

*Soldiers' Perceptions and Expectations of Converting Military Capital—The Cases of Israeli and British Militaries *☆☆*

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Research regarding the ability to convert military resources into valuable social resources (convertibility) focused on the macro-level. These researches examined the influence of various mechanisms on the ability to convert military service into objective rewards in the civilian sphere and labor market. The aim of this research is to focus on a neglected part in the research of convertibility: the micro-level analysis that emphasizes the subjective dimension. We argue that soldiers are motivated by, evaluate and perceive their military service through the capitals they acquire during military service which they expect, or not, to convert into the civilian sphere and labor market. The article presents a comparative analysis of veterans from the Israeli and British militaries, based on interviews with soldiers who served in both combat and non-combat roles.

Introduction

Soldiers convert resources acquired during military service into various rewards in the civilian sphere. This process of conversion is known as convertibility (Levy, 2007). Convertibility mostly rests on the republican concept, according to which there is a connection between military status and civilian status (Janowitz, 1976; Mann, 1993). Research regarding convertibility focused on the influence of various social, financial, and political mechanisms on the ability to convert military service into social rights, improve social standing, and gain citizenship (Burk, 1995; Card and Cardoso, 2012; Krebs, 2006; Levy, 2007, 2013; Moskos, 1977).

The main interest of these studies was the macro-level of convertibility, while focusing on the objective dimension of convertibility. This research aims to address a neglected part in the research of convertibility, the micro-level analysis that emphasizes the subjective dimension. The lack of micro-analysis and of the subjective dimension means that it was not possible to examine agents' perceptions, motivations, and expectations of conversion.

In order to examine the subjective dimension of convertibility, we will look at the contract between the soldiers and the state, since soldiers' interpretation of this contract influences their motivation to serve and their expectation

of conversion. Furthermore, we will examine military capital through which soldiers experience, internalize, value, and perceive military service. By capital, we refer to Bourdieu's conceptualization of cultural, symbolic, and social capital (Bourdieu, 1984, 1990).

Therefore, we ask how do the soldiers perceive, understand, and interpret the capitals they acquire during military service? How these subjective perceptions of acquired military resources influence soldiers' expectation to convert these resources into civilian sphere and labor market? How do soldiers' perceptions of the contract between soldiers and the state that determines the way they perceive the military and its place in society influence expectations for convertibility?

The findings of the research indicate that although convertibility depends on the contract between the soldiers and the state it is also influenced by soldiers' subjective perceptions. We found that soldiers are motivated by, evaluate and perceive their military service through the capitals they acquire during military service which they expect, or not, to convert into the civilian sphere and labor market. Thus, military capital, we argue, is the mediating variable between military service and social rewards. So soldiers' expectations for convertibility are influenced not only by the objective rewards of military service, but also by the way they perceived and evaluate the acquired military capital. These findings are important for fully understanding the process of convertibility.

The article presents a comparative analysis of veterans from the Israeli and British militaries who served in both combat and non-combat roles. Taking into consideration that conscription in Israel and volunteer service in the UK is an essential difference that creates different contracts between the soldiers and the state in each country, the study not only analyzes the differences, but also reveals various similarities. Both differences and similarities enable us to highlight the importance of the subjective dimension of convertibility.

In order to examine the subjective dimension of convertibility, we conducted in-depth interviews which are well suited to examine conceptions, interpretations, expectations, as well as retrospective processes and reflections regarding social experience. The analysis is based on an interpretive phenomenological approach that enabled us to build our understanding of soldiers' experiences and interpretations rather than imposing a particular framework upon them.

The study contributes to the existing study of convertibility, the examination of convertibility from a micro-perspective in order to address the subjective dimension of convertibility by focusing on agents' perspective. This will enable highlighting of the extent to which the expectation of soldiers to convert resources acquired during military service into rewards in the civilian sphere is influenced by agents' subjective perception of the military capitals they have

acquired. Furthermore, our study reveals that military service rewards not just through its importance, popularity, or the contract between the state and the soldiers, but by affecting and designing the identities, expectations, self-efficacy, and self-confidence of the soldiers. Finally, deconstructing convertibility into various capitals enables a more complex analysis of the process of convertibility. By doing so, the study exposes capital as a mediating variable of convertibility, since soldiers experience their military service through the capitals they acquire, and their perception of these capitals influences their expectation to convert them into rewards.

In the next section, we will present civil–military relations and discuss the relationship between military and society in Western countries and the changes they went through. Afterward, we will present the process of convertibility. At the end of the literature review, we will introduce Bourdieu's conceptualization of capital that we will use for examining the subjective dimension of convertibility. After the methodology section, we will analyze soldiers' perceptions of the cultural, social, and symbolic capital they acquire through military service. We will conclude by discussing the important part of subjective experience in order to fully understand the process of convertibility.

Civil–Military Relations

Since the 18th century, with the formation of the modern nation state, militaries were considered essential institutions for the definition of the political entity and sovereignty of the nation state, as well as defining citizenship. Consequently, military service improved social standing and provided citizenship to those who serve (Burk, 1995; Janowitz, 1991).

Two main discourses regarding the relationship between the state and its residents have developed. The first was the liberal discourse, according to which military service is part of civilian obligation toward the state, so that military service represents citizenship. In return for these duties, the soldier is entitled to all the rights provided by the state: civil, social, and political (Janowitz, 1976, 1991). In this way, military service itself provides those who serve with social and cultural capital, which soldiers can convert.

The second is the republican discourse. According to the republican discourse, military service is the supreme obligation (Odfield, 1990). Citizenship is defined by the degree of contribution to the common good of the community, so good citizenship is associated with good soldiering, and good civilians are characterized by virtues such as discipline, dedication, and readiness for self-sacrifice for the sake of the political community (Burk, 1995). In this manner, only those who sacrifice gain extra rights (Katzenelson, 2005; Mann, 1993).

