

Social Inclusiveness or Political Alienation? The Two Faces of Military Service in Israel

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Summary

Political institutions may have diverse, even contrasting, effects on patterns of political behavior, as with the case of the Israeli Defence Forces [IDF]. On the one hand, the IDF generates a sense of social cohesion and facilitates political integration, due to its socially inclusive nature. On the other hand, it exposes individuals to situations of severe violence, which dampen future political participation. Through exploring the multifaceted effects of military service, we seek to shed new light on how institutional experiences shape the relations between citizens and the state.

Questions

- Do interactions with inclusive institutions, such as the military, affect levels of the trust in government among **immigrants**? (impact of military service)
- Does military service affect patterns of political behavior when examining **all citizens**? Do different experiences during military service impact the relationship with the state? (impact of variations in types of service)

IDF background

Military service in Israel is:

- mandatory (non-Ultra Orthodox Jewish and non-Arab individuals, age 18).
- 3 years for men, 2 years for women.
- until 2001, immigrants > 21 at arrival → on reserve.

Empirical Approach

Using Survey Data from the European Social Survey:

1. We examine variations in migrants' trust in political institutions, depending on military service.
 - Comparing individuals around the age threshold for military service.
 - Comparing individuals of all ages who arrived between 1989-90 from the former USSR.
2. We examine variations in political participation within the full sample, depending on military service during times of military conflict.

Inclusiveness of Immigrants

	DV: Trust Legal Syst.	
No military	-0.804*	
No military *Ex USSR	-3.049*	
Age 20-23	Yes	No
Years Migr 89-90	No	Yes
Pre-Imm Controls	Yes	No
Wave FE	Yes	No
Design Weight	Yes	Yes
Observations	131	111

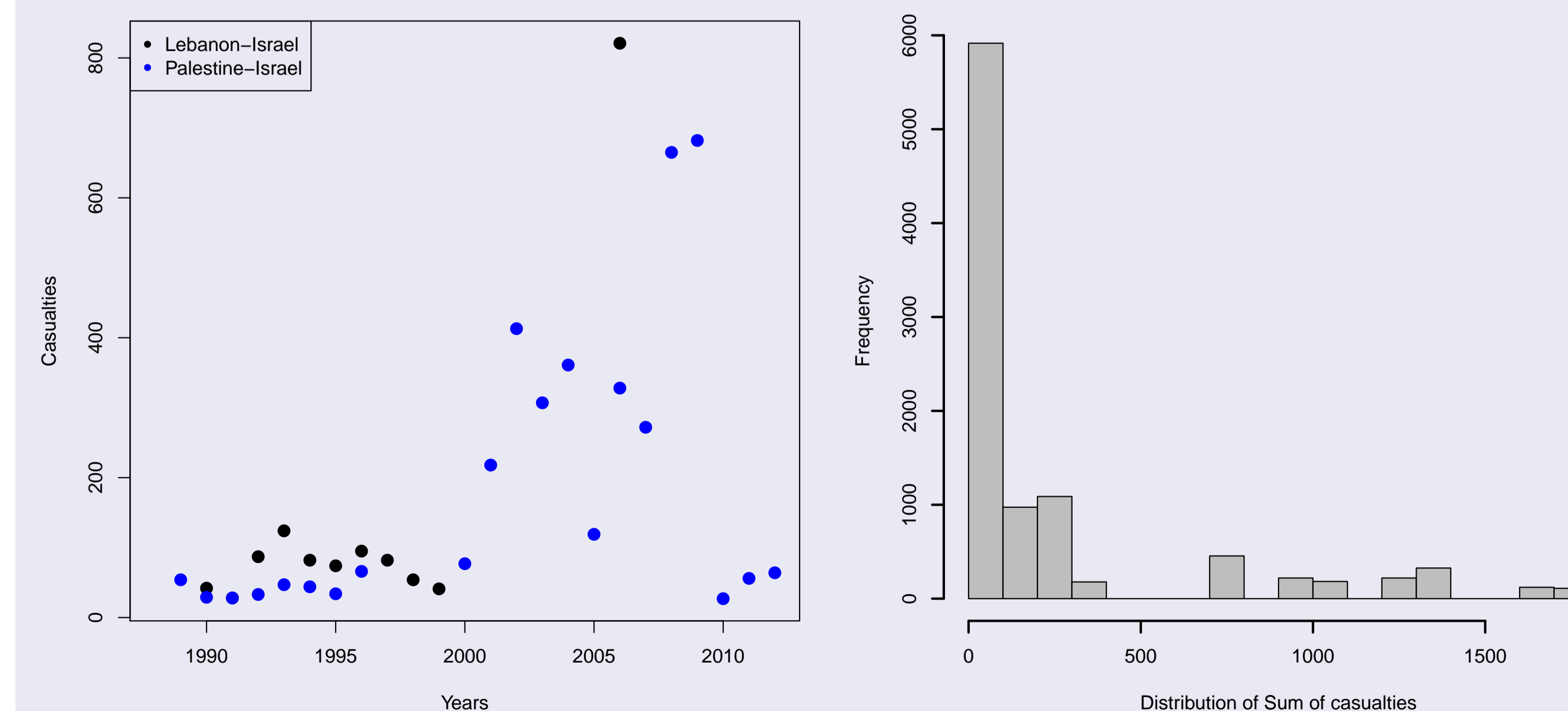
Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

- “No Military service” predicts **lower trust** in the legal system among immigrants.
- **No significant impact** on voting turnout.

Military Conflict (entire population)

Proxy for years of “military conflict”:

- Data on casualties in the Israeli-Palestinian and Israeli-Lebanese conflicts since 1975 are taken from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP).
- Sum (or mean) of number of casualties per period.



Benchmarks: 2000-2005 Second Intifada, 2006 Lebanon-Israel War

Military Conflict, Trust, and Political Participation

	Dependent variable:	
	Voted	Trust Legal System
	logistic	OLS
Sum of Casualties	-0.0004*	-0.0002
Demographics	Yes	Yes
Religiosity	Yes	Yes
Fam Background	Yes	Yes
5 Years cohort FE	Yes	Yes
Wave FE	Yes	Yes
Social Connection FE	Yes	Yes
Observations	2,925	3,256
R ²		0.118

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Military Conflict and Voting Behavior

Individuals who served in periods of **higher casualties** are (conditioning on the same covariates and fixed effects as above):

- Much **more** likely to vote for **Nationalist-Religious parties**
- **Less** likely to vote for **Secular Right** (Likud and Israel Beitenu)
- **More** likely (although not significant) to vote for the **Left**.

Other Empirical Approaches

- More detailed data from 2000 and onwards: exploiting the distinction between Israeli and non-Israeli casualties
- Utilizing differences between serving right before and right after important conflicts (e.g. Intifada).

Questions for the Reader

1. Should the discussion on immigrants' trust and the one on military conflict be two separate papers?
2. Where to look for literature on the impact of military conflict on political behavior and political attitudes?