

MILITARIZED SOCIALIZATION, MILITARY SERVICE, AND CLASS REPRODUCTION: THE EXPERIENCES OF ISRAELI SOLDIERS

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ABSTRACT: Exploring the links between militarized socialization and social inequality in Israel, the authors aim to examine both the pattern of political socialization, which extols the role of the combat soldier as the emblem of the "good citizen," and the ways by which social agents themselves respond to this socialization. Although an all-encompassing phenomenon, the authors find militarized socialization is not equally "distributed" or "received." Rather, it reflects and reproduces the class and ethnic positions of its various recipients. Based on interviews with male soldiers in a wide range of military roles, the authors identify two types of responses to militarized socialization: (a) a dominant response of conformity and obedience, mainly expressed in the unquestioning acceptance of military service in a combat role, and (b) an ambivalent response, of simultaneous acceptance of and resistance to this ideal. In a more comparative vein, the authors argue that military service does not simply reproduce ethnic and class inequalities but rather, by molding the soldiers' conceptions of citizenship, is still a powerful mechanism of legitimizing a hegemonic militarized and class-differentiated social order.

Keywords: militarized socialization; military service; citizenship; political socialization; class and ethnic inequality; Israel

"Combat is Best, Bro" (A popular bumper sticker in Israel)

The recent outbreaks of aggression on Israel's Gazan and Lebanese fronts marked a turning point in what seemed to be Israel's path to de-escalation. Following a decade of negotiated and unilateral territorial withdrawals, many Israelis felt that Israel was heading for peaceful relationships with its neighbors and that a new civic ethos would replace the militaristic metacode that characterized the long period of nation building (Kimmerling 2001; Shafir and Peled 2000). Nonetheless,

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with the rekindling of the Intifadah in 2000 and with even greater vigor after the inception of the second Lebanon War in 2006, Jewish Israelis were swept with a patriotic zeal and a (renewed) passion for militaristic response to these aggressions.¹ Yet consent and dissent with regard to militarism and peace does not spread evenly in society. In fact, whereas military actions usually draw considerable consensus across class and ethnic backgrounds, peace negotiations remain a matter of conflict, which overlaps these social categories (see Shafir and Peled 2002: 339–41; Shalev and Levy 2005: 177–80). A similar split, between the dovish Jewish (mostly Ashkenazi) middle-class and the hawkish Jewish (mostly Mizrahi) lower class, is seen when one examines the patterns of participation in the military (Y. Levy 2006).²

This interconnectedness between militarism and class divisions stands at the core of this article, which seeks to examine, by returning to the political socialization approach, the role of militarized education in constructing belligerency and warfare as normal across society. Examining how young Israeli male soldiers discuss their military service and characterizing their different responses to militarized education, we seek to explain how class and ethnicity shape these differential responses and argue that militarized education in Israel is still the prime form of political socialization, which, beyond generating consent for war, is equally responsible for reproducing ethnic and class stratification. In a more general, comparative vein, we argue that military service does not simply reproduce ethnic and class inequalities but rather, by molding the soldiers' conceptions of citizenship, is still a powerful mechanism of legitimizing a hegemonic militarized and class-differentiated social order.

Recent literature on militarism and socialization in Israel has contributed considerably to our understanding of the dynamics of militaristic education in shaping conceptions of citizenship and political identities. Yet whereas this literature focused on attributing the "responsibility" for Israel's militarized political culture, and for the centrality of the military in reproducing differential paths for citizenship (Shafir and Peled 2002), to the state's agents of socialization, this article examines the role of the political agents themselves—that is, young soldiers—in reproducing a militarized and class-based social order. Committed though we are to a structural perspective, we believe that to fully understand the mechanisms of socialization and reproduction, a more nuanced analysis is in place. Specifically, what is at times missing is an examination of the interaction between (militarized) socialization and the various responses that it engenders. Our analysis thus aims at complementing the extant critical literature on militarized socialization with a bottom-up perspective that explores how the social agents internalize and respond to this socialization. The article reveals two main ways in which young male soldiers³ from various social and ethnic backgrounds respond to militarized socialization: (a) a dominant response of conformity and obedience, mainly expressed in the unquestioning acceptance of military service in a combat role, and (b) an ambivalent response, simultaneously involving acceptance of and resistance to this ideal. It also shows that whereas conformity spans social strata, ambivalence has a clear class and ethnic character.

From a broader perspective, we argue, it is this discrepancy between adherence and ambivalence that calls for a renewed approach to the relationship between militarism and class. While the role of militarized education as a powerful mechanism in generating consensus among the lower classes—especially in states where conscription is voluntary—has been widely acknowledged (Aguirre and Johnson 2005; Berlowitz and Long 2003; Tannock 2005), its reproductive powers in the context of mandatory draft had not been fully comprehended. In particular, what is most striking in the soldiers' responses is not necessarily their showing adherence to the republican ethos of militarized education. It is rather this differential response along class and ethnic lines that demonstrates how, by adhering to and extolling the ideal of the combat soldier as the "good citizen," the socialized themselves partake in reaffirming the power of militarized socialization. Thus, despite being an all-encompassing phenomenon, militarized education, in Israel and elsewhere, as will be shown later, becomes another mechanism in reproducing class and ethnic positions among its various recipients, and hence contradicts the universalistic ideal of "service for all," and its simplistic understanding as representing a single, coherent conception of citizenship.

Political Socialization Revisited

Research into political socialization was a mainstay of (American) political science between the 1950s and 1970s, after which it was practically declared dead (Connell 1987; Niemi and Hepburn 1995; Sigel 1995). Concerning themselves mostly with methodological and conceptual drawbacks, critics of early research in the field pointed to its functionalist foundations as the main reason for its demise. Thus, for example, focusing on children's "political views" as a precursor of their adult behavior (therefore defining them as pre-adults; e.g., Easton and Dennis 1969; Marsh 1971; Niemi and Hepburn 1995), these studies were driven by a concern for the political system's stability (Sigel 1995). Similarly, equating "American society" with white middle-class society offered "reassuring," though misleading, evidence for widespread trust in the political system, overlooking the lack of similar political knowledge and trust among children from ethnic minorities (Sigel 1995).

Connell's (1987) criticism of the political socialization paradigm showed that much of the research was American oriented and, moreover, was concerned with political stability and a fear of political change. Furthermore, its orientation toward an "individualist concept of reality," on the one hand, and its lack of a conception of the role and place of collectivities in developing an individual's political orientation, on the other, meant that the "person as agent, the issues of resistance to socialization, of invention and collective practice, are all missing from the fundamental concept" (Connell 1987: 217). However, although these theoretical and conceptual weaknesses eventually brought about the demise of the political socialization paradigm, they have not, as Sigel (1995) rightly claims, diminished our interest in this process. The task, therefore, is to bring the "person as agent" and "the issues of resistance" back into the study of political socialization.