Of all soldiers, the combat soldier is considered the best citizen, yet only certain groups are allowed to serve as combat soldiers (Levy, 1998). This creates a differential eligibility to civilian rights and to conversion of military capital into social and cultural capital in civilian society. Only middle-class white men had an established right to serve and were able to convert their military status into rights, positions, and power in the civilian sphere and labor market (Levy, 2007, 2013). Since not all groups in society were able to serve in the military and specifically as combat soldiers, not everyone could enjoy the material and symbolic capital that can be derived from military service. This created a replication of hierarchy within the military to the social sphere.

Since the 1960s, most Western nations have turned from draft to all-volunteer forces. Alongside this change in the recruitment system, the globalization process, accompanied by neoliberal and post-Fordism perceptions, created market-oriented pressure on the military (Dandeker, 1994; King, 2006; Levy, 2010). These changes challenged the republican discourse and created a shift from "citizen army" to, as introduced by Levy (2010), "market army." This transition also led the military to adopt new roles that endorse equal status for women, ethnic minorities, and homosexuals (Dandeker, 1994; Shaw, 2000) who, on their behalf, fought for their right to serve in order to be able to gain and convert military capital.

Furthermore, the emulation of market practices (Dandeker, 1994; King, 2006; Levy, 2010) created an individualistic expectation from military service to fulfill the individual's ambitions and interests (Levy, 2007, 2013; Levy et al., 2007). According to studies, the penetration of personal gain to the barter between soldiers and the military (Smith, 2005), alongside untying the connection between soldiering and citizenship and between military service and rights (Burk, 2002), weakened the republican bargaining (Levy, 2010; Levy et al., 2007) and devalued convertibility.

Convertibility

Convertibility "is the ability of a group to convert the power they acquire within, and owing to, military service into valuable social resources – symbolic and material alike – in the civilian sphere" (Levy, 2007:189). Convertibility mostly rests on the republican concept according to which citizens, as soldiers, are willing to sacrifice their lives and bear the burden of war and preparation to war for civil, social, and political rights (Janowitz, 1976; Mann, 1993). In this way, serving in the military is converted into symbolic capital that can be exchanged into social rights, improve social standing, and gain citizenship (Burk, 1995; Levy et al., 2007).

The literature regarding convertibility distinguishes between two reward systems: material rewards and symbolic rewards. Material rewards are

comprised of financial rewards such as pensions, financial benefits, and skills; symbolic rewards are the product of the prestige of military service (Asch and Warner, 1994; Card and Cardoso, 2012; Krebs, 2006; Levy, 2003; Levy, 2007; Moskos, 1977). Symbolic rewards and some of the material rewards, excluding monetary rewards, are determined by their convertibility. Furthermore, symbolic and material rewards are mutually related and partially dependent on one another, such that the increase or decrease of one affects the other (Levy, 2007). In this way, serving in the military grants symbolic capital that can be converted into material rewards, such as rights, financial benefits, and priority for employment, and some material rewards depending on the status and prestige of the service (Burk, 1995; Levy, 2007; Levy et al., 2007).

So convertibility is affected by the different roles taken by those who serve in the military and not only determines eligibility for citizenship, but also produces social hierarchies and therefore can differentiate the possibilities of social mobility for different groups (Weede, 1993; Soysal, 1994; Levy, 1998; Levy and Sasson-Levy, 2008).

For many decades women, homosexuals and ethnic groups were excluded from military service and therefore from the soldier's ability to convert their military status into rights, positions, and power in the civilian sphere and labor market (Cohen, 2008; Levy, 1998; Levy, 2003; Levy, 2013; Sasson-Levy,). Over time minorities fought for their right to serve in the military, and specifically as combatants, in order to utilize military service as a mechanism for social mobility and to convert it into social status, rights, positions, and power (Burk, 1995; Enloe, 1980; Gropman, 1997; Lake, 1992; Levy, 2007, 2013).

These studies underlined the influence of various social, financial, and political mechanisms on the ability to convert military service into social rights, improve social standing, and gain citizenship. In so doing, these studies focused on the macro-level of convertibility while neglecting the micro-level. Furthermore, they focused on the objective dimension while neglecting the subjective dimension of convertibility.

The lack of micro-analysis, and of analysis of the subjective dimension, did not allow the examination of agents' perceptions, motivations, and expectations of conversion. We argue that focusing on soldiers' subjective interpretations and perceptions of the contract between the soldiers and the state reveals a more complex and multifarious understanding of the meaning of military service and therefore of convertibility. Thus, the changes in Western nations did not cause a sharp, single-value decline of the republican exchange and therefore of convertibility. Soldiers' motivation to enlist and to serve, alongside their expectations from military service, is not affected only by the existence of social rewards, that is, by the objective outcomes of military service, but also by their subjective perception of convertibility.

The Forms of Capital

In order to examine soldiers' subjective perception of convertibility, we will use capital. The collection of cultural and social characteristics soldiers learn and internalized through socialization to military service termed military capital (Swed and Butler, 2015). Military capital composed of skills, professions, behavior norms, cultural codes, and connections soldiers learn and gain through military service; furthermore, these capitals shape soldiers' identities, self-perceptions, and experiences (Cooper et al., 2018; Woodward and Jenkins, 2011).

Within the military field, these capitals may reward the soldiers with military qualifications and promotions, and although this military institutionalized cultural capital is exchangeable in the labor market, it does not transfer easily to civilian labor market, due to its different applications and values in civilian life (Ashcrof, 2014). For instance, ranks, the have high currency value in the military, often misunderstood or ignored outside the military fields (Burdett et al., 2014).

We will address military capital using Bourdieu's forms of capital. We found Bourdieu's cultural, social, and symbolic capital most appropriate to examine the way soldiers experience and perceive the resources they acquired during military service, since, as we will show capital serves as a mediating variable of conversion. We argue that soldiers experience military service through the capital they acquire, and their perception of these capitals influences their expectations to convert them into rewards.

Together with field and habitus, capital provides an explanation for how and why people act in a certain manner in various social and cultural settings (Bourdieu, 1990). A field is a social setting in which agents are located and interact. Each field operates according to its rules, regulations, and social positions (Bourdieu, 1984). In this study, we conceptualize the military as field, composed of subfields, each with their own characteristics, but all of them sharing the general rules and regulations of the military field.

