Military careers of politicians matter for national security policy☆

David Stadelmann [a,c,*], Marco Portmann [b,c], Reiner Eichenberger [b,c]

[a] *University of Bayreuth, Universitätsstraße 30, 95447 Bayreuth, Germany*
[b] *University of Fribourg, Bd. de Pérolles 90, 1700 Fribourg, Switzerland*
[c] *CREMA – Center for Research in Economics, Management, and the Arts, Zurich, Switzerland*

A R T I C L E   I N F O

A B S T R A C T

Do politicians with a military background vote differently on military affairs? We investigate the informative institutional setting of the Swiss conscription army. Politicians who served in the military have a higher probability of accepting pro-military legislative proposals, even when controlling for party affiliations and the revealed preferences of their constituents. Although conscription requires all able-bodied man to serve at least as soldiers, we can exploit variation in exposure to enforced and voluntary service. We find evidence that intrinsic motivation to serve in the military, instead of compulsory service, plays a substantial role in explaining legislative decisions on military affairs.

© 2015 Elsevier B.V. All rights reserved.

> *War is too serious a matter to entrust to military men.*
> —Georges Clemenceau, "Soixante Anneés d'Histoire Française," 1932, by Georges Suarez.

1. Introduction

Political decisions on military and defense issues affect national security and welfare. Politicians are not totally neutral toward, nor are they independent of, the military. They often have a personal background in the military because they have served in their youth or held a high-ranking military post before being elected. Over two-thirds of U.S. presidents have served in the armed forces. The current French president François Hollande and his prime minister Manuel Valls both served as sub-lieutenants. Vladimir Putin's domestic and foreign policy is commonly said to be shaped by his military and secret service training. Innumerable representatives in parliaments around the world have served in the military. They decide on crucial military and army issues today.

The economic literature is astonishingly silent on how members of parliament with a military background decide on issues related to the military. Previous studies in political science suggest that the military background of politicians may differentially affect the probability of militarized disputes (see Huntington, 1957 and Nordlinger, 1977 for seminal contributions and, more recently, Feaver and Gelpi, 2004). Since parliamentary decisions have an important effect on military budgets as well as national and international security policy, we empirically analyze whether politicians with a military background decide differently on military affairs, holding constituents' policy preferences constant. More precisely, we investigate whether members of parliament who served in the military vote more often in favor of pro-military affairs than do representatives without such a background, accounting for the wishes of the constituents they are supposed to represent. We then explore whether differences in voting behavior are due to self-selection into higher military ranks or to socialization.

Any endeavor to analyze this issue is confronted with at least two major challenges: (1) members of parliament are elected by constituents and are supposed to represent them. Constituents may elect representatives with or without a military background because they feel that voting "correctly" on military affairs is important. Unfortunately, preferences of constituents regarding military issues are usually unobservable, which makes it difficult to distinguish whether decisions of members of parliament are influenced by their personal background or by their duty to represent their constituents. (2) While it is fairly easy to identify parliamentary decisions affecting the military, it is more difficult to identify whether they are pro- or anti-military. Thus, an external classification by military experts, independent of the parliamentary decision itself, is required. In this article, we address both challenges and analyze differences in legislative voting on pro- and anti-military issues by parliamentary representatives with different military backgrounds.

In Switzerland, constituents reveal their preferences for parliamentary proposals in popular referenda (see Schneider et al., 1981; Portmann et al., 2012). The wording of each referendum is identical to the corresponding legislative proposal dealt with in parliament. Thus, we directly *observe* both constituents' preferences and decisions of members of parliament in final roll call votes on the same proposals. To identify military affairs and military preferences, we use official voting recommendations for referenda issued by military experts. These expert sources are two official military organizations, the Swiss Officers Society and the Noncommissioned Officers Society. Finally, we collect personal data on the military service and military ranks of all Swiss legislators in office from 2000 to 2011. In this setting, we investigate how a military background affects the voting behavior of members of parliament on military affairs, always taking into account revealed constituents' preferences for the same legislative issues.

Our empirical results unequivocally show that members of parliament with a military background exhibit a statistically significantly higher probability of voting pro-military. The size of this effect is not influenced by other personal characteristics or party affiliations or by controlling for constituents' preferences. This is a relevant result, and no previous study has been able to account for constituents' preferences in such a natural way. However, it is challenging to interpret the finding: although it suggests that bringing more politicians with a military background to parliament increases the likelihood of pro-military proposals being accepted, it remains unclear whether military service makes politicians more pro-military or whether pro-military individuals are more likely to serve in the armed forces.

Our setting provides evidence that military service does not make individuals more pro-military but rather that a politician's motivation to voluntarily advance in the military explains pro-military voting behavior in parliament. Conscription is compulsory in Switzerland, but over time conscription requirements were relaxed. We observe politicians who served only as soldiers, others who usually chose to become noncommissioned officers, and a third group whose members almost certainly chose to become officers. Exploiting differences between age groups and military ranks allows us to distinguish a potential selection effect of advancing in the military from the treatment effect (socialization effect) of serving in the military. The results indicate that differential voting patterns occur due to self-selection into higher military ranks, i.e. pro-military motivated individuals tend to be promoted to higher military ranks and to vote more pro-military when in parliament later on. In contrast, simply serving as a soldier as a result of conscription does not induce future politicians to vote more pro-military compared to politicians who did not serve in the military.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows: Section 2 relates our contribution to the existing literature. Section 3 presents the institutional setting, our data, and the identification strategy. Empirical results for the influence of military service on the probability of representing military interests in parliament are presented in Section 4. Section 5 elaborates on whether differences in voting behavior emerge from individual selection into higher military ranks or whether compulsory service in the military affects attitudes toward the military. Finally, Section 6 offers concluding remarks.

2. Related literature and theoretical considerations

This paper is related to at least three different strands of research.

First, it relates to the literature on military budgets, institutions, and conflicts (see, among others, Collier and Hoeffler, 2004, 2006; Dunne et al., 2008; Gadea et al., 2004; Yildrim and Sezgin, 2005; Nikolaidou, 2008; Dunning, 2011; Gebremedhin and Mavisakalyan, 2013). Democratic institutions regulate the allocation of power and help to prevent conflicts (see Acemoglu and Robinson, 2006, 2008). However, commitment and accountability problems may exist in democratic as well as autocratic societies (see Geddes, 1999, 2003; Fearon, 2004; Powell, 2004). Recently, Weeks (2012) has shown substantial variation in belligerence and suggests that civilian autocratic regimes with powerful elites are just as likely to initiate conflict as democracies. Our analysis of military background as an individual characteristic of politicians helps to clarify

the commitment of politicians in a democratic society and their behavior in parliament when deciding on a broad array of military issues.

Second, our paper contributes to the expanding literature on the legislative behavior and choices of politicians. Articles investigating the influence of candidates' personal valence indicate that if voters consider such aspects, politicians have a potential leeway in their decisions (see Groseclose, 2001; Adams et al., 2010; Padovano, 2013). Apart from pure electoral competition (see Downs, 1957a, 1957b), legislative choices and the behavior of politicians may be explained by other factors, such as gender (see Gagliarducci and Paserman, 2012; Stadelmann et al., 2014), having daughters (see Washington, 2008), links to civil service (see Braendle and Stutzer, 2010), education (see Ruske, 2015), and numerous other socioeconomic characteristics and preferences (see, e.g., Ågren et al., 2007; Padovano and Ricciuti, 2009; Freier and Thomasius, 2012; Okulicz-Kozaryn, 2014). Important contributions in political science and sociology turned their attention relatively early to the question of whether military service and know-how specific to the use of force affect the political willingness to support military action (see Huntington, 1957; Nordlinger, 1977). Military conservatism may have led U.S. military officers to be cautious in using force as a foreign policy tool (see Betts, 1991; Gelpi and Feaver, 2002). Once war starts, however, military authorities seem to prefer decisive action (see Holsti, 1998). Other literature in political science suggests that leaders who served in the military or in combat may have hawkish views regarding military engagement (see Geddes, 1999, 2003; Holsti, 2001; Horowitz and Stam, 2014). Sechser (2004) argues that military conservatism may simply be a by-product of civilian oversight. Views of citizens and political leaders on military issues are typically measured with surveys (see, e.g., Holsti, 1998). This strand of literature highlights the importance of politicians' individual characteristics and personal backgrounds. In particular, past military service may affect the decision to engage in conflict. Our analysis contributes to this literature by analyzing how serving in the military influences real policy decisions on security-related issues. We focus on a European country and hold revealed constituents' preferences for security proposals constant by employing referenda that are identical to legislative decisions by members of parliament.[1]

