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WHO JOINS THE MILITARY?
A LOOK AT RACE, CLASS, AND IMMIGRATION STATUS[1]

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This article discusses the history of participation of the three largest racial–ethnic groups in the military: whites, blacks, and Latinos. It empirically examines the likelihood of ever having served in the military across a variety of criteria including race–ethnicity, immigrant generation, and socioeconomic status, concluding that significant disparities exist only by socioeconomic status. Finally, the article offers an in-depth look at Latinos in the military, a group whose levels of participation in the armed services have not been thoroughly investigated heretofore. The findings reveal that, among Latinos, those who identify as "Other Hispanic" are more likely to have served in the military than Mexicans, while Puerto Ricans are not significantly different from Mexicans in their service. An important finding of this study is that a large percentage of Latinos who have served in the armed forces are children of immigrants. Thus, even among Latinos, immigrants are not significantly less likely to have served in the military than those with two U.S.-born parents.

To what extent are the poor and minorities disproportionately selected into the military? Relatively little research has examined this question empirically, although the Department of Defense keeps annual records on the race and gender of military personnel. Fligstein (1980) found that from 1940 to 1973 blacks were less likely to join the military than whites. Kane (2006), on the other hand, concluded that blacks are overrepresented in the military. In terms of social class, Kane (2006) found that people who serve in the military come from more well-off neighborhoods than those who have not joined the military although the economic elite are underrepresented in armed service. Little is known about Latino participation in the armed services.[2] Farnsworth Riche and

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[1]An earlier version of this article was presented at the Conference on "Military Service, Social (Dis)advantage, and the Life Course," which was held at the Maxwell School of Citizenship & Public Affairs, Syracuse University, October 5-6, 2007. Partial support for the conference was provided by the American Sociological Association's Fund for the Advancement of the Discipline. I thank Andrew London for his comments on an earlier version of the article.

[2]I use the terms Latino and Hispanic interchangeably in this article. Both the military and the Department of Education tend to use the term Hispanic in their data collection. However, Oboler's (1995) work suggests that many prefer the term Latino.

Quester (2004) note that Latinos are somewhat underrepresented. To what extent do Latinos vary in their participation by ethnicity? Finally, to what extent do children of immigrants participate in the military? This article seeks to answer these questions.

Discussing the history of participation of the three largest racial–ethnic groups in the military (whites, blacks, and Latinos), this article examines empirically the likelihood of ever having served in the military across a variety of criteria, including race–ethnicity, immigrant generation, and socioeconomic status. It concludes that significant disparities exist only by socioeconomic status. Finally, the article offers an in-depth look at Latinos in the military, a group whose levels of participation in the armed services have not been thoroughly investigated. The findings reveal that among Latinos, those who identify as "Other Hispanic" are more likely to have served in the military than Mexicans, while Puerto Ricans are not significantly different from Mexicans in their service. An important finding of this study is that a large percentage of Latinos who have served in the armed forces are children of immigrants. Thus, even among Latinos, immigrants are not significantly less likely to have served in the military than those with two U.S.-born parents.

A BRIEF RACIAL-ETHNIC HISTORY OF THE MILITARY

WHITE ETHNICS IN THE MILITARY

Immigrants and their children have a long history of participation in the United States military. From the Revolutionary War to World War II, a large portion of the immigrants and children of immigrants in the military were white ethnics. In the Revolutionary War, many Irish and German immigrants and their children fought with the colonists, although some fought on the side of the British. Particularly in the Mid-Atlantic States, Irish and Germans comprised a large percentage of recruits to the American forces and, in some cases, participated in all-Irish and all-German battalions. Neimeyer estimates that "roughly one out of every four continental soldiers was of Irish descent," noting that the colonists drew parallels between Irish and American revolutionary ideals to recruit the Irish to their cause (1996:37). Germans, who settled in large numbers in the state of Pennsylvania, comprised, on average, 13% of Pennsylvania's regiments (Neimeyer 1996:51). Likewise, Irish and German Americans fought in the Civil War. Both the North and the South recruited immigrants to serve in the military, although Irish and German immigrants had a tendency to fight on the Union side due to their settlement patterns. Although most fought in regular military units, there were also regiments that were predominantly Irish or German (Burton 1988).