Seeking to revitalize the political socialization approach, Connell made two useful suggestions in this direction. First, grounded in the sociology of consciousness and cultural theory,⁴ Connell (1987) proposed investigating “the ways in which people construct or enter a form of consciousness in terms of their life histories and patterns of personal growth” (p. 221). This would enable us to overcome the political socialization view of children as “empty containers” and to develop instead a critical perspective based on particularistic personal backgrounds and on the reactions to the process of political socialization among young people on the verge of joining the military. His other suggestion was to broaden our perspective on the “politics of political socialization.” Seeing political socialization only as a “top-down” process, functionally designed to shape the minds and consciousness of passive subjects, implied the depoliticization of the field. At this point, one should differentiate the “working assumptions” for those state agencies that stood at the core of this process from research on political socialization. The latter, Connell justly proposed, failed to observe that these agencies that were “identified by political socialization theory as ‘agencies’ of socialization to the political system themselves contain a form of politics” (p. 221). Therefore, he conjectured that when children, or adolescents, enter one of these institutions, they do not simply undergo “preparation for (later) politics” but are rather “already participating in a politics” (p. 221).

It was mainly for this reason, namely its eluding the political and its too narrow conception of politics, that critical social theory abandoned political socialization altogether. In parallel, a renewed interest in Antonio Gramsci’s concept of hegemony, especially among various strands of Marxist analyses (e.g., Morrow and Torres 1995: 279), gave rise to novel conceptions regarding education and the state. Thus, one could see in the British New Sociology of Education, in Cultural Studies, as well as in hegemony theories (cf., Morrow and Torres 1995: 285), a growing interest in the politics of education. Accordingly, not only are schools political institutions, but also our understanding of where and how political socialization takes place should be extended beyond the school. Hegemony theories were of particular interest in this respect, as they focused on the ways education, to take one hegemonic practice, sought to mold and construct a hegemonic order—that is, turning a specific, moreover particularistic, conception of the social order as “natural” and assumed. At this point, a return to the political socialization approach proves useful. First, it allows us to see the state’s interest and effort to instill in its citizenry a specific conception of social relations as a manifestation of a hegemonic practice. Thus, seeing the state as the locus for the study of power relations, political socialization was identified as a concrete effect of state power (see Isaacs 1987). In this sense, if militarization is a hegemonic project, the focus on political socialization may help us to better understand how specific socialization agencies are participating in making it hegemonic.

Second, hegemony theories also generated an interest in social and political identities, emphasizing their multiplicity and relational character (Brubaker 2004; Filc 2006; Laclau and Mouffe 1985; Malešević 2006: 65–66). Thus, the process of political socialization, while still the most significant state practice aimed at molding a single, coherent collective identity, is bound to face resistance at various levels

of the educational process. Refusing to treat students/citizens as “passive recipients” of the meaning intended for them, we seek to study their experiences to understand, to recall Connell’s first proposal, how they construct or enter a form of consciousness. In this respect, if militarization is “the contradictory and tense social process in which civil society organizes itself for the production of violence” (Geyer 1989: 79, as cited in Lutz 2002), what we ask is not merely what people are being taught about politics and by whom (Farnen 1994: 51). We are equally interested in the processes whereby citizens become political (Isin 2002) and in the ways in which, through the duality of acceptance of and resistance to the state’s hegemonic practices, militarism is still a metacode of the Israeli political culture (Kimmerling 2001).

Citizenship, Militarism, and Social Class

The military was, and still is, one major state institution involved in the construction of citizenship and rendering it meaningful. Seen from either liberal or republican perspectives on citizenship, the expansion of the draft has made military service the hallmark of modern citizenship (Janowitz 1976: 357) and a powerful mechanism in making citizenship universal, surpassing class and ethnic affiliations (Burk 1995). Nonetheless, military service has not diminished the power of class in shaping differential paths for inclusion in the citizenry, as in fact, the draft remained class (and ethnic) determined. In Israel, the centrality of the military in reproducing social class hierarchies derives from the strong link between citizenship and class and hence its role in generating a multilayered structure of citizenship (Shafir and Peled 2002). Though the concept of a “people’s army” is not unique to Israel, it takes on special meaning in interlinking military service and citizenship due to the prolonged Arab-Israeli conflict and its centrality in the Israeli political culture (Ben-Eliezer 1995). This link is further strengthened as military service divides the Israeli citizenry, differentiating Arabs from Jews, and discriminating among Jewish citizens according to their alleged contribution to the common good (Y. Levy 2006; Shafir and Peled 2002: 126).

In Israel, where military service is compulsory, it is seen as a right rather than a duty and forms a foundation of the national consensus (Y. Levy 1998); indeed, the question is not who obeys the mandatory conscription law, but rather, who is a “patriot” and to what extent (Helman 1997). Military service, therefore, not only delineates both the external and internal boundaries of the Israeli polity, it has also led to the development of “civilian militarism” (Kimmerling 2001), which serves as a metacode for Israeli political culture, whose effects extend beyond the military or military service *per se*. In this context, the republican citizen-soldier model came to be identified with middle-class Jewish Ashkenazi men, who historically formed the backbone of the Israeli political and military elite. As shown by Yagil Levy (1998, 2006), the assimilation of the citizen-soldier principle has allowed the Ashkenazi elite to benefit from their power of exchange, based on the conversion of military status into valuable social positions. It also empowered them to reinforce the marginal position of non-elite groups by depreciating their contribution to the “security effort.” These non-elite, marginalized groups include,

as well as Palestinian citizens and women,⁵ ultra-orthodox Jews, who are exempt from military service, and lower-class Mizrahim, who are either disqualified due mainly to a lower level of education or are drafted and serve in menial jobs (Sasson-Levy 2003b). This latter group is of particular interest because Mizrahim are part of the ethnonational collective yet are marginalized and stigmatized as “parasites” (see Levy and Emmerich 2001). In recent years, peripheral groups have attempted to defy and circumvent this stigmatization, and in the context of the diminishing value of military service for the Ashkenazi middle-class, they have increased their presence in combat units (Y. Levy 2006: 318–20). This only reemphasizes the salience of the republican principle and of the military in the Israeli social order and the way militarized socialization, to which we turn now, shapes the conception of Israelis from various backgrounds of what it takes to become a “good citizen.”

Militarized Socialization in Israel

Militarized socialization is an all-encompassing phenomenon in Israel. It is shaped by the republican discourse of citizenship and therefore extols military service and produces the identification of the combat soldier with the “good citizen.” Yet although military service stands at the core of militarized socialization, the military is not the only social agency involved in this process. In fact, when young Israelis enter the military, they have already been exposed to many years of militarized indoctrination.

The fusion between the state’s political ideology and formal education begins in pre-school settings, where Israeli children are exposed to themes of persecution, heroism, and war. These themes are given special salience in Memorial Day ceremonies commemorating masculine warriors, whose stories lay the emotional foundation for the construction of militaristic attitudes and behavior (Furman 1999: 149).