Within a particular field, social actors accumulate capital, which is a form of power that determines the relative position of an actor within a field. Bourdieu distinguishes between three types of capital: economic capital, which is directly convertible into money, and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights; cultural capital, which exists in three forms; and social capital, which is made up of social connections. Both cultural and social capital can be converted, in certain conditions, into economic capital (Bourdieu, 1986).

Symbolic capital refers to honor, prestige, and social legitimation accumulated through the various forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1990). Since fields exist in relation to other fields, the potential to convert military capital into the

civilian sphere is influenced by symbolic capital. For example, in Israel, with the erosion of the republican exchange, the symbolic capital of the combat soldier declined, concurrently with the rise of technological and white collar professions, the convertibility of the combat soldier has also been harmed (Levy, 2013; Levy et al., 2007). In the UK, although the public has high regard for the armed forces, the volunteer service created a gap between the military and civilian sphere, since most of the population has no knowledge regarding the characteristics of the military (Binks and Cambridge, 2018; Hines et al., 2014). As a result, the low symbolic capital of accumulated military capital affects the probability of conversion (Cooper et al., 2018).

Social capital, according to Bourdieu (1986), can be converted by the members into economic, cultural, and symbolic capital. As such, social capital is never independent from other forms of capital, since an agent's social capital affects the other capitals he possesses. The existence of a network is the product of individual or collective investment strategies, consciously or unconsciously aimed at transforming contingent relationships, such as those of neighborhood or workplace or even kinship, into relationships that are directly usable in the short or long term (Bourdieu, 1986). Social capital woven during military service can provide job opportunities and entrance to sectors and markets (Swed and Butler, 2015).

Cultural capital is the form of knowledge and acquired cognitive ability that enables individuals to identify and favor high culture. Owning high cultural capital grants social superiority and therefore legitimacy and dominance in the social structure. Cultural capital, according to Bourdieu (1986), exists in three forms: an objectified state, that is, ownership of cultural goods; an institutionalized state that is realized in the position or recognition of an institution, mainly through possessing of degrees and other credentials and which, within the military, is manifested in the form of ranks, positions, qualifications, and military experience; and the embodied state, which is the form of cultural capital that is translated into personal traits, embodied dispositions of mind and body, a set of characteristics and capabilities seen as intrinsic to human nature. For example, when civilians join the military, they undergo socialization processes during basic training, where they learn and become accustomed to military organization and culture that inscribes them with cultural values and rules of conduct in order to create identification with the military and to prepare the soldiers to carry out military labor (Burdett et al., 2014; Godfrey et al., 2012; Hockey, 1986).

The embodied state very much overlaps Bourdieu's concept of habitus (Bourdieu, 1990). Habitus, according to Bourdieu (1990), is a system of external principles that is created through social encounters and exists as a system of knowledge within a particular cultural setting that is internalized as personal

perceptions. Thus, habitus is acquired through exposure and participating in social conditions, yet it is embedded in the person’s unconscious level (Davey, 2009).

The manifestation of cultural, social, and symbolic capital acquired in the military is shown in Figure 1.

Thus, various social groups and individuals internalize, interpret, and evaluate military capitals in various ways; therefore, they will have different expectations for conversion of these capitals into social rewards.

Methodology

Data Collection

Our micro-level analysis of social action is based on in-depth interviews with soldiers who served in the IDF (Israel defense forces) and in the British military.

Using interviews to collect data enable learning about conceptions, interpretations, expectations, as well as retrospective processes and reflections regarding social experience. One of the main virtues of interview is that it is still the best method to study observations (Lamont and Swidler, 2014). Only by asking or talking to people, we can reveal the emotional dimensions of social experience, the imagined meanings of their activities and their self-concepts (Lamont and Swidler, 2014; Pugh, 2013).

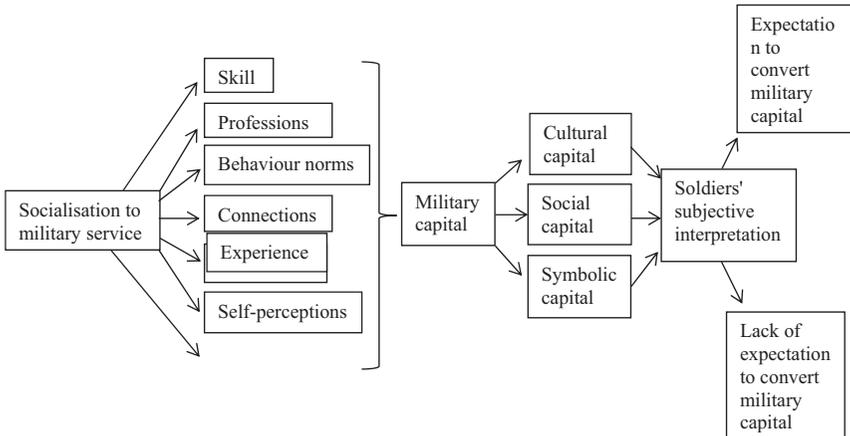


Figure 1 The process of convertibility and the part of subjective perception of acquired military capital

Interview, as all methods, has weaknesses. One of the challenges facing researchers that use interview is how to contextualize institutional contexts, when they themselves are not fixed (Lamont and Swidler, 2014). In our research, we used cultural and institutional differences to demonstrate differences and similarities between the Israeli and the British militaries.

Another weakness of interview is that since interview focuses on the view of individuals, this data collection technique can lead to methodological individualism. This bias is not inherent to this method and various studies illustrate that narratives and repertoires are institutionalized character of these conceptions (Edwards and Holland, 2013; Lamont and Swidler, 2014). Our research demonstrates the way social and cultural processes and conceptions influence individuals' perceptions, understanding, and expectations of converting military capitals. Nonetheless, we emphasize the importance of individuals' interpretations and how their understanding and action can potentially influence cultural and social processes and structure.

The interviews were held with soldiers who had completed their military service. Snowball sampling was employed, such that the first interviewees were located in various ways (for example, researchers' personal contacts or public notices) and they helped us to contact other interviewees. In order to overcome the similarity bias of this sampling method, different sources were selected from varied social networks and from various geographical areas.