Third, the paper is connected to the literature that differentiates politicians' behavior with respect to socialization, personal or party ideology, and other factors (see Garfinkel, 1994; Levitt, 1996; Poole and Rosenthal, 1997; Brunner et al., 2013). For voting on military issues, ideology has been identified as a major factor (see Lindsay, 1990; Carsey and Rundquist, 1999), but economic interests also play a role (see Fordham, 2008). Other related literature analyzes the influence of conscription on societal variables and choices (see Teigen, 2006; Sasson-Levy, 2007; Vasquez III, 2005). Most of the theoretical arguments regarding the link between military experience and decisions to engage in conflict focus on military socialization (see, e.g., Weeks, 2012; Horowitz and Stam, 2014). However, hawkish behavior in legislative decisions may be driven by self-selection into the military instead of socialization (see Bachman et al., 2000). We provide further insights into this important issue by distinguishing the influence of conscription (socialization) from that of personal motivation for voluntarily serving in the military (self-selection). We show that personal motivation and self-selection into higher military ranks play a crucial role in explaining legislative choices in military affairs, independent of party ideology, revealed constituents' preferences, and district (economic) interests.

Given the existing literature, the theoretical background of our contribution is simple and straightforward. Although politicians' legislative decisions are driven in part by reelection considerations and their individual motivations to be good representatives—and thus by the preferences of their voters—politicians still have a certain leeway for pursuing their self-interests and following their personal motivations (see, e.g., Adams et al., 2010; Gerber and Lewis, 2004; Levitt, 1996). Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that their decisions with respect to security policy are driven by their own military background, because the latter impinges not only on their personal interests but also on their socioeconomic environment.

3. Data and identification

3.1. Institutional setting and data

We analyze the individual voting behavior on military affairs of 357 members of the Swiss National Council (proportionally elected lower house of parliament) from 2000 to 2011. The members of the National Council are elected in 26 constituencies, i.e. the Swiss cantons. As is common in the literature on legislative voting behavior, we examine final votes (roll calls) of politicians during their time in office. Final roll call votes are most proximate compared to other votes in parliament to the adoption of governmental policies (see Krehbiel, 1993). They are registered for all members of the National Council by an electronic voting system.

The Swiss parliament crafts constitutional and legislative proposals for military affairs such as general army reforms, national security issues, and defense procurement. Its enactments become effective after a lag of 90 days. During this period, citizens may challenge all proposed laws and demand a referendum by collecting 50,000 signatures, which represents about 1% of the national electorate. Amendments to the constitution are automatically subject to a mandatory referendum. By advancing a so-called initiative and collecting 100,000 signatures, citizens can demand a popular vote on their own proposals for a constitutional amendment. Referenda reflect revealed preferences for policies, because they permit constituents to rank

---

[1] Controlling for constituents' preferences is important because politicians tend to be selected for personal characteristics and are supposed to represent their constituents. This selection may affect their security-related decisions (see Weeks, 2012).

them against the status quo (see Schneider et al., 1981; Frey, 1994; Portmann et al., 2012; Carey and Hix, 2013; Portmann, 2014) and they entail real policy outcomes and consequences. This is a distinctive feature of our data.

Our empirical strategy is to match referendum results for each constituency with its representatives' final roll call votes in parliament on the same military issues with the identical wording. We obtain external validity for our setting, because politicians cannot simply follow the revealed choices of their constituents. As in countries without referenda, Swiss representatives do not have an exact knowledge of their constituents' preferences when making decisions in parliament, so they must revert to standard means to predict those preferences (see Garrett, 1999; Brunner et al., 2013).

Although referenda and parliamentary decisions allow us to identify constituents' preferences and politicians' decisions on precisely the same legislative proposals, we also need to identify military issues as well as pro- and anti-military proposals. We resort to the referendum voting recommendations of the two major military organizations generally recognized as experts in military matters (of course, they also have some vested interests with respect to military affairs). More precisely, we collect all "accept" and "reject" voting recommendations issued by the Swiss Officers Society (*Schweizerische Offiziersgesellschaft*)[2] and the Swiss Noncommissioned Officers Association (*Schweizerischer Unteroffiziersverband*).[3] The Swiss Officers Society and the Swiss Noncommissioned Officers Association regularly issue voting recommendations for referenda on military and security affairs. Our identification strategy relies on both groups having pro-military interests and detailed knowledge on military matters. This strategy gains credibility from the fact that both groups never disclose diverging recommendations. Although some generals and high-ranking officers may act as advisers of parliament and political parties in the elaboration of legislation, the recommendations of military organizations do not target specific representatives. The two organizations disseminate voting recommendations for referenda only *after* politicians have made decisions in parliament, and they do not engage in the ranking of politicians. Thus, the recommendations employed are *not* part of a strategically chosen, highly polarized set of issues (see Snyder, 1992).

Appendix Table A1 (online) presents our sample of referenda with a short description of the topics and voting recommendations (the original text of each referendum in three official languages can be found on the parliamentary homepage). In Switzerland, military affairs encompass a wide range of issues. Military organizations can be expected to recommend measures that benefit the military in general. Politicians who served in the military, and officers in particular, might be expected to support legislation that benefits them directly, such as pay and pensions. In contrast to the United States, however, veteran benefits and pensions are not important topics in the Swiss militia system. No referendum in our sample was directly related to them. Most decisions aim at national security policy, such as the overall size and disposition of the military or its activity range. Importantly, the topics in referenda are not unequivocally related to military budgets only but to larger questions surrounding the relationship between the military and society (e.g., the referendum on "Protecting the population against the noise of jets in tourism areas"). Interestingly, even reforms that reduce military budgets (e.g., "Changes regarding the organization of the federal army and increasing its flexibility [XXI army reform act]") may be recommended for acceptance if military experts argue that they strengthen the military via reorganization. Due to Swiss neutrality, there is no referendum related to the direct use of force,[4] an issue often analyzed in the United States (see, e.g., Gelpi and Feaver, 2002). However, Swiss neutrality does not imply that the army plays a negligible role. Quite to the contrary, due to neutrality, Switzerland has always aimed to be able to defend itself without being integrated into an alliance, even in a potential West–East conflict. Thus, Switzerland puts more resources into its defense than most other European countries.[5]

Switzerland's national army originates from the cantonal troops of the earlier Confederation. Since its formal establishment, it has basically been a militia army of all able-bodied male conscripts between the ages of 19 up to 50 years for specific military functions and time periods. For women, military service is voluntary. In recent years, approximately two-thirds of young Swiss men were judged to be able-bodied and fit for service by military authorities. In contrast, in the 1950s almost all young men without physical disability served in the armed forces. Alternative services, such as civil protection, exist for those considered incapable of military service but still capable of such an alternative service. Individuals in an alternative service with a lower burden than those in regular military service are required to pay a military exemption tax as compensation for the time not served. Men not serving at all, due to either physical or mental reasons, are required to pay the full military exemption tax on their incomes.[6] Professional soldiers represent only about 5% of military personnel. The military is engaged in peacekeeping missions, but Swiss neutrality prohibits any Swiss military personnel from participating in other countries' conflicts. Around 1968, due to the general conscription requirements dating back to the revised constitution of 1874 and reforms instituted after World War II, the militia army size rose to 880,000 men and counted among Europe's largest military forces (especially considering Switzerland's population size at the time, which was about 6 million). After

---

[2] The Swiss Officers Society was established in 1833 and represents the interests of Swiss Officers regarding security and military issues.