By the turn of the 20th century, immigration trends had shifted and new immigrants to the United States tended to come from Southern and Eastern Europe. Many of these newcomers fought in World War I. Although only those

immigrants who had applied for citizenship were eligible for the draft, the majority of immigrants who had not applied for citizenship registered and served (Sterba 2003). Noncitizens who fought were able to acquire their citizenship while in service (Mangione and Morreale 1992). Given that the U.S. fought on the same side as Italy, Italians made up a large number of the recruits, in total comprising nearly 12% of the Army (Mangione and Morreale 1992:340). Another important immigrant group that fought in World War I was Eastern European Jews. Sterba estimates that about 200,000 Jews served in World War I, the vast majority of Eastern European origin (2003:29). Indeed, at the end of World War I, the American Jewish Committee Survey found that among the Jewish soldiers who served in the war, 97% were immigrants or children of immigrants and three-quarters had originated from the Russian Pale (Sterba 2003:80). Despite such immigrant participation in World War I, however, anti-immigrant sentiment was growing in the United States and, shortly after the war, the National Origins Quotas severely curtailed migration from Southern and Eastern Europe.

Immigrants and their children also served in World War II. Among them were Italians, who were "the largest ethnic group stemming from the 'new immigration' numbering perhaps 6 million residents in 1940" (Pozetta 1995:64). Despite the fact that they were fighting on the opposite side as their home country, more than 500,000 Italians served on behalf of the United States in World War II (Mangione and Morreale 1992:341). After World War II, however, migration from Eastern and Southern Europe did not resume in large numbers. While the Hart–Cellar Act did away with the National Origins Quotas in 1965, European migration never reached its previous levels. Instead, the Act paved the way for immigration to the United States from new source countries, particularly in Asia and Latin America.

LATINOS IN THE MILITARY

Like white ethnics, Latinos also have a long history of service in the military, although their service has not been well documented. Dansby, Stewart, and Webb note that "Hispanic soldiers participated in major battles from the war of 1812 to the present;" however "the number of Hispanic Americans serving in the military before the Vietnam War can only be estimated" as the military did not keep records on Latinos prior to this time (2001:xix). The Department of Defense estimates that 9,000 Mexican Americans, serving in both the Confederate and Union armies, fought in the Civil War, with the Union army creating all-Mexican American cavalry units in both California and Texas (1989:14). Latinos also fought in both World Wars. Rochin and Fernandez estimate that "more than 4,000 Hispanics were trained for military service" in World War I, but many were given menial tasks (2002:9). One estimate based on surnames indicates that approximately half a million Latinos fought in World War II (Allsup 1982). There was one all-Puerto Rican infantry regiment, the 65th

Infantry Regiment, but Latinos mostly served in integrated units with whites (Department of Defense 1989:27). Dansby et al. note that some Latinos also served in black units based on their skin tone (1996:xix). In Korea, too, the all-Puerto Rican 65th Infantry Regiment served again, although, as was the case during the Second World War, most Latinos served in integrated units (Department of Defense 1989:34). By the time of the Vietnam War, there were no all-Latino units and, by the 1990s, Latinos tended to be underrepresented in the military (Armor 1996:16). Research by the Pew Hispanic Center indicates that Latinos tend to be overrepresented in personnel who "most directly handle weapons," while they tend to be underrepresented in "technical occupations such as electronics and communications" (2003:5).

AFRICAN AMERICANS IN THE MILITARY

In the early years of the United States, policies toward African Americans in the military were somewhat ambivalent. Often, the policies stated that participation in the military was for whites only, but in practice blacks were allowed to join whenever the military needed manpower. As such, African Americans have fought in every American war. In the Revolutionary War, George Washington initially banned black participation in the war against the British. However, when the British offered to free slaves who fought on their side, Washington changed his mind and allowed free blacks to fight with the colonists (Moskos and Butler 1996:18). In 1792, however, blacks were prohibited from joining militias (Young 1982:193). During the War of 1812, blacks were again officially excluded from participation, but the need for additional troops meant that over 3,000 blacks fought in the War (Moskos and Butler 1996:20). During the Civil War, African Americans were first prohibited from joining the Union Army, but the need for additional troops led Union forces to change this policy and admit blacks into the military (Young 1982:195). As a result, about 180,000 African Americans fought in the Union Army during the Civil War and another 29,000 served in the Union Navy (Dorn 1989:2). After the Civil War, the Army created four all-black units (Mershon and Schlossman 1998:2) and the 1862 Militia Act allowed African Americans to serve in state militias (Young 1982:195). In 1863, the Conscription Act (which began the draft) included African Americans (Young 1982:196).

During World War I, segregation was rampant in American institutions (particularly in the South), including within the military. During the 1890s, the Navy, which had previously been integrated, began to segregate by occupation. Blacks were informally and quietly assigned to positions of menial labor, which would keep them segregated from other sailors (Mershon and Schlossman 1998:12). The Army had traditionally maintained four black regiments since the days of Reconstruction. These units had fought in the Spanish American War as well as in battles against American Indians. However, the four traditional all-black units were not sent to Europe during World War I (Mershon and

Schlossman 1998:7). Among black Army draftees in World War I, most were excluded from combat duty and served in positions in which they performed menial labor. Few African Americans advanced to become officers. Discrimination and lack of training meant that there were few black officers to lead black soldiers; as a result, black soldiers were almost always led by white officers, including many who discriminated against their own men (Mershon and Schlossman 1998:4).

