father who served in the military, for each possible educational level of the father and of the mother, and for each possible number of immigrant grandparents. Standard errors clustered at ID-cohort level. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table 5 shows that having been exposed to a more diverse set of peers is associated with stronger effects on national identity (columns 3 and 4), by approximately 0.08 standard deviation units for a 1 unit increase in the peer-diversity index. Moreover, serving in a difference province is associated to a much stronger effect, more than double than when

serving in the home province. Crucially, at the same time, the effect of conscription on national values remains highly significant among individuals who were not exposed to a particularly diverse set of peers: the effect on individuals with a standard deviation *less* in peer-diversity exposure is approximately 0.28 p.p. (p=0.037). The same holds for individuals who served in their home province (b=0.22, p=0.007). These results are consistent with the interpretation that conscription fostered a stronger national identity partly through the exposure of individuals to out-group members from within the country, which may have weakened socioeconomic cleavages and ultimately led to reinforcing the shared identity.

5.3 Social networks

We documented respondents' social network size and composition through two quesitons: (i) "*With how many persons that you know would you discuss personal problems (financial, etc.)?*" and (ii) "*Out of those, how many are former conscripts? How many from another province? How many college graduates? How many practising Catholics?*". While we do not find significant differences in size, we find important ones in composition. These differences are consistent with higher exposure and better attitudes toward out-groups from within the country, and may help explain their long-run persistence.

Table 6 presents the estimates from regressing network size and composition indicators (*i.e.*, dummy variables for having at least one person from each group) on serving in the military. We see that, on average, non-drafted individuals report having around 5 people with which they would discuss personal problems, which is unaffected by serving in the military. Columns 2 through 7 show how the composition of these 5 persons differs on average due to serving in the military.

In columns 2 and 3 we see that serving tends to increase the probability of having a close acquaintance who also served (+9 p.p.) and who comes from a different province (+10 p.p.), although they are noisily estimated. In columns 4 and 6 we see positive baseline effects on being close to a college graduate and to a practising Catholic. However, this masks strong heterogeneous effects: the positive impact is driven by individuals from a low-SE background in the first case, and by non-Catholics in the second case, which is consistent with forming a more diverse social network. In particular, individuals from a low-SE background who served are significantly more likely to be close acquaintances with a high-SE status individual (+17 p.p.), and non-Catholics are significantly more likely to be close to a practising Catholic (+22 p.p.).[21]

[21]The last column may suffer from a "bad control" problem if serving in the military affected religious

Table 6: Social networks

	Net. Size	Conscripts	Other prov.	College grad.		Practising Cath.	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Served	-0.00	0.09	0.10*	0.09	0.17**	0.12**	0.22**
	(0.69)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.08)	(0.06)	(0.10)
Served x HS-grad par.					-0.14		
					(0.09)		
HS-grad parent					0.15***		
					(0.04)		
Served x Catholic							-0.14
							(0.10)
catholic						0.28***	0.33***
						(0.02)	(0.04)
Cohort FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
District FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Add. controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Coef. int. group					0.03		0.08
					0.07		0.06
Control mean	4.95	0.44	0.27	0.61	0.61	0.60	0.41
Obs.	1994	1994	1994	1994	1994	1994	1994

Note: Additional controls include indicators for having a father who served in the military, for each possible educational level of the father and of the mother, and for each possible number of immigrant grandparents. Standard errors clustered at ID-cohort level. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

5.4 Wartime v. peacetime conscription

In this section we exploit the fact that four cohorts in our sample served during periods of heightened combat risk due to internal conflict in 1975–early 1976 and the Malvinas/Falklands War in 1982. Importantly, the chance of being exposed to combat was very low, as very few troops were actually mobilized. For example, in the Malvinas/Falklands war, administrative data indicates that only 5.8% of conscripts participated and 0.1% were killed. We find that serving during wartime does not affect national values and social integration —if anything, it tends to reduce them— and it leads to having lower civic values. This implies that combat is not a mechanism driving our baseline results; on the contrary, it is peacetime conscription that generates the effects.

affiliation. In Table A10 we show there is no evidence that this may be the case.