[3] The Swiss Noncommissioned Officers Association is an umbrella association that was established at the national level in 1864 and represents the political interests of Swiss noncommissioned officers and their associations.

[4] This might make our results particularly interesting for neutral and nonbelligerent countries and countries with peaceful constitutions (e.g., Sweden, Austria, and Japan).

[5] Official Swiss data on military spending tends to significantly underestimate the true cost, because it comprises only a small fraction of the remuneration of the armed forces. More than 90% of the salaries and opportunity costs of the personnel are paid by an insurance policy financed by contributions of employers and the workforce (see Eichenberger, 2009; Milizkommission, 2012).

[6] Foreigners living in Switzerland are required neither to serve nor to pay exemption taxes, but they do not vote for politicians or in referenda.

the Cold War, the army reform of 1995 reduced the number of soldiers to approximately 400,000 active militia troops for a population of around 7.2 million. Subsequent reforms led to another reduction in troops and reserves, this time to 220,000 men by 2004, whereas the number of weeks for basic military training for the approximately 20,000 annual recruits was increased from 15 weeks to between 18 and 21 weeks. Swiss soldiers are required to keep their own military equipment, including assault rifles, at their private homes. The reforms described here, the requirement of storing military equipment at home, and even a proposal to abolish the army were all at some point in time subject to a referendum. Detailed information on the Swiss military system is provided by the Federal Department of Defense, Civil Protection, and Sports.

For all members of parliament, we collected information on whether they served in the military, on their military ranks, and on additional personal characteristics. Due to the data structure and the institutional setting, all variables are actually observed, i.e. we do not impute any values.[7] The (unweighted) average probability of an individual member of parliament accepting a military proposal in parliament is 51.2%; the probability is 32.7% if the proposal is anti-military and 75.7% if the proposal is pro-military. Of the decisions in our sample, 44.9% are made by members of parliament who served in the army. On average, constituents accept referenda against the military with a probability of 29.6% and pro-military proposals with a probability of 59.2%. Appendix Table A2 (online) presents descriptive statistics and sources for all variables.

3.2. Empirical strategy

The empirical strategy to analyze whether members of parliament with a military background vote differently on military affairs than members without such a background, follows directly from the institutional setting: we *observe* final roll call votes by members of parliament, and we know whether or not they served in the military. We also *observe* pro-military and anti-military proposals by employing the official referendum recommendations of army experts with respect to security affairs. Preferences of constituents for the identical legislative proposals are given and *observed*. This setting allows us to analyze the following relationship with an interaction term between *Served in military* and *Proposal pro-military*:

$$MPYes_{ir} = \alpha + \beta_1 (Served\ in\ military)_i + \beta_2 (Served\ in\ military)_i * (Proposal\ pro\text{-}military)_r + \beta_3 (Proposal\ pro\text{-}military)_r$$

$$+ \beta_4 (Constituency\ preferences\ yes)_{ir} + \boldsymbol{X}_{ir}\boldsymbol{\gamma} + \varepsilon_{ir}. \tag{1}$$

$MPYes_{ir}$ is a dummy for whether a representative i accepts (dummy equals 1) or rejects the final roll call vote corresponding to referendum r. $(Served\ in\ military)_i$ is a dummy for whether a representative i served in the army (dummy equals 1) or not, and $(Proposal\ pro\text{-}military)_r$ stands for pro-military proposals (dummy equals 1) or anti-military proposals as identified by army organizations in referendum r.

This study focuses on the influence of the interaction term between having served in the military and pro-military proposals; the effect of this interaction is captured by β_2. Both constituent terms of the interaction are dichotomous, and our estimation Eq. (1) also includes, as a matter of course, both constituent terms of the interaction term (see Brambor et al., 2006). Thus, β_2 reflects the effect of a military background on parliamentary voting for a change from an anti- to a pro-military proposal compared to politicians without a military background, i.e. it represents the typical cross-difference of the observed voting outcome minus the cross-difference of the potential voting outcome (see Puhani, 2012 for nonlinear models). Having served and the interests of the military are both exogenous to accepting a specific proposal. Therefore, the interaction effect itself is exogenous to the voting decisions, and the setting constitutes a quasi-experiment (difference-in-difference) that permits the direct interpretation of β_2.

When interpreting β_2, conditioning on observed preferences of a constituency is necessary for disentangling the effect of having served in the military from the military preferences of the constituency a politician is supposed to represent. The effect of the preferences of the constituency, such as economic interests (see, e.g., Fordham, 2008), is reflected by β_4. Neglecting constituents' preferences might misattribute their policy preferences to a potential influence of politicians' military careers. Thus, not controlling for $(Constituency\ preferences\ yes)_{ir}$ introduces an omitted variable bias for the coefficient of the interaction term β_2.[8] Although the literature recognizes the need to control for constituency preferences when analyzing any type of voting on legislative issues, no previous study has used such a direct measure for revealed preferences on the identical policy proposals voted on by politicians. According to the previous literature, we may speculate that other controls such as personal characteristics, party affiliations, and constituency fixed effects may be associated with legislative voting. The influence of these additional factors is reflected by the vector γ. ε_{ir} stands for the error term.

Eq. (1) is presently formulated in terms of a linear probability model. Because the dependent variable is dichotomous, our main analyses will be based on logit models, but we will also present coefficients of linear probability models to facilitate interpretation. Both models provide qualitatively identical and quantitatively highly similar results.

---

[7] We stress this point because any researcher in this field will know that, often, certain values (in particular regarding preferences) have to be approximated or imputed.

[8] In particular, it is conceivable that if constituents are pro-military, they are more likely to accept pro-military proposals and more likely to elect a politician with a military background. Not controlling for constituents' preferences will, in such a case, bias the coefficient of the interaction term upwards, because serving in the military captures pro-military preferences of the constituency.
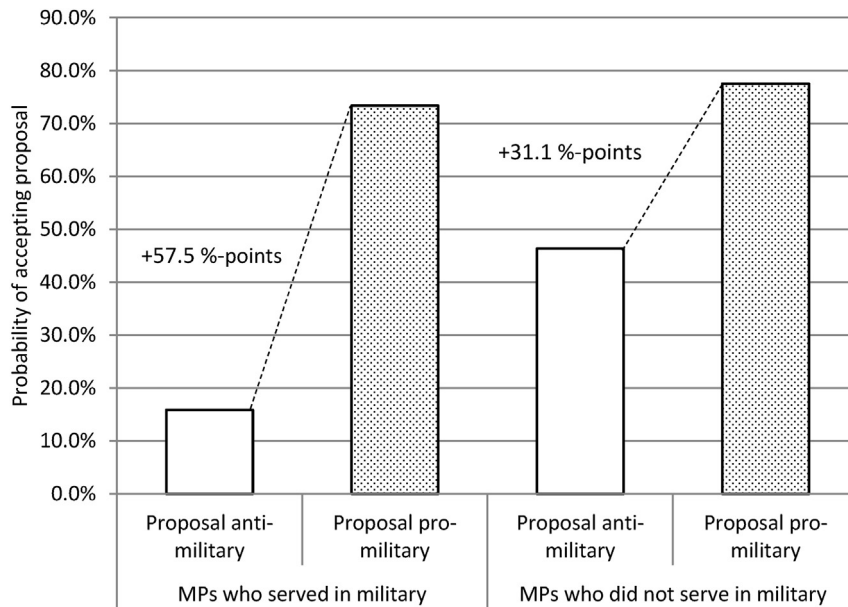
Fig. 1. The effect of serving in the military on legislative voting.

4. Empirical results of the quasi-experiment

4.1. Descriptive evidence

Fig. 1 illustrates the central motivation and baseline results of this paper. The figure depicts the probability that members of parliament, who have served in the military (first two bars) or not (last two bars), will accept proposals that are either anti- or pro-military.