World War II marked a turning point in black participation in the military, both because large numbers of African Americans served in that war and because the war itself became a catalyst for the birth of a social movement that would demand equal rights for black soldiers. Participation, however, varied across different branches of the military. Most African Americans served in the Army, as they still do today. At that time, over 900,000 African Americans served and, at the height of black participation during World War II, nearly 9% of the Army was black (Dansby and Landis 2001:10). Fewer, but not insubstantial, numbers of African Americans served in the Navy and Marines. Approximately 167,000 blacks served in the Navy during the war, making up roughly 4% of the Navy (Dansby and Landis 2001:10), while approximately 17,000 served in the Marine Corps, comprising about 2% of that service (Dansby and Landis 2001:10). African Americans continued to serve in segregated units. During and after World War II, the NAACP and other organizations concentrated their efforts on the desegregation of the military. The "Double V" campaign, a campaign which sought victory over both enemies abroad and Jim Crow policies within the United States, was started by an editorial in the Pittsburgh Courier, an African-American newspaper (MacGregor 1981). By the end of the war, the military began experimenting with racial integration. As a result of the positive outcomes of such integrationist experiments, the Navy chose to end racial segregation in its general service, including the desegregation of sleeping quarters and mess halls (Mershon and Schlossman 1998:138). In practice, however, the Stewards' branch, which comprised the manual labor positions to which African Americans were confined during the war, remained segregated (Mershon and Schlossman 1998:140). Although the Army also experimented with racial integration on a small scale and desegregated its recreational facilities, by the end of the war it had reaffirmed its policy of segregated units (Mershon and Schlossman 1998:121, 124, 127).

The proportion of African Americans in the military grew during and after the Second World War. Despite segregation and widespread discrimination, a survey of soldiers reported that African Americans found life in the military to be more satisfying than did whites (Mershon and Schlossman 1998:88). And, although the Navy lost a large proportion of African Americans after the war (Mershon and Schlossman 1998:139), fewer blacks than whites were discharged from the Army at this time (Dansby et al. 2001:xx). Voluntary

enlistment of African Americans into the armed services, particularly the Army, continued, even after the war's end. Six months after the end of World War II, 17% of new enlistees were African American, although only about 11% of the 18–37 year old male population was black (Young 1982:216). As a result of such trends, the proportion of black soldiers in the military grew.

In 1948 President Harry Truman issued Executive Order 9981, which outlawed racial discrimination in the military. The order stated:

> It is hereby declared to be the policy of the President that there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the Armed Forces without regard to race, color, religion, or national origin. This policy shall be put into effect as rapidly as possible, having due regard to the time required to effectuate any necessary changes without impairing efficiency or morale. (Truman 1948)

Truman's executive order also established a committee appointed by the President to examine racial inequality in the military as well as to create and alter military policies related to civil rights. While previous policies had sought to put an end to racial discrimination in the military, they did not define segregation as a form of discrimination, thus allowing it to continue. Truman and the President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity were clear in specifically defining segregation as a form of racial discrimination. Truman "saw black civil rights as a matter of national security," thereby investigating and promoting civil rights as such (Skrentny 2002:16). Because racial policies in the military were not statutory laws, desegregation of the military did not require congressional legislation (Mershon and Schlossman 1998:167). In fact, desegregation in both the Air Force and Navy began to take hold as these branches worked with the President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity to desegregate their units. The Army and the Marines, however, resisted desegregation efforts.

The Korean War was the first war fought under a policy of integrated troops. In practice, many units remained segregated during the war but, by the end of the war, integration was nearly complete. In fact, the Korean War led the Army to begin to see desegregation as a solution to problems of manpower and inefficiency. Similarly, the Marine Corps moved towards integration as a way to ease personnel shortages during the war. By the beginning of 1954, only 10,000 out of 250,000 African Americans in the military continued to serve in segregated units (Young 1982:219).

The Vietnam War, however, was marked by racial strife. One prominent issue was that of racial inequality in the draft. The military allowed college students to defer service, a practice that largely allowed the white middle class to avoid the draft. As poor people and blacks made up a large portion of the troops during the Vietnam War, allegations were made that "blacks and the

poor were serving as cannon fodder" (Armor 1996:9). Some civil rights activists became strong opponents of the war, in part because of the large numbers of African Americans fighting in it. Military installations—both in the United States and abroad—became the sites of race riots throughout the Vietnam War (Mershon and Schlossman 1998:322). Although the military was integrated throughout this war, discrimination against black soldiers was rampant. For example, after the death of Martin Luther King, Jr., white soldiers burned crosses and flew Confederate flags at some bases in Vietnam (Terry 1971:228). Despite continued discrimination in the military, however, blacks tended to reenlist at a greater rate than whites (Stern 1971:220).

