Post 9/11 Women Veterans
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Introduction
The role of women in the U.S. military has changed since the inception of the All-Volunteer Force (AVF) in 1973. On the eve of the AVF, women comprised 2 percent of the military. In 2008, 14 percent of service members were women (DOD 2008). Significant changes in legislation and policy in the early 1990s opened up occupational opportunities for active-duty women (GAO 1999). Today over 80 percent of the services’ career positions are open for women (GAO 1999).

In addition to these policy changes, the nature of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan has redifined the experience of women serving in the Armed Forces. Since 2002, an unprecedented 155,000 women have been deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan (PBS 2007).

Today’s servicewomen represent a generational shift. They no longer face the same challenges as their predecessors. Not only is the representation of women in the AVF increasing, but the demographics of these women are also changing.

Research Questions
How do women who served in the military only after September 11, 2001 differ from their predecessors who served in the early part of the AVF and how do they differ from their present-day non-veteran counterparts?

How have 20 years of policy changes affected the post-military outcomes of women veterans?

Data and Methods
This analysis uses data from the 1990 decennial census and the 2008 American Community Survey (ACS).

The universe for this analysis is the population of women 18 to 34 years old from each data source. The 1990 decennial census data were used to facilitate the analysis of the two cohorts of veterans. The 1990 data provide information on women veterans from the early part of the AVF-period who are close in age and in the amount of time since their separation from the military to the most recent cohort of women veterans from the Post-9/11 era.

Multivariate analysis was used to compare the earnings of veterans and nonveterans in 1990 and 2008.

All comparative statements have undergone statistical testing and are significant at the 90 percent confidence level unless otherwise noted.

An asterisk (*) in a graph denotes an estimate that is statistically different from the estimate for the reference group, “Post 9/11 women veterans.”

Demographic Changes 1990 to 2008

Post-Military Outcomes 1990 to 2008

Summary
The demographics of women veterans are changing as the population of the women entering the military becomes more diverse.

Post 9/11 women veterans are more likely to:

- Racially diverse
- Never married
- More educated
- Black
- Divorced
- Less educated
- Compared with non-veteran women

Discussion
Research has suggested that military experience is a strong substitute for civilian labor market experience in occupation groups where training is the most transferable (medical, equipment repair, etc.), while not as far occupations where training is least transferable (infantry, combat).

Women serving in the military may be doing jobs similar to military men, as the policies change regarding occupations, but women veterans are doing jobs similar to all other women.

These findings may suggest difficulty transferring skills learned in male-dominated, and war-related, military occupations.