We observe that the probability of accepting a proposition against the military is 15.9% if the member of parliament served in the military. If the proposition is pro-military and the member of parliament also served in the military, the probability of voting yes is 73.4% and, thus, 57.5 percentage points higher. The picture is different for a member of parliament who did not serve in the military. The probability of accepting a proposition that is against the military is 46.4% and, thus, already 30.5 percentage points higher than for a member of parliament who served. If the proposition is pro-military, the probability of voting yes increases by approximately 31.1 percentage points to 77.6%. Although the probability of accepting increases for both groups of members of parliament, i.e. for those who served in the military and those who did not, the increase is higher for members of parliament who actually served in the military. The difference-in-difference is 26.4 percentage points and statistically significant. Put simply, the difference in the probability of accepting an anti-military proposal vs. a pro-military proposal is significantly higher for members of parliament who served in the military themselves than for members of parliament who did not serve. Consequently, our initial descriptive evidence shows that members of parliament who served in the military tend to react more strongly when proposals change from anti-military to pro-military than do members who did not serve.

4.2. The effect of serving in the military when controlling for constituents' preferences

Based on Eq. (1), Table 1 reports econometric results on the behavior of members who served in the military in comparison to members of parliament who did not serve. We run logit models in specifications (1)–(4) and a linear probability models in (5)–(6).

For logit models, we calculate discrete effects to facilitate the interpretation. The first discrete effect represents the change in the probability that a member of parliament who served in the military will accept a proposal when it changes from an anti- to a pro-military proposal. Thus, we assess the effect of the recommendation by military experts on members of parliament who served in the military. The second discrete effect represents the difference in cross-differences, which simplifies to the incremental effect of the coefficient of the interaction term as both constituent terms are dichotomous (see Puhani, 2012). It represents the additional effect on the probability of voting yes for a change from an anti- to a pro-military proposal for members of parliament who did not serve in the military compared to those who served. We employ the delta

Table 1
Baseline results: the effect of serving in the military on legislative voting, controlling for constituents' preferences.

	Logit				Linear probability	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Served in military	−1.525***	−0.745***	−0.690***	−0.979***	−0.290***	−0.114***
	(0.234)	(0.191)	(0.216)	(0.248)	(0.042)	(0.026)
(Served in military)*(Proposal pro-military)	1.300***	1.522***	1.485***	1.722***	0.252***	0.216***
	(0.280)	(0.475)	(0.499)	(0.561)	(0.052)	(0.061)
Proposal pro-military	1.384***	1.248***	1.282***	0.856**	0.130**	0.120**
	(0.201)	(0.432)	(0.409)	(0.417)	(0.052)	(0.053)
Constituency preferences yes		4.304***	4.300***	6.030***	0.624***	0.728***
		(0.728)	(0.733)	(0.760)	(0.063)	(0.079)
Female			0.229	0.060		0.016
			(0.161)	(0.164)		(0.021)
Age			−0.078	−0.114*		−0.012
			(0.060)	(0.065)		(8.4e−03)
Age squared			7.8e−04	1.2e−03*		1.2e−04
			(6.2e−04)	(6.8e−04)		(8.9e−05)
Time in parliament			−0.064*	−0.120***		−0.014***
			(0.038)	(0.044)		(4.7e−03)
Time in parliament squared			3.3e−03*	6.4e−03***		7.7e−04***
			(2.0e−03)	(2.4e−03)		(2.4e−04)
Has children			0.297**	0.347**		0.036**
			(0.142)	(0.139)		(0.018)
Is married			0.038	−1.2e−03		3.5e−04
			(0.171)	(0.167)		(0.018)
Has master's or doctoral degree			0.144	0.119		0.011
			(0.142)	(0.164)		(0.017)
Intercept	−0.144	−2.575***	−0.944	−0.307	0.258***	0.404*
	(0.127)	(0.298)	(1.492)	(1.629)	(0.032)	(0.209)
Party group fixed effects	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
District fixed effects	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
(Pseudo) R2	0.297	0.634	0.637	0.658	0.258	0.513
Log-likelihood	490.078	1255.472	1263.949	1324.826		
Brier score	0.191	0.094	0.094	0.092		
n. Obs.	1947	1947	1947	1947	1947	1947
DE of "Proposal pro-military" when MP served in military	0.575***	0.597***	0.596***	0.566***		
	(0.042)	(0.049)	(0.053)	(0.076)		
DE of interaction term	0.264***	0.297***	0.290***	0.355***		
	(0.052)	(0.103)	(0.105)	(0.118)		

Notes: The dependent variable for all estimations is "MP votes YES." Robust clustered standard error estimates for constituencies are reported throughout the table. DE stands for discrete effect. The discrete effect of the interaction term represents the difference between cross-differences when all other control variables are evaluated at their median values; that is, the change in the probability of voting yes if "(Served in military)*(Proposal pro-military)" is equal to 1 (see Ai and Norton, 2003; Puhani, 2012).
*** indicates a mean significance level of <1%.
** indicates a mean significance level of 1–5%.
* indicates a mean significance level of 5–10%.

method to estimate the standard errors for both discrete effects (see Ai and Norton, 2003).[9] For each specification, we report robust standard error estimates clustered by constituencies.

In column (1) we essentially reproduce the results of Fig. 1. We observe that the interaction term between the identifier for whether a member of parliament served in the military and whether the proposal is pro-military is positive and highly significant. Members of parliament who served in the military tend to increase their probability of voting yes by more than members of parliament who did not serve when a legislative proposal changes from anti- to pro-military. The discrete effects suggest that when a proposal is pro-military instead of anti-military, the probability of accepting it for members of parliament who served in the military increases by 57.5 percentage points. This corresponds to an additional increase of 26.4 percentage points in comparison to members of parliament who did not serve in the military, which reflects the result illustrated by Fig. 1.[10]

In specification (2) we control for the preferences of a representative's constituency. We also control for party affiliation as a measure of ideology. Politicians of left parties may be more prone to take a stand against the military, which may affect

our interaction term. Whereas other studies often approximate preferences for the military (e.g., by looking to whether the constituency hosts a military base or to surveys), we directly observe constituents' preferences. If constituents have a stronger tendency to accept a policy proposal, their representatives are, in general, more likely to accept it as well. The coefficient for representing constituents' preferences, β_4, is indeed positive, statistically significant, and large compared to the other determinants. Important for our analysis is the fact that the interaction term between the identifier for members of parliament who served and the indicator for pro-military proposals remains highly significant and positive. Both discrete effects are of similar magnitude as in specification (1). The discrete effect of a change from an anti- to a pro-military proposal for members of parliament who served in the military is 59.7 percentage points, which corresponds to an additional increase of 29.7 percentage points compared to members of parliament who did not serve. Thus, members of parliament who served in the army are less likely to accept anti-military propositions and react more strongly to a change from an anti-to a pro-military proposition, independent of constituents' preferences.

In line with the literature on legislative voting, we also include a large number of additional control variables in specification (3) and district fixed effects in specification (4). Again, independent of constituents' preferences, members of parliament who served in the army, compared to politicians who did not serve, are much less likely to accept anti-military propositions and exhibit a much stronger reaction in their voting behavior when anti-military and pro-military propositions are compared. As conscription is limited to men, it is important to control for the legislator's sex. Women can voluntarily serve in the army, but no female representative in our sample had chosen to do so. We also account for age, time in parliament, whether a member of parliament has children, marriage, and education. Finally, district characteristics such as military bases may affect the behavior of representatives when voting in parliament. Results show that the interaction term between having served in the armed forces and whether a proposition is pro-military is positive and statistically significant and that its discrete effect is of a magnitude similar to earlier specifications.

In specifications (5) and (6) we run linear probability models of specifications (2) and (4). The results are almost identical to earlier estimates, i.e. the interaction term is positive and highly significant. The large and significant coefficient for constituency preferences underlines the importance of controlling for constituency preferences when explaining the behavior of representatives. Because both constituent terms are dichotomous, the results can be directly interpreted: compared to members of parliament who did not serve in the military, members of parliament who served have 21.6–25.2 percentage points higher probability of voting yes if a proposal changes from anti-military to pro-military. According to the linear probability model in specification (6), the probability of voting yes increases by 33.6 percentage points (SE = 0.058) for members who served in the army compared to 12.0 percentage points (SE = 0.053) for members who did not serve when a proposal changes from anti- to pro-military.