In the IDF, we carried out 12 interviews with soldiers between the ages of 25 and 29 who served in the IDF. Six of them served in combat units and six in Military Intelligence. All interviewees were men from the upper-middle socioeconomic class. All were interviewed after their compulsory service (which lasts three years). Of the intelligence soldiers, three served for an extra time after the end of their three-year service (Table 1).

In the British Military, we carried out seven interviews with UK Armed Forces veterans, aged between 38 and 58, who had served between 3 and 24 years in the British Army or the Royal Navy, in combat and non-combat roles. One respondent was female. All respondents had served actively in the Army or Navy and were discharged or released from Armed Forces duties under conditions that were not dishonorable (Table 2).

The interviews were semi-structured, and the interviewees were presented with a few similar questions in order to structure the interview to ensure that, as far as possible, we received all the data we were looking for in our questions. However, interviewees were at liberty to expand beyond what they were directly asked, and they were encouraged to exemplify their answers by telling stories, on the assumption that these stories could enrich the data. Upon response, some participants were asked probing questions in order to elicit a more detailed understanding. For example, can you explain how that made you

Table 1
Full Israeli Participant Information

Participant	Age at time of Interview	Years of Military Service	Years since exit at time of interview	Additional Information
Dor	28	3	7	Served as a combat soldier in the Paratroopers, and was also a medic.
Omer	26	3	5	Served as a combat soldier at the Armored Corps. He was wounded during his service and transferred to serve as Intelligence Sargeant.
Dan	26	3	5	Served as a combat soldier in Kffir infantry brigade.
Elad	25	3	4	Served as a combat soldier in Givati infantry brigade.
Uri	27	3	6	Served as combat soldier in the Navy, he was a mechanic in a missile boat.
Alon	29	3	6	Enlisted when he was 20. Served as a combat soldier in Nachal infantry brigade. Due to medical reasons was transfer to military operation room.
Adam	27	3	6	Served in Intelligence in special operations.
Itay	25	3.4	4	Served in Intelligence as a radio operator. His role was to listening to segments in Persian and summarizes them in Hebrew.
Yariv	27	3.8	5	Served in Intelligence in unit 8200.

Table 1
(continued)

Participant	Age at time of Interview	Years of Military Service	Years since exit at time of interview	Additional Information
Shlomi	25	5	2	Served in Intelligence as a software developer.
Gadi	27	3	6	Served in Intelligence as a radio operator. His role was to listening to segments in Arabic and summarizes them in Hebrew.
Evyatar	27	3	6	Served in Intelligence in a technological unit that operates mainly in the field.

feel? Why do you think that was the case? What do you think was the biggest influence at that time?

Taking into consideration the differences between the militaries and the societies, as elaborated following the questions, we asked different questions in order to get similar reference to the issues the study deals with.

All Israeli participants were asked all of the following questions:

1. Tell me about your military service. When did you enlist? In which unit did you serve? Tell me about your service from your recruitment, through your training and the role you fulfill.
2. What qualities and abilities did you get from your military service?
3. Do you think these qualities and abilities will help you after military service in your professional course?
4. How do you perceive military service and what part it has in your life?
5. Tell me about the jobs you've been carrying since you discharged from the military.
6. Are you studying or do you intend to study at the University?

Table 2
Full British Participant Information

Participant	Age at time of interview	Years of Military Service	Years since exit at time of interview	Additional Information
Chris	59	3	38	Joined the British Army aged 21 and served in the Grenadier Guards, is now retired from a post-Military career
David	37	16	3	Joined the British Army aged 18, served in the Infantry for 5 years and then as an Army Nurse for 11 years, is currently employed
Fred	48	24	8	Joined the British Army aged 16, served in the Infantry and then in the Royal Mechanical Engineers, and is currently employed
John	52	22	12	Joined the British Army aged 18, served in the Infantry and then in the Royal Mechanical Engineers, is currently employed
Peter	39	6	13	Joined the British Army aged 20, served in the Royal Corps of Signals, and is currently employed
Sam	50	21	11	Joined the British Army aged 18, served in the Infantry and then in the Royal Mechanical Engineers, is currently employed

Table 2
(continued)

Participant	Age at time of interview	Years of Military Service	Years since exit at time of interview	Additional Information
Sarah	35	11	1	Joined the Royal Navy aged 23, is currently concentrating on raising her family but intending to return to work soon

7. Are you serving in reserve?
8. Where do you see yourself professionally ten years from today?

The purpose of the first question was to get a full background on the interviewees and their experience of the service. The aim of questions 2, 3, 5, 6, and 8 was to learn about the interviewees' subjective perception of military service, their expectations to convert military service itself, and the capitals they acquired during service and the influence of the service on their identities, self-efficacy, and self-confidence. The aim of questions 1, 4, and 7 was to enable us to understand the way soldiers perceive the military and its place in society. Through these last questions, we were able to learn about the macro-perception of the military and the civil–military relations in Israel and how they affect the results of questions 2, 3, 5, 6, and 8 that refer to the influence of military service on the interviewees' civilian life, or in other words, their expectations for convertibility of military capital into civilian sphere and labor market.

All British participants were asked all of the following questions:

1. Tell about your military service. What was your occupation in the AF? How long did you serve? How old were you when you joined? And what made you join?
2. Did you always imagine that you would join the AF?
3. How would you describe daily life in the AF? Have you got any stories that stick out?
4. Did you notice the difference from civilian life straight away?

5. Do you think that you adjusted well to the role or did it take time to get used to everything?
6. Do you think that you immediately defined yourself as a soldier/ sailor? So would you say that that role become your identity? Do you think that the AF became your life?
7. When you were in the AF, did you feel like an individual or like you were a part of something bigger? Do you think that you had your own beliefs/goals or that you were part of bigger group beliefs and goals? Were these forced upon you?
8. When you were in uniform, how did that make you feel?
9. Do you think that the uniform took away your identity or do you think that the uniform became your identity?
10. How does society respond to serving AF personnel? Examples? How did that make you feel?
11. Why did you leave the AF? When did you decide to leave the AF? And did you prepare for leaving the AF?