In elementary school, the process of militarized socialization is continued as children study Israel’s wars and take field trips “in the footsteps of warriors” to learn the legacy of important battles (Klein 2002). On memorial days, children participate in commemoration ceremonies (Lomsky-Feder 2004), which are usually held in a quasi-military fashion (Ben-Amos and Bet-El 2003) in the school’s “memorial corner” for school graduates or in the local cemetery.⁶

The passage into high school marks the beginning of children’s actual preparation for military service. During the eleventh grade, both male and female students are sent for a week to a *Gadna* camp (*Gadna* is the Hebrew acronym for Youth Regiments). Dressed in military uniforms, the students taste army life as they are subjected to military discipline and undergo basic weapons training and even shooting practice. While *Gadna* is a mandatory part of the curriculum, many teenage boys, and even some girls, attend privately run preparatory courses that aim to guarantee a place in an elite combat unit through strenuous physical training, field navigation, and basic acquaintance with military life and history (Y. Levy et al. 2007: 138–40). However, these courses have engendered criticism for being privately financed and hence

disadvantaging children from poor backgrounds in the draft to the elite combat units.⁷

During their last years of high school, students meet combat soldiers (preferably graduates of their school, thus giving these encounters a familiar face), who present various military units and jobs to them, usually based on their personal experience, with the aim of motivating the students to enlist in combat units. Given a fall in the rate of recruits among Jewish males, from 84 percent in 1990 to 77 percent in 2002 (Nevo and Shor 2002: 12), the Ministry of Education, in conjunction with the military, initiated additional programs to increase the motivation to serve, especially in combat units (Shiloni 2002). One such initiative was to distribute questionnaires among tenth graders to assess their motivation to serve in combat units. The project was meant to enable the military to classify the students according to motivation level and to develop programs to encourage the less motivated to reconsider their attitude toward combat service (Grinberg 2006).⁸ Eventually, this initiative was discontinued following criticism from parents and some school principals.

Another way of bolstering the youngsters' patriotism is by emphasizing the "lesson of the Holocaust" in a tour to Holocaust sites in Europe, a trip many eleventh graders make. A primary message passed on to the participants is the need for a strong military to ensure that "the Holocaust shall never happen again" (Feldman 2002). Yet again, one should note that the cost of this trip, which is borne by the parents, means that more students from affluent backgrounds participate than those from a lower class background.

As happens in the United States (see below), following the growth of neoliberal ideologies and of individualistic attitudes, the state has found it necessary to intensify its educational efforts to increase the motivation to serve in the military. Thus, for example, former Minister of Education Limor Livnat (Likud) said when seeking support among high-tech business people and economists for a neoliberal reform in education⁹:

We ought to start from the bottom, to ensure that the education system would be that which drives the students' curiosity for science [and] innovativeness. *That they would be able to operate the [war]planes and weaponry of tomorrow.* (italics added; Zelikowitch 2005)

Minister Livnat's emphasis on the militaristic value of neoliberal educational reform suggests that the potency of militarized education retains its appeal, even when the state seems to "roll back" from society. Thus, although militarized socialization differs in various educational settings—that is, between academic and vocational education, religious and nonreligious schools, in affluent and disadvantaged areas—militarized education is still a major experience for most Jewish students.

Finally, in Israel, where most Jewish men undergo "lifelong military socialization" (Klein 2002: 672), militarism plays a central role in the cultural sphere too, as the image of the fighter constantly appears in fiction, poetry, plays, films, and, not surprisingly, commercials.

Whereas militarized socialization took place unquestioningly for decades, a new atmosphere of peace and reconciliation since the early 1990s has charged

Israeli society with a more critical perspective on this kind of indoctrination. An antimilitaristic attitude has arisen, not only in academia but throughout society, and new nongovernmental organizations offer nonmilitaristic conceptions of citizenship and solidarity (Gor 2003; Lomsky-Feder 2004). This critical perspective aims not only at dismantling the curricular aspects of militarized education but also other developments, such as the rise in the number of retired high-rank military officers who become school principals, mainly in prestigious schools for urban middle-class children. Nonetheless, this opposition remains marginal. Employing Otley's (1978) distinction, we may conclude that even when the Israeli school structure is not militaristic, its culture is saturated with military values and messages.

In summary, by highlighting the heroic image of the combat soldier and marginalizing noncombat and nonmilitarized identities, militarized socialization is responsible both formally and informally for reproducing the centrality of the military in the lives of Israelis. However, despite its omnipresence, militarized socialization produces social differentiation. In contrast to the ideal of a republican society that places no conditions on those who may contribute and become "good citizens" (Yonah 1999), in reality, nationality, gender, and class limit individuals' access to the common good. As we shall demonstrate, the particularistic nature of militarized socialization is also reflected in the responses of the soldiers themselves—who are, nominally, the "natural" recipients of this ideal. Ethnicity and class play a critical role in making this process a part of the reproduction of social inequalities and the preservation of the existing social order.

METHODS

The data for this article are drawn from an earlier study on the construction of gender identities within the Israeli military (Sasson-Levy 2006), which employed a phenomenological methodology to analyze social reality from the subjective point of view of those who live within it (Geertz 1973; Taylor 1987). This article is based on the interviews conducted with fifty-two male soldiers, of whom twenty served in combat roles, sixteen in blue-collar jobs (such as car mechanics, drivers, and cooks), and sixteen in white-collar roles (such as computers or intelligence). The interviews were conducted by Sasson-Levy during the years 1995–1999, when Israel was engaged in negotiations with the Palestinian Authority (the Oslo Accords) and just before Israel's unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon (May 2000). Whereas the original study focused on the interviewees' gender and civic identities, we seek here to analyze their narratives from the perspective of the interconnection between socialization and class position.

Conformity and Obedience: A "Pattern of Blindness"

The dominant response to militarized socialization among all of our interviewees reflects conformity and consent to the ideal of the combat soldier. Predictably, it is explicitly articulated in the narratives of combat soldiers, irrespective of class or ethnic origin. We call this response a "pattern of blindness." This metaphor

suggests that the uniform decision of young men to enlist into combat units stems from their desire to prove their masculinity, to gain social prestige, and to become "one of us." Itamar, who served first in the paratroopers' brigade and then as a paramedic, is from a small middle-class suburban Ashkenazi family from Jerusalem; he offered us this metaphor:

In the [high-school] graduation ceremony, we each gave this little monologue. My monologue was about the military, how [terrible] it is that I'm going to the paratroopers and not to the [elite unit] of the reconnaissance, though all I wanted was to go into reconnaissance. [. . .]

I think there was this hidden push, the people who came to talk to us in high school were all combat soldiers. The attitude was "military is combat." I think this is true in most schools. For most people in my [social] group, I think, except for those who are physically disabled, there was this *blind tendency* to join a combat unit. For me, it went along with being an athlete, a leader, and all this blah blah. [. . .] But, I must say that in retrospect it was a *blind sight*. What other alternatives are there? Did we consider other options? No, it was quite a *blind race*.

