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978-1-107-02498-4 - Conscription, Family, and the Modern State: A Comparative Study of France and the United States

Dorit Geva

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Conscription, Family, and the Modern State

The development of modern military conscription systems is usually seen as a response to countries' security needs and as a reflection of national political ideologies like civic republicanism or democratic egalitarianism. This study of conscription politics in France and the United States in the first half of the twentieth century challenges such commonsense interpretations. Instead, it shows how despite institutional and ideological differences, both countries implemented conscription systems shaped by political and military leaders' concerns about how taking ordinary family men for military service would affect men's presumed positions as heads of families, especially as breadwinners and figures of paternal authority. The first of its kind, this carefully researched book combines an ambitious range of scholarly traditions and offers an original comparison of how protection of men's household authority affected one of the paradigmatic institutions of modern states.

Dorit Geva is an assistant professor in the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology at Central European University. She received a PhD in sociology at New York University. Geva was the Vincent Wright Fellow in Comparative Politics at the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute (2006–2007), and spent four years as a Harper-Schmidt Fellow in the Society of Fellows at the University of Chicago (2007–2011) teaching social theory in the College Core. Her work has been published in *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State, and Society*; *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*; and *Armed Forces & Society*. She is a member of the American Sociological Association; the Council for European Studies; the American Political Science Association; the European Association for Gender Research, Education and Documentation (ATGENDER); and the Social Science History Association.

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*A Comparative Study of France
and the United States*

DORIT GEVA

Central European University



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For my parents, and in memory of their parents

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Acknowledgments

This book project started in 2003, and since then more than nine years have passed, during which I have lived in six cities and accumulated many debts to mentors, friends, and family. In some ways it all started back when I was an undergraduate student at Tel Aviv University. I'm appreciative of the early support given to me as a budding sociologist by Eva Illouz and Gila Menahem. At New York University's Department of Sociology, the seeds of this book were planted in the form of my PhD dissertation, and I'm grateful to Craig Calhoun, Lynne Haney, Neil Brenner, and Steven Lukes for shepherding me through the process. The Political Sociology workshop and the workshop on Gender and Sexuality at NYU helped me critically think through my dissertation from the proposal stage until its finishing chapters. I'm also thankful for the many meaningful conversations I had with Helmut Dubiel, David Garland, Kathleen Gerson, Ruth Horowitz, Robert Max Jackson, and Martin Schain while at NYU. I still try to emulate David Garland's teaching style in my own graduate seminars, though I'm perpetually falling short. Early conversations with Antoine Prost and Susan Pedersen helped point me in the right direction. My encounter with Mildred Schwartz in the Department of Sociology's computer lab was fortuitous, and I am indebted to her continued support and her inspiration as a woman who pursued an academic career when there were few women in the academy. I'm also very appreciative of my lucky encounter with Meyer Kestnbaum at the American Sociological Association meetings when I was still a PhD student, and his ongoing support and friendship. Anna Korteweg has also been a constant source of encouragement (and fun!) since my grad school days.

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This book is dedicated to my parents, Esther and Benjamin Geva, who have given me all manner of love and support. I can only hope to be as caring, effervescent, inquisitive, and generous as they are. It is also dedicated to the memory of their parents, Sara and Yehuda Brull and Raya and Abraham Greenberg, who in many ways lived difficult lives, but who tried their best to build something new for the rest of us. This book is written in their memory, flawed and fierce as they were.