Race, Place, and Veteran Status: The Changing Relationship between Military Staffing Policy and Migration History

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INTRODUCTION

Service in the armed forces necessarily requires migration at the time of induction, is likely at the time of separation, and may affect the likelihood of subsequent migration trajectories. The effects of military service, then, may include both socioeconomic status attainment and spatial mobility. This effect is particularly noteworthy because it results from direct state action and may point to relatively unexplored state leverage in the process of spatial stratification. As staffing policy changes select different groups into military service, state action may differentially facilitate geographic mobility. During the 20th century in the American context, the state acted on three occasions: the Post-War desegregation of the armed forces; the implementation of the peacetime draft following the Korean conflict, and the 1973 move to the All-Volunteer Force (AVF). This paper uses census data to examine the influence of veteran status on lifetime inter-state migration and on recent migration and residential mobility between 1940 and 2000, and how that relationship may differ for blacks and whites. It further investigates the ways that changes in military staffing policy may have resulted in differential relationships between migration and veteran status for blacks and whites over time. I currently use logistic regression and three distinct decades of data to estimate whether group-level differences exist in probabilities of lifetime interstate migration or changing residences in the last 5-year interval. Future iterations of this work will employ structural equation systems, and utilize all decades of population census between 1940 and 2000.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Military service represents perhaps the most costly extraction of resources a state can ask of its citizens. In the context of industrialized countries, however, individual risk of martial sacrifice also implies a reciprocal responsibility on the part of the state. In the American context, this has been expressed through the early implementation of pensions for Civil War veterans (Skocpol), a series of "GI Bills" that helped millions of service members purchase homes or pursue educational goals, and within the last 30 years, the exchange of specific financial and educational incentives for enlistment and terms of service. These benefits provide opportunities for socioeconomic mobility to citizens who prove their worth on the battlefield, and the influence of veteran status on individual educational and occupational attainment are well-documented in the literature (Angrist 1998; Cooney, et. al., 2003; Nam 1964; Sampson and Laub 1996; Schwartz 1986).¹ With the exception of widespread Post-War suburbanization facilitated by VA home loans (Skocpol 1997), however, the relationship between *prior* military service and spatial mobility remains largely unexplored.

The Military and Migration

The link between the armed forces and migration has been studied only to a limited degree. Work that addresses changing patterns of selection into the service in the AVF context, or the influence of policy-related changes in any existing relationship is virtually non-existent. A small number of historical projects identify differential migration patterns for veterans and non-veterans, the limited geographic and temporal foci makes this work of limited use. The only study of which I am aware that compares rates of migration *by race* for veterans and non-veterans finds that only among individuals with the lowest levels of human capital (as measured by standardized test scores) are rates of migration consistently tied to military background, and

¹ Although see Cohen, Segal and Temme (1992), for analysis of the influence of changes in the policy environment on differential levels of educational attainment between veterans and non-veterans.

in these cases migration tends to be higher among veterans than non-veterans (Baker 1998; Cutright 1974).

The influence of changes in military staffing policy on the relationship between military service and subsequent migration patterns remains almost wholly unexplored, particularly at the micro-level. The vast majority of existing work looks at cohort-level net migration streams, but fails to inspect individual-level propensities to migrate. Military service necessarily involves "induction" migration -- changing residences upon entry into the armed services -- and for many service personnel may also involve "separation" migration. Military prevalence has been found to impact young adult interstate migration patterns, although with "separation" migration, economic characteristics of places of origin and of destination also play a critical role (Vaidyanathan 1969). Active-duty military personnel are more likely than their civilian counterparts to move, undoubtedly due to relocation requirements associated with specific missions or assignments and the fixed location and limited number of military bases (Miller 1969). Finally, the relationship between the research-and-development and production capabilities of the military-industrial complex *have* been studied at length (Clark 1993; Ellis et. al., 1993; Markuson et. al., 1991), and results indicate that regional redistribution of the U.S. population is linked to the location of "high tech" military-industrial complex hubs.

Military Staffing Policy

Throughout U.S. history, the armed forces have been staffed primarily by a "skeleton crew" of career officers during times of peace. The standing army was relatively small prior to the onset of the Cold War, and wartime fighting forces were augmented by a combination of volunteers and the occasional draft. The U.S. military underwent three major staffing changes in the latter half of the 20th century, all of which have substantial potential to change any existing relationship between migration and veteran status. First, in the aftermath of the Second World War, President Truman ordered the desegregation of the armed forces. Prior to WWII, African Americans were under-represented in the military due to a limited number of segregated units in which they were allowed to serve. Following desegregation, blacks continued to be under-represented because a larger proportion of African Americans were deemed to be physically or mentally unfit. However, the expansion of secondary education in the South and the geographic redistribution of many southerners to Northern and Western industrial centers led to an increasing proportion of black and Southern applicants admitted to the military (Moskos 1966).