Itamar uses the metaphor of blindness three times, each time more powerfully. At first, he talks about a blind tendency, then he characterizes his condition with the oxymoron of blind sight, and finally he reaches the dangerous situation of a blind race. In his perception, combat service has turned into an ideology that blinds his sight, trapping him and his friends within a one-dimensional perspective on reality. This not only exposes the power of militarized socialization but also demonstrates how this blindness, by placing other military or civilian options out of sight, meets the interests of the state. Itamar and his friends are perfectly aware that soldiers also serve as cooks, as drivers, and in other noncombat positions, but they do not see these as viable options for themselves. As a result, combat service remains the only legitimate option for these youngsters.

This blindness recurs in the stories of other interviewees who decided to join combat units. "When I was first summoned to the recruitment base [at the age of seventeen]," said Guy, a Mizrahi soldier from near Tel Aviv, "all of a sudden I decided that this is it, that I must make it [and enlist] into the elite reconnaissance unit." Similarly, Eli, an Ashkenazi soldier from a city in the center of the country, said, "From the start it was clear to me that I will go where everybody goes. Combat service seemed fine to me. I don't think that I gave it much thought before I was enlisted."

Some soldiers identify in their narratives the social agencies and processes that in practice manufacture blind obedience to the imperatives of militarized socialization. Aviv, from a wealthy Ashkenazi family, explained, "I knew I was supposed to serve in a combat unit. I didn't know why, I mean, I knew why, because that's the norm in my neighborhood. It's a neighborhood full of fighters." Only a few of the interviewees could expose and describe the impact of militarized socialization as clearly as Rami, who is from a lower class, single-parent Mizrahi family. Rami's explanation of his motivation to serve as a paratrooper (although

he ended up serving as a paramedic in the armored corps) concisely summarizes our own arguments and propositions:

Oh, now we have to go a long way back. I was a kind of a military child. All my life, I grew up on stories and myths, and I think that by the age of fourteen I already knew more than the average officer about the army, its history, its legacy, its equipment and its warfare strategies. [. . .]

I was “poisoned” [military slang for a highly motivated soldier]. A poisoned little boy. I read all about the paratroopers in the 1950s, about their retaliation operations, about the origin of the [paratroopers’] brigade. [I knew] all the big names [of war heroes], Arik Sharon, Har-Zion, all of them. And I was enthralled. It’s visually captivating for every regular soldier—the red boots, the paratroopers’ wings, the red beret, the prestige, it affects you. It’s amazing how it does. So that’s it, I wanted to be a paratrooper.

Notably, what these texts share is a lack of conscious or informed choice in opting for combat service. They show that by working its way down to the immediate settings of prospective soldiers, the hegemonic conception of the combat soldier reinforces the military’s power of homogenization, which is itself a necessary element in imagining a national community (Anderson 1991). As Gramsci remarked, the power of the hegemony is reproduced when social institutions—ranging from education, religion, and the family to the microstructures of the practices of everyday life—all contribute to the production of meaning and values. In turn, these values produce, direct, and maintain “spontaneous” consent for the status quo among the various strata of society, a status quo that serves the interests of the dominant group (Holub 1992: 6). In this sense, the effectiveness of militarized socialization is measured by its success in limiting one’s options, in turning mandatory conscription into a right, a privilege that men voluntarily choose (Berkowitz 1999), and by ensuring that the combat path is taken for granted when it comes to military service.

Conformity and Subversion: Patterns of Ambivalent Resistance

Given the all-encompassing character of militarized socialization, it is hardly surprising to find high levels of conformity among soldiers of various ethnic, class, (and gender) origins. Therefore, combat units are the most heterogeneous in terms of their population (Y. Levy 2006). However, when we turn to the interviewees who served in noncombat positions, the picture changes. The stories of these soldiers present a dual response to the hegemonic discourse of contribution and sacrifice. While consenting to the predominant image of the combat soldier, they also challenge it, either in their discourse or through their practices. These ambivalent responses, as will be shown here, take on a different shape among soldiers of different class backgrounds. In general, class differences were manifested in the interviews as blue-collar soldiers stressed their limited choice of military roles, hence reflecting their social marginalization, in contrast to white-collar soldiers who expressed a conscious decision to opt for noncombat service. Both groups, however, share an ambivalent resistance to the image of the combat soldier.

Patterns of Ambivalent Resistance: Soldiers in Blue-Collar Roles

Soldiers in noncombat roles are positioned, primarily, according to their prior level and quality of education. The ethnic composition of soldiers in blue-collar positions—such as drivers, cooks, mechanics, low-skilled technicians, and other menial jobs—thus reflects the stratified structure of the Israeli education system (G. Levy 2002). Two main social groups are highly represented in these jobs, distinguished by both ethnicity and class. One group consists of lower class Mizrahi soldiers, most of whom earned vocational or partial matriculation diplomas and some of whom dropped out of school before completing postelementary education (Jerby and Levy 2000). The other group comprises recent immigrants from the Former Soviet Union, often their parents' only child, and often from single-parent families. Many soldiers from the latter group end up in noncombat roles either because of their lower class position and poor Hebrew or because their parents refuse to consent to their service in combat roles (as required by military regulations when the soldier is an only child). Consequently, both personal circumstance and class position shape the military service of this group of blue-collar soldiers.

In their narratives, these soldiers show an almost ritualistic consent to militarized socialization, coupled with manifestations of resistance and protest against it, as well as an attempt to promote other, nonmilitaristic elements in constructing their social identities. These narratives are characterized by an explicit commitment to the ideal of the warrior, typically stated at the outset of the interview, followed by an explanation of why they are serving in noncombat positions. Three different, interrelated themes recur in their narratives explaining the discrepancy between their "idealistic" rhetoric and their actual military position: the importance of the home and the family, economic provision, and resistance to military discipline and authority (Sasson-Levy 2003b).

Amram, a car mechanic from a Mizrahi family, explained:

I wanted to serve as a naval commando, but my parents didn't let me because they love me too much. I'm serious. I wanted it so much, even today, but my parents asked me [not to] because it's dangerous. So I had to give it up, I had no choice.

Udi, from Jerusalem, his widowed mother's youngest son, similarly accounted for his transition from a combat to a noncombat unit:

I started basic training with the paratroopers, but then I had problems and I had to leave. It was out of my control. I left towards the end of basic training because of my mom's situation. She was left alone, and she was used to having me around. She needed my support, so that made me leave combat training.