Table 7: Value transmission during wartime v. peacetime

	(1) National Values	(2) Civic Values	(3) Similarity
Served	0.31**	0.11	0.96**
	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.37)
Served x wartime	-0.43*	-0.49**	-1.59**
	(0.23)	(0.22)	(0.73)
Cohort & District FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Add. controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
Coef. int. group	-0.12	-0.38**	-0.64
	0.20	0.18	0.62
Control mean	-0.04	-0.05	4.12
Obs.	3086	3086	1994

Note: Additional controls include indicators for having a father who served in the military, for each possible educational level of the father and of the mother, and for each possible number of immigrant grandparents. Standard errors clustered at ID-cohort level. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

6 Conclusion

In this paper we explore the role that conscription played in the process of nation-building in Argentina during the 20th century, focusing on the development of national values, civic values, and social integration.

Exploiting survey data from almost 3,100 individuals and a natural experiment on exposure to conscription in Argentina, we document that serving in the military has strong impacts on national affiliation and social integration in the long term.

Evidence on mechanisms suggests that this was not driven by changes in educational, occupational, family, or religious outcomes. Rather, it seems to be driven directly by the experiences lived in the military, as expressed by former conscripts themselves in an open-ended question. Moreover, the composition of social networks is consistent with higher exposure to diverse peers. In line with the "impressionable years" hypothesis, this type of experiences at ages 19-21 can have long-lasting impacts on the formation of attitudes and beliefs. Finally, we also find that former conscripts tend to talk more often about the

values instilled by the military, which may indicate that regularly repeating this motivated narrative is one of the vehicles that help to sustain these lessons over such a long period of time.

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Appendix A

Table A1: Summary statistics, by served status

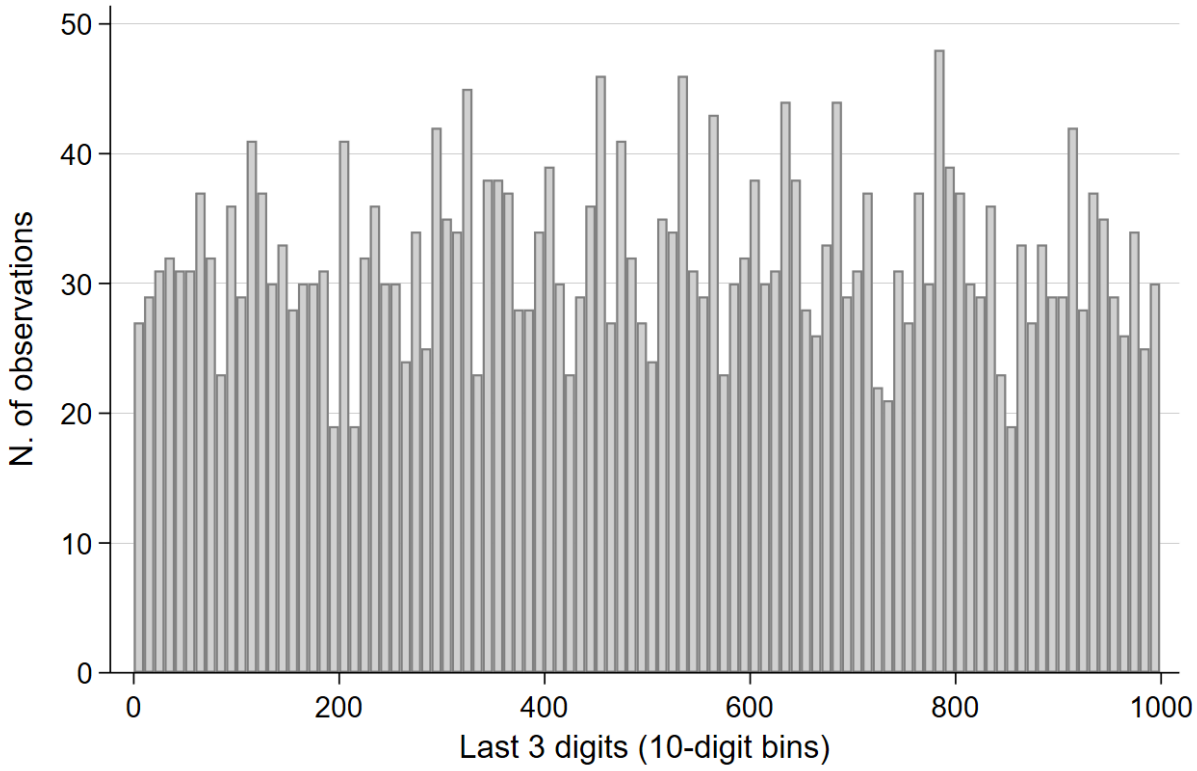
	No	Yes	Total	p
served	0	1	0.375	-
high-number	0.361	0.853	0.546	0.000
age	56.61	61.98	58.62	0.000
BA metro	0.487	0.552	0.511	0.000
HS-grad parent	0.631	0.586	0.614	0.014
College-grad parent	0.139	0.130	0.136	0.478
N. immig. parents	0.210	0.255	0.227	0.026
N. immig. grandp's	1.594	1.842	1.687	0.000
Father served in military	0.677	0.671	0.675	0.728