The purpose of the questions 1 and 2 was to get a full background on the interviewees, their reason for enlisting (a question that is not relevant is Israel due to conscription), and their experience of the service. The aim of questions 3, 4, 7, 8, and 10 was to learn about the interviewees' subjective perception of military service, the meaning of the military for them, their expectations to convert the capital they acquire during military service into civilian sphere and labor market and the influence of the service on their identities, self-efficacy, and self-confidence. The aim of questions 5, 6, 9, and 11 was to understand the way soldiers perceive the military and its place in society. Through these questions, we were able to learn about the macro-perception of the military and the civil–military relation and how they affect the results of questions 3, 4, 7, 8, and 10 that refer to soldiers expectations for convertibility.

Why Israel and the Uk? Differences and Similarities

The main contrast between British and Israeli veterans, which formed an important basis for comparisons, stems from two very different types of military service. In Israel, most Israelis¹, male and female, have experienced military service. This experience creates a continuum between the military and society, such that almost every Israeli can understand, to some extent, the meaning of military service. In the UK, however, the nature of an all-volunteer force results in a gulf in this understanding, and an associated distance between the Armed Forces and society (Binks and Cambridge, 2018).

This creates different motivations for enlisting for Israelis and British. For Israelis, the duty creates an internalization of the obligation, which is embedded

in Israel security circumstances and the construction of the status of the military in Israeli society. Nowadays, instrumental motivation is also a factor in the service (Levy, 2003; Levy, 2010; Levy et al., 2007). For British recruits, the motivation for enlisting is instrumental, while the reasons are varied (Woodruff et al., 2006), as we will elaborate in the next section.

Common to both British and Israeli Forces is the understanding of the military as a collective. However, where the Israeli military conscription system renders military service as part of the fabric of life for most Israelis' and affords integration at the societal level. This is not so for the British Armed Forces where recruits develop an identity often considered superior to the civilian population, which is supported by UK military advertising campaigns, and which results in a gulf between military personnel and civilians (Cohen, 2008; Hines et al., 2014).

Alongside the differences, there are also similarities between both militaries. Firstly, militaries share some characteristics, such as order, discipline, obeying to rules, and an emphasis on task orientation. Furthermore, in both British and Israeli Forces, military service is connected with citizenship, national belonging, and identity construction (Krebs, 2006). The state and the surrounding culture influence the status and significance of the military which impact the manifestation of these similarities.

However, we argue that we can learn and understand soldiers' perceptions and expectations of military service and about civil–military relation from the differences no less than the similarities.

Data Analysis

In order to examine the subjective dimension of convertibility, we base our analysis on an inductive qualitative methodology, which is well suited to examining the subjective point of view of individuals operating within a studied frame of meaning (Creswell et al., 2007; Glaser and Strauss, 1999).

In order to carefully and critically examine the participants' lived experiences, interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) was employed. "Concerned with an individual's personal perception or account of an object or event" (Smith and Osborn, 2015:25), the aim of the research is to allow participants to present experiences as they perceive them, and for the researcher to respect this rather than being limited by an a priori hypothesis. Drawing on issues related to symbolic interactionism regarding meaning construction, where the objective is not a wide generalization but a detailed understanding of the participants' experiences (Smith et al., 1995).

To achieve this, there is a requirement for some flexibility in the data collection, with Smith and Osborn (2015) advocating for the use of semi-

structured interviews which allow flexibility with questioning and question modification as data collection progresses.

To adequately achieve the aims of IPA, Smith and Osborn (2015) recommend researchers “try to find a fairly homogeneous sample” (p.28), not a sample that is based—for example—on random sampling but rather a sample achieved via purposive sampling, where individuals are selected based on the needs of the study and the judgment of the researchers. Without imposing order where there is none and with epistemological alertness to the kind of evidence a specific data collection technique provides (Lamont and Swidler, 2014). As the issue under investigation is relevant to all, not merely a subset of, military veterans, the parameters for inclusion were based not on age, sex, branch, or service, but on successful service which had been concluded with sufficient time for reflection. We deliberately wanted to conduct the interviews in sufficient time after they finished their service in order to gain from their retrospective interpretation. The exceptional British veteran who exit the military 38 years at time of interview enabled us to absorb the long-term influence of the service where there is no reserve.

Analysis was performed in line with Smith and Osborn’s (2007) guidelines for IPA. On a case-by-case basis, transcripts were read and annotated with initial notes which attempted to make sense of what was important to the participant. Emergent themes for each participant were developed from these notes, which intended to capture and provide an understanding of the participants’ experiences. The emergent themes were then reviewed and grouped with reference to the entire original data set. This allowed for the development of meaningful superordinate themes for each case. This process was repeated for all transcripts. Individual respondent superordinate themes were then clustered to create master superordinate themes relevant to each cohort of participants. Finally, the superordinate themes for each group of participants were compared in order to determine similarities and differences between the British and Israeli perceptions.

In the next section, we will conduct an analysis of the cultural and social capital the soldiers acquire during military service, in order to examine the way their interpretation, internalization, and evaluation of these capitals influence their expectation of convertibility.

Soldiers’ Perceptions and Expectations of Converting Military Capital

Cultural Capital. The findings from both the Israeli and the British military indicate that the soldiers acquired two forms of cultural capital: institutionalized and embodied.

Within the military roles, some of the non-combat roles granted *soldiers institutionalized cultural capital*. These roles enabled the soldiers to acquire

knowledge and education that grants them certifications that are officially accepted in civilian society, such as programmer and nurse. The soldiers are aware that these kinds of capitals can be converted directly to civilian society since they are based on civilian training, such as university or college, or based on universal knowledge that is not unique to the military, such as programming.

David, who started his service in the British military as an infantry soldier and transferred to nursing, describes nursing studies: "...when I transferred they sent me to Portsmouth university for three years which isn't a military university." And Shlomi, who served in the IDF in the Intelligence corps as a programmer, describes his acquired knowledge: "...it's not like the military have a special programming language, we use civilian programming languages."

