Moving On Up?
U.S. Military Service, Education and Labor Market Mobility among Children of Immigrants

By

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Abstract

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This dissertation examines U.S. military service enlistment intentions and post-military education and labor market outcomes among young adult children of immigrants in the United States in the early 21st century. I assert that the military is perceived as an alternative pathway to incorporation among disadvantaged children of immigrants. Rather than relying on ethnic social ties and networks to get ahead as segmented assimilation asserts is necessary for success among disadvantaged children of immigrants, they actively avoid downward mobility by choosing military service as a pathway to mobility. I argue that disadvantaged children of immigrants who aspire to upward mobility are pushed toward military service by structural disadvantages but only those who perceive the military as best option to get ahead make the decision to enlist.

An empirical investigation of post-military educational and labor market outcomes reveal that military service does not uniformly benefit veteran children of immigrants as they may have hoped. Analyses of nationally representative data, the National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Youth (ADD Health) and the Current Population Surveys (CPS) reveal that veteran children of immigrants are less likely to acquire bachelor's degrees and are less likely to be enrolled in post-secondary school than non-veterans by the ages of 24 to 32 but unemployment and earnings are similar between veteran and non-veteran children of immigrants.

However, these findings hide the variation underlying these outcomes that are revealed by in-depth interviews with thirty-three veteran children of immigrants. While some individuals seamlessly transition from military service to stable, middle-income occupations in the civilian labor market, others face unemployment, underemployment and obstacles to post-secondary degrees because of non-transferable military job skills and the challenges of transitioning from military to civilian life. Members of a third group were pursuing four-year degrees at the time of their interviews and post-college trajectories have yet to be determined.

Dedication

In memory of my father, David J. Barry,
my biggest academic fan – I miss you.
This is for you.

To my mother, C. Ann Barry,
lots of love and
thanks for giving me the name ‘Freight Train, Jr’ to live up to.

To my dear friends and siblings,
thanks for supporting me, cheering me on, and giving me strength
in those dark moments of the dissertation;
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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

The United States is home to over 40 million foreign-born persons (Census 2012) and 30 million persons of foreign-parentage (Rumbaut 2008), comprising over 20% of the total U.S. population. The social, economic and political incorporation of immigrants and their children is a significant issue with demographic and socio-cultural ramifications on U.S. society. Immigration scholars have highlighted the influence of individual and family characteristics and the impact of institutional forces - political organizations, post-secondary schools and government programs - on facilitating or hampering incorporation (Alba and Nee 2003; Kasinitz et al. 2008; Bloemraad 2006; Reitz 1998; Jones-Correa 1998; Marrow 2009). But these studies have ignored the largest single employment institution in the United States - the military - with over 2.4 million active and reserve-duty members in 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau 2012 Statistical Abstract) and the largest single employer of young adults aged 18-24 (Defense Data Manpower Center 2002, Phillips et al. 1992).

The U.S. military has been touted as a 'school for the nation', reshaping American society and integrating diverse racial and ethnic groups into the American polity. African Americans and Whites worked and lived side-by-side during the post WWII, pre-civil rights era desegregated military, paving the way for subsequent desegregation efforts (Moskos 1966). During World War I (1918-1919), over 192,000 immigrants acquired citizenship through military service, accounting for over 50% of all naturalizations in the U.S. during that period (*Yearbook of Immigration Statistics 2010*). The mid-twentieth century boost in average levels of education among U.S. men (Stanley 2003; Nam 1964) and the expansion of the White middle class (Katznelson 2005; Brodkin 1998) are attributed to the post-WWII utilization of GI benefits, which allowed millions of veterans to be the first in their families to complete college. The military has thus re-shaped American society by arguably advancing de-segregation and boosting socio-economic mobility of millions. How might it affect the dynamics of immigrant integration?

The increasing proportion of children of immigrants among the young adult population, the shrinking levels of serious interest in military participation among the general youth population (National Research Council 2004), and the association between minority status, disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds and military enlistment (Bachman et al. 2000) underscores the importance of examining military enlistment among children of immigrants to shed light on processes of social mobility and immigrant incorporation and the impact of institutions.

Children of Immigrants: Why the Military?

The military's promise of on-the-job training, immediate financial gain and post-service educational benefits may hold particular interest to children of immigrants who desire to gain a foothold into the mainstream labor market. Military participation and inclusive military policies have led to greater social inclusion for African-Americans (Krebs 2006; Ford 2001), and to better economic opportunities and outcomes post-service (Browning et al. 1973; Teachman and Tedrow 2007; Greenberg and Rosenheck 2007). Research demonstrates that African-Americans intentionally engage in military service as an avenue to improve social standing (Krebs 2006; Segal et al. 1998; Berryman 1989; Binkin and Eitelberg 1986). Since the initiation of the post-1973 volunteer force, African-Americans have enlisted at higher proportions than whites (Armor and Gilroy 2010, Bachman et al. 2000, Binkin and Eitelberg 1986; Janowitz and Moskos 1974),

regarding military service more favorably than white, non-Hispanic youth (Orvis et al. 1990; Armor and Gilroy 2010).

Although Hispanics are underrepresented in the military, recent research finds that Hispanic youth regard military service more favorably than African-Americans or whites (Armor and Gilroy 2010; Asch 2009). Disqualification based on eligibility criteria, including higher levels of high school dropouts and overweight or obesity may create barriers for Hispanic youth (Asch 2009). For the most part, African-Americans (Lundquist 2008; Orvis et al. 1990; White and Hosek 1982) and Latinos (Lundquist 2008) view the military as a more equitable and less discriminating environment than the civilian labor market. The post-1973 military has allowed socio-economically disadvantaged young men to escape from adolescent poverty (Seeborg 1994) and continues to attract individuals from lower-than-average socio-economic backgrounds who enlist as a springboard to get ahead (Elder et al. 2010; Kleykamp 2006).

Like other minority members in the U.S., children of immigrants may perceive and utilize the military institution as a potential pathway to mobility.

Theories of Immigrant Incorporation and the Roles of Institutions

Immigrant parents are generally concentrated in a limited number of occupations and industries (Kasinitz et al. 2008; Waldinger and Lichtenstein 2003), many lack English skills (Bean and Stevens 2003; Fortuny and Chaudry 2010), and face discrimination in labor and housing markets (Waldinger and Lichtenstein 2003; Waters 1999). The limited occupational and social networks of immigrant parents translate to lower social capital available to children of immigrants, who vie for positions in the mainstream labor market against children of native-born parents with higher average levels of resources and networks. Current immigration scholarship highlights the importance of institutional mechanisms on limiting or expanding the opportunities available to disadvantaged race/ethnic minority children of immigrants.

Segmented assimilation theorists delineate three main integration options for the children of immigrants. Children of educated immigrants with higher levels of income and greater human capital resources face few barriers to the labor market and to post-secondary attainment; they generally maintain or surpass the middle-class achievements of their immigrant parents. Disadvantaged children of immigrants, on the other hand, may experience upward or downward mobility. They achieve upward social mobility by maintaining ethnic network ties and cultural identity or experience downward social mobility by absorbing minority urban expectations and by severing ethnic bonds (Portes and Zhou 1993; Zhou and Bankston 1994; Rumbaut 2008; Zhou et al. 2008; Fernandez-Kelly and Portes 2008). In this theory, ethnic relationships and networks are viewed as informal institutions that foster mobility by engendering expectations of high educational achievement and protecting immigrants and their children from the negative influences of socio-economic disadvantage present in the neighborhoods where they often live and the schools they attend. In sum, immigrant mobility is limited to upward or downward movement, depending on parental human capital and resources as well as depending upon ties to informal social institutions.