Both interviewees teach us about the centrality of the home and the family in determining the course of their military service and hence their identity as blue-collar soldiers. When these soldiers talk about their homes, they often characterize them in terms of poverty, unemployment, and sometimes sickness and social weakness. This socioeconomic predicament renders the young man's labor power and presence at home as crucial for the family's upkeep. In the military, in contrast,

they often feel invisible and redundant, as they might also have felt in school or in the workplace. In fact, when lower class Mizrahim are visible in the public sphere, it is mainly as a “problem” (G. Levy 2002). It is their home and family, then, that provide them with the recognition they lack elsewhere and that highly value their contribution. The home, and not the state, is thus mobilized as the anchor of their identity.

Another recurring theme that further accentuates the home and family in the narratives of blue-collar soldiers is the need to provide either for their family or for their own future. The shift in most Western militaries from mandatory conscription to professional armies has offered men a unique opportunity to combine the “armed masculinity” with the masculinity of the breadwinner. In the United States, for example, military service is seen as a path for social mobility, and most soldiers enlist for economic reasons (Moskos 1993: 86). In Israel, however, where the military is based on universal mandatory conscription, the governing principle is contribution to the state, rather than the soldier’s economic needs. Nonetheless, blue-collar soldiers in Israel, who suffer from a lack of resources and can find themselves in dire financial straits, do evaluate their military service from an economic perspective and emphasize these needs as determining their military pathway.

Dror, from a lower class family, strips his military service of its national significance by emphasizing the professional and financial gains accrued from his service as a communications technician:

In the beginning, I always thought I’d be a combat soldier. But since I had a profession [acquired in a vocational high school], I was told that if you work in your profession in the military, you accumulate seniority [rights]. I had already signed a contract with the Phone Company—and the three years of military service will count there for my seniority, so it pays to hold on to my profession.

Even if they lack a diploma or a specific skill, other soldiers similarly resist being placed in combat units to acquire a profession during their military service or to serve in a way that would enable them to work part-time in the civilian labor market. Thus, the need to economically provide for their family or themselves takes priority over the combat imperative.

The precedence of the home or economic necessity over the military’s demands was the source of a third theme that often appeared in the stories of blue-collar soldiers—the theme of resistance to military discipline. Many soldiers initially posted in combat units were later transferred into blue-collar jobs after constantly disobeying military discipline. In their interviews, they talked at length about how they disobeyed orders, refused to keep time schedules, talked back to their commanders, and defected from their bases. Kfir, from a lower middle-class family on the outskirts of Jerusalem, served as a base guard throughout his entire service. He described his first days in the military as follows (note how he begins too by declaring his desire to be a combat soldier):

At first, I wanted to be a combat soldier. But I was in the recruitment base for a month and a half. They made me paint the walls there, it wasn’t easy. Many people lost their motivation. They started to cause problems, to run away.

I was one of those who dropped out. [. . .] Every day, when they would call us to get on the bus [that would drive us] to the artillery force training base, I would run back home and return the next morning [to the recruitment base].

Like Kfir, Shuki's story is also characteristic of those soldiers who emphasized their resistance to military authority. Coming from a Mizrahi family in a small development town, Shuki studied to become an electrician in a vocational high school but did not complete his matriculation exams. He started the interview by saying:

The truth is that when I was first summoned to the recruiting office, I wanted to be a combat soldier, [. . .] but it didn't work out. I made a mess in the army, right from day one. I didn't want to be a combat soldier. So I didn't get on the bus [to the basic training camp]. I said, "no, I'm just not getting on this bus." So they put me in detention.

This unruly behavior is even more conspicuous at times of economic hardship. In July 2002, at the height of the economic recession, Israeli newspapers reported a significant rise in the number of soldiers deserting their military units (up to 50 percent in some cases). These soldiers, according to the reports, claimed that they deserted to support their parents because of severe financial difficulties (Rabin 2002). One soldier succinctly explained the motivation behind his desertion:

I wanted to join *Givati* [an infantry brigade] like my brother did, but my parents fell into financial trouble and had debts of two million shekels. [. . .] So what? Should I stand on guard and kill Arabs when my parents have nothing to eat? I would rather run away [and help my parents].

When this soldier weighs the needs of the state ("stand on guard and kill Arabs") against those of his family, he has no doubts where his priorities lie. Indeed, one-fifth of male draftees, mostly blue-collar soldiers, are discharged from service before completing their three years of compulsory duty, mainly due to financial hardships at home (Nevo and Shor 2002: 14).

Desertion and unruly behavior is not unique to soldiers in blue-collar roles. Still, they alone emphasize their opposition and resistance to military discipline as a central theme that shapes their military experience. From their marginal ethnic and class position, these soldiers express a sober and even bitter attitude toward the promise that military service would be their entry card into society. Moreover, they seem to intuitively understand that more often than not they will leave the military with the same social resources they had prior to their service and that they will not be rewarded for serving in the military, as promised by the republican ethos. This notion was clearly expressed by Yiftach, from a poor Mizrahi family who served as a "personal driver," after being originally assigned to serve as an aircraft metal worker. He remarked cynically about the military's promises for social mobility:

This really drove me crazy. They came to me with this nice attitude, saying "this is for your own future." What future? I'll be an aircraft metal worker for the rest of my life? Get real, stop cheating people.

Similar feelings of frustration and powerlessness are echoed in Amram's words:

What's worse is that when I'm discharged I've no idea what I'm going to do as a civilian. Let's say the state will hardly help me. It helps new immigrants, [. . .] Jews, non-Jews, whatever, but it really hurts that the state helps them more than it helps discharged soldiers who contributed three years [to the state].

Feelings of discrimination and injustice were frequently expressed in these soldiers' narratives. However, the knowledge that they are unlikely to gain the same benefits from their service as middle-class soldiers only increases their feelings of alienation from the state and its institutions and leads to their unruly behavior and refusal of military discipline. By refusing the military code of behavior, blue-collar soldiers also distinguish themselves from combat soldiers, whom they regard as "suckers" (Roniger and Feige 1993). In this way, their interpretation of military service differs from the hegemonic, republican interpretation. Feeling that their own contribution is not appreciated (again, as their own experience on the margins of society tells them), they reinterpret military service not as a duty but as part of a mutual exchange system that does not fairly compensate them for their contribution. Their practices of resistance, and their refusal of the ethos of sacrifice, should thus be understood as a form of social protest, opposing ethnic and class inequality in Israeli society.

All this notwithstanding, lower class youth still prefer to serve, at times even in the face of the army's tendency to exempt them because of their low military profile (based on their low educational achievements and lower socioeconomic measures). They struggle for their right to enlist because military service denotes normality and respectability in Israeli society. Yiftach pithily demonstrates this when he says:

I'm serving in order to honor my family. This is the first thing, [. . .] you may say [that it is for] the state, but this is only a small part of it. [. . .] I want to honor them. They gave me a lot in life. I want to give them something in return.

To be sure, by enlisting to the military, these working-class men reinforce the interest of the state and the imperative of militarized socialization. Yet they serve because they feel obliged to do so to reassure their parents (and themselves) that they are conforming to the social norm of "being Israeli." Lacking socioeconomic and educational resources for social acceptance, they obey the militarized imperative, however they attribute their choice to the family and not to the state.