4.3. Robustness tests

Table 2 presents robustness tests for different weighting strategies, subsamples, referendum fixed effects, and the exclusion of female politicians.

Differences between legislative proposals matter for the voting behavior of politicians. We may speculate that they affect the way military service interacts with a pro-military voting recommendation. In particular, some votes on military affairs may be uncontroversial, whereas others give rise to debate and pass narrowly. Thus, we apply different weighting strategies in specifications (1)–(4). To capture controversy in parliament, we first weight observations by the absolute vote margins in the parliamentary vote (columns 1 and 2); that is, we weight by the absolute yes vote minus the no vote on a proposal. For specifications (3) and (4) observations are weighted by an (inverse) agreement index (see Hix et al., 2003, based on Rice, 1928) that captures cohesion in parliament on different issues. Independent of our weighing choices, we find that members of parliament with a military background tend to vote more pro-military than members of parliament without such a background.

The statistical significance and the quantitative effect of our baseline specifications also hold when constituents accept the referendum with a majority (specifications 5 and 6) and when referendum decisions are tight (columns 7 and 8). These robustness tests indicate that pro-military proposals or proposals that constituents accepted do not affect the differences between politicians who served in the military and those who did not. Pro-military measures elicit higher levels of support from both groups of politicians, and they are accepted by voters as well. However, the interaction term between pro-military proposals and having served in the military is not affected.[11]

Specifications (9) and (10) include referendum fixed effects. Our results are not driven by different baseline probabilities of support for legislative proposals. The interaction effect between serving in the military and pro-military proposals remains positive and highly significant.[12] The quantitative effect of the interaction terms suggests that the change in the probability of members of parliament who served in the military increases by 28.1–33.2 percentage points compared to members who did not serve when a proposal changes from anti-military to pro-military.

---

[11] In an online supplement, we provide additional robustness tests in which we exclude referenda that affect only the military administration and referenda on the future abolishment of the military. All results remain qualitatively and quantitatively robust.

[12] Identification works through differences in voting recommendations by military experts, and including referendum fixed effects might have been expected to render the interaction term insignificant.

Table 2
Robustness tests for the effect of serving in the military.

	Vote margin		Agreement index		Constituencies accepting proposal		Tight referendum decisions		Referendum FE		Without female MPs	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
Subset	Full set	Full set	Full set	Full set	YES > 50%	YES > 50%	Tight decisions	Tight decisions	Full set	Full set	Men only	Men only
Weighted by	Vote margin	Vote margin	Agreement index	Agreement index	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Served in military	−0.803***	−1.075***	−0.769***	−1.011***	−1.346***	−1.307***	−1.227***	−1.338***	−0.810***	−0.999***	−0.522**	−0.505*
	(3.1e−03)	(4.0e−03)	(0.080)	(0.098)	(0.391)	(0.350)	(0.248)	(0.355)	(0.184)	(0.226)	(0.241)	(0.294)
(Served in military)*(Proposal pro-military)	1.482***	1.728***	1.613***	1.803***	1.760***	1.712***	2.044***	2.252***	1.737***	1.812***	1.489**	1.368*
	(6.2e−03)	(7.9e−03)	(0.197)	(0.222)	(0.551)	(0.571)	(0.549)	(0.561)	(0.523)	(0.596)	(0.639)	(0.754)
Proposal pro-military	1.097***	0.621***	1.130***	0.800***	0.444	−0.052	0.444	−0.417	1.895***	1.281**	1.981***	1.111*
	(6.2e−03)	(6.2e−03)	(0.163)	(0.155)	(0.377)	(0.205)	(0.385)	(0.262)	(0.464)	(0.552)	(0.650)	(0.659)
Constituency preferences yes	5.581***	7.406***	3.567***	5.083***	6.661***	7.382***	3.851	11.262**	1.407*	6.773***	2.744***	11.765***
	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.308)	(0.324)	(1.095)	(1.091)	(5.661)	(5.665)	(0.735)	(2.195)	(0.922)	(2.978)
Party group fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Other controls	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
District fixed effects	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Referendum fixed effects	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
(Pseudo) R2	0.650	0.676	0.597	0.622	0.423	0.501	0.415	0.547	0.666	0.685	0.729	0.755
Brier score	0.089	0.086	0.106	0.104	0.128	0.116	0.156	0.131	0.089	0.088	0.070	0.071
n. Obs.	1947	1947	1947	1947	758	758	536	536	1947	1947	1475	1475
DE of "Proposal pro-military" when MP served in military	0.565***	0.526***	0.594***	0.571***	0.361***	0.159***	0.458***	0.183**	0.717***	0.637***	0.694***	0.544***
	(7.0e−04)	(1.1e−03)	(0.020)	(0.030)	(0.080)	(0.053)	(0.059)	(0.081)	(0.041)	(0.097)	(0.059)	(0.134)
DE of interaction term	0.298***	0.372***	0.320***	0.374***	0.307***	0.162***	0.381***	0.216**	0.281***	0.332***	0.256**	0.286*
	(1.4e−03)	(1.7e−03)	(0.042)	(0.046)	(0.080)	(0.060)	(0.076)	(0.086)	(0.101)	(0.121)	(0.127)	(0.159)

Notes: The dependent variable for all estimations is "MP votes YES," and logit models are estimated. Robust clustered standard error estimates for constituencies are reported throughout the table. "Other controls" include all additional variables used in Table 1 (4). When the subset includes only men, the control "Female" is dropped. DE stands for discrete effect.

*** indicates a mean significance level of <1%.

** indicates a mean significance level of 1–5%.

* indicates a mean significance level of 5–10%.

Finally, excluding female politicians from the dataset does not affect the interaction term, which remains positive, significant, and similar in size (columns 11 and 12), even when including referendum fixed effects. These specifications indicate that men who served in the military vote more pro-military than men who did not serve. Thus, our results are not due to differences between men and women regarding voting behavior on military issues. Results of these robustness tests are qualitatively equal and quantitatively highly similar when a linear probability model is estimated (see online supplement).

All robustness tests provide evidence that members of parliament who served in the army are less likely to accept anti-military propositions and more likely to accept pro-military propositions than parliamentarians who did not serve but otherwise have the same characteristics. This effect is independent of constituents' preferences, party affiliations, and district and referendum fixed effects. Thus, our contribution shows that personal military background matters for legislative decisions on military issues. However, this does not necessarily imply that putting potential members of parliament into the military before their parliamentary career will change their subsequent voting behavior.

5. Exploring the channels of influence of military background on parliamentary voting

5.1. Exploiting differences in military ranks

Although, there is conscription in Switzerland, selection into *higher* military ranks may depend on personal motivation for the military (see Bachman et al., 2000), which may also explain future legislative decisions. We can investigate whether the stronger pro-military voting behavior of representatives with a military background is due to preexisting differences in attitudes and motivation for military advancement or whether compulsory military service shapes future voting decisions, i.e. we can discriminate self-selection from potential socialization. Our data allows us to distinguish politicians who *chose* to advance in the military from those who only served as soldiers due to conscription requirements. Officers and noncommissioned officers chose to pursue promotion to higher ranks. In contrast, simple soldiers did not choose to serve but were forced to do so by conscription. Their voting behavior can be compared to individuals who did not have to serve.

The results in Table 3 strongly suggest that it is *motivation for military advancement* rather than *having served in the military* that shapes legislative voting. Thus, our analysis points to self-selection as a reason for pro-military voting instead of socialization. We estimate linear probability models to facilitate direct interpretation of the interaction terms and the constituent variables of the interaction. Results do not change when estimating a logit model (see online supplement).