In 1971 the Pentagon created the Defense Race Relations Institute (DRRI), later renamed the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI). This institute was created to "cope with the racial turbulence then afflicting the military" (Moskos and Butler 1996:56). One of the main purposes of DEOMI involves equal opportunity training, which is mandatory for military personnel. The program has been labeled as "the single most ambitious training program…ever implemented in the United States" (Dansby et al.:xxiii). Today, equal opportunity training emphasizes an "overarching American identity," rather than multiculturalism, as the aim is to create an underlying unity among soldiers (Moskos and Butler 1996:58). The armed services take this training seriously and view racial harmony as an important step toward the broader goal of cohesive units and combat readiness. As Moskos and Butler note, "The Army treats good race relations as a means to readiness and combat effectiveness—not as an end in itself;" hate speech, for instance, tends to be punished only when it causes problems within the ranks rather than at every utterance (Moskos and Butler 1996:53).

In 1973, as the Vietnam War came to an end, the military did away with conscription, marking the beginning of the all-volunteer force. Concerns were raised that, in the context of an all-volunteer force, the overrepresentation of blacks and low-income individuals would become even greater, as middle class whites would have little motivation to join the military (Armor 1996:10). Indeed, with the advent of the all-volunteer force the proportion of blacks in the military did grow substantially (Levy 1998). In Desert Storm, fought with an all-volunteer force, blacks continued to make up a large proportion of military men and women in Iraq; African Americans comprised 20% of troops in the Gulf War (Buckley 2001:433).

RACE AND IMMIGRATION STATUS IN THE CONTEMPORARY MILITARY

In 2006, among active duty forces in all services, including the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard, 70.2% were white, 17.3% were black, 1.6% were American Indian or Alaska Native, 3.4% were Asian, 0.6% were Pacific Islander, 1.0% were multiracial and 6% were of an unknown

race (DEOMI 2006:2). Like the U.S. Census Bureau, the military asks whether forces are of a "Hispanic ethnicity," in addition to asking about race. Among active duty forces 10.2% identified as Hispanic. There is variation in the racial–ethnic composition across armed services. There are more blacks in the Army than in any of the other armed services—blacks comprised 21.1% of active duty Army personnel in 2006. Although the greatest number of individuals who identify as Hispanic are in the Army, the greatest proportion of Hispanics are in the Marine Corps, where they make up 13.1% of all active duty personnel. The greatest overall numbers and proportion of Asians are in the Navy, where they make up 5.7% of active duty personnel. Among whites, the greatest numbers are in the Army, but the greatest proportion is in the Coast Guard, where whites make up 79% of active duty personnel. Among American Indians and Alaska Natives, the greatest numbers and proportion are in the Navy, where they comprise 3.8% of active duty personnel (DEOMI 2006:2).

Today, nearly 5% of the armed forces is comprised of immigrants, two-thirds of whom are naturalized citizens (Batalova 2008). Like native-born Americans, immigrants living in the United States, including undocumented immigrants, are required to register with the Selective Service (Stock 2006). Given that no draft currently exists, and that immigrants in today's military are all volunteers, service in the military is often a way to expedite citizenship proceedings for those who serve. In July 2002, President Bush used his authority under the Immigration and Nationality Act to expedite the citizenship of non-citizens who had been serving honorably in the military since September 11, 2001. Since that time, more than 37,250 immigrants serving in the military have become United States citizens and 111 have been given posthumous citizenship (Batalova 2008). The National Defense Authorization Act, passed in November of 2003, also allows naturalizations to take place outside of the United States, thereby allowing military personnel serving in places like Iraq and Afghanistan to become United States citizens while serving abroad (Batalova 2008, Stock 2006).

DATA AND METHODS

As previously stated, this study examines the impact of race, class, and immigration status on military service. First, I examine representation across race–ethnicity in recent decades by comparing the percentage of different racial–ethnic groups in the military with their percentage in the military-age (17–35 years) general population. I compare ipums (Integrated Public Use Microdata Series) data for 1980, 1990, and 2000 (Ruggles et al. 2008) with military data for 1981, 1990, and 2000. The 1981 military data is taken from the work of Martin Binkin and colleagues (1982), while the military data from 1990 and 2000 is from the DEOMI (1990, 2000).