Patterns of Ambivalent Resistance: Soldiers in White-Collar Roles

The other group to opt out of the normative combat path differs from the blue-collar group in both class and ethnicity and, given that, in the choices that it faces. This group of middle-class Ashkenazi youth from prestigious academic high schools undergo normative militarized socialization, and yet despite coming from the dominant strata of Israeli society, some of them reject the republican notion of

contribution and choose instead to serve in white-collar jobs, as, for example, computer programmers, journalists, or intelligence officers. This group demonstrates a choice that youth from marginalized groups lack and that reflects their previous academic skills. Although being similarly ambivalent toward the republican imperative, their reasoning differs from that of noncombat soldiers in blue-collar roles.

One aspect of the ambivalent response to militarized socialization, which we saw among blue-collar soldiers, was to comply with the norm by enlisting in a combat unit but soon afterward looking for a way out. The main reason for changing their military course is their search for self-fulfillment and not the importance of their home and economic provision. A clear manifestation of this was provided by Itamar, whom we met earlier. Although he was prepared to become an elite paratrooper, he soon realized what combat life was really like:

A week after I enlisted, I could already say that no [I don't want to be there]. I was simply, and I think that it's the same for many people, I was *trapped in the image of the fighter*, something very macho. I must say, I was really shocked in the military. After two or three weeks at boot camp, I decided that this is not for me.

Itamar was not only disillusioned by the reality of the combat soldier, his narrative also deconstructs the heroic image that underlies it:

No, no, no, I couldn't imagine myself living this kind of life for three years. I knew very well why it's important. [But] it was important for me to have some kind of intellectual challenge, and it was just boring there [. . .] standing in the sun all day long, doing boring things. You know, for three weeks you shoot, so the first time is exciting, you do things that you see in the movies, but after that, it simply drove me crazy. I didn't find anything in it, it was just boring.

Rejecting the ideal of the combat soldier, Itamar's narrative instead extols intellectual abilities, knowledge, expertise, and management capacities as the markers of his military identity. The managerial ethos thus replaces emotional and physical self-control, courage, and self-sacrifice in boosting his self-esteem:

Towards the end of my service, I commanded the paramedics course. It was a great experience [. . .] you go through a process where you choose the people personally, you choose what to teach and how to teach, what simulations you want in the course, with the help of others of course, but the final word is yours. We can also screen out people. It's a lot of power.

This sense of power and responsibility resonates in the words of Erez, a non-commissioned officer for education:

That's what I liked, this freedom, to show initiative, to do whatever I wanted, and the responsibility too. I mean, at the age of eighteen you take on a grownup role, a colonel may come up to you and ask you to help him prepare for a journey. [. . .] That's what I liked.

This managerial military identity is constructed in line with the cultural script of the middle-class executive, which emphasizes individualistic values and the

acquisition of cultural capital for the purpose of self-realization and career advancement. Both speakers use their military service to expand these skills and even to construct professional networks that will serve them in civilian life. Thus, just like blue-collar soldiers, they too expect a “fair exchange”; however, its content and especially its range differ greatly from that which lower-class soldiers may demand or expect.

When white-collar soldiers emphasize this individualistic, managerial ethos, they undermine the heroic ethos of contribution and self-sacrifice for the collective good. They thus move away from their militarized socialization but not, it would seem, from its rhetoric. Eitan, a middle-class Ashkenazi soldier who served as a noncommissioned officer with the Israel Defense Forces Spokesperson, demonstrates this duality when he expresses his satisfaction at not being physically fit to serve in a combat role. At the same time, it is important for him to note that his service is “more combative” than he expected.

I was very pleased with my asthma. I must say, when I found out my physical profile, I didn't hide my happiness. [. . .] It seemed very natural and very pleasant to serve in the army's radio station or something like that. It's not that I was afraid of combat service, and my service was ultimately much more combative than I had ever dreamt, and the truth is that at one stage I was so “poisoned” that it tormented me that I wasn't an infantry fighter.

Talking about his duty in Gaza, Eitan chose to describe it in combative terms:

This job is really terribly difficult, I don't think that someone who wasn't there can understand the intense responsibility and pressure, and danger too, you know? Driving every day, a few times a day, down the Gaza Strip road, where there are terrorists on the roads, and they shoot every day, it's not such a nice feeling. You have to be very alert.

Eitan deploys multiple symbols from the realm of the combat soldier—danger, pressure, alertness, and so on—and thus, he positions himself on an equal footing with the combat soldier. While this implicitly testifies to the superiority of the combat soldier, he uses these symbols to legitimize his noncombat service and even to present his job as more dangerous and important than that of infantry soldiers. This simultaneous challenge of the combat soldier heroic model and its acceptance as a central criterion and benchmark for appropriate service reveals his own ambivalent attitude toward the republican ethos of sacrifice.

Liron, who as an only child could not serve in a combat role, juxtaposes in his narrative the combat role and his own job as a computer officer. By deconstructing the heroic image of the fighter, Liron proposes an alternative military identity, that of the middle-class manager:

In combat training, you don't learn anything, you don't develop anything except for battle skills. Where would I acquire all the knowledge and professional experience I have today if I had served as a combat soldier? Here I'm in charge of everything. When it comes to computerization, this unit is what I want it to be, [. . .] I believe you have to initiate, to set things in motion, because in my field I'm the boss, I'm the single authority, there's no one to tell me what to do, it's just me.

However, despite emphasizing the uniqueness of his white-collar job, Liron could not let go of his dream to become a combat soldier:

Now that I know the military, I would definitely choose to go to the naval officers' course and become a combat soldier. I understand now that as a combat soldier you experience things you can't experience anywhere else, at any other age. And it's also an ego thing, there are aspects in commanding that you'll never experience as noncombat soldier. To lead thirty-five people into battle . . . today I would choose to become a fighter, no doubt about it.

Liron's narrative embodies the ambivalence that characterizes the militarized identity of white-collar soldiers. Truly disappointed by missing out on the glory of being a fighter, he quickly moves on to present himself as benefiting from his service more than a combat soldier. In both cases, however, we notice how Liron accentuates individual gains—as the leader of soldiers into battle, in the second case, or as being the sole authority where nobody tells him what to do in the first.

Liron's narrative is emblematic of the position of middle-class, mostly Ashkenazi soldiers in white-collar jobs. Whereas blue-collar soldiers justify their service in terms of personal gain, grounded in their contribution to their domestic economy, white-collar soldiers employ a rhetoric of self-actualization that can take the form of concern for their future career or of satisfaction and interest in their military position. In this sense, although they reject the republican imperative by not serving in combat roles, as lower class soldiers do, they do so not by opposing military discipline but rather by interpreting their role in the military as similar to that of the combat soldier. In other words, speaking from their middle-class position, they too, like their peers who serve in combat units, see themselves as contributing to the common good, though their narratives cannot hide the individualistic undertone of their rhetoric.