Table A2: Selection into sample by high-number status

cohort	N	pop. share w/ high number	sample share w/ high number	difference	p_value
1944	16	0.77	0.94	-0.17**	0.02
1945	29	0.74	0.72	0.02	0.85
1946	35	0.79	0.86	-0.07	0.27
1947	31	0.72	0.65	0.07	0.40
1948	46	0.71	0.80	-0.09	0.12
1949	56	0.79	0.73	0.06	0.34
1950	70	0.76	0.81	-0.05	0.25
1951	67	0.87	0.88	-0.01	0.79
1952	100	0.88	0.91	-0.03	0.30
1953	88	0.86	0.82	0.04	0.31
1954	96	0.93	0.90	0.03	0.28
1958	132	0.83	0.82	0.01	0.73
1959	126	0.68	0.64	0.04	0.39
1960	118	0.66	0.63	0.03	0.46
1961	121	0.65	0.64	0.01	0.76
1962	154	0.68	0.69	-0.01	0.82
1963	135	0.65	0.65	-0.00	0.96
1964	132	0.60	0.63	-0.03	0.50
1965	147	0.61	0.61	-0.00	0.96
1966	113	0.33	0.39	-0.06	0.20
1967	134	0.31	0.40	-0.09**	0.03
1968	134	0.37	0.37	-0.00	0.94
1969	153	0.41	0.52	-0.11***	0.01
1970	140	0.47	0.43	0.04	0.33
1971	146	0.28	0.29	-0.01	0.70
1972	127	0.11	0.15	-0.04	0.21
1973	143	0.25	0.20	0.05	0.16
1974	153	0.28	0.25	0.03	0.37
1975	144	0.26	0.23	0.03	0.43
Total	3,086	0.55	0.55	0.01	0.42

Note: This table tests, cohort by cohort and for the full sample (last row), whether sample shares with high number are statistically different to population shares with high-number. Statistically significant differences would imply that the lottery outcome induces selection into the sample. We find reassuring evidence that there is no observable selection, especially given the negligible difference at the full-sample level. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Figure A1: Distribution of last-3 digits of the ID



Note: This graph plots the frequency of last-3 digits of the ID, grouped in 10-digit bins.

Table A3: Components of National Values and Civic Values Indexes

	National Values		Civic Values		
	(1) Arg. best	(2) Pride Arg.	(3) Evasion	(4) Own justice	(5) Voting
Served	0.12**	0.07	-0.05	0.02	0.02
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.02)
Cohort & District FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Add. controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Control mean	0.65	0.57	0.63	0.58	0.93
Obs.	3086	3086	3086	3086	3086

Note: Columns are indicators for choosing the upper two items out of a 4-item Likert scale, with the exception of 'voting', which was a 3-item Likert scale. Additional controls include indicators for having a father who served in the military, for each possible educational level of the father and of the mother, and for each possible number of immigrant grandparents. Standard errors clustered at ID-cohort level. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A4: Trust in other nationalities and in institutions

	Nationalities					Institutions			
	(1) Paraguay	(2) Chile	(3) Uruguay	(4) English	(5) Index	(6) Church	(7) Armed Forces	(8) Sup. Court	(9) IMF
Served	0.12*	0.03	0.03	0.04	0.16	0.08	-0.05	0.03	-0.03
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.13)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)
Cohort & District FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Add. controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Control mean	0.58	0.40	0.75	0.53	-0.06	0.34	0.61	0.32	0.27
Obs.	1994	1994	1994	1994	1994	1994	1994	1994	1994