Second, using data from the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS:88), I use multivariate analysis to examine the impact of race, class, and

immigration status on ever having served in the military. To date, NELS:88 is the only longitudinal, nationally representative dataset that follows the academic trajectories of youth from their pre-high school years through their mid-twenties. It includes data on early labor–market entry as well as social, demographic, and education-related information. NELS:88 was administered in 1988 to 24,599 eighth graders and to their parents, teachers, and principals; it provides individual, family, and school-level data. Later, in 1990, 1992, 1994 and 2000, surveys were administered again to the same students. This research used a sample of students who remained in the study from 1988 to 2000. In 2000, a question was asked about whether the respondents had ever served on active duty in the military. In this research, a series of probit models are used to examine the effect of race, class, and immigration status on military service. I first use a sample of people of all racial–ethnic backgrounds and then limit the analysis to those who identify as Hispanic in order to look more specifically at the military service of this under-studied group. All data are weighted utilizing NELS:88 panel weights and all models include adjustments for design effects.

DEPENDENT VARIABLE

The dependent variable is an indicator of whether the respondent has ever served in the military by the year 2000. The variable is based on the individual's response to the question, "Have you ever served on active duty in the armed forces?" About 5.9% of the sample has ever served in the military. (Unfortunately, given the limitations of the NELS:88 study, it is not possible to distinguish between the enlisted ranks and the officer corps.)

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

Race/Ethnicity indicates whether the respondent identified as White, Black, Hispanic, Asian, or American Indian. White is the omitted category.

Latino Ethnicity indicates the ethnicity of a respondent—Mexican, Puerto Rican, or Other Hispanic—who has self-identified as "Hispanic." Mexican is the omitted category.

Gender is a dichotomous variable measured by the student's self-report of sex, either male or female (male=1/female=0).

Generation is measured by a series of dummy variables constructed from questions on student and parent birthplaces for the base year (eighth grade): first generation (children born outside of the United States), second generation (U.S.-born children with at least one foreign-born parent), third and later generations (U.S.-born children of native-born parents).[3] In addition, I

[3] See also Oropesa and Landale (1997) for a similar identification of immigrant generation.

include a fourth generational category called unknown generation. A relatively large portion of the sample cannot be adequately identified by generation because of missing data on parent and child birthplace. The question arises as to how to classify island-born Puerto Ricans. Because Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens by birth, I classify them as U.S.-born rather than foreign born, despite the fact that island-born Puerto Ricans share some characteristics with foreign-born Latinos.

Social Class: There are two measures of social class: family income and parental education. *Yearly Family Income* is measured in thousands of dollars using the parents' report of the yearly family income in the 1988 parental interview. Because income was reported within a range of income categories in the survey, yearly family income is set to the mean for each category. *Mean Parental Education* refers to the combined level of education completed by the parents or guardians in years. When two parents are present in the household, the average of the parents' education is used. When only one parent is present, that parent's education level is used.

High School Achievement Test Scores are measured by the student's score in centiles on achievement tests taken in math and reading during their senior year of high school. Possible scores range from 1–99. The first and the ninety-ninth centile each represent 1.5%, while the other centiles represent 1%. Achievement test scores are included in the analysis because the military uses scores on the Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT) to determine whether someone is qualified to enter the military. The achievement test scores used here are not AFQT scores but rather achievement tests administered through the data collection effort by the National Center for Education Statistics, the agency in the U.S. Department of Education that collected the NELS:88 (National Center for Education Statistics. 2002) data. Achievement test scores in math and reading are used here because the AFQT is comprised of math and verbal tests.

School Type is a dichotomous variable indicating whether the student attended a public or private high school.

Urbanicity is measured by a series of dummy variables indicating whether the individual resided in an urban, suburban, or rural area.

RESULTS

One way to examine the representation of different racial–ethnic groups is to compare the percentage of different groups in the military with their percentage in the military-age (17–35 years) general population. If the percentage of a given group in the military is markedly greater than that of the general population, we can say that it is overrepresented in the military; if its percentage in the military is markedly lower than in the general population, we can say that it is underrepresented in the military. In 1970 for example, the percentage of blacks in the military was 9.8%, while the percentage of blacks in the military-age general population was 11%—making blacks slightly underrepresented in

the military (Ruggles et al. 2008; U.S. Census Bureau 2008). Table 1 shows the percentage of different racial–ethnic groups in the military and the general population for the years 1980/1981, 1990, and 2000. In 1981 blacks were somewhat overrepresented in the military, while whites and Hispanics were somewhat underrepresented in the military. By 1990, the situation had changed and whites were overrepresented in the military, while blacks, Hispanics, and Asians were underrepresented. In 2000, Hispanics were underrepresented, while blacks were overrepresented.