Critics of segmented assimilation assert that minority immigrants and their children do not face only two possible outcomes; instead they assert that children of immigrants contend with race and class by following the footsteps of disadvantaged minorities who arrived in the U.S. generations before them. 'New' assimilation theorists and others assert that immigrants and their children who interact with mainstream institutions and who acquire the knowledge, experience, and habits of the mainstream White society enjoy higher socio-economic success

than those who fail to acquire them. Children of immigrants access post-secondary educational opportunities to gain better paying jobs in the mainstream labor market by leveraging policies and institutions meant for native minorities, such as diversity admissions in higher education, in order to achieve socio-economic success (Kasinitz 2008). Perlmann (2007) proposes an alternative channel of assimilation for today's immigrants that was utilized by Italian and Polish immigrants at the beginning of the twentieth century: entry into the working class. During their entrance into the working class, immigrants and their offspring are often relegated jobs near the bottom of the economy, but unlike the underclass in segmented assimilation theory, the group experiences high employment rates, positioning successive generations for upward mobility rather than perpetual disadvantage.

Ethnic networks provide access to job opportunities, which can be particularly advantageous to the lower-skilled (Waldinger and Lichtenstein 2003), but are limiting to the more educated children of immigrants who search for stable work outside of the ethnic enclaves (Kasinitz et al. 2008).

Previous literature on immigrants and their children highlight the importance of institutions on immigrant incorporation. Institutions and policies that encourage the involvement of immigrants, their children, and other minority members facilitate integration while incorporation falters in contexts that ignore, discourage, or make no special concessions to involve these groups (Alba and Nee 2003; Kasinitz et al. 2008; Bloemraad 2006; Reitz 1998; Jones-Correa 1998; Marrow 2009).

One of the main institutions of interest concerning immigration scholars in the United States is the public education system, a historical tool used to weave diverse groups into the American civic and economic tapestry. The country's K-12 educational institutions touch the lives of virtually all children born the in the U.S. and millions of foreign born children who reside in the U.S. permanently or temporarily. This near-universal institutional experience begins during an individual's childhood and continues through adolescence, generally spilling into young adulthood – ages 17 to 19. For the children of the post-1965 immigration stream, educational outcomes are the first measures of integration available and the first hint of what the future might hold for children of immigrants.

Research shows that educational context deeply shapes the socio-economic outcomes of children of immigrants, but the effects are not uniform across all groups. Housing discrimination based on race and the neighborhood settlement patterns produces 'sort' children of darker-skinned immigrants, such as West Indians and Dominicans, into systematically disadvantaged school systems with few material resources, high levels of violence (Waters 1999) and racially discriminatory teacher-student relations (Kasinitz et al. 2008). Members of other groups, such as children of Chinese immigrants, gain access to better school systems and teacher encouragement, ultimately resulting in higher levels of educational attainment and better socio-economic outcomes than darker-skinned country-of-origin groups despite similarly low-levels of education among the parents' generation (Kasinitz et al. 2008). These findings demonstrate the importance of large institutions on the incorporation of children of immigrants and the different outcomes that may be experienced by different groups.

But the K-12 educational system is just one set of institutions among many that impact children of immigrants and the process of assimilation. What influence do other institutions hold for children of immigrants? Recent evidence shows that today's children of immigrants, though constrained by various structures, are active and strategic in their search to get ahead – and other institutions are an important part of this process. Russian Jewish immigrants and their children in

New York benefit from a constellation of Jewish social service agencies and Jewish educational institutions which have helped to alleviate family poverty, assisted in the job search among parents, sheltered children from many of the problems of public schools, and provided networks and resources on college campuses (Kasinitz 2008). West Indian immigrants along with 'other' racial groups have benefitted greatly from diversity admissions and outreach on college campuses, co-ethnic labor unions and other opportunities that were designed to serve native minorities (Kasinitz 2008). Civic and religious institutions have often advanced socio-economic incorporation of immigrants and their children; some religious institutions provide access to services such as loan and mortgage applications that non-members would not have access to (Bankston and Zhou 2000; Hirschman 2006). Institutional mechanisms vary, but institutions are part of a dynamic relationship between individual actions, social networks and human and social capital resources (Alba and Nee 2003).

Evidence shows that institutions play key roles in immigrant assimilation, but less is known about the factors and characteristics that draw children of immigrants to different institutions in the first place. We know much about the role that institutions play in incorporation among children of immigrants, particularly the roles of primary and secondary educational institutions. But we know less about institutional pathways to adulthood and incorporation after high school, particularly routes involving institutions other than college. The U.S. military institution is a viable and popular post-high school option neglected by many researchers.

Attending school is compulsory from ages 6 to 17, so immigrants and their children, particularly those with too few resources to spend on private primary education, have little choice in their participation in the public educational system. Involvement in other institutions is much less universal, and children of immigrants face more choices in their transitions to adulthood.

How the military enlistment of minority children of immigrants fits into models of assimilation is unclear. According to new assimilation theories, children of immigrants would enlist as an institutional strategy to gain access to mainstream work but the theory has little to say about how socio-economic trajectories post-military would fare among children of immigrants. According to segmented assimilation theory, enlistment could lead to downward assimilation because disadvantaged children of immigrants remove themselves from protective ethnic surroundings by leaving neighborhoods and enclaves behind. However, this prediction may not hold in the military institutional context because the military is a large, mainstream institution and although a disproportionately high proportion of African Americans serve in the military, they generally come from higher socio-economic backgrounds than African-American non-enlisters (Teachman et al. 1993), not a minority underclass. On the other hand, military enlistment could serve a similar function as college education and facilitate upward mobility by providing or enhancing job skills and marketability. These potential effects present us with a puzzle: does the military positively or negatively impact children of immigrants?

Building on immigration theories and integrating findings from military research, I highlight the role of the U.S. military on the incorporation of children of immigrants. I propose that many disadvantaged children of immigrants at risk for downward mobility identify the military as an institution that will help them overcome the obstacles they face in the transition to adulthood. Furthermore, based on this perception, many disadvantaged children of immigrants access the military institution as their best option to gain future entry into mainstream post-secondary institutions and employment.

This study aims to uncover the factors that drive children of immigrants to enlist in the U.S. military during their transitions to adulthood, and how their life trajectories are shaped and changed through their experience in the military institution. This research adds to the study of social mobility and immigrant incorporation processes by examining enlistment intentions and determinants of active-duty enlistment among young adults in the U.S. In this study, I seek to understand the impact of the post-1973 volunteer-based military institution on labor market status, earnings, and occupations of children of immigrants, including U.S.-born 'second-generation' children and the '1.5-generation' – defined here as children who arrived to the U.S. by age 15, following the trend of other researchers who define '1.5ers' as foreign-born children educated in whole or in part in the U.S. (Rumbaut 1991). Understanding the role of the military institution on the outcomes of children of immigrants is a theoretical contribution by broadening current theories of incorporation.