In specifications (1) and (2) we analyze three different interaction terms. Results point to a large, positive, and highly significant interaction term for politicians who served as officers, a marginally smaller but still important and significant positive interaction term for politicians who served as noncommissioned officers (NCO), and an insignificant and small interaction term for politicians in the soldier ranks, always compared to politicians who did not (have to) serve.[13] These findings suggest that politicians who *chose* a military career in the militia as officers or noncommissioned officers tend to be particularly pro-military in their voting behavior in parliament. However, individuals who had to serve in the military (in the soldier ranks) due to conscription requirements are not more inclined to vote pro-military than politicians who did not have to serve. We also test whether the interaction terms are different from each other. There is no statistical difference between the interaction term for serving as an officer and the interaction term for serving as a noncommissioned officer. However, there is always a significant difference between these two interaction terms and the interaction term for simple soldiers. Self-selecting and actively choosing a military career in the militia leads to voting behavior that is more pro-military, controlling for constituents' preferences as well as a wide array of other characteristics and fixed effects.

Consequently, the results are consistent with the view that individuals who already possessed a positive attitude toward the military *chose* their military career (perhaps even to "boost" their political career[14]) and tend to vote more pro-military. Pure exposure to the military as a soldier due to conscription does not affect future voting behavior compared to individuals who did not have to serve.

5.2. Refinements for age and socialization

It could be argued, though, that having to serve in the military positively motivates some individuals to choose to achieve higher ranks. In such a situation, the initial conscription influences motivation, which then leads to more pro-military legislative voting. Although such an effect would be required to work through personal characteristics that we cannot observe or control for, it is not possible to fully exclude such a channel of influence. Analyzing differences in age and conscription requirements allows us, however, to provide further evidence regarding the role of this channel. Exploiting differences in

---

[13] We note that our estimates include all constituent variables for the interaction. As the constituent variables are dummies and mutually exclusive, no higher- or lower-order interactions exist that could be included (see Braumoeller, 2004).

[14] The French President François Hollande, for example, told weekly magazine *Marianne* (May 6, 2012) that he knew at a young age that he would become a politician and, thus, that his duty was to perform military service.

Table 3
Motivation for military advancement and voting pro-military: exploiting military ranks and differences in age.

| | Different army ranks | | In 1968 already 18 years old | | | |
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Subset	Full set	Full set	18 in 1968	Not 18 in 1968	18 in 1968	Not 18 in 1968
Served in military			−0.120***	−0.060		
			(0.035)	(0.048)		
(Served in military)*(Proposal pro-military)			0.171**	0.277*		
			(0.076)	(0.157)		
Served as officer	−0.151***	−0.176***			−0.169***	−0.172***
	(0.031)	(0.040)			(0.046)	(0.066)
(Served as officer)*(Proposal pro-military)	0.330***	0.322***			0.245***	0.451***
	(0.074)	(0.076)			(0.094)	(0.137)
Served as NCO	−0.158***	−0.156***			−0.114**	−0.106
	(0.039)	(0.033)			(0.046)	(0.065)
(Served as NCO)*(Proposal pro-military)	0.303***	0.290***			0.136	0.579***
	(0.087)	(0.084)			(0.099)	(0.157)
Served in soldier ranks	−0.033	−0.032			−0.045	2.0e−03
	(0.040)	(0.037)			(0.043)	(0.060)
(Served in soldier ranks)*(Proposal pro-military)	0.052	0.047			0.049	0.045
	(0.105)	(0.106)			(0.119)	(0.189)
Proposal pro-military	0.173***	0.130**	0.221***	−0.063	0.227***	−0.053
	(0.058)	(0.054)	(0.051)	(0.114)	(0.051)	(0.115)
Constituency preferences yes	0.539***	0.693***	0.708***	0.649***	0.689***	0.603***
	(0.068)	(0.078)	(0.099)	(0.141)	(0.096)	(0.136)
Party group fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Other controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
District fixed effects	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R2	0.506	0.520	0.560	0.499	0.564	0.519
n. Obs.	1947	1947	1265	682	1265	682
Joint significance of all interaction terms (p-value)	0.000	0.000			0.050	0.000
IE "Served as officer" - IE "Served as NCO"	0.027	0.031			0.108	−0.128
	(0.111)	(0.108)			(0.116)	(0.173)
IE "Served as officer" - IE "Served in soldier ranks"	0.278***	0.275***			0.196*	0.406***
	(0.105)	(0.109)			(0.117)	(0.145)
IE "Served as NCO" - IE "Served in soldier ranks"	0.250***	0.244***			0.088	0.533***
	(0.097)	(0.099)			(0.139)	(0.147)
Differences "(Served in military)*(Proposal pro-military)"			(3)–(4) = −0.105	*p*-value = 0.272		
Differences "(Served as officer)*(Proposal pro-military)"					(5)–(6) = −0.206*	*p*-value = 0.036
Differences "(Served in as NCO)*(Proposal pro-military)"					(5)–(6) = −0.442***	*p*-value = 0.009
Differences "(Served in soldier ranks)*(Proposal pro-military)"					(5)–(6) = 0.004	*p*-value = 0.493

Notes: The dependent variable for all estimations is "MP votes YES," and linear probability models are estimated. Robust clustered standard error estimates for constituencies are reported throughout the table. Other controls include all additional variables used in Table 1 (4). For the subsets in (3)–(6) the controls "Age" and "Age squared" are not included. "IE" stands for the interaction term of "Proposal pro-military" with the respective identifier for military ranks.

*** indicates a mean significance level of <1%.

** indicates a mean significance level of 1–5%.

* indicates a mean significance level of 5–10%.

age also alleviates concerns that some individuals with strong preferences against the military may have tried to appear not to be able-bodied during medical tests and, if successful, avoided having to serve.

After World War II, conscription was more comprehensive than in more recent periods. Medical tests were strict, and social pressure to serve in the military was high. In the 1950s and 60s, large numbers of soldiers were even forced to serve as noncommissioned officers and complete the appropriate training, which took about half a year. But very rarely were soldiers forced to become officers, which took another year when accounting for training time and increased service duty. We identify a dummy variable that indicates whether politicians were already 18 years of age in 1968, that is, around the

Table 4

Robustness tests for motivation for military advancement and voting pro-military.

	Different army ranks and without female MPs		In 1968 already 18 years old and without female MPs			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Subset	Men only	Men only	18 in 1968 and men only	Not 18 in 1968 and men only	18 in 1968 and men only	Not 18 in 1968 and men only
(Served in military)*(Proposal pro-military)			0.128** (0.062)	0.249*** (0.078)		
(Served as officer)*(Proposal pro-military)	0.258*** (0.087)	0.252*** (0.087)			0.201** (0.080)	0.387** (0.190)
(Served as NCO)*(Proposal pro-military)	0.230*** (0.086)	0.218*** (0.083)			0.090 (0.098)	0.514** (0.206)
(Served in soldier ranks)*(Proposal pro-military)	−0.016 (0.112)	−0.018 (0.111)			5.9e−03 (0.103)	3.9e−03 (0.255)
Base effects + constituency preferences yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Party group fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Other controls	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
District fixed effects	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R2	0.557	0.574	0.627	0.476	0.632	0.534
n. Obs.	1475	1475	1028	447	1028	447
Joint significance of all interaction terms (p-value)	0.000	0.000			0.072	0.000
IE "Served as officer" - IE "Served as NCO"	0.028 (0.110)	0.033 (0.109)			0.111 (0.119)	−0.127 (0.166)
IE "Served as officer" - IE "Served in soldier ranks"	0.274*** (0.105)	0.269*** (0.107)			0.195** (0.116)	0.383*** (0.141)
IE "Served as NCO" - IE "Served in soldier ranks"	0.246*** (0.096)	0.236*** (0.098)			0.084 (0.139)	0.510*** (0.145)
Differences "(Served in military)*(Proposal pro-military)"			(3)–(4) = −0.121	*p*-value = 0.118		
Differences "(Served as officer)*(Proposal pro-military)"					(5)–(6) = −0.186	*p*-value = 0.184
Differences "(Served in as NCO)*(Proposal pro-military)"					(5)–(6) = −0.424**	*p*-value = 0.039
Differences "(Served in soldier ranks)*(Proposal pro-military)"					(5)–(6) = −0.020	*p*-value = 0.497

Notes: The dependent variable for all estimations is "MP votes YES," and linear probability models are estimated. Robust clustered standard error estimates for constituencies are reported throughout the table. Other controls include all additional variables used in Table 1 (4). For the subsets in (3) to (6) the controls "Age" and "Age squared" are not included. "IE" stands for the interaction term of "Proposal pro-military" with the respective identifier for military ranks.