TABLE 1. RACIAL-ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF UNITED STATES MILITARY AND MILITARY-AGE GENERAL POPULATION

	1981	1980	1990		2000	
	Military	General Population	Military	General Population	Military	General Population
White	72.4%	78.3%	85.1%	72.7%	65.9%	63.1%
Black	19.8%	12.0%	7.7%	12.7%	19.8%	13.0%
Hispanic	3.7%	7.1%	4.4%	10.5%	7.9%	16.5%
Asian	2.0%	1.8%	1.6%	3.2%	3.6%	4.6%
American Indian	0.7%	0.7%	1.2%	0.8%	1.0%	0.8%
Other	1.4%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	1.9%	0.2%
2 or more races	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1.9%

Sources: Binkin et al. 1982, Ruggles et al. 2008, DEOMI 1990, 2000.

Table 2 shows the characteristics of those who have served in the military from the NELS:88 data. Among those who have ever served, 67% were white, 15.7% were black, 9.9% were Hispanic, 4.9% were American Indian, and 2.2% were Asian. Males were much more likely to have served than females. About 86.3% of those who have served are male while only 16.4% are females. Military service also varied by immigrant generation. Those with U.S.-born parents comprise the largest share of those who have ever served; about 83% were third or later generations, 7.2% were second generation, 3.1% were first generation and 6.7% were of an unknown generation. A greater percentage of those who have served in the armed forces were suburban; about 23.7% were from urban areas, 39.9% were from suburban areas, and 36.5% were from rural areas. Finally, the vast majority of those who have served in the military went to public high schools—about 96.6%—while 3.4% went to private high schools.

TABLE 2. CHARACTERISTICS OF THOSE WHO HAVE SERVED IN THE MILITARY

Race/Ethncity		Immigrant Generation	
White	67.0%	First Generation	3.1%
Black	15.7%	Second Generation	7.2%
Hispanic	9.9%	Third and Later Generations	83.0%
American Indian	4.9%	Unknown Generation	6.7%
Asian	2.2%	Urbanicity	
Gender		Urban	23.7%
Male	83.6%	Suburban	39.9%
Female	16.4%	Rural	36.5%
		School Type	
		Public	96.6%
		Private	3.4%

Source: NELS:88

Table 3 shows the results of a series of six probit equations estimating whether individuals have ever served in the Armed Forces by the year 2000. Surprisingly, there are no significant racial–ethnic differences in terms of having ever served in the military. There are also no significant generational differences. Immigrants are not significantly less likely to have served than those with two U.S.-born parents. However, there is an association between family income and military service: as family income increases, the likelihood of having ever served in the military decreases. A closer examination of the relationship between family income and military service reveals that the family incomes of those who have never enlisted in the military are somewhat higher than those who have served at the low end of the distribution (56.25% higher at the 5th percentile, 42.85% higher at the 10th percentile, and 28.57% higher at the 25th percentile), are no different between the 50th and 90th percentile, and are substantially higher (140%) at the 95th percentile. Therefore, among the working class, those who have served in the military have tended to come from poorer circumstances, while there is low representation of the children of the very rich. Indeed, additional analysis (not shown here) finds that the highest income quartile was significantly less likely to have served than the lowest, while the second and third quartiles were not significantly different from the lowest quartile in their likelihood to serve. In sum, the economic elite are very unlikely to serve in the military.

Other factors also play a role in military service. Math achievement, for example, is positively associated with military service. As scores on standardized tests of math achievement increase, so does the likelihood of ever having served in the military. This is likely due to the use of the Armed Forces Qual-

ification Test (AFQT) in selecting recruits to the military. Not surprisingly, males are significantly more likely to serve than females. Students from public high schools are also more likely to have ever served than those from private high schools. Model 6, which includes interaction terms between achievement test scores and race–ethnicity, indicates that the effects of achievement test scores vary by race–ethnicity. Compared to whites, Hispanics who score high on reading achievement tests are less likely to join the military. However, compared to whites, Hispanics who receive high scores on math achievement tests are more likely to have ever served.

Because little work has been done on Latino participation in the Armed Services, I further analyze the Latino participation. Among Latinos who have ever served in the military by the year 2000, 49.1% were Mexican, 7.5% were Puerto Rican, and 41.5% were "Other Hispanic." Compared to the general population, a greater share of Latinos who have served are children of immigrants. Among all Latinos, 49.1% are third and later generations, 35.8% are second generation, 9.4% are first generation and 7.5% are of unknown generational status.