In both militaries, institutionalized cultural capital, whether acquired via degree or knowledge, can be translated immediately and converted into the civilian labor market. However, there is a difference in the way the Israelis and British soldiers perceive the convertibility of the acquired capital. For British soldiers, military service can be perceived as a vehicle for civilian professions, and in some cases (although not in David's case), this expectation was the reason for enlisting. This is indicated by Sarah, serving as a nurse in the British Navy: "...it was in about my 3rd year of archeology that I decided I wanted to be a nurse, but obviously I'd already spent quite a lot of money on being a student, so someone suggested joining the forces'cos obviously you get paid to train... so I did."

For other British participants, they were guided by family members who advised them to join a branch of the Armed Forces that would offer them transferable skills. For example, upon telling his father that he was joining the Army, Peter was advised that: "the Signals is good, you know, you'll get a good trade from that."

In addition to this, British participants spoke of being offered opportunities in the Armed Forces that were not available to them in civilian life and that offered the prospect of a career and skills that would be transferable. For example, Sam indicated: "there certainly wasn't any sort of apprenticeship schemes and training was very-very-very limited... the army gave me the opportunity to be an apprentice as an Electrical Mechanic."

In contrast, for IDF soldiers, the obligation to serve in the military was the first goal; nevertheless, the option of gaining a profession through military service is well known to the soldiers. As Adam who served in the IDF in a special Intelligence operation explains: "It was never a dilemma whether to become a combat soldier, since I have asthma, infantry wasn't an option, and if you are not a combat soldier you are going to Intelligence... there is an

understanding in Israeli society, even at the age of 16 or 17 you realize that if you enlist to Intelligence it will open doors for you in the future.”

Yariv who served in 8,200 Intelligence unit describes the skills and tools he got from his service and the how they transfer to civilian life: "8,200 is a large community, veterans who served in the unit prepare you to civilian life. They teach you to write your C.V., how to stand out and brand yourself and guide you regarding the knowledge you need to gain before you discharge."

Both Israeli and British soldiers are aware that some military professions can provide them the knowledge and the experience that is relevant and will serve them after discharge. However, while Sarah, Peter, and Sam enlisted with the intention of acquiring a profession, so their motivation for service is to acquire job skills and training, which consist with the literature on enlistment motivations (Woodruff et al., 2006), for Adam and Yariv enlisting came prior to the profession. Still, they are well aware of the options the military has to offer them and they aim toward a service from which they will benefit.

The main reason for this difference perception of military service derives from conscription versus volunteer service. The transition to all-volunteer military, alongside globalization and the penetration of the neoliberal market perception (Dandeker, 1994; King, 2006), created an instrumental perception of military service which is expressed by British soldiers. In Israel, military service is still mandatory and that explains why the obligation to serve is prior to gaining skills. However, the military in Israel was also affected by these changes that challenged the republican perception and created an individualistic expectation from military service among Israeli soldiers (Levy, 2007, 2013).

As a result, we argue soldiers from both groups have different perception of military service which influences the way soldiers perceive the institutionalized capital and therefore their expectation to convert it into the civilian sphere and labor market. British soldiers emphasize the degree or certification they acquire, since in order to convert the capital a formal professional certification is required. Furthermore, British veterans tend not to use and sometimes even to hide their military service. This can be seen in David's words: "People ask what I do, I just say I'm a nurse or I do healthcare professionally. You know, if they ask more questions about where you did your training or where did I work previously then I'd tell them, but I don't come straight out with... no." And he adds further: "When people find out I was a nurse they can relate more to that cause they've had contact with nurses rather than some people that don't have any contact with any military."

In contrast, for IDF soldiers the main capital is the time they served in the military, meaning the experience they gain in their profession during military service. The reason for that is that as a militaristic society with conscription, military service in Israel, despite the changes and the challenges (Levy, 2003),

still enjoys high symbolic capital. Furthermore, due to close civil–military relations in Israel, most Israelis are familiar to some extent with the military and aware of the rewards they can gain from military service itself and specifically from various military professions (Swed and Butler, 2015).

So the differences in the soldiers' perception of the institutionalized capital, we argue, are the product of the symbolic capital of military service. The symbolic capital of military service is affected by the social context which is the socially recognized honor and prestige of military service (Levy, 2007, 2013). In the UK, however, although the public have a high regard for the armed forces, there is a civil–military gap that affects the perception of military service (Binks and Cambridge, 2018; Hines et al., 2014) which influence the symbolic capital of military service and therefore the expectation for convertibility.

In addition to the institutionalized cultural capital, the soldiers acquired *embodied cultural capital*. Unlike the acquisition of institutionalized cultural capital, which characterizes only some of the non-combat roles, acquisition of embodied cultural capital exists in the socialization process of all soldiers to military service (Cooper et al., 2018; Swed and Butler, 2015); however, it can be embodied in different ways, firstly due to the different motivation for enlistment.

British interviewees indicated several reasons for enlisting to the military. One is growing up in a problem family: “I came from what we call a dysfunctional family. Alcoholic father. That sort of thing. . . I saw him hit my mother. . . I was gonna join the army and try to find some answers” (Chris). Another is quitting school: “I started business studies and basically I lasted three months. . . I didn't want to go straight from education to education, I wanted a bit of life experience. So I just walked into the careers office and went from there” (David). Or job opportunities: “I couldn't get a job to be honest. . . I struggled to get a job and just decided, I thought I'd join the army” (John). And financial security: “Financial stability, pension, healthcare, dental care” (David). These findings are consistent with the characteristics of the occupational military (Moskos, 1988).

In contrast, in the IDF, asking for the reason for enlisting was irrelevant, since the assumption is that service is an obligation, so the question “why did you enlist?” is not appropriate. As Omer, who served as an infantry soldier, noted: “It wasn't an option not to serve, it was obvious to me, a necessity, a state necessity, something you do. . . It is a part of being an Israeli.” And as Yuval, who served in Intelligence phrase it: “I grew up with the understanding that military service is like enlisting to the Palmach², establishing Kibbutzim, drying the swamps of our days. . . without an army there won't be a state, I truly believe in it, even today. . . The sense of importance kept me going and

motivated me in my most difficult times." This motivation consists with the characteristics of the institutional military (Moskos, 1988).