Following the onset of hostilities involving US military forces on the Korean Peninsula and the intensification of the Cold War, the U.S. instituted the first ever peace-time draft. This meant that all able-bodied young males shared a near-universal risk of service, although racial minorities and Southerners were still under-represented due to higher proportions of these groups failing to meet educational or physical fitness minimum thresholds. In practice, veteran status became much more equally distributed throughout the population, and despite widely-publicized race- and class-based disparities in service *assignments* (and resulting casualty rates) in Vietnam, selection into the military became primarily an issue of gender and age. Any independent effect of military service on subsequent migration or mobility patterns, then, is likely to be widespread among men who served under this policy regime.

Finally, in 1973, in response to intensifying public opposition to the U.S. war with Vietnam and the draft, Congress authorized yet another major change in military staffing policy: the transition to the All-Volunteer Force (AVF). This led to dramatic demographic changes in military personnel, including a growing proportion of women in uniform, increasing levels of

educational attainment and performance on standardized tests for enlistees, and an overrepresentation of blacks for the first time in our nation's history. The changing characteristics of the armed services resulting from the transition to the AVF may mean that possible migratory effects of military service have now become concentrated on specific segments of the population. Recruitment since 1973 has disproportionately attracted Southerners and young adults from rural communities (Fredland et. al., 1996; Segal and Segal 2004). Additionally, given the increasing selectivity of military applicants and longer, more career-oriented trajectories of enlistment, the effects of veteran status on migration may either intensify or dissipate as military service becomes only one among a panoply of possible career options.

Migration and Residential Mobility

Military service may make migration more likely because of a number of theoretically and empirically important correlates of migration. First, the required relocation associated with a term of service – often entailing multiple moves for even brief enlistment periods – reduces costs of gathering information on potential destinations (Lee 1966). The level of mobility incumbent upon military personnel also reduces social network ties with both the individual's "home" community and with the communities in which s/he lived during military service, and makes additional residential moves more likely in the future (Shaw 1975). The increasing selectivity of military enlistment under the AVF context may also draw populations more likely to migrate: current active-duty military personnel are disproportionately Southern, rural, male and black (Segal and Segal 2004). Finally, military service may *indirectly* impact individual patterns of migration and mobility because veteran status has been documented to influence levels of educational and occupational attainment, which in turn have independent effects on migration and mobility. However, given that the relationship between veteran status and socioeconomic outcomes has varied under different policy environments, the direction of any relationship between service in the All-Volunteer Force and subsequent migration remains in question.

DATA AND METHODS

This paper utilizes Public-Use Microdata from the population census for each decade from 1940 through 2000. The main questions center on whether the relationship between veteran status and migration or residential mobility changed over the last half of the twentieth century, and whether those effects differ for black and white veterans. As such, two separate logistic regression models are estimated in the preliminary results section. The first uses lifetime interstate migration – whether the individual in question is currently residing in his state of birth – as the outcome variable. The second analysis focuses on recent migration – whether the individual has changed residences in the past five years.² Both models control for educational attainment, age, race, and two measures of labor force participation – whether the individual is a labor force participant, and whether active participants are employed or not. Preliminary results, based on three decades of data, are reported below. The final models will utilize a system of structural equations to more fully explore the causal mechanisms at play. In order to more fully assess the role of socioeconomic status, occupational SEI score will also be included. Because of changing patterns of inter-regional migration across time, and substantially different costs associated with varying distances of migration, I will also incorporate a measure of distance

 $^{^{2}}$ Note that for the 1950 census, the recent migration question addresses migration within the past year, so this variable will reflect a somewhat different temporal relationship for this decade.

between states to determine whether patterns exist in distance between state or birth and state of residence by veteran status and race, and whether these vary over time.

Because the 1970 Census only poses questions about veteran status to males aged 14 and older who are not currently serving in the U.S. armed forces, the sample for all decades is restricted to males – an unfortunate analytical limitation given the increasing representation of women, and particularly of black women, in the military since the transition to the AVF. Additionally, in order to reduce "noise" from international migration and from the concentration of migration and residential mobility during the young adult years, each decade's sample is restricted to US-born individuals aged 29 and older. Future versions of this paper will reduce the potential influence of retirement-related migration by restricting the sample to those under age 65, and will provide a more nuanced exploration of the role of policy changes by disaggregating groups of black and white veterans into age categories most likely to have been affected by each era of military staffing (ex: for the 2000 data, separately examining migration patterns among those ages 29 - 45, who were most likely to have served in the AVF, and ages 46-65, who were most likely to have been subject to the draft).