Table 4 shows the results of five probit equations estimating whether Latinos have ever served in the armed services. Model 1 shows the results of a probit equation indicating the impact of ethnicity on military service. Compared to Mexicans, "Other Hispanics" are significantly more likely to have served. Puerto Ricans are no different in their likelihood of service compared to Mexicans. Model 2 adds generational status. Interestingly, there are no significant differences across immigrant generation. Immigrants are not significantly less likely to have served than children of immigrants or those with two U.S.-born parents. When socioeconomic status is added, as is the case in Model 3, the results show that as family income increases, the likelihood of service decreases, while parents' education does not significantly affect military service. When standardized achievement test scores are included in the model, however, the effect of family income disappears, indicating that achievement test scores may impact the selection of recruits by family income. Among Hispanics, higher reading achievement is associated with less likelihood of joining, while higher math scores are associated with a greater likelihood of joining the military. These effects disappear, however, when additional controls for sex, high school type, and geography are included in the model. As shown in Model 5 and as might be expected, Latino males are significantly more likely to have served than Latinas. Thus, the results for test scores may be explained by gender differences in reading and math achievement and the greater likelihood of males to have ever served in the military. There are no significant effects of high school type and geography among Latinos. Although not shown here, a final model included interaction terms between ethnicity and achievement test scores. The results for the interaction terms were not significant.

TABLE 3. PROBIT: EVER SERVED IN ARMED FORCES (N=7570)

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
Variables[a]	Estimate	SE	Sig	Estimate	SE	Sig	Estimate	SE	Sig
BLACK	0.228	0.165		0.185	0.133		0.135	0.138	
HISPANIC	0.055	0.085		0.087	0.102		0.028	0.104	
ASIAN	-0.182	0.141		-0.112	0.156		-0.084	0.159	
AMERICAN INDIAN	0.191	0.180		0.183	0.182		0.146	0.183	
2ND GEN				-0.101	0.110		-0.102	0.111	
1ST GEN				-0.113	0.138		-0.131	0.142	
UNKNOWN GEN				0.424	0.315		0.397	0.329	
MEAN PARENTAL EDUC							-0.008	0.015	
FAMILY INCOME							-0.003	0.001	**
READING ACHIEVEMENT									
MATH ACHIEVEMENT									
MALE									
PUBLIC HIGH									
RURAL									
BLACK*READING ACH									
ASIAN*READING ACH									
AMERICAN INDIAN*READING ACH									
HISPANIC*READING ACH									
BLACK*MATH ACH									
ASIAN*MATH ACH									
AMERICAN INDIAN*MATH ACH									
HISPANIC*MATH ACH									
Constant	-1.601	0.035	***	-1.605	0.037	***	-1.358	0.215	***
Log likelihood		-1688.48			-1680.47			-1671.56	

Source: NELS:88.

[a]Omitted variables: White; 3rd and later gens, Private high; Suburban.

*p<.05; **p<.01; *** p<.001.

TABLE 3. (continued)

	Model 4			Model 5			Model 6		
Variables	Estimate	SE	Sig	Estimate	SE	Sig	Estimate	SE	Sig
BLACK	0.203	0.143		0.251	0.138		-0.270	0.172	
HISPANIC	0.070	0.102		0.092	0.117		0.018	0.270	
ASIAN	-0.096	0.160		-0.056	0.171		-0.631	0.459	
AMERICAN INDIAN	0.178	0.181		0.157	0.184		-0.384	0.353	
2ND GEN	-0.125	0.110		-0.063	0.122		-0.066	0.125	
1ST GEN	-0.163	0.144		-0.146	0.152		-0.147	0.153	
UNKNOWN GEN	0.405	0.324		0.434	0.296		0.431	0.282	
MEAN PARENTAL EDUC	-0.018	0.016		-0.024	0.015		-0.023	0.015	
FAMILY INCOME	-0.004	0.001	***	-0.003	0.001	*	-0.003	0.001	*
READING ACHIEVEMENT	-0.002	0.002		0.001	0.002		0.002	0.002	
MATH ACHIEVEMENT	0.006	0.002	**	0.003	0.002		0.000	0.002	
MALE				0.805	0.073	***	0.804	0.073	***
PUBLIC HIGH				0.428	0.130	***	0.440	0.128	***
URBAN				-0.028	0.093		-0.031	0.092	
RURAL				0.041	0.068		0.045	0.069	
BLACK*READING ACH							0.002	0.006	
ASIAN*READING ACH							0.007	0.006	
AMERICAN INDIAN*READING ACH							-0.010	0.011	
HISPANIC*READING ACH							-0.012	0.006	*
BLACK*MATH ACH							0.010	0.006	
ASIAN*MATH ACH							0.003	0.006	
AMERICAN INDIAN*MATH ACH							0.019	0.011	
HISPANIC*MATH ACH							0.012	0.005	*
Constant	-1.400	0.217	***	-2.315	0.287	***	-2.216	0.268	***
Log likelihood	-1659.76			-1533.97			-1518.27		

TABLE 4. PROBIT: EVER SERVED IN ARMED FORCES
(Hispanic sample, N=868)