Scholars note that children of immigrants in the U.S. often struggle to belong, experiencing multiple and often conflicting identities because of family and personal links to foreign countries (Rumbaut 2005; Feliciano 2009; Tovar and Feliciano 2009; Song 2010). Some scholars, policymakers and members of the public are concerned that these ties to ethnic identities and countries-of-origin undermine the 'Americanization' and incorporation of immigrants and their children and threaten to divide U.S. society (Huntington 2004; Smith 2000). But this research reveals that this struggle to belong does not negatively impact attitudes toward enlistment or actual enlistment among children of immigrants. In fact, children of immigrants express levels of interest in military service that are similar to children of U.S.-born parents and surprisingly, *have greater odds* of enlisting than children of U.S.-born parents. In order to understand these findings, I situate military service in the life-course as a potential pathway to adulthood – one of many pathways from which children of immigrants, like children of U.S. natives, much choose. In the following section, I describe these pathways in more detail.

Pathways to Adulthood

Almost all adolescents in the United States engage in one or more institutional pathways to adulthood. Civilian labor market work, post-secondary enrollment, a combination of work and enrollment, military service, and institutionalization in the correctional system all play roles in the lives of young adults. Children of immigrants, like children of the native-born, may choose - or be pushed into - any of these paths, based on structural or individual-level factors. Previous research on children of immigrants links these institutions to positive and negative adult socio-economic outcomes. Post-secondary enrollment and degree completion are linked to higher incomes and more stable jobs (Kasinitz et. all 2008) than direct entrance into the labor market. In contrast, incarceration is both a consequence of and pathway toward downward mobility and is associated with lower educational attainment, lower income and job instability (Haller et al. 2011; Portes and Kelly 2008). The impact of military service on children of immigrants, however, remains a mystery.

The military service of immigrants and their children stretches back to birth of the nation. (Neimeyer 1996). Despite the millions of immigrants and their children who have served in the military, immigrant status has been ignored within the field of military sociology. As a result we know little about factors that draw children of immigrants to military service (but see Lutz 2008 and Kleykamp 2006 for recent exceptions). And despite its recognition as a well-worn road in the transition to adulthood, immigration scholars, too, have failed to explore the military

participation of children of immigrants as they grow into adulthood and search for options that help them get ahead.

The ADD Health survey reveals a snapshot of transitions experienced by children of immigrants by age 23: 6.5% had ever served on active-duty military service; 11.3 % had ever been incarcerated; 13.8% had ever dropped out of high school; and 34.8% had earned a bachelor's degree. (Note: these are not mutually exclusive categories). Military service impacts a growing number of children of immigrants, a number that is poised to increase further with the pending Comprehensive Immigration Reform act which stipulates a 4-year military service route to legal permanent residence among children of immigrants.

Currently, over 22% of young adults 18 to 24 are immigrants or U.S.-born children of at least one immigrant parent (Current Population Survey 2010), a proportion predicted to rise as the children of post-1965 immigrants grow up. The U.S. military and the Department of Defense do not record information on service members' parental countries-of-origin, making it impossible to know how many second generation immigrants serve in the armed forces at any given point in time. However, 65,000 immigrants served in the military in 2007, or approximately 5% of all active-duty personnel (Batalova 2008), and 2.5 million U.S. military veterans living in the country today are children of immigrants (Current Population Survey 2010).

Institutional practices and policies maintained in settings such as the labor market and education institutions do not just impact native-born members of society; they are also recognized for the key roles they play in the socio-economic, political, and linguistic integration of immigrants and their children (Alba and Nee 2003; Kasinitz et al. 2002; Reitz 1998; Bloemraad 2006; Telles and Ortiz 2008; Waldinger 2001; Menjivar 2000; Portes and Rumbaut 2006; Portes and Zhou 1993). Yet little existing scholarship investigates the military's role in shaping the incorporation of millions of children of immigrants, *U.S.-born second generation immigrants* and *1.5 generation legal permanent residents who arrived as children,* into the American socio-economic landscape.

The vast majority of children from the post-1965 era of migration are composed of minority groups from Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia and the Middle East (Portes and Rumbaut 2001; Bean and Stevens 2003; Kasinitz et al. 2008). Significant numbers grow up in linguistically and geographically isolated households near other immigrant groups and minorities (Fortuny and Chaudry 2010; Bean and Stevens 2003), with high proportions of parents who work in ethnic niche markets outside of the mainstream labor market (Nee and Sanders 2001; Kasinitz et al 2008). With fewer financial resources and fewer ties to the mainstream than the opportunities available to children of immigrants as they transition into adulthood – specifically employment and post-secondary education - are limited in comparison to the white non-immigrant majority (Waters 1999; Portes and Rumbaut 2001; Kasinitz et al. 2008). The educational and employment prospects that are accessible are often marked by overt and covert discrimination based on race/ethnic group membership or immigrant status (Kasinitz et a. 2008; Neckerman et al. 1999), further diminishing avenues to integrate into the mainstream. In response to these disadvantages, children of immigrants develop strategies and weigh alternatives in a quest for upward mobility, capitalizing on the varying mix of social networks, financial resources, skills and knowledge which they possess (Waldinger and Perlmann 1998; Waters 1999; Zhou and Bankston 1994; Menjivar 2000). The military institution may be adopted by disadvantaged children of immigrants as a strategy for mobility.

This argument centers on an assumption of a bounded rationality (Simon 1956). Like classical rational theories, bounded rationality theories propose that individuals act in their own self-interest. However, bounded rationality recognizes that individuals presented with alternatives are limited in the amount of information they use to make decisions, choosing the alternative that they expect, with their limited information, will provide the greatest gain (Einhorn and Hogarth 1986).

The Military as a Strategy for Upward Mobility

Military service takes place during a very formative stage of life. In the U.S., service generally occurs during young adult years, a critical juncture when individual choices and experiences about work, education, and family directly influence later-life educational and earnings trajectories. Children of immigrants who enlist in active duty military service and complete several years of training and work in the military institution are likely to forge pathways of assimilation that differ from non-enlisting peers. The military is a unique institution that removes individuals from their home environments, often sending them to train in states far removed from family and friends while placing individuals in housing quarters with strangers of every race and ethnic group. The military provides distinct training in soft skills, "abilities and traits that pertain to personality, attitude, and behavior" and includes motivation and interpersonal skills such as the ability interact with others (Moss and Tilly 2001, 44). Soft skills are highly sought after by employers (Moss and Tilly 2001), and military training in these skills may give children of immigrants an edge over non-veteran peers with less contact and experience with a mainstream institution when competing in the workforce.

After discharge, a variety of veterans' clubs and services are available for networking, socializing and accessing veteran's related benefits such as the Veterans of Foreign Wars, college campus veterans' service centers, and the Veteran's Administration hospital systems. Therefore, though most members serve only a few short years during their young adulthood, the influence of the military structure - the human capital skills, social networks, and bureaucratic experience acquired- may have lasting effects on the integration of the veterans who are children of immigrants.

Military Enlistment Among Children of Immigrants

Though enlistment propensity and determinants among children of immigrants have been ignored in previous research, immigration scholars provide several theories that predict how children of immigrants might behave regarding military enlistment. Classical assimilation theory (Warner and Srole 1945) argues that assimilation occurs in a straight-line manner for immigrants and their children: longer U.S. residence among immigrants and successive generations leads to assimilation into a static white mainstream. This suggests that because of their newcomer status, lack of familiarity with U.S. institutions and social customs, and greater isolation within ethnic communities, children of immigrants may express less interest in military service and be less prone to actually enlist in the military than children whose parents were born in the U.S.