This individualistic orientation is reflected in the popular slogan "*sayeret o' nayeret*," which literally means "elite combat unit or office work." This slogan insinuates that some middle-class adolescents will only be combat soldiers if they can serve in prestigious units. If they are rejected from, say, the pilot training course or certain select units, they prefer to serve in desk jobs or skilled white-collar positions. Either way, middle-class boys prioritize self-fulfillment in their military service over contribution to the common good. The choice, then, between prestigious combat units and white-collar jobs is class determined, both in its individualistic ideals and in the privilege to make a choice, and is exclusive to middle-class youth (see also Y. Levy et al. 2007).

Militaristic Socialization and Social Stratification: A Comparative Note

The spread of militaristic values and, at times, the direct involvement of the military in education are not unique to Israel (Davies 2003; Pinson 2004). Rather, it is a ubiquitous phenomenon, prevalent especially in times of nation building, state making, prolonged armed conflicts, and revolutions. Thus, for example, President Chaves decreed in 1999 that all school children in Venezuela will receive military training (Harber 2004: 126); Serb schools in Kosovo taught children about

mines and booby traps (Davies 1999); in Taiwan in the 1980s, military officers were present in every senior school, supervising the students' life at the school and giving two weekly hours of military training (Chen 2002); and in Turkey, it has been mandatory from 1926 for all high school students to take a National Security Knowledge course, taught by a uniformed military officer (Gul Altinay 2004). Militarization of the curriculum could also be found in South Africa's apartheid regime, in Libya, North Korea, and more (Harber 2004). However, socialization saturated with militaristic values is also common in more "established" democracies, such as the United Kingdom and the United States.

The long history of the military's involvement in education in the United States starts with the 1916 National Defense Act that established (among other things) the Senior and Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (SROTC and JROTC), which called for three weekly hours of military instruction over a three-year period. Though JROTC leadership states that its mission is "to motivate and develop young people," its true goal is to recruit for the military (Berlowitz and Long 2003). Currently, more than half a million students are enrolled in JROTC programs, in over 3,500 schools (Finley 2003). In addition, military values—such as hierarchy, obedience, centralized authority, domination, and control—are transmitted through the academic structure of schools, the prevalent pedagogical practices, a curriculum that glorifies heroic wars (but disregards peace processes; e.g., Farnen 1994: 26) and even school sports teams, which are often managed like boot camps and promote models of conflict and warfare (Finley 2003; Fogarty 2000). In the post-Columbine period, the physical structure of schools also emanates a sense of military barracks, with the use of metal detectors, security guards, ID cards, pat-down searches, and other punitive measures (Aguirre and Johnson 2005; Finley 2003).

These varied measures of militaristic socialization in the United States are somewhat similar to those practiced in Israel, with, however, one significant difference: whereas Israel has had mandatory conscription since 1949, the United States, like most Western countries, abolished the draft in 1973, following the Vietnam War, and replaced it with the All Volunteer Forces. This difference has multiple implications. While the Israeli military counts on a steady stream of manpower, the U.S. military's Achilles' heel is its dependence on mobilizing enough human resources to successfully wage wars abroad (Tannock 2005). As we have shown here, a mandatory military tends to reproduce gender, class, and ethnic stratification. In an all-volunteer military, this situation is intensified (Janowitz 1975). While most middle- and upper class youth do not view the military as an attractive venue for mobility, racial and ethnic minority youth often consider military service as their most viable opportunity to alter their life chances (Aguirre and Johnson 2005). Growing up in neighborhoods racked by poverty, joblessness, and draconian welfare reforms, these youth are "trapped by a form of economic conscription referred to as the 'push pull' phenomenon, in which they are pushed by poverty and the economics of racism and pulled by the promise of military benefits" (Berlowitz and Long 2003: 167; see also Tannock 2005: 166). The result is the overrepresentation of racial and ethnic minorities in the U.S. military (Aguirre and Johnson 2005; Berlowitz and Long 2003; Y. Levy 1998; Lutz 2002; Moskos 1993).

Race and class inequality in the U.S. military is so severe that it even led to a call to abolish the all-voluntary forces and to reinstate the draft (Tannock 2005).

The need for recruitment efforts to be directed to the poor resulted in the militarization of the educational space in the inner-cities. Compared to high schools in affluent areas, schools in disadvantaged lower class, mostly black neighborhoods are more militarized in their physical space, in standardization policies, in curricular terms, and in the ubiquity of JROTC programs and military involvement (Brown 2003; Leistyna 2003). JROTC programs are framed as operations that should have, as General Colin Powell put it, "particular emphasis [. . .] where drugs, gangs and juvenile delinquency flourish" (as cited in Berlowitz and Long 2003: 166).

Neoliberal reforms in education were mobilized to confront the declining recruitment rate. In 1999, the U.S. government used the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) for this effort by requiring that high schools provide the U.S. military with personal contact information for their students, penalizing those who fail to do so by withdrawing federal funding. Parents could choose to opt out; however, in this case, the student's name would also be removed from mailing lists providing financial resource information for college. The NCLB Act emphasizes, again, the link between the military, the education system, and class differences and thus became the main point of contention for the contemporary antiwar movement that calls for all parents and students to opt out (Aguirre and Johnson 2005; Tannock 2005). Moreover, the NCLB Act reasserts the role of education in enabling the state to promote policies of national, militaristic mobilization, which, in the United States as well as in Israel, helps obscure the growing class gap in neoliberal times.

Bearing these similarities and differences in mind, we wish, in conclusion, to reassert the importance of the revitalization of the political socialization approach within a critical social theory perspective and to point to its contribution to our understanding of the interlinking of militarization, education, and social class.

CONCLUSION

As early as 1980, Cynthia Enloe (1980) challenged the accepted view about the powers of the military to undo class and ethnic stratification and hierarchies. Rejecting functionalist as well as essentialist assumptions regarding the military and ethnic identities, Enloe showed how military service further exacerbates social differentiations and reinforces ethnic (and class) identities, rather than yielding social integration. This critical vein was further extended as the study of military-society relations moved away from its original institutional-organizational perspective, offering more nuanced explications of the military "as a major arena of social exchanges" (Barak and Sheffer 2007: 2–6). In this new theoretical context, military service, whether mandatory or voluntary, is no longer seen simply as the "great equalizer." Rather, it is the question of how military service and, even more so, militarism, underscore, reproduce, or even transform social relations. It is in this context that we ask to shed much needed light on the interconnectedness between class, militarism, and citizenship.

Militarized education is a feature of the state-society relationship not only in Israel but also in other contemporary democratic societies. Evidence from the United States suggests that in the context of voluntary military service, this form of political socialization is directed to the lower echelons of society. Thus, although hypernationalistic and chauvinistic (and hence militaristic) education is not necessarily confined to the working-class (see Farnen 1994: 28), the promise that military service would remedy social exclusion is class and ethnic determined. Conversely, as militarized education becomes a main method of political socialization for the poor, it undermines civic education and a conception of politics based on individualistic and humanistic values, thus practically reproducing the soldiers' social marginality.

In the context of mandatory conscription, as in the case of Israel, where military service is still considered a major mechanism of nation building, militarized education is expected to reinforce the integrative powers of the military. However, two main conclusions to the contrary can be drawn from our analysis: (a) that militarized socialization is still a major mechanism that maintains a hierarchical social order based on an ethnorepublican ethos that glorifies the image of the combat soldier as the "good citizen" and therefore (b) that militarized socialization helps reproduce and legitimize the existing hierarchical class structure.

Shifting our focus to the responses of the socialized, our analysis suggests that while militarized education dominates the personal experience of most, if not all, Israelis, it is class that matters in generating difference in the way it is received. Thus, beyond rhetorically reiterating the ideal of the combat soldier as the "good citizen," the soldiers' military experience demonstrates variation according to class and ethnic backgrounds.

Youths from a middle-class background benefit from their better education and preparation for the military and enjoy a choice between combat and noncombat service. Based on their parents' material and social capital, these young soldiers use military service to develop their individualistic self. In this respect, whether they adhere to or resist the hegemonic practice of militarized education, these soldiers challenge the republican ethos from within, accentuating a liberal conception of citizenship and civic belonging (Shafir and Peled 2002). This is evidenced when those who opt for white-collar jobs turn their military jobs into an advantage for their prospective middle-class careers.

Recruits from the lower class background, conversely, demonstrate a different pattern of ambivalent resistance. They, it appears, are not merely drafted but rather drifted into menial military occupations that reinforce their marginalized social starting point, and contrary to white-collar soldiers, they fail to render their military service useful in terms of life careers. Hence, blue-collar soldiers' ambivalent resistance demonstrates a challenge from without, based on what Sasson-Levy (2003b) termed "home-based masculinity." In this way, their challenge to militarized education does not alter their social marginality but rather reinforces their hope to be a part of the hegemonic order based on their belonging to the ethnonational Jewish collectivity (Y. Levy 1998; Shafir and Peled 2002).

These differential conceptions of citizenship, however, are not derived solely from the perceptions of the soldiers themselves, as they are not responsible for the persistence of class differences in the military. Rather, it is the military itself that, by retaining the principle of mandatory conscription, is engaged not only in the reproduction of class and ethnic hierarchies but practically relies on them to reinforce the principle of the citizen soldier as its organizing principle, masquerading as the hierarchical practice of the ethnorepublican ethos. It is in this context, where militarism and class interplay, that the revitalizing of the political socialization approach and its refocus on the persons as agents help us excavate the politics of political socialization. The soldiers, apparently not “empty containers,” reveal in their own understandings of their military experience, and moreover, in their choices, the existence of several paths to becoming politically socialized. In this light, against and despite the hegemonic effort of various socialization agencies—the school and the military in particular—to present and to infuse a single, coherent conception of citizenship, militarized education turns out to be a powerful mechanism of legitimizing the extant social order, both in prioritizing military thinking and in reproducing class differentiations.

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NOTES

1. A survey taken on August 6, 2006, following the U.N.’s attempt to bring a ceasefire on the Lebanese front, shows that 67.9 percent of Israeli Jews favored a continuation of the fighting over a ceasefire and engaging in negotiations (Shavit et al. 2006).
2. Mizrahim and Ashkenazim are the two main Jewish ethnic categories in Israeli society. Mizrahim are Jews, or descendants of Jews, from Muslim and Arab countries and primarily occupy the lower echelons of Israeli Jewish society. Ashkenazim are Jews of (mainly Eastern) European origin and represent, for the most part, the middle- and upper classes of Israeli society (see also G. Levy 2002).
3. Whereas commonly this group is referred to as Israelis or Jewish young males, these terms are misleading as they exclude either the Palestinian citizens of the state (also Israelis, but not drafted to the military) or non-Jewish draftees (mostly immigrants from the Former Soviet Union). This confusion led Ian Lustick (1999) to define Israel as a “non-Arab state.”
4. Connell is here referring to the Birmingham Centre of Contemporary Cultural Studies and its studies in the late 1970s on minorities in Britain.
5. Although mandatory conscription includes women, the Israeli military is still a male-dominated institution (see Izraeli 1997; Klein 2002: 672–75; Sasson-Levy 2003a). With regard to Arab citizens, the ethnocentric conception of civic virtue leaves little leeway for non-Jews to contribute to the common good (see Yonah 1999: 416). Hence, only Jews are drafted for military service, with two salient exceptions: Arab-Druze, who are therefore

secluded from the Arab minority, and non-Jewish immigrants from the Former Soviet Union, whose contribution to the state is thus considered as a justification for granting them equal citizenship rights. A recent, still marginal, change is the voluntary military service of Arab citizens (Kanaaneh 2005). This phenomenon further confirms our argument, demonstrating how deep the republican discourse has penetrated even the Arab citizenry.

6. It is noteworthy that although commemoration ceremonies retain their metastructure, as dictated by the Ministry of Education, there is growing variation in their conduct, especially in schools that cater mostly for the Ashkenazi middle class (Lomsky-Feder 2004). However, as the collaborative work of Y. Levy et al. (2007: 134–37) shows, these variations do not challenge the metacodes of militarized education. Rather, “[they lean] on the legitimization of the warrior ethos [to put] the individual and his needs at the center, instead of his contribution to the collective” (Levy et al. 2007: 136).
7. In 1989, MK Ran Cohen (Meretz) wrote a letter to the Ministers of Education and Defense, asking them to offer similar preparatory courses to children who cannot afford to pay for them privately (*Panim Le-khan U-le-khan* 1990: 25–26). Interestingly, the letter and the ministers’ responses appear in a journal dedicated to current events to be discussed in school. In this specific case, the children were invited to discuss the rise of what the journal defines as “gray military education” and its implications for inequality. Notably, in 1999, following the identification of a “motivation crisis” mainly within the middle-class, the Ministry of Education designated preparation for military service as obligatory in Jewish high schools (Y. Levy et al. 2007: 137). In recent years, former high-ranking military officers have mobilized private philanthropic funds to run similar courses in peripheral towns, with the explicit goal of offering combat service as a bypass for their social disadvantage.
8. The questionnaire included questions on the students’ immediate environment and its effect on motivation, such as the extent to which family members or friends encouraged them to serve in the military and in which role. In 2004, another initiative, titled “The Next Generation,” coordinated by both the military and the Ministry of Education, aimed to assign to each high school a military officer who would guide and accompany it. This initiative was met with wide and vocal criticism before, ultimately, quietly fading out (Grinberg 2004).
9. For a critical analysis of the Dovrat Report and its neoliberal underpinnings, see Dahan and Yonah (2005).

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