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
Variables[a]	Estimate	SE	Sig	Estimate	SE	Sig	Estimate	SE	Sig
PUERTO RICAN	0.050	0.240		0.084	0.249		0.107	0.252	
OTHER HISPANIC	0.454	0.196		0.459	0.202		0.552	0.216	
2ND GEN				-0.220	0.201		-0.270	0.202	
1ST GEN				-0.310	0.245		-0.370	0.255	
UNKNOWN GEN				0.047	0.281		-0.025	0.312	
MEAN PARENTAL EDUC							0.020	0.031	
FAMILY INCOME							-0.011	0.005	
READING ACHIEVEMENT									
MATH ACHIEVEMENT									
MALE									
PUBLIC HIGH									
URBAN									
RURAL									
Constant	-1.685	0.088	***	-1.566	0.123	***	-1.519	0.415	***
Log likelihood		-194.99			-193.29			-189.10	

Source: NELS:88.
[a]Omitted variables: Mexican; 3rd and later gens, Private high; Suburban.
*p<.05; **p<.01; *** p<.001.

TABLE 4. (continued)

	Model 4			Model 5		
Variables	Estimate	SE	Sig	Estimate	SE	Sig
PUERTO RICAN	0.071	0.273		0.069	0.294	
OTHER HISPANIC	0.507	0.219		0.573	0.241	*
2ND GEN	-0.288	0.204		-0.341	0.230	
1ST GEN	-0.440	0.265		-0.474	0.306	
UNKNOWN GEN	0.017	0.334		0.213	0.396	
MEAN PARENTAL EDUC	0.020	0.032		0.008	0.032	
FAMILY INCOME	-0.013	0.007	***	-0.013	0.007	
READING ACHIEVEMENT	-0.012	0.005		-0.009	0.005	
MATH ACHIEVEMENT	0.014	0.006	**	0.011	0.006	
MALE				0.856	0.212	***
PUBLIC HIGH				0.332	0.503	
URBAN				-0.137	0.199	
RURAL				-0.074	0.202	
Constant	-1.590	0.383	***	-2.204	0.836	***
Log likelihood		-181.01			-166.95	

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

It appears that there are few significant differences in the propensity to join the military across race–ethnicity. In this respect, service in the military is available to those of all racial and ethnic backgrounds. That this finding seems to contradict popular opinion and military data for the year 2000 on active duty personnel warrants further investigation. A comparison of the military data to the general population shows that, in 1990, African Americans were underrepresented, but by 2000 they were overrepresented among military personnel. As such, some issues warrant further analysis. First, asking whether one has ever served in the military is different from asking whether one is currently serving in the military. The use of the first question (whether a respondent has ever served) may potentially underrepresent black participation in the military as African Americans tend to have longer military careers (Binkin et al. 1982). If the question of whether someone has ever served produces more yes responses from those with shorter military careers, it may underrepresent the experiences of those with longer service in the military. Secondly, this research begs the question as to why "Other Hispanics," comprised of Central and South Americans, Cubans, and Dominicans, may be more likely to serve in the military, while Puerto Ricans are no different in their likelihood of serving, compared to Mexicans. Further research might investigate how national origin among Latinos relates to enlistment.

Although one might expect greater participation in the military among those with deeper roots in the United States, this research finds that, overall, children of immigrants (including members of both the first and second generation) are not significantly less likely to serve in the military as those with two U.S.-born parents. Particularly worth noting is the fact that foreign-born children of immigrants are not significantly less likely to serve than the children of the U.S.-born. Furthermore, the number of children of immigrants who have served in the military are not trivial. Among Latinos, as in the general population, there are no significant differences in the likelihood of having served in the military across immigrant generation.

An important predictor to military service in the general population is family income. Those with lower family income are more likely to join the military than those with higher family income. Thus the military may indeed be a career option for those for whom there are few better opportunities. For such enlistees, military service can open opportunities that would not otherwise be available. Indeed, research has found that military service often serves as a positive turning point in the career trajectories of enlistees from disadvantaged circumstances (Elder 1986, 1987; Sampson and Laub 1996). A popular claim is that those of low socioeconomic status are more likely to be assigned to combat roles within the military than those from higher socioeconomic backgrounds. Based on this, it is said that the poor serve as "cannon fodder" in fighting for

their nation during times of war. Gimbel and Booth (1996) have found that during the Vietnam War those with lower AFQT scores were more likely to be assigned to combat arms and to go to Vietnam, but they did not examine the impact of socioeconomic status. Thus, further research might investigate whether socioeconomic status is significantly related to one's assignment once one is accepted into the military.

In conclusion, among race, socioeconomic status, and immigration status, socioeconomic status is the only significant predictor of having ever served in the military. Class differences in military enlistment likely reflect differences in the non-military occupational opportunity, structured along class lines. This research shows that the all-volunteer force continues to see over-representation of the working and middle classes, with fewer incentives for upper class participation.

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