PRELIMINARY RESULTS

All models are estimated both with and without veteran status variables. The referent group for models that exclude veteran status is **all whites**, and the coefficient for "Black" compares all blacks to all whites, regardless of veteran status. In models incorporating veteran status, **white non-veterans** are the referent group. The coefficient for the variable "Veterans" should be interpreted as the difference between white veterans and white non-veterans. The "Veteran * Black" variable is an interaction term that captures effects for individuals who are both black and veterans. The variables "Black" and "Veteran * Black" identify differences between white non-veterans and black non-veterans and black veterans, respectively.

Preliminary results from analyses of the 1940, 1970, and 2000 census records reveal striking differences between veterans and non-veterans, between blacks and whites, and changes in these differences over time. Logistic regression estimates indicate that throughout these decades, white veterans were significantly more likely than white non-veterans to be living in a state other than the state in which they were born (See Table 1). Blacks are more likely than are whites to have migrated during all three decades. Differences among blacks by veteran status do not emerge until 2000. This may indicate an interaction between public policy and structural changes in the U.S. economy: specifically, the emerging role of military service in migration processes for blacks indicates that as the Great Migration came to a close. By 2000 a large proportion of black veterans would have served under the AVF regime, so within-race differences may reflect a growing role of black selectivity into military service, and the amplified role of the state in facilitating black spatial mobility. Veteran status appears to be less predictive of recent migration patterns, especially for blacks. In no decade under examination do black veterans and non-veterans differ in their rates of five-year mobility, although all blacks are significantly more likely than non-veteran whites to have experienced a recent move. Among whites, however, while no differences are found in 1940, veterans appear to be much more likely than do non-veterans to have experienced a recent move in both 1970 and 2000.

Clearly, the measure of lifetime interstate migration may reflect migration that has occurred at any time over the life course. Any differences that persist between veterans and nonveterans may therefore reflect either variance in the propensity to enlist based on differential childhood migration histories, or differential propensity to migrate based on veteran status.

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	<u>1940 Census</u>		<u>1970 Census</u>		2000 Census	
Educational attainment	0.139***	0.136***	0.093***	0.088***	0.218***	0.210***
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Unemployed	0.324***	0.320***	0.314***	0.315***	0.010	0.000
	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.016)	(0.016)
Not in Labor Force	0.242***	0.238***	0.167***	0.172***	0.038***	0.030***
	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.007)	(0.007)
Age	0.011***	0.011***	0.006***	0.007***	0.011***	0.007***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Ever Married	0.018	0.024	0.278***	0.273***	0.105***	0.085***
	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.008)	(0.008)
Black	0.391***	0.406***	0.037*	0.042**	0.117***	0.069***
	(0.026)	(0.027)	(0.013)	(0.016)	(0.009)	(0.011)
Veteran		0.409***		0.126***		0.247***
		(0.022)		(0.008)		(0.006)
Veteran*Black		-0.010		0.012		0.131***
		(0.083)		(0.024)		(0.018)
Intercept	-2.180***	-2.242***	-1.838***	-1.933***	-2.655***	-2.488***
	(0.041)	(0.041)	(0.024)	(0.025)	(0.020)	(0.020)

Table 1. Logistic Regression Predicting Lifetime Interstate Migration Based on Race and Veteran Status, 1940 – 2000.

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. * $p \le .05$; ** $p \le .01$; *** $p \le .001$. Census division of birth included in regression estimation; results not presented.

	<u>1940 Census</u>		<u>1970 Census</u>		<u>2000 Census</u>	
Educational attainment	-0.015***	-0.015***	0.043***	0.041***	0.048***	0.045***
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Unemployed	0.337***	0.338***	0.558***	0.559***	0.302***	0.297***
	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.016)	(0.016)
Not in Labor Force	0.369***	0.369***	0.687***	0.690***	0.330***	0.327***
	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.007)	(0.007)
Age	-0.030***	-0.030***	-0.048***	-0.048***	-0.047***	-0.049***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Ever Married	0.205***	0.205***	0.145***	0.143***	0.019*	0.013
	(0.019)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)
Black	0.390***	0.397***	0.077***	0.077***	0.111***	0.114***
	(0.027)	(0.028)	(0.013)	(0.017)	(0.009)	(0.011)
Veteran		-0.027		0.036***		0.104***
		(0.022)		(0.008)		(0.006)
Veteran * Black		-0.098		0.007		-0.013
		(0.086)		(0.024)		(0.019)
Intercept	1.280***	1.283***	1.148***	1.123***	1.245***	1.314***
	(0.039)	(0.039)	(0.024)	(0.025)	(0.020)	(0.020)

 Table 2. Logistic Regression Predicting Recent Migration and Mobility Based on Race and Veteran Status, 1940 – 2000.

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses. * $p \le .05$; ** $p \le .01$; *** $p \le .001$. Census division of birth included in regression estimation; results not presented.