On the other hand, higher rates of military enlistment among children of immigrants are also possible. Barriers to enlistment may exist, but because children of immigrants value social mobility, they actively seek out ways to eliminate those barriers. 'New' assimilation theorists extend the classical model, recognizing that although incorporation generally occurs in an upward fashion, immigrants and their children engage with a reactive, shifting mainstream (Alba and Nee 2003). During this engagement, they employ a variety of tactics to achieve upward

mobility, including leveraging policies and institutions that benefit native-born minorities, such as college diversity admissions programs (Kasinitz et al. 2008). Children of immigrants, recognizing the potential employment and educational benefits of military service, may pursue military enlistment as an alternative route to upward mobility. Post-service educational benefits include college tuition, money for books, and sometimes a living allowance, and these benefits are well-known aspects of military service (Giambo 1999). Though college is a well-established pathway to mobility, college funding is increasingly dependent on loans rather than grants, creating barriers to low-income students who are highly sensitive to school costs when making the decision to apply, enroll and persist in post-secondary institutions (Paulsen and St. John 2002). Furthermore, Latino and Asian origin parents are more averse to taking out student loans than whites or blacks, creating additional obstacles to higher education among these groups (Paulsen and St. John 2002; Cunningham and Santiago 2008).

Other models of immigrant incorporation are less clear about the pursuit of military service. Segmented assimilation theorists outline three assimilation trajectories for immigrants and their children, warning that they are not automatically on the path toward mainstream incorporation because of the double disadvantages of minority status and the lower-status backgrounds that many children of immigrants possess. Although segmented assimilation theorists agree that children of immigrants from middle-class or non-minority white backgrounds face relatively unimpeded entry into the middle-class mainstream (Portes et al. 2005; cite more?), they acknowledge two other paths to disadvantaged children of immigrants: upward mobility to the mainstream resulting from maintaining ethnic network ties that protect from the negative influence of disadvantaged neighborhoods or downward mobility by adopting norms and practices of an urban minority underclass (Portes and Zhou 1993; Zhou and Bankston 1994; Portes and Rumbaut 2001).

Research Methods

Details about the qualitative and quantitative methods utilized are described within the chapters.

Organization of this Dissertation

First, I examine the motivations and choices leading to military service in Chapters 1 and 2 to uncover how children of immigrants who enlisted *perceive* the military institution and the opportunities it can provide. Then I analyze the impact of military service on educational and labor market outcomes in Chapters 3 and 4.

Chapter 1: Using a nationally representative survey of the cohort born between 1976 and 1984, Chapter 1 reveals that among children of immigrants, lower measured cognitive ability encourages adolescent military propensity; socio-economic advantage or disadvantage plays no role in predicting higher propensity among children of immigrants. However, by young adulthood, mediocre high school grades combined with higher measured cognitive ability as well as growing up with a father either unemployed or working in a blue collar job are predictive indicators of actual enlistment. In addition, although adolescent children of immigrants express similar future military plans as children of U.S. born parents, suggesting a measure of assimilation, young adult children of immigrants are more likely to serve on active duty than children of U.S. born parents. Expanding upon the theoretical framework of segmented assimilation theorists, I argue that the military institution is perceived by children of immigrants

with mediocre grades and limited resources as an intermediary pathway to access post-secondary institutions and mainstream occupations.

Chapter 2: Using in-depth qualitative interviews of 33 veteran children of immigrants, Chapter 2 shows that children of immigrants who enlisted expected that military service would improve their lives – directly by acquiring job and self-efficacy skills and indirectly by gaining access to college money that they planned to turn into college degrees. Before joining, enlistees evaluated their prospects for the future and decided that the military was the best way for them to get ahead given the choices they perceived to be available to them. In addition to gaining college educational benefits from the GI Bill, respondents turned to the military to develop or strengthen 'soft skills,' such as motivation, a clearer sense of direction, discipline, and follow-through.

In Chapter 3, statistical analyses reveal that by the ages of 24 to 32, veteran children of immigrant are less likely to attain four-year college degrees non-veterans nor are they are not poised to catch up: they are also less likely to be enrolled in post-secondary schooling at the ages of 24 to 32 than non-veteran peers. Additionally, labor market outcomes among children are mixed, but modest: veterans are more likely to be employed in the government sector but have similar unemployment levels compared to non-veterans.

In Chapter 4, in-depth interviews uncover three distinct sub-groups with divergent post-military trajectories that start to appear among veterans aged 24 to 32. One group transitions smoothly from military service to civilian work with little interruption generally because they are able to leverage their military occupational skills or connections for civilian employment. Others find their military occupational skills harder to transfer or they would like to be trained in a new occupation. Of these, members of one group concentrate their efforts on attending post-secondary school and obtaining degrees while others struggle to find work or are underemployed, finding the transition from military service to civilian life more difficult.

Chapter 5 concludes by examining the implications of these findings on immigration theories. Immigration theorists must recognize the U.S. military as a distinct pathway to post-secondary education and entrance to the civilian labor market that offers unique opportunities and drawbacks to participants, such as benefits for higher education and exposure to injury or death in combat.

CHAPTER 2: Combating Disadvantage?
U.S. Military Enlistment Intentions and Determinants among Children of Immigrants

Today's children of immigrants are confronted with a complex web of choices, opportunities and constraints as they grow into adulthood and engage the dynamic process of incorporation into U.S. society. What pathways and institutions children of immigrants choose to access, how and why they choose – or are driven – to access them, and the repercussions of these choices are all part of the incorporation process. The U.S. military institution, recognized as a potential pathway to mobility (Angrist 1998; Moskos and Butler 1996), is a viable post-high school opportunity for many children of immigrants. But what encourages – or discourages – children of immigrants from military service?

Recent research examining determinants of military enlistment indicates that lower socio-economic status, mediocre high school achievement, minority status, gender, and non-traditional families (Segal et al. 1998; Segal and Segal 2004; Teachman et al. 1993; Asch et al. 1999; Elder et al. 2010; Bachman et al. 2000) are associated with military enlistment. Yet these studies fail to distinguish between children of immigrants and children of U.S. born parents, leaving an open question in the literature. Will socio-economic and other disadvantages drive enlistment among children of immigrants, or will a different pattern emerge? Will children of immigrants, with fewer connections to mainstream institutions, be less likely to enlist than children of U.S. born parents? Or driven by disadvantage and the desire to get ahead, will they be more likely to enlist than children of U.S. born parents?

Research Questions

In order to understand whether military enlistment may be a strategy for upward mobility among children of immigrants, I set forth a series of hypotheses to explore intentions toward and determinants of military propensity and enlistment. Propensity, or willingness, to serve is established by a youth's response that they 'probably will' or 'definitely will' enter the military in the future. Specifically I ask the following:

- During adolescence, do children of immigrants express different future plans to enlist in the military than children of U.S. born parents? Here, I measure to what extent children of immigrants reflect mainstream military enlistment aspirations.
- What socio-demographic factors determine future plans to enlist in the military (military propensity) among adolescent children of immigrants?
- During their post-high school transitions to adulthood, do young adult children of immigrants enlist in the military at rates that differ from children of U.S. born parents? Here I measure to what extent enlistment trends among children of immigrants reflect mainstream trends among children of U.S. natives.
- What socio-demographic factors determine military participation among children of immigrants?

Based on analyses of these questions, this chapter asserts that among children of immigrants, lower measured cognitive ability encourages adolescent military propensity; socio-economic advantage or disadvantage plays no role in predicting higher propensity among children of immigrants. However, by young adulthood, mediocre high school grades combined with higher measured cognitive ability as well as growing up with a father either unemployed or working in a blue collar job are predictive indicators of actual enlistment. In addition, although adolescent children of immigrants express similar future military plans as children of U.S. born

parents, suggesting a measure of assimilation, young adult children of immigrants are more likely to serve on active duty than children of U.S. born parents. Expanding upon the theoretical framework of segmented assimilation theorists, I argue that the military institution is perceived by children of immigrants with mediocre grades and limited resources as an intermediary pathway to access post-secondary institutions and mainstream occupations.