*** indicates a mean significance level of <1%.

** indicates a mean significance level of 1–5%.

* indicates a mean significance level of 5–10%.

time the Swiss militia army had its highest number of conscripts.[15] In many countries, 1968 also represented the height of liberal student and citizen movements. Thus, the dummy variable captures whether politicians currently in parliament served during the time when many men *had to serve* as soldiers and even noncommissioned officers.

In specifications (3) and (4) we interact the identifier for members of parliament who served in the military with the identifier for pro-military proposals. We focus on the subsample of politicians who were 18 in 1968 in specification (3) and on politicians who were not 18 in 1968 in specification (4). In both cases, we observe a significant and positive interaction term. However, the interaction term in specification (4) is larger by 10.5 percentage points than the one in specification (3). Although the two interaction terms are not statistically different from each other[16] at common significance levels, both the sign and magnitude of the difference suggest that members of parliament who served but were not yet 18 in 1968 have

---

[15] Qualitative results do not depend on the precise year at which the break is made. But 1968 corresponds to an important watershed in social as well as military respects.

[16] We perform a simple *t*-test when comparing the two coefficients using their standard errors and assume that the two samples are independent.

a higher probability of accepting a pro-military proposal than those who served and were already 18 in 1968. Because it was more difficult to avoid conscription prior to 1968, these results highlight the importance of initial motivation for the military.

Exploring the data in greater detail, motivational effects and self-selection seem to be the central reason why politicians with a military background exhibit rather pro-military voting behavior. Specifications (5) and (6) distinguish between different army ranks and age groups. Officers and noncommissioned officers tend to have a higher probability of accepting a proposal than members of parliament who did not serve when the recommendation changes from anti- to pro-military. The interaction effects for officers who (always) chose to become officers in both time periods are positive and statistically significant in the two specifications. The interaction effects for soldiers are never statistically significant, such that soldiers cannot be statistically distinguished from other members of parliament who did not (have to) serve in the military. In the sample of individuals who were already 18 in 1968 (column 5), the interaction term between serving as noncommissioned officer and pro-military propositions is not significant. This suggests that in the past, a certain number of noncommissioned officers had to serve and did not choose to become noncommissioned offices. This finding changes when looking at the sample of individuals who became 18 after 1968. There, we observe that officers and noncommissioned officers exhibit a much higher probability of voting pro-military than soldiers and representatives who did not serve. After 1968, noncommissioned officers usually *chose* to become noncommissioned officers: on average, they are more pro-military compared to their older counterparts, and they vote accordingly in parliament on military affairs. For the sample in specification (6), the interaction term for officers and that for noncommissioned officers are not statistically different. Officers and noncommissioned officers are statistically more likely to support pro-military legislation in comparison to simple soldiers and individuals who did not serve in the military. All these findings support the view that self-selection into military service plays a role in future voting behavior in parliament, even when holding constituents' preferences, ideology, and other characteristics constant.

Table 4 illustrates the same regressions but excludes female politicians from the sample. Because women never had to serve, a member of parliament's sex might be an important dimension of legislative voting on military affairs. The results of this robustness test are essentially equivalent to the results in Table 3 regarding the significance and size of the effect of serving in the military. We note that logit estimates would yield similar results. *Choosing* to serve in the military as an officer and as a noncommissioned officer in more recent time periods is positively related to voting pro-military in legislative decisions, whereas simply having to serve due to conscription is not related to voting pro-military.

6. Conclusions

We exploit an informative institutional setting to analyze whether the military background of politicians is related to strong pro-military voting in parliament. We find that independently of constituents' preferences, party affiliations, and other factors, politicians who served in the military tend to vote more pro-military in legislative decisions. In particular, controlling for constituents' preferences is essential, because constituents elect politicians based on their characteristics, and the politicians are then supposed to represent them, among others, in military affairs. Evidence suggests that this more hawkish and pro-military voting behavior is due not to exposure to the military service but rather to selection into higher military ranks; that is, motivation for military advancement plays a key role. Politicians who were motivated to advance in the military exhibit rather pro-military voting behavior in parliament. Politicians who were conscripted and had to undertake mandatory service cannot be distinguished from politicians who did not serve, i.e. their voting behavior on military affairs is statistically not different. Thus, serving compulsory time as soldiers in the army does not lead politicians to vote more pro- or anti-military. Politicians who *chose* to advance in the military and to become noncommissioned officers or officers, however, have a higher probability of voting pro-military than the rest of parliamentary representatives. These empirical results are robust to numerous tests, in particular the exclusion of female members of parliament who never had to serve in the military.

The observed pro-military behavior of politicians with a military background is independent of constituents' preferences but can be explained by their personal motivation for military advancement, i.e. politicians who self-selected into higher military ranks behave accordingly in parliamentary decisions. If political representatives in countries around the world are mostly of higher military ranks, our findings help to explain the tendency of other research to find that politicians who served in the military show more hawkish behavior in politics than do pure civilian leaders. However, our data does not suggest that people become more pro-military in their voting behavior only because they have served in the army as soldiers due to compulsory service. Thus, bringing the generals to parliament may change voting outcomes on military issues. However, having simple soldiers as parliamentary representatives and forcing future politicians to perform military service will not necessarily have any differential effects on legislative decisions regarding military affairs and national security.

Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data associated with this article can be found, in the online version, at http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jebo.2015.04.001.

References

Acemoglu, D., Robinson, J.A., 2006. Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, MA.

Acemoglu, D., Robinson, J.A., 2008. Persistence of power, elites, and institutions. Am. Econ. Rev. 98 (1), 267–293.

Adams, J., Brunell, T., Grofman, B., Samuel, I.M., 2010. Why candidate divergence should be expected to be just as great (or even greater) in competitive seats as in non-competitive ones. Public Choice 145 (3–4), 417–433.

Ai, C., Norton, E.C., 2003. Interaction terms in logit and probit models. Econ. Lett. 80 (1), 123–129.

Ågren, H., Dahlberg, M., Mörk, E., 2007. Do politicians' preferences correspond to those of the voters? An investigation of political representation. Public Choice 130 (1–2), 137–162.

Bachman, J.G., Segal, D.R., Freedman-Doan, P., O'Malley, P.M., 2000. Who chooses military service? Correlates of propensity and enlistment in the US armed forces. Mil. Psychol. 12 (1), 1–30.

Betts, R.K., 1991. Soldiers, Statesmen, and Cold War Crises. Columbia University Press, New York, NY.

Braendle, T., Stutzer, A., 2010. Public servants in parliament: theory and evidence on its determinants in Germany. Public Choice 145 (1), 223–252.

Brambor, T., Clark, W.R., Golder, M., 2006. Understanding interaction models: improving empirical analyses. Polit. Anal. 14 (1), 63–82.

Braumoeller, B.F., 2004. Hypothesis testing and multiplicative interaction terms. Int. Org. 58 (4), 807–820.

Brunner, E.J., Ross, S.L., Washington, E.L., 2013. Does less income mean less representation? Am. Econ. J.: Econ. Policy 5 (2), 53–76.

Carey, J.M., Hix, S., 2013. District magnitude and representation of the majority's preferences: a comment and reinterpretation. Public Choice 154 (1–2), 139–148.

Carsey, T.M., Rundquist, B., 1999. Party and committee in distributive politics: evidence from defense spending. J. Polit. 61 (4), 1156–1169.

Collier, P., Hoeffler, A., 2004. Greed and grievance in civil war. Oxf. Econ. Pap. 56 (4), 563–595.

Collier, P., Hoeffler, A., 2006. Military expenditure in post-conflict societies. Econ. Gov. 7 (1), 89–107.