Note: Columns are indicators for choosing the upper two items out of a 4-item Likert scale. Additional controls include indicators for having a father who served in the military, for each possible educational level of the father and of the mother, and for each possible number of immigrant grandparents. Standard errors clustered at ID-cohort level. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A5: Internal migration

	By Province			By Size of Locality		
	(1) Current	(2) Temporary	(3) Ever	(4) Small/Med. to Large	(5) Large to Small/Med.	(6) Any change
Served	-0.04	0.06	0.02	0.06	0.04	0.09*
	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.06)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.05)
Cohort & District FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Add. controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Control mean	0.17	0.14	0.31	0.11	0.06	0.20
Obs.	2058	2058	2058	2058	2058	2058

Note: Columns are indicators for currently living in a province different to age 16 (1), for currently living in the same province to age 16 but having lived in a different province for at least 2 years since age 25 (2), for taking value 1 in any of the two previous columns (3), for currently living in a large locality but having lived in a small/medium-sized locality at age 16 (4), for currently living in a small/medium-sized locality but having lived in a large locality at age 16 (5), for taking value 1 in any of the two previous columns (6). Additional controls include indicators for having a father who served in the military, for each possible educational level of the father and of the mother, and for each possible number of immigrant grandparents. Standard errors clustered at ID-cohort level. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A6: Partner characteristics

	(1) Diff. Province	(2) Diff. Relig. Raised	(3) Diff. SES background	(4) Index
Served	-0.02	-0.05	-0.01	-0.15
	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.07)	(0.14)
Cohort & District FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Add. controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Control mean	0.28	0.17	0.33	0.01
Obs.	1551	1551	1348	1551

Note: Columns are indicators for having a partner who was raised in a different province (1), in a different religion (2), and in a different socioeconomic background (3). Column 4 is an index of the first three. Additional controls include indicators for having a father who served in the military, for each possible educational level of the father and of the mother, and for each possible number of immigrant grandparents. Standard errors clustered at ID-cohort level. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A7: Social capital and moral universalism

	(1) Trust	(2) Positive recip.	(3) Negative recip.	(4) Altruism	(5) Universalism
Served	0.02	-0.03	0.09	-0.01	-0.04
	(0.05)	(0.11)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.12)
Cohort & District FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Add. controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Control mean	0.42	-0.02	0.01	-0.03	-0.03
Obs.	3086	3086	3086	3086	2058

Note: Columns include the standard measure of generalized trust (1), standardized measures of negative reciprocity, positive reciprocity, and altruism (2-4) following Falk et al. (2018), and a standardized index of three questions measuring universalism among foreign individuals in terms of religion, language, and political ideology, following Enke, Rodriguez-Padilla and Zimmermann (2022). Additional controls include indicators for having a father who served in the military, for each possible educational level of the father and of the mother, and for each possible number of immigrant grandparents. Standard errors clustered at ID-cohort level. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A8: Education and occupational choice

	(1) high school grad.	(2) college grad.	(3) selfemployed	(4) pubsec_emp	(5) privsec_emp	(6) unemployed	(7) retired
Served	0.04*	0.01	0.01	-0.03	0.02	0.00	-0.01
	(0.02)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.02)	(0.03)
Cohort & District FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Add. controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Control mean	0.95	0.38	0.29	0.20	0.34	0.07	0.10
Obs.	3086	3086	3086	3086	3086	3086	3086

Note: Columns are indicators for falling in each category. Additional controls include indicators for having a father who served in the military, for each possible educational level of the father and of the mother, and for each possible number of immigrant grandparents. Standard errors clustered at ID-cohort level. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A9: Family outcomes

	(1) single	(2) married	(3) divorced	(4) free union	(5) widower
Served	0.02	-0.01	0.03	-0.03	-0.00
	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.02)
Cohort & District FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Add. controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Control mean	0.15	0.54	0.14	0.15	0.02
Obs.	3086	3086	3086	3086	3086
f_test					

Note: Additional controls include indicators for having a father who served in the military, for each possible educational level of the father and of the mother, and for each possible number of immigrant grandparents. Standard errors clustered at ID-cohort level. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A10: Religiosity

	religion		religiosity	
	(1) Catholic	(2) none	(3) imp. of God	(4) high attendance
Served	0.08	-0.04	0.08	-0.08*
	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.11)	(0.04)
Cohort & District FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Add. controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Control mean	0.63	0.25	2.99	0.19
Obs.	3086	3086	3086	3086