The Role of the U.S. Military in Social Mobility

After high school, individuals may enroll in college, work in the civilian labor force, combine civilian labor force participation and post-secondary education, enlist in the military, or do some other activity. An ideal investigation of the factors behind military service among children of immigrants would juxtapose military enlistment after high school versus the other activities described above to understand the influence of different factors on various post-high school routes. However, no nationally representative dataset provides all of the variables necessary to carry out such an analysis – measures to identify U.S. born children of immigrants; sufficient numbers of children of immigrants with military service for robust findings; detailed information on future plans for military service during adolescence – before respondents are old enough to solidify their enlistment plans; information on the timing of civilian work, college enrollment, military service and other activities; and detailed information about the background characteristics of interest. Therefore, I divide the exploration into two distinct analyses; one explores determinants behind future military plans and the second explores a dichotomous measure of ever enlisting for active-duty service. The analyses of determinants are carried out separately using two datasets that contain overlapping cohorts of young adults.

This research approaches the military as one institution among many that children of immigrants may choose to access during the transition to adulthood. Understanding what determines interest in and actual enlistment in the military institution among children of immigrants helps us understand how children of immigrants perceive their options to get ahead and how and why they make choices to access the military institution.

Previous Research on Determinants of Military Service and Connections to Immigration Theory

Only two recent studies incorporate immigrant status or citizenship into the study of military enlistment. Researchers find no evidence that children of immigrants (Lutz 2008) or non-citizens (Kleykamp 2006) enlist in the military at different rates than children of the native-born or citizens. However, Lutz (2008) bases her conclusion on a small sample of less than 50 children of immigrants, potentially limiting the power to identify a statistically significant result. Kleykamp (2006) only identifies the possession or lack of U.S. citizenship in her research. U.S. citizens consist of U.S. born children of the native-born, U.S. born children of immigrants, and 1.5 generation members who have naturalized, making citizenship status an inadequate measure to capture immigrant generation. The current research improves upon these past studies by incorporating a larger sample: 172 children of immigrants in the ADD Health study have served on active-duty in the military by ages 24 - 32.

Existing literature illustrates that military enlistment is driven by a common set of socio-economic factors linked to the risk of downward mobility among children of immigrants. Below I discuss these factors and make predictions about how they will influence enlistment among children of immigrants. Because of the lack of literature on children of immigrants and military service, I often refer to findings regarding minorities and military service to make predictions.

Race/ethnicity immigration theorists assert that different opportunities and resources are available to children of immigrants based on country-of-origin and racial categories (Kasinitz et al. 2008; Portes et al. 2005; Alba and Nee 2003; Waters 1999; Zhou and Bankston 1994; Portes and Zhou 1993). The bulk of today's immigrants and their children are members of minority racial/ethnic groups who turn to the military as a strategy to advance mobility, echoing African American actions of the past. For most of the duration of the post-1973 all-volunteer force (AVF), African Americans have been more likely to enlist in the post-1973 volunteer military than whites even after controlling for differences in parental education, income, and other factors (Armor and Gilroy 2010; National Research Council 2004; Bachman et al. 2000; Teachman et al. 1993; Moskos 1982), viewing employment in the military more favorably than the civilian labor market (Binkin and Eitelberg 1986; Orvis et al. 1990; White and Hosek 1982)[1].

Hispanics have been underrepresented within the military (Kilburn and Klerman 1999) likely because of Hispanic youth unable to meet education, language or residency requirements (Segal et al. 2007; Gifford 2005); recent studies demonstrate that Hispanics have higher military propensity than whites (Dempsey and Shapiro 2009; Segal et al. 2007). Research on propensity and enlistment has ignored Asian minority group members because of their small proportions in both U.S. and military populations. However, findings here demonstrate that members of disadvantaged minority groups have been particularly attracted to military service, suggesting that disadvantaged children of immigrants may also be attracted to military service.

Military policies include strict selection criteria. Recruits must meet aptitude and physical requirements that vary some by military branch. A recent Department of Defense report (2010) states that more than half of today's youth and young adults would not qualify for military service based on one or more of these criteria. Children of immigrants exhibit fewer chronic and acute health problems (Kandula et al. 2004, Harris 1999) and lower likelihood to be obese or overweight (Gordon-Larsen et al. 2003), suggesting that children of immigrants may be better equipped to meet physical requirement than native-born youth.

All potential recruits must meet minimum score requirements on the Armed Forces Qualifying Test (AFQT), which tests basic cognitive ability. It is unclear how children of immigrants fare on the AFQT compared to others because the Department of Defense does not identify children of immigrants in their data and the ADD Health study contains vocabulary test scores, which can only serve as a proxy for the AFQT which is more comprehensive. Findings from previous research suggest that poorer average scores will not necessarily lead to lower levels of military enlistment. For example, despite the evidence that on average, minority members perform more poorly on the AFQT than whites, African-Americans have a history of enlisting in the volunteer force at higher rates than other groups (Armor and Gilroy 2010). On the other hand, lower test scores may serve as a deterrent to military service.

Family resources and characteristics such as socio-economic status have a strong correlation with those who enlist and significantly impact immigrant integration. Children of immigrants are more likely to live in households with two parents, in households where languages other than English are spoken, have parents with lower average levels of education

[1] More recent research finds that propensity and enlistment among African-Americans has been falling since just before the onset of first Gulf War and again with the onset of the Afghanistan/Iraq conflict, mostly attributed to lower levels of support for these conflicts among African Americans (Fors et al. 2006). Black propensity may no longer be higher than white propensity (Kleykamp 2006).

and income than children of U.S. natives (Chaudry and Fortuny 2010; Landale et al. 2011; Borjas 2011; Fortuny et al. 2009; Kasinitz et al. 2008; Bean and Stevens 2003).. For the general population, lower parental socio-economic status, lower levels of parental education and living in households with a step-parent present or lacking a biological parent are associated with selection into military service (Elder et al. 2010; Bachman et al. 2000; Goldsheider and Goldsheider 1998, National Research Council 2004; Segal 1989; Orvis et al. 1990).

Speaking another language in the home may limit the English language skills of children of immigrants, which could inhibit enlistment if minimum language standards are not met (Segal et al. 2007). Minimum English language fluency is required by all branches, although some recently instated special programs to improve English proficiency among native Spanish speakers. On the other hand, every child of immigrants in this sample attended at least some primary school in the United States, where they were likely to have learned some English; most of the interviews were conducted in English as well, suggesting a minimum level of English proficiency. With the exception of household composition, the family characteristics among children of immigrants are expected to encourage military enlistment.

Residential characteristics also factor in military enlistment as individuals from rural or urban areas and those from the south (Segal and Segal 2004) participate in the military at higher rates than individuals from suburban and non-South areas (Bachman et al. 2000). These characteristics may have mixed effects on enlistment among children of immigrants. Children of immigrants are more concentrated in urban areas and less concentrated in rural areas than children of U.S. born parents, reflecting findings from previous research (Chaudry and Fortuny 2011; Jensen and Chitose 1994). However, higher concentrations of urban residence may encourage military enlistment, while less concentration in the South may suppress enlistment.