Downs, A., 1957a. An Economic Theory of Democracy. Harper & Row, New York, NY.

DownsDowns, A., 1957b. An economic theory of political action in democracy. J. Polit. Econ. 65 (2), 135–150.

Dunne, J.P., Perlo-Freeman, S., Smith, R.P., 2008. The demand for military expenditure in developing countries: hostility versus capability. Def. Peace Econ. 19 (4), 293–302.

Dunning, T., 2011. Fighting and voting: violent conflict and electoral politics. J. Confl. Resolut. 55 (3), 327–339.

Eichenberger, R., 2009. Die ideale Armee für die Schweiz: Die freiwillige Miliz. Rote Revue – Zeitschrift für Politik, Wirtschaft und Kultur 87 (1), 14–18.

Fearon, J.D., 2004. Why do some civil wars last so much longer than others? J. Peace Res. 41 (3), 275–301.

Feaver, P., Gelpi, C., 2004. Choosing Your Battles: American Civil–Military Relations and the Use of Force. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ.

Fordham, B.O., 2008. Economic interests and congressional voting on security issues. J. Confl. Resolut. 52 (5), 623–640.

Freier, R., Thomasius, S., 2012. Voters prefer more qualified mayors, but does it matter for public finances? Evidence for Germany. Discussion Papers of DIW Berlin 1262.

Frey, B.S., 1994. Direct democracy: politico-economic lessons from Swiss experience. Am. Econ. Rev. 84 (2), 338–342.

Gadea, M.D., Pardos, E., Perez-Fornies, C., 2004. A long-run analysis of defence spending in the NATO countries (1960–99). Def. Peace Econ. 15 (3), 231–249.

Gagliarducci, S., Paserman, D.M., 2012. Gender interactions within hierarchies: evidence from the political arena. Rev. Econ. Stud. 79 (3), 1021–1052.

Garfinkel, M.R., 1994. Domestic politics and international conflict. Am. Econ. Rev. 84 (December (5)), 1294–1309.

Garrett, T.A., 1999. A test of shirking under legislative and citizen vote: the case of state lottery adoption. J. Law Econ. 42 (1), 189–208.

Gebremedhin, T.A., Mavisakalyan, A., 2013. Immigration and political instability. Kyklos 66 (3), 317–341.

Geddes, B., 1999. Authoritarian breakdown: empirical test of a game theoretic argument. In: Paper presented at the 95th Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, September, Atlanta, GA.

Geddes, B., 2003. Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics. University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, MI.

Gelpi, C., Feaver, P.D., 2002. Speak softly and carry a big stick? Veterans in the political elite and the American use of force. APSR 96, 779–793.

Gerber, E.R., Lewis, J.B., 2004. Beyond the median: voter preferences, district heterogeneity, and political representation. J. Polit. Econ. 112 (6), 1364–1383.

Groseclose, T., 2001. A model of candidate location when one candidate has a valence advantage. Am. J. Polit. Sci. 45 (4), 862–886.

Hix, S., Kreppel, A., Noury, A., 2003. The party system in the European Parliament: collusive or competitive? J. Common Mark. Stud. 41 (2), 309–331.

Holsti, O.R., 1998. A widening gap between the U.S. military and civilian society? Some evidence, 1976–1996. Int. Secur. 23 (3), 5–42.

Holsti, O.R., 2001. Of chasms and convergences: attitudes and beliefs of civilians and military elites at the start of a new millennium. In: Feaver, P., Kohn, R.H. (Eds.), Soldiers and Civilians: The Civil–Military Gap and American National Security. MIT Press, Cambridge, MA.

Horowitz, M.C., Stam, A.C., 2014. How prior military experience influences the future militarized behavior of leaders. Int. Org. 68, 527–559.

Huntington, S.P., 1957. The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil–Military Relations. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.

Krehbiel, K., 1993. Constituency characteristics and legislative preferences. Public Choice 76 (1–2), 21–37.

Levitt, S.D., 1996. How do senators vote? Disentangling the role of voter preferences, party affiliation, and senate ideology. Am. Econ. Rev. 86 (3), 425–441.

Lindsay, J.M., 1990. Parochialism, policy, and constituency constraints: congressional voting on strategic weapons systems. Am. J. Polit. Sci. 34 (4), 936–960.

Milizkommission, 2012. Die Bedeutung der Armee für die Schweiz. Milizkommission C VBS, http://www.vbs.admin.ch/internet/vbs/de/home/departement/organisation/milizkomm.html (accessed 10.02.15).

Nikolaidou, E.E., 2008. Introduction: defence spending: determinants, economic impact and burden sharing issues. Def. Peace Econ. 19 (4), 249–251.

Nordlinger, E.A., 1977. Soldiers in Politics: Military Coups and Governments. Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ.

Okulicz-Kozaryn, A., 2014. Winners and losers in transition: preferences for redistribution and nostalgia for communism in Eastern Europe. Kyklos 67 (3), 447–461.

Padovano, F., 2013. Are we witnessing a paradigm shift in the analysis of political competition? Public Choice 156 (3), 631–651.

Padovano, F., Ricciutti, R., 2009. Political competition and economic performance: evidence from the Italian regions. Public Choice 138 (3), 263–277.

Poole, K., Rosenthal, H., 1997. Congress: A Political–Economic History of Roll Call Voting. Oxford University Press, New York, NY.

Portmann, M., 2014. Parliamentary representation of citizens' preferences: Explaining the differences between parliamentarians' votes and popular referendum results (1. Aufl ed.), Volume Band 15 of Neue Studien zur politischen Ökonomie. Nomos, Baden-Baden.

Portmann, M., Stadelmann, D., Eichenberger, R., 2012. District magnitude and representation of the majority's preferences: quasi-experimental evidence from popular and parliamentary votes. Public Choice 151 (3–4), 585–610.

Powell, R., 2004. The inefficient use of power: costly conflict with complete information. APSR 98 (2), 231–241.

Puhani, P.A., 2012. The treatment effect, the cross difference, and the interaction term in nonlinear difference-in-differences models. Econ. Lett. 115 (1), 85–87.

Rice, S.A., 1928. Quantitative Methods in Politics. Alfred A. Knopf, New York, NY.

Ruske, R., 2015. Does economics make politicians corrupt? Empirical evidence from the United States Congress. Kyklos 68 (2), 240–254.

Sasson-Levy, O., 2007. Contradictory consequences of mandatory conscription: the case of women secretaries in the Israeli military. Gender Soc. 21 (4), 481–507.

Schneider, F., Pommerehne, W.W., Frey, B.S., 1981. Politico-economic interdependence in a direct democracy: the case of Switzerland. In: Hibbs, D.A., Fassbender, H. (Eds.), Contemporary Political Economy: Studies on the Interdependence of Politics and Economics. Amsterdam, North Holland, pp. 231–248.

Sechser, T.S., 2004. Are soldiers less war-prone than statesmen? J. Confl. Resolut. 48 (5), 746–774.

Snyder, J.M., 1992. Artificial extremism in interest group ratings. Legis. Stud. Q. 17 (3), 319–345.

Stadelmann, D., Portmann, M., Eichenberger, R., 2014. Politicians and preferences of the voter majority: does gender matter? Econ. Polit. 26 (3), 355–379.

Teigen, J.M., 2006. Enduring effects of the uniform: previous military experience and voting turnout. Polit. Res. Q. 59 (4), 601–607.

Vasquez III, J.P., 2005. Shouldering the soldiering: democracy, conscription, and military casualties. J. Confl. Resolut. 49 (December (6)), 849–873.

Washington, E.L., 2008. Female socialization: how daughters affect their legislator fathers. Am. Econ. Rev. 98 (1), 311–332.

Weeks, J.L., 2012. Strongmen and straw men: authoritarian regimes and the initiation of international conflict. APSR 106 (2), 326–347.

Yildrim, J., Sezgin, S., 2005. Democracy and military expenditure: a cross-country evidence. Transit. Stud. Rev. 12 (1), 93–100.