Note: Additional controls include indicators for having a father who served in the military, for each possible educational level of the father and of the mother, and for each possible number of immigrant grandparents. Standard errors clustered at ID-cohort level. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

.1 Top coincidences in topic model

Topic 1:

- "*Obedience, respect, courage, comradeship, discipline, respect for the homeland.*"

- "*I think it was positive. I think the values were respect, hierarchy, comradeship, neatness, order, sacrifice, discipline, order, cleanliness, honor.*"
- "*Effort sacrifice obedience obedience conduct comradeship values*"

Topic 2:

- "*It was important to fulfill the military duty since it transmitted values for the life of the Citizen such as dignity, honor and patriotism as well as at 18 years old it was appreciated to have a sense of responsibility.*"
- "*I agree with the obligatory military service, one learns to respect the other person with whom they live with, also to have an objective in their life, there they receive education in disciplines that serve them in their daily life, such as survival courses, aircraft mechanics, boats or other disciplines, to follow a military career, also to have an orderly life with objectives.*"
- "*The conscription was the best thing that our country had. They corrected the person with military disciplines that helped them to respect not only the family but everyone in general, be it people or material objects, thus forging men and women subordinate to our country ARGENTINA.*"

Topic 3:

- "*I think it was a waste of time, since it did not allow to continue studying or working. Personally I think it was useless (at least the way it was structured or thought). There was no way to learn any trade,*"
- "*Actually it was a lost year, because at that time there was a "healthy" youth because they studied or worked, now the vast majority neither study nor work, with the aggravating factor of the acquisition of drugs anywhere...*"
- "*It was a way to transmit essential and fundamental values for a portion of the conscripts, to make possible the completion of studies and to gain access for the first time to a number of aspects. Nowadays, a large percentage of young people take a sabbatical year even after finishing their studies, so they have the lost year. The problem is the framework of the institution where the military service takes place, the armed forces, which is very poor and corrupt.*"

.2 Bags-of-words components

- **National values**: *homeland fatherland patriot flag anthem emblem symbol country national identi ' nation'*
- **Civic values**: *civic norm institu dignit rule law citizen honest justice conduct ' ethi' 'respect for society' 'service to society'*
- **Integration**: *empathy socializ interior province region integration close compan comrad camarad share sharing colleag coex brotherhood communit 'respect for others' 'respect others' 'respect for other people' 'social values' ' toleran' ' equal' 'sense of belonging'*
- **Discipline**: *discipl order organiz dedicat punctua responsib*
- **Authoritarianism**: *viole authorit obedie obey respect subordinat coerc control superior hierarchy indoctrinat*
- **Waste of time**: *lose lost loss useless nothing none waste 'no learning at all' 'no transmission' 'no value'*

Table A11: Sentiment analysis

	(1) Sentiment score	(2) I[score=1]	(3) I[score=0]
Served	0.07	0.06	-0.07
	(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.06)
Cohort & District FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Add. controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
Control mean	0.56	0.50	0.37
Obs.	1994	1994	1994

Note: Additional controls include indicators for having a father who served in the military, for each possible educational level of the father and of the mother, and for each possible number of immigrant grandparents. Standard errors clustered at ID-cohort level. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A12: Transmission of political and economic preferences

	Civic Values		Demand Regulation	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Served	0.02	-0.19	-0.02	-0.02
	(0.10)	(0.12)	(0.07)	(0.08)
Served x I[post '83]		0.46**		0.23*
		(0.22)		(0.14)
Served x I[post '89]				-1.05***
				(0.37)
Cohort & District FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Add. controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Coef. int. group 1		0.27		0.21*
		0.18		0.11
Coef. int. group 2				-0.84**
				0.35
Control mean	-0.05	-0.05	0.52	0.52
Obs.	3086	3086	1972	1972

Note: Additional controls include indicators for having a father who served in the military, for each possible educational level of the father and of the mother, and for each possible number of immigrant grandparents. Standard errors clustered at ID-cohort level. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Appendix B: Full set of fixed effects

Table B1: First stage, National Values, and Civic Values

	Served (First Stage)		National Values Index		Civic Values Index	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
High-number	0.39***	0.40***				
	(0.02)	(0.02)				
Served			0.22**	0.20*	-0.04	-0.04
			(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.11)
Full set FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Add. controls	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Control mean	0.12	0.12	-0.05	-0.05	-0.04	-0.04
Obs.	3033	3033	3033	3033	3033	3033