Associations between military enlistment and high school achievement suggest that grades are one predictor of military enlistment. Male students with mediocre ‘C’ average grades are more likely to enlist than others, although the relationship is weaker among female students (Bachman et al. 2000). High school grades are also linked to immigrant incorporation; children of immigrants with higher grades are more likely to complete more years of schooling and scale the occupational ladder while those with lower grades are more likely to fall behind, dropout and experience downward mobility (Portes et al. 2005).

School standards and curricula also impact military enlistment and immigrant incorporation. Catholic and other private schools focus on academics and propel high school achievement among immigrant youth (Lutz 2007, Hoffer et al. 1985). This may also reflect more selective parents; parents who send their children to Catholic schools do so in a conscious attempt to steer their children away from the negative influence of schools with low performance scores (Louie and Holdaway 2009). Similarly, according to Bachman et al. (2000), involvement in college preparatory curricula dampens both military propensity and actual enlistment.

While these studies offer evidence that the military attracts youth disadvantaged by the same dimensions that put children of immigrants at risk for downward mobility, current research fails to explore the factors that drive military propensity and military enlistment among children of immigrants (with an exception by Lutz 2008). This study bridges this research gap, analyzing nationally representative data to extract the factors predicting interest in military service and actual enlistment in the military institution.

Data and Methods:

This chapter is based on two types of data. First, I examine military propensity – or future plans to enlist in the military – among children of immigrants and children of the native-born using the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 (NLSY97). Then, I examine predictors of actual military enlistment among a cohort of young adults using the National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Youth (ADD Health).

National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 (NLSY97)

The National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Youth 1997 (NLSY97) is a nationally representative dataset of a cohort of 8,984 adolescents aged 12 to 16 years old (as of December 31, 1996) and living in the United States in 1997. The NLSY97 sample design includes: a core of youth representing the non-institutionalized civilian youth and an oversample of black and Latino youth. Individuals have been interviewed annually since 1997. NLSY97 gathers detailed socio-demographic information on adolescent respondents; their labor market, educational, and social behaviors and attitudes; and details about parents of respondents. See Table 1 for descriptive statistics of NLSY97 respondents, by immigrant generation.

The goal in analyzing of NLSY97 data is twofold: first, I explore and compare military propensities among children of immigrants and children of U.S. born parents to assess the assimilation of children of immigrants and second, I identify the factors that predict military propensity among children of immigrants to determine what role socio-economic and other disadvantages play. Military propensity is measured in Wave 1, when respondents were still enrolled in high school. Data from the first six rounds are used in the analysis to measure missing and incomplete information. (See the appendix for more details.)

The NLSY97 possesses three features that make it the best fit for this analysis: first, the data includes questions about country-of-origin of respondents' parents, permitting the identification of children of immigrants; second, the data includes a specific, direct measure of military propensity that is seldom found in longitudinal studies of youth and is missing in the ADD Health data used later in this chapter; and third, the measure of military propensity was asked during adolescence before respondents graduated high school and were still considering their post-high school options. However, I am unable to use the NLSY97 to explore determinants of military enlistment among children of immigrants because the sample size of children of immigrants who have ever enlisted on active duty by the last available survey wave is approximately 65, a small sample with less statistical power to identify associations between variables. Therefore, to explore determinants of enlistment among children of immigrants, I use the ADD Health dataset, which I describe in the following section.

National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (ADD Health)

To analyze and compare determinants of military enlistment and odds of enlisting among children of immigrants and children of U.S. born parents, I use each of the four waves of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (ADD Health), a nationally representative sample of 20,745 adolescents in grades 7-12 in the United States during the 1994-1995 academic year. ADD Health uses a multi-stage, stratified, school-based cluster sampling design. The sample design included 80 high schools selected with probabilities based on size along with oversampling of adolescents from ethnic minority groups. Individuals were interviewed over a period of 14 years, in four distinct waves: 1994-1995, 1995-1996, 2001-2002, and 2007-2008. The ADD Health survey collects detailed socio-demographic information on adolescent

respondents; their labor market, educational, and social behaviors and attitudes; and details about parents of respondents.

As a recent, nationally representative sample of young adults in the United States, the ADD Health survey is advantageous for studying enlistment among children of immigrants for two main reasons. Most importantly, the data includes measures of immigrant generation, including over 170 children of immigrants who ever served in the active duty military – a larger sample than is available in other nationally representative longitudinal studies that document the transition from school to work. Second, unlike most cross-sectional data that contain large samples of children of immigrants with military experience, such as the Current Population Survey (CPS), ADD Health data includes childhood background and parental characteristics that predict military enlistment.

A total of 15,701 respondents completed interviews at Wave 4 in 2007-2008 (80% of eligible respondents). By Wave 4 of the ADD Health study, respondents reached age 24-32, past the prime ages of military recruitment[2]. All had initiated post-high school work and/or educational trajectories. Many had enlisted and separated from military service. The final sample used for this analysis contains 14,692 respondents after removing individuals missing survey weights or for other reasons. See the Table 2 in the Appendix for descriptive statistics of ADD Health data, by immigrant generation.

Results:

Children of Immigrants Express Similar Future Military Enlistment Plans as Children of U.S.-born parents

Research Question 1: During adolescence, do children of immigrants express different future plans to enlist in the military than children of U.S. born parents?

This section compares the stated plans to enlist among children of immigrants and children of U.S. born parents to assess the existence of differences between groups. Military propensity, or stated plans to enlist, is highly correlated with actual enlistment (Bachman et al. 2000; Segal et al. 1998); more than two-thirds of high school seniors who expressed propensity to serve enlisted within six years of graduating high school (Woodruff et al. 2006).

Research on attitudes toward military service and intentions to enlist have ignored children of immigrants as a distinct group, instead concentrating on race/ethnicity and gender. Therefore, to understand how military propensity compares between children of immigrants and children of U.S. born parents, I analyze the self-reported future plans of enlisting among a cohort

[2] Undocumented status was not identified in this survey and the possible presence of undocumented 1.5 generation youth in this sample may bias results. This potential effect will likely be small and generate more conservative, rather than less conservative findings. Undocumented 1.5 generation children of immigrants are very unlikely to have ever served in the military, a U.S. government institution, because of the many legal obstacles involved to prove one's citizenship or resident status to be employed by the U.S. government. Therefore, any undocumented immigrants who are present in the data will likely be non-military participants. Bias based on the inclusion of undocumented children of immigrants in the non-veteran group, if it does exist, would actually decrease the strength of a relationship between status as a child of immigrants and odds of military enlistment, resulting in more conservative estimates of the predictor variables.

of youth using the NLSY97. In 1997, youth born between 1980 and 1984 enrolled in primary school were asked, "How likely are you to join the military in the future?" Answer choices included 'very unlikely'; 'unlikely'; 'undecided'; 'likely', and 'very likely'. Details of other variables are included in the appendix.

When examining future intentions to enlist, response patterns are very similar among children of immigrants and children of U.S. born parents. Descriptive statistics show that the majority (60%) of each group stated that they were unlikely or very unlikely to enlist, 24% of each group were neutral or undecided about the possibility, and 15% of each group projected military enlistment as likely or very likely. See Figure 1 for details.

Two models, based on ordinal logistic regressions that included controls for demographic characteristics and household, school and residential characteristics demonstrate the same story as the descriptive results: children of immigrants and children of U.S.-born parents report similar plans to enlist in the U.S. military. See Table 3 for more details.