However, despite this important difference in the starting point, we wish to address two significant similarities that characterize the cultural setting of both militaries. The first is military culture. The literature describes the socialization process that turns civilians into soldiers and generates identification with military organization and culture (Burdett et al., 2014; Godfrey et al., 2012). The military is characterized as an organization with a strict code of discipline and order, and a demand for obeying rules that is mandatory from everyone who enlists regardless of his or her role or profession (Burdett et al., 2014). Furthermore, the unique cultural setting of the military constitutes military identities through everyday practices of soldiering that soldiers carry out (Woodward and Jenkins, 2011). The following citations illustrate the unique military culture and the learning, internalizing, and identity construction processes.

Peter, who served in Royal Signals, setting communication links³: "They [Armed Forces] were really good at team building work, which is probably why nowadays I can just fit into anything and just get involved... it brought me out of my shell, gave me more of a rounded character, made me not too scared of things."

Chris, who served as an infantry soldier in the British military: "I was a completely different person [after being in the Army], people would see the change in me... Everything I became and achieved after the Armed Forces was because of the Armed Forces."

Roni, an IDF infantry soldier: "Management, order, responsibility and above all security... there is nothing I can't achieve. These are things the military teaches everyone."

Evyatar, who served as an Intelligence soldier: "It really opened your mind, a lot of responsibility, military service is a kind of a stepping stone for your character, it brings out certain characteristics... you learn skills, technical and other, and you gain confidence, independence and responsibility."

As we can learn from the quotes, whether British or Israeli force, conscription or volunteer, combat or non-combat, soldiers learn and internalize the comparable military habitus: a set of shared experiences and dispositions that characterize the military as a distinct field with its own rules, regulations, and structure. The military habitus becomes second nature, deeply embedded in service personnel (Cooper et al., 2018; Maringira, et al., 2015) shaping his and her identity (Woodward and Jenkins, 2011).

The second shared cultural setting is the adoption by Western armies of the neoliberal notion since the end of the Cold War, elimination of the draft, outsourcing logistical functions, specialization, and flattering hierarchy (King, 2006). These changes created an individualistic and instrumental motivation

(Levy, 2010) in both militaries. So although in Israel military service is mandatory and the moral motivation is still central, self-interest was added to it. And although volunteer military turned individualistic motivation to be the dominant motivation, the sense of duty and honor did not dissolve. In other words, institutional and occupational enlistment motives are coexist (Woodruff, 2017).

Hence, the question arises is how all these elements influence soldiers' expectation for convertibility? In order to address the question, we should indicate that the different type of service creates different process of discharge and perception of veterans.

In Israel, there is almost no discussion on the transition from the military to society. This does not mean that the intense military service, participating in war and missions, does not affect the transition of Israeli veterans. However, due to conscription and the perception of military service as a taken-for-granted part in young Israelis' life course, the transition to civilian life in Israel is not perceived as problematic and was not related to in the interviews.

In contrast, the literature indicates the difficulties British veterans experience when transitioning to civilian life (Burdett et al., 2014; Demers, 2011); indeed, transition from military to civilian society in the UK was a central issue for interviewees. As Chris, who served as an infantry soldier points out: "I know lads who came back from Falkland... they were related to as heroes for ten minutes and then they became the guy who nobody wants to talk to because he could flip out at any given time..."

Fred, who served as a survey engineer: "There are some people... calling you a murderer to my face, although I've never murdered anybody, but people don't look at you as individual, they just see that big green machine, and as far as they're concerned or aware, we're murderers."

The internalization of the unique military habitus and the understanding of the gap between the military and society influence their low and even lack of expectation to convert military acquired capital and experience accumulated during service into the civilian sphere.

Moreover, the interviewees focused on changes in their individual identity and personal characteristics rather than on a convertible habitus. For example, Chris said that military service turned him into: "a totally different person", such that people, who prior to military service had a negative opinion of him, noticed the changes, "and they knew enough to know that they had made a mistake and they were dealing with a totally different character."

British soldiers realize the personal value of military service in the process of identity building, and as a result, the value of military service to personal growth; however, they do not perceive this embodied cultural capital as capital they can convert into labor market. Interestingly, these findings are equivalent with Israeli combat soldiers.

The literature indicates that Israeli soldiers perceive military service as a means to personal development but also as a stepping stone to professional experience (Girsh, 2018). The findings of the research revealed that the perception of military service and the expectation of Israeli combat soldiers to convert acquired military capital were similar to those of British combat soldiers and soldiers without professional certification, that is, with no conversion rate to labor market. Throughout the interviews, Israeli combat soldiers separated military service from civilian life; none of their occupation was related to their military service, and they did not perceive military cultural capital as a capital they can use after discharge.

The interviewees indicated they hold temporary jobs in order to save money, mostly for traveling (a custom of Israelis after compulsory service) before university or other career paths. Furthermore, they did not experience a continuum between military service and civilian life, so although acknowledging the acquired military capital, as indicated earlier, they did not perceive its potential for conversion.

While the consequence—low expectation for convertibility—is similar, the reasons are different. In the UK, the reason for the low or lack of expectation for convertibility is the gap between the military and society (Binks and Cambridge, 2018; Hines et al., 2014), whereas in Israel, the reason is the erosion of the republican exchange and the decline in the status of the combat soldier (Levy, 2010; Levy et al., 2007).

Unlike the similar perception of the combat soldiers in both countries regarding the convertibility of the embodied cultural capital, we found differences among the non-combat soldiers. As indicated in the discussion regarding institutionalized capital, for British soldiers the expectation for conversion lies only in the institutionalized capital in the form of certification. In contrast, for some non-combat Israeli soldiers, mainly soldiers who served in Intelligence, which is considered an elite non-combat unit, the expectation for conversion largely rests on the embodied cultural capital that is similar to that of the civilian labor market and the high symbolic capital of their military profession.

Social Capital

There were two interesting findings regarding the social capital of the veterans. Firstly, we found that combat soldiers, both in Israel and in the UK, acquire similar social capital. Combat soldiers make close friends during their intensive military service but, surprisingly, these connections stay very limited, since the veterans look at them as social relationships with no conversion rate. They do not expect to convert the connection acquired to other capitals.

Uri, who served as a combat soldier in the Israeli Navy, describes his relationships with his friends from his service: “There isn’t too much contact,

mainly through Facebook.” Dor, who served as a combat medic in the Paratroopers, explains: “We are only in touch when we meet on reserve duty, only then, we do not meet outside of the military... you are in a close relationship with the guys only in the reserves, not in daily life. I have a close friends from reserves that I trust and would help me if necessary, but I don’t see myself meeting with him outside the military... I separate the military from real life.”

David, who started his service in the British military as an infantry soldier and transferred to nursing, describes his military connections: “...I’ve always had military friends but I’ve always kept my civilian friends and they’re my closest friends.” And he notes later that the friends from the military are: “...mostly, funnily enough, from when I was in the infantry.” The reason for that, as he explained: “I think there was more of a bond, you know, we were always together 24/7... whereas I felt as soon as I moved to nursing... it was more a job.”

All combat soldiers, both in Israel and in the UK, describe the close friendships they made through intensive military service, but none of these friendships are perceived as capital that can be used in the civilian sphere or the labor market. We argue that the discourse in infantry, both in Israel and in the UK, is still embodied in brotherhood, comradeship, and fraternity; therefore, the soldiers do not translate the potential of the social capital and do not expect to convert these connections into capital they can use instrumentally outside the military.

As opposed to the similarity in the social capital of infantry soldiers in Israel and the UK, the second finding of the social capital illustrates a difference between non-combat soldiers in these groups. In Israeli society, the social and symbolic capital which once was the resource of combat soldiers (Levy, 2007; Levy et al., 2007) has become the resource of Intelligence soldiers. As noted by Adam: “I wanted to serve in Intelligence... I don’t know if I understood it then, but I understand it now, it opens doors for you; the reason I got into the company I work in was Intelligence, and not my studies.” Yariv also demonstrated the way the social capital is converted: “Where people are coming to reserves it’s a great way to get there; let’s say some 50-year-old guy that manages a hi-tech company comes to the unit, he marks people.”

Soldiers who enlist to Intelligence expect to gain social capital they can convert and realize in the labor market. In contrast, none of the British veterans who served in non-combat roles reported any social capital they had acquired through military service that was converted into civilian society and helped them integrating into society or finding a job. None of the veterans mentioned using military connections in civilian society.

We argue that the reason is the perception in Israel of military service itself as a capital. In Israel, military service is perceived as an advantage in the

labor market since employers see veterans as self-motivated, mature, and responsible. Although this does not mean that all military professions will have the same conversion value, nevertheless the labor market values military service. In contrast, in the UK, there is little understanding of the military, some of the participants spoke about being misunderstood and the idea that they would have to be watched, because the general public and employers feel that they may be institutionalized in the military and therefore unable to self-motivate and work under their own initiative.

British veterans find themselves as minorities after discharge and can only use certification. The lack of social capital and the ability to convert only institutionalized cultural capital is expressed by Fred, who served as a survey engineer, a profession that can be converted into the civilian labor market: "...in the military I was the guy who is in charge of other surveyors for multimillion pound tasks around the globe and suddenly this guy wanted me to be the idiot holding the pole under the brush in the rain, so I had nothing viable to show to him, look I can do that, it was just my word." Fred illustrates, as he continues, the importance of civilian certifications provided by some military roles, which make a difference in the civilian labor market. Although Fred has the knowledge for the job, he realizes that he cannot convert it.

Conclusions

The aim of this paper was to examine the subjective dimension of convertibility through veterans' perceptions and understanding of military service and their expectations for convertibility. There for we asked, how do soldiers perceive, understand, and interpret the capital they acquired during military service? How these subjective perceptions influence soldiers' expectations to convert these capitals into civilian sphere and labor market?

Our findings demonstrate that soldiers perceive their military service via the capital they acquire during service. Their perception and evaluation of the acquired capital influence their expectation to convert it into the civilian sphere and labor market.

The main difference between Israel and the UK regarding military service is conscription versus voluntary service. This difference creates different contracts between the soldiers and the state and influences the way the military is perceived in society. So the paper asked how does soldiers' perception of the contract between the soldiers and the state influence their expectations for convertibility?

The findings of this research indicate that although convertibility depends on the contract between the soldiers and the state, the level of militarism and the connection between the military and society, expectation for conversion is more complex and the differences between Israel and the UK forces are not unequivocal.

In order to do so, this research called for examination, not just of the macro-mechanisms and the objective rewards that influence the process of convertibility, but also of a micro-level analysis of agents' perceptions, understanding, internalizing, and evaluating of military service and the way it influences expectation for convertibility.

We argue that soldiers perceive military service via the capital they acquired during military service. Thus, military capital is the mediating variable between military service and social rewards. So soldiers' expectations for convertibility are influenced not only by the objective rewards of military service, but also by the way they perceive and evaluate the acquired military capital.

This argument is reinforced by the similar expectation, or in fact lack of expectation, of combat soldiers both in Israel and in the UK to convert acquired military capital. So although combat soldiers in both groups gain cultural capital that is relevant in the labor market, such as keeping to schedules, coping with difficulties, operating under pressure and handling prolonged work, they do not perceive these capitals as having conversion potential.

The main contribution of this paper is exposing the important part of the subjective dimension of convertibility. So convertibility is composed not just of the military opening or blocking opportunities to accumulate resources, and not only by rewards defined by the state, but also by the way soldiers experience and interprets these opportunities. Furthermore, the findings of this research revealed that we can identify similarities in Israel and the UK even though the types of military service and of civil-military relations are different in these countries. Stressing the subjective perception, alongside the objective rewards, enable us to view the nuances that take part in the process of convertibility and the important part of the agent in social processes. Future research should examine the perceptions of various groups and military occupations in order to continue analyzing the effect of subjective perception on the expectation of convertibility and the process of convertibility in itself.

ENDNOTES

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¹Note the exception of Arabs and some religious Jews.

²The Palmach was the elite fighting force of the Haganah, the underground army of the Yishuv (Jewish community) during the period of the British Mandate for Palestine.

³Peter compares his role in the military to a civilian BT Engineer's job.

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