Note: Columns 1–2 show estimates for the first stage, columns 3–4 show 2SLS estimates for the effect of serving in the military on the National Values index, and columns 5–6 show the analogous estimates for the Civic Values index. The National Values index is a standardized aggregate of two questions ("pride in nationality" and "best country to have been born in"). The Civic Values index is a standardized aggregate of three questions ("justify evasion," "going to vote," and "taking the law into own hands"). Additional controls include indicators for having a father who served in the military, for each possible educational level of the father and mother, for each possible number of immigrant grandparents, and for survey round. The control group is low-number individuals. Standard errors are clustered at the ID-cohort level. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table B2: Social Integration

	Similarity	Neighbors (rejection)					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
		Immig. workers	Other relig.	Indigenous	Other sex. or.	Low SES	Low SES
Served	0.58*	0.03	0.04	-0.05**	-0.09*	-0.03	0.08
	(0.33)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Served x HS-grad par.							-0.18**
							(0.07)
HS-grad parent							0.12***
							(0.03)
Full set FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Add. controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Coef. int. group							-0.10
							0.07
Control mean	4.10	0.07	0.06	0.04	0.15	0.17	0.10
Obs.	1927	1927	1927	1927	1927	1927	1927

Note: The control group is low-number individuals in columns 1-6 and low-number individuals with no high-school graduate parents in column 7. Additional controls include indicators for having a father who served in the military, for each possible educational level of the father and of the mother, and for each possible number of immigrant grandparents. Standard errors clustered at ID-cohort level. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table B3: Bags of words

	Topics						Log-Length	Freq.
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	Authorit.	Discip.	National V.	Integration	Time Waste	Civic V.		
Served	-0.10	-0.01	0.07	0.10**	0.06	-0.01	0.19*	0.14**
	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.10)	(0.07)
Full set FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Add. controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Control mean	0.44	0.34	0.19	0.16	0.14	0.09	2.71	0.52
Obs.	1927	1927	1927	1927	1927	1927	1927	1927

Note: Columns 1–6 regress indicator variables for mentioning at least one term related to that topic, Column 7 regresses the log of the number of words, and column 8 regresses an indicator for reporting to talk "occasionally/at most once per year" or "frequently/more than once per year" about the types of values transmitted in the military. Additional controls include indicators for having a father who served in the military, for each possible educational level of the father and of the mother, and for each possible number of immigrant grandparents. Standard errors clustered at ID-cohort level. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table B4: Exposure to diverse peers

	National Values				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Served	0.20*	0.36***	0.36***	0.35***	0.21**
	(0.11)	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.08)
Served x peer div. index, freq. contact			0.06*		
			(0.04)		
Served x peer div. index, any contact				0.08**	
				(0.04)	
Served x diff. province					0.40**
					(0.18)
Full set FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Add. controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Control mean	-0.05	-0.10	-0.10	-0.10	-0.10
Obs.	3033	2001	2001	2001	2001

Note: Additional controls include indicators for having a father who served in the military, for each possible educational level of the father and of the mother, and for each possible number of immigrant grandparents. Standard errors clustered at ID-cohort level. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table B5: Social networks

	Net. Size	Conscripts	Other prov.	College grad.		Practising Cath.	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Served	0.12	0.10	0.07	0.07	0.14*	0.14**	0.20*
	(0.72)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.08)	(0.06)	(0.11)
Served x HS-grad par.					-0.13		
					(0.09)		
HS-grad parent					0.15***		
					(0.04)		
Served x Catholic							-0.09
							(0.11)
catholic						0.27***	0.31***
						(0.02)	(0.05)
Cohort FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
District FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Add. controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Coef. int. group					0.01		0.11
					0.07		0.07
Control mean	4.97	0.44	0.27	0.61	0.61	0.60	0.42
Obs.	1927	1927	1927	1927	1927	1927	1927

Note: Additional controls include indicators for having a father who served in the military, for each possible educational level of the father and of the mother, and for each possible number of immigrant grandparents. Standard errors clustered at ID-cohort level. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Appendix C: Reduced form effects

Table C1: First stage, National Values, and Civic Values

	Served		National Values Index		Civic Values Index	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
High-number	0.39***	0.39***	0.09**	0.09**	0.01	0.01
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Cohort FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
District FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Add. controls	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Control mean	0.12	0.12	-0.04	-0.04	-0.05	-0.05
R2	0.27	0.27	0.03	0.06	0.03	0.04
Obs.	3086	3086	3086	3086	3086	3086

Note: Columns 1–2 show estimates for the first stage, columns 3–4 show 2SLS estimates for the effect of serving in the military on the National Values index, and columns 5–6 show the analogous estimates for the Civic Values index. The National Values index is a standardized aggregate of two questions ("pride in nationality" and "best country to have been born in"). The Civic Values index is a standardized aggregate of three questions ("justify evasion," "going to vote," and "taking the law into own hands"). Additional controls include indicators for having a father who served in the military, for each possible educational level of the father and mother, for each possible number of immigrant grandparents, and for survey round. The control group is low-number individuals. Standard errors are clustered at the ID-cohort level. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table C2: Social Integration

	Similarity	Neighbors (rejection)					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
		Immig. workers	Other relig.	Indigenous	Other sex. or.	Low SES	Low SES
High-number	0.26**	0.01	0.01	-0.02**	-0.04*	-0.02	0.03
	(0.13)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)
int_hsparent_highnum							-0.08**
							(0.03)
Cohort & District FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Add. controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Coef. int. group							-0.08**
							0.04
Control mean	4.12	0.08	0.07	0.05	0.16	0.17	0.67
Obs.	1994	1994	1994	1994	1994	1994	1994

Note: The control group is low-number individuals in columns 1-6 and low-number individuals with no high-school graduate parents in column 7. Additional controls include indicators for having a father who served in the military, for each possible educational level of the father and of the mother, and for each possible number of immigrant grandparents. Standard errors clustered at ID-cohort level. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table C3: Bags of words

	Topics						Log-Length	Freq.
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	Authorit.	Discip.	National V.	Integration	Time Waste	Civic V.		
High-number	-0.03	-0.00	0.02	0.04**	0.02	0.01	0.08**	0.07***
	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.04)	(0.03)
Coh. & Dist. FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Add. controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Control mean	0.44	0.35	0.20	0.16	0.14	0.09	2.71	0.52
Obs.	1994	1994	1994	1994	1994	1994	1994	1994

Note: Columns 1–6 regress indicator variables for mentioning at least one term related to that topic, Column 7 regresses the log of the number of words, and column 8 regresses an indicator for reporting to talk "occasionally/at most once per year" or "frequently/more than once per year" about the types of values transmitted in the military. Additional controls include indicators for having a father who served in the military, for each possible educational level of the father and of the mother, and for each possible number of immigrant grandparents. Standard errors clustered at ID-cohort level. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table C4: Exposure to diverse peers

	National Values				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
High-number	0.09**	0.14***	0.14***	0.14***	0.14**
	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.07)
int_smopeers_fc_highnum			0.07**		
			(0.04)		
int_smopeers_ac_highnum				0.09**	
				(0.04)	
int_diff_prov2_highnum					-0.00
					(0.06)
Cohort & District FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Add. controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Control mean	-0.04	-0.09	-0.09	-0.09	-0.09
Obs.	3086	2058	2058	2058	2058

Note: Additional controls include indicators for having a father who served in the military, for each possible educational level of the father and of the mother, and for each possible number of immigrant grandparents. Standard errors clustered at ID-cohort level. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table C5: Social networks

	Net. Size	Conscripts	Other prov.	College grad.		Practising Cath.	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
High-number	-0.00	0.04	0.04*	0.03	0.08**	0.05**	0.09**
	(0.27)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.04)	(0.02)	(0.04)
int_hsparent_highnum					-0.07*		
					(0.04)		
HS-grad parent					0.14***		
					(0.03)		
int_catholic_highnum							-0.06
							(0.05)
catholic						0.29***	0.32***
						(0.02)	(0.03)
Cohort FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
District FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Add. controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Coef. int. group					-0.06		-0.03
					0.05		0.05
Control mean	4.95	0.44	0.27	0.61	0.61	0.60	0.41
Obs.	1994	1994	1994	1994	1994	1994	1994

Note: Additional controls include indicators for having a father who served in the military, for each possible educational level of the father and of the mother, and for each possible number of immigrant grandparents. Standard errors clustered at ID-cohort level. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.