These results show that adolescent children of immigrants enrolled in U.S. primary education institutions express intentions to enlist in the U.S. military that are almost identical to children of U.S. born parents; children of immigrants express mainstream attitudes toward military enlistment.

I recognize that null effects serve as weak evidence, but given the dearth of research on military propensity among children of immigrants, I assert that these findings based on a nationally representative dataset of adolescents give us a starting point. Of course, unique features of this dataset limit the ability generalize the findings to children of immigrants of all ages. For example, military propensity is elastic, responding to conflicts, recessions, and other factors; race/ethnic groups vary in their responses to these events (Gilroy and Armor 2010). The data focus on the cohort born between 1980 and 1984 and the military propensity question was asked of respondents during 1997, a relatively peaceful period with sporadic and small-scale deployments into conflict zones six years after the first Gulf War and four years before the initiation of the large-scale conflict in Afghanistan. Therefore, individuals born before or after this cohort may have had different military propensities, responding to different recruiting and conflict environments.

Socio-Demographic Disadvantages are not associated with Greater Intentions to Enlist Among Children of Immigrants; Only Lower ASVAB Scores Predict Greater Propensities

Research Question 2: What socio-demographic factors determine future plans to enlist in the military (military propensity) among adolescent children of immigrants in high school?

Findings indicate that that military propensity among children of immigrants is not predicted by immigrant generation, race/ethnicity, family background characteristics, high school grades, or residential characteristics. Females report lower military propensities than males and only lower standardized ASVAB scores predict greater intentions to enlist among children of immigrants. The lack of significance and predictability of most variables suggest that socio-economic disadvantages do not drive children of immigrants to seriously consider enlisting in the military during adolescence any more than other factors do.

Predictors of military propensity among children of U.S. born parents, on the other hand, are more driven by socio-economic factors. Among children of U.S. born parents living in a household without a parent or in a household with one biological and one other parent are linked to higher propensity while having a parent with some college or more and earning mostly 'A' grades in high school are linked with lower propensity. As with children of immigrants, females

have lower military propensities than males. ASVAB scores are not linked to higher or lower propensities among children of the U.S. born parents.

Children of Immigrants are Predicted to Have Greater Odds of Enlisting than Children of U.S. Born Parents, Despite Similar Military Propensities

Research Question 3: Do young adult children of immigrants enlist in the military at rates that differ from the native-born?

Given the similar military propensity of adolescent children of immigrants and children of the native-born, do members of these groups actually enlist at similar rates? Descriptive statistics from ADD Health data show that 6.9% of children of immigrants versus 5.8% of children of the U.S. born parents have ever served on active duty by ages 24-32. But is this a meaningful difference, once other factors are taken into account?

Table 3, model 3 presents the results of logistic regression predicting the odds of participating in the active duty military among the combined sample of children of immigrants and children of U.S. born parents. Variables measuring individual socio-demographic characteristics, military eligibility criteria and family background are examined to predict their influence on military enlistment. Details of variable measures are available in the appendix.

Results clearly show that children of immigrants have higher odds of enlisting in the military than children of the U.S. born even when all of these factors are taken into account.

Among Children of Immigrants, High School Achievement, Gender, and Father's Occupation Predicts Actual Military Enlistment

Research Question 4: What factors determine military participation among children of immigrants?

Given that children of immigrants enlist at higher rates than children of U.S. born parents, what drives enlistment among children of immigrants in the first place? If children of immigrants use the military for social mobility, they must perceive the military as a place to gain skills or benefits to help them in areas where they are lacking.

In this section I shift focus, separating children of immigrants from children of natives to narrow the scope on predictors of enlistment within the children of immigrants group. I ran two logistic regressions on the ADD Health cohort, stratifying the joint sample into two groups: children of immigrants only and children of U.S. born parents only. Separating the sample in this way permits the identification of factors that determine military enlistment among members of each group; model 1 in Table 3 shows what factors influence the enlistment of children of the native-born and model 2 in Table 3 shows factors that influence children of immigrants.

Focusing on children of immigrants, results reveal that mediocre high school grades combined with higher test scores and having a father who was not working or who was working in blue-collar occupations during adolescence strongly predicts military enlistment; the influence of other socio-economic disadvantages are not significant. This finding contrasts with the NLSY97 analysis showing that that lower test scores predict adolescent intentions to enlist among children of immigrants. However, because of military criteria that require minimum test scores it is not surprising that higher scores, rather than lower scores, are associated with enlistment. Previous research also finds that lower ability individuals are weeded out of enlistment (Bachman et al. 2000 DC). Females are much less likely to actually enlist than males. Children of U.S. born parents are influenced similarly with a few main exceptions: instead of dampening military enlistment, living in a single parent household predicts military enlistment as

does living in a household with one biological and one non-biological parent; living in the northeast during youth dampens enlistment.

Plans about military enlistment generally develop during high school (Segal, Burns, Falk, Silver and Sharda 1998), when plans regarding college and post-high school employment are also formed. Attending college is almost a universal desire among young adults in the United States: 87% of seniors in 2004 reported plans for postsecondary education (Ingels et al. 2005). The military can place college within reach of young adults with few financial resources and mediocre academic achievement records who may believe that their lackluster academic record will inhibit their chances of being accepted to college or gaining financial aid to attend if they are accepted.

The fact that children of immigrants with mediocre grades and higher test scores are more likely to enlist than children of immigrants with higher grades reveals that even though enlisters have mediocre grades, they tend to have higher ability than their grades might imply. It also suggests that these individuals seek military service in order to pave the way for post-high school success. When considering college and the application process, students assess their qualifications, consider how to finance college, and develop preferences for certain schools (Berkner and Chavez 1997; Choy and Ottinger 1998). During this process, many young adults may consider the military as an option for financing college. Youth are well aware of the college benefits associated with military service (Giambo 1999), and 75% of male youth 16 to 21 have ever considered enlisting (Fors et al. 2006). Indeed, among enlisted service members, earning money for college is listed a top motivator (Woodruff et al. 2006; Eighmey 2006) across racial/ethnic groups (National Research Council 2004). Analysis of in-depth interviews in Chapter 3 reveals that children of immigrants with mediocre grades did, in fact, enlist in the military in order to gain college educational benefits.

In addition, immigrant youth report strong obligations to assist their families through financial and other assistance (Fuligni and Tseng 1999; Fuligni and Pederson 2002). Although obtaining a post-secondary degree is viewed among immigrant youth as a path to help find better paying jobs to support their families (Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco 1995; Zhou and Bankston 1994), those who feel the greatest sense of obligation tend to work immediately after high school to help support their families – often juggling work and post-secondary schooling (Fuligni et al. 1999). The generally unstable jobs available to young adults without college degrees may interfere with class schedules or provide few extra funds once individuals pay for school and associated transportation costs. The strain of juggling these responsibilities may prove difficult, leading many to pragmatically reassess their options to pay for school. Although many students may take out loans to complete their education, children of immigrants may avoid them or lack information about them – 71% of students do not name loans as potential sources of financial aid (Sallie Mae Fund and Harris interactive 2003), and immigrant parents have less knowledge about financial aid for college than other parents (Tornatzky, Cutler and Lee 2002). In addition, taking out loans while simultaneously providing family support makes little financial sense in the short-term, particularly if obtaining a college degree seems unlikely or too far into the future. The military provides housing, food and a steady salary along with educational benefits and job training. For many children of immigrants, the military institution is particularly attractive because of the relatively large payoff in as little as four years, approximately the same amount of time required to obtain a college degree.

Conclusion

Four main findings from this chapter indicate that children of immigrants enlist in military service as a strategy to achieve upward mobility and to avoid downward mobility:

- Adolescent children of immigrants have similar enlistment propensities as children of U.S. born parents, indicating an alignment to mainstream attitudes toward military service;
- Lower ASVAB scores predict greater military propensity among children of immigrants, but socio-economic or other schooling disadvantages are not linked to higher military propensity;
- By young adulthood, children of immigrants are more likely to enlist than children of U.S. born despite similar enlistment plans during adolescence;
- Among children of immigrants, having a father who is unemployed or working in a blue collar occupation combined with mediocre high school grades and higher test scores are most predictive of military enlistment.

Today's children of immigrants are confronted with a complex set of choices, opportunities and limitations as they grow into adulthood and secure a place in U.S. society. Structural forces such as family educational and financial resources, race/ethnic group membership, neighborhoods and other contexts of reception determine much of these outcomes. But children of immigrants possess individual characteristics, dreams and motivations that influence how they react to these forces. Among children of immigrants, the U.S. Armed Forces are not magnets for the most disadvantaged individuals with few options in the civilian labor market. Like African-American minority members of the All-Volunteer Force, children of immigrants who enlist are poised for upward mobility.

According to segmented assimilation theory, family disadvantages are predicted to lead to downward mobility unless children of immigrants seek the protective shelter of ethnic ties and networks. Instead, I posit that the military is perceived as a pathway to incorporation among disadvantaged children of immigrants. The military offers stable short-term employment, money for college, and job training in an organized environment away from home and old neighborhoods, offering enlisters many opportunities to scale mobility ladders that may not have otherwise been available to them in ethnic enclaves. I speculate that military enlistment is part of a strategy to fulfill family obligations while positioning oneself to acquire job training and education to get good jobs. Additionally, foreign-birth and/or lacking U.S. citizenship may propel children of immigrants to use military service as a pathway to better employment, to gain citizenship or to signal an American identity.

Perhaps children of immigrants are more likely to enlist in the military than children of U.S. born parents because they face greater barriers in the civilian labor market and they view enlistment as an opportunity to improve current and future labor market prospects. Markers of immigrant status such as accented English or lacking U.S. citizenship, along with visible Latin-American, Asian, or Middle Eastern origins may prove to be greater barriers to entering the civilian labor market than entering the military which relies on tests and eligibility criteria, and does not require U.S. citizenship. Because of these markers, the civilian labor market may attempt to under-employ children of immigrants (Hosoda et al. 2012, Carlson and McHenry 2006) – forcing them into lower-wage positions with less ability for advancement. Children of immigrants may turn to the military, viewing it as a more equitable, accessible and less discriminating employer than civilian employers, mirroring the sentiments of recent generations of African-Americans.

In addition to tangible motivations related to family, finances, and education children of immigrants may serve in the U.S. armed forces to assert or signal an American identity. Many children of immigrants who enlist may feel a greater connection to the United States than to their countries-of-origin. Feeling more 'American' than any other identity, military service 'signals' the strength of this conviction. Among those with a strong U.S. connection who lack U.S. citizenship, an important marker of identity for many (Bloemraad 2013), military service may be a particularly strong motivator to prove to oneself and to others the strength of their American identity.

In the next chapter I turn to qualitative interviews to gain deeper insight into motivations behind military enlistment among children of immigrants.

Variable Measurement and Definitions:

NLSY97: The dependent variable, military propensity, was measured in Wave 1, the only time the question was asked in the survey. Independent variables were measured in various waves of the interview. The following variables were collected in the first wave: year born, race, gender, immigrant generation status, parental income, metropolitan status, region of residence, household composition, ASVAB percentile score, self-reported weight, highest level of parental education, non-English spoken in household and type of school. Veteran status was measured at each interview wave to create an 'ever served' veteran status. High school grades come from Wave 3 data. None of the respondents were removed from the sample and multiple imputation was used to account for missing data.

ADD Health: All independent variables were measured in the Wave 1 in-home interview, with the exception of residential characteristics, which were collected in Wave 2, and high school degree or GED receipt, which was measured in Wave 4. Data collected in Waves 2 through 4 were used to complete missing information on those missing age (11), race (11), immigrant status (77) and gender (2) in Wave 1. Individuals who served in the military reserves but never served in the active duty military are not included within the active-duty military sample; preliminary analyses reveal that determinants of enlistment are not the same for active and reserve duty military participants.

From the 15,701 individuals interviewed at Wave 4, those missing sample weights (895 individuals), those missing data on active-duty military service (2), and individuals missing information on ethnicity (28) and immigrants who arrived in the U.S. at age 16 or after (84) were excluded from the analysis. The final analytical sample is composed of 14,692 respondents, including 2,616 children of immigrants and 12,076 children of two U.S. born parents. See Table 1 for details regarding descriptive statistics.

Deleting all cases with missing data for the analyses would reduce sample size by approximately one-third. To avoid this, I utilized multiple imputation techniques for cases with missing data. Imputation variables included gender, generational status, year born and race/ethnicity. Three sets of analytical variables measuring disadvantage are incorporated into the models Table 2: socio-demographics and military enlistment criteria, family resources and characteristics and residential context.

Dependent Variables NLSY97 & ADD Health:

In the NLSY97 the dependent outcome of interest for each model is military propensity, identified by the NLSY97 question in the first survey wave in 1997 when youth born between

1980 and 1984 were asked "How likely are you to join the military in the future?" Answer choices included 'very unlikely'; 'unlikely'; 'undecided'; 'likely', and 'very likely'.

In ADD Health the dependent outcome of interest for each model is active-duty military service, identified by self-reported active-duty service before or during Wave 4. 172 children of immigrants and 700 children of two U.S-born parents possessing active-duty military experience in this sample, totaling 872 respondents with active-duty experience.

Independent Variables NLSY97 & ADD Health

Immigrant Status: Children of two U.S. native-born parents are compared with children of immigrants in this study. Because of the common U.S. school experiences shaping some or all of childhood, U.S.-born second generation immigrants and immigrants who came to the U.S. as children are analytically referred to as children of immigrants (Kasinitz et al. 2008; Portes and Rumbaut 2001; Brown et al. 2011). Children of immigrants are composed of second generation and 1.5 generation immigrants. Second generation immigrants refer to individuals born in the United States with one or two foreign-born parents. 1.5 generation immigrants refer to foreign born children of immigrant parents who arrived to the U.S. by age 15[2]. Individuals who migrated to the United States at the age of 16 or later are considered 'immigrants' and are not included in the sample.

Race/ethnicity. ADD Health: White non-Latino; Asian, non-Latino, Black non-Latino; Latino and Other, non-Latino (which includes a general 'other' category as well as Native Americans)[3]. NLSY97: White non-Latino; Asian, non-Latino, Black non-Latino; Latino and Other, non-Latino (which includes a general 'other' category as well as Native Americans).

Age. In ADD Health, age is measured as the age of the respondent in the first survey wave, which ranges from 11 to 21, and is centered to the mean age of 16. In NLSY97, age is not reported as such but rather as 'year born' and ranges from 1980 to 1984.

Controls for Military Policies and Selection. Scores on the Armed Forces Qualifying Test (AFQT), required for military enlistment, are not available in this survey, so percentile scores on the ADD Health picture vocabulary test (PVT) and standardized scores on the Armed Services Vocational Battery (ASVAB) in the NLSY97 serve as proxy measures for cognitive ