Follow-up to 'Conscription and Nation-Building: Lessons from Argentina'

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1. Introduction

In the study pre-registered as Conscription and Nation-Building: Lessons from Argentina (AEARCTR-0008950) we proposed analyzing the impact of conscription on a set of values, beliefs, and attitudes, related to nation-building. These included the strength of national identity, civic values, social capital, beliefs and attitudes toward fellow nationals as well as other nationalities, and religiosity, among other. We also implemented a randomization exercise to examine the effect from primming military service on these outcomes. We obtained small and statistically insignificant estimates on the effect of conscription on national identity, civic values, and social capital.[3] On the other hand, we obtained a set of significant effects around social integration. Moreover, we found no effect on any of these outcomes deriving from priming military service.

In this new round of data collection, which is a follow-up to the first round registered and conducted in February and March of 2022, we plan to achieve three objectives:

A. Obtain additional data on the main outcomes from the first round that are small and statistically insignificant, in order to be sufficiently powered to detect effects of a reasonable magnitude.
B. Obtain new evidence on the effects of conscription on social integration, focusing on other types of outcomes not explored in the first round.
C. Obtain new evidence on possible mechanisms that may be driving these effects (or lack thereof), focusing on factors not explored in the first round.

To achieve these objectives, we will collect surveys from new respondents and from recontacts from the first round. In particular, we plan to collect 1,500 surveys from new respondents (in line with Objective A—explained below), and 1,000 surveys from recontacts, who will take a short version of the questionnaire answered by the former (which excludes questions already taken in the first round). Thus, in total, we plan to collect 2,500 surveys in this new round.[4]

2. Objective A: Obtain additional data on the main outcomes from the first round

Using data from the first round, we estimate that with a sample size of 3,500 total observations we will be able to detect an intent-to-treat effect of 0.09 standard deviations on the national values index, our main outcome of interest, under a power of 80%.[5] Analogously, we would be able to detect a local average treatment effect of 0.20 standard deviations for the same level of power. Thus, since we have around 2,000 observations from the first round, we will collect 1,500 additional observations from new respondents.

3. Objective B: Obtain new evidence on the effects of conscription on social integration

In the first round we document the effects of conscription on beliefs and attitudes toward others. In this round we plan to complement these with "harder" measures of social integration, which will test whether the patterns we observed

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[3] Under the baseline specification, two-stage least-squares coefficients (in standard deviation units, except for *trust*) and corresponding standard errors include: 0.06 (0.13) for the national values index; 0.09 (0.13) for the civic values index; 0.06 (0.06) for a dummy indicating generalized trust; -0.07 (0.13) for being positively reciprocal; 0.05 (0.13) for being negatively reciprocal; 0.01 (0.13) for being altruistic.
[4] The main reason why we do not collect all 2,500 surveys from new respondents is that the survey panel provider cannot guarantee that number of new respondents.
[5] The intent-to-treat effect we obtained in the first round was 0.024 (0.053).

extend to other relevant aspects of individual behavior. These include questions on internal migration, partner characteristics, prosocial behavior, and an incentivized prisoner's dilemma.

3.1. Incentivized prisoner's dilemma

We will have respondents play two rounds of an incentivized prisoner's dilemma. The objective is to test whether former conscripts are more likely to cooperate, especially with members of a different socioeconomic group. After initial questions on personal characteristics, we will ask respondents to identify with a level of social class (low, middle-low, middle-high, or high). Afterwards, we introduce the game, explaining that we will select 10 winners, who will obtain the payoff obtained in one of the two rounds (selected at random).

Both rounds are identical, except for the characteristics of the partner to whom they are matched. In one round we match them with "*a low or middle-low class man that resides in Argentina*." In the other round we match them with "*a high or middle-high class man that resides in Argentina*." The order of the rounds is randomized.

Payoffs are expressed in "Korus", the token used by Netquest (the panel provider) to reward respondents.[6] The PPP US dollar equivalence to each payoff is the following.

- If both cooperate, each gets $ 75 (200 Korus)
- If A cooperates but B does not, A gets $ 11 (30 Korus) and B gets $ 112 (300 Korus)
- If neither one cooperates, each gets $ 37 (100 Korus)

Besides these "harder" outcomes, we will also include questions on social capital that were not included in the first round. These include moral universalism (in-group/out-group bias) applied to people from anywhere in the world, as well as self-reported beliefs about cooperation (by themselves and by others). In particular, the latter will help to understand whether any impact we find in the game is due to changes in beliefs about others cooperating or due to changes in preferences for others' wellbeing.

Finally, we will also include a standard question to measure gender attitudes. Besides its intrinsic importance, it will reveal whether the better attitudes developed through conscription extend to groups to which conscripts were not significantly exposed during that time. Note that. if anything, conscription caused a reduction in exposure to women. A positive effect on this outcome would imply that conscripts improved their attitudes toward people different to them beyond the scope of the groups to which they were exposed during conscription; a negative effect on this outcome would reinforce the "contact" channel interpretation.

3. Objective C: Obtain new evidence on mechanisms

Motivated by the results on social integration from the first round, we will ask an additional set of questions to those individuals who report having done military service. The objective is to produce heterogeneity analyses that may help to uncover mechanisms that explain the main results (or lack thereof). These questions target characteristics of their experience as well as their appreciation of how good or useful it was.

Some questions in this section ask about objective characteristics, such as region and length of service or whether they were exposed to different groups of people (low/high class, indigenous, gays, etc.) Variability in peers' characteristics and length of service may produce important differences in the effect of conscription on our main outcomes.

Other questions ask about perceptions about their experience, such as whether it was good/bad, whether they learnt useful things, or whether they think all conscripts were treated equally. While the realization of these variables is likely

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[6] Netquest is the same online panel provider we used for the first round. They are widely used in the social sciences. Korus can later be exchanged for rewards (electronics, health & beauty, etc.)

the result of several factors, they are important aspects in which perceived experiences may have differed, which in turn may result in the development of different attitudes towards others, the nation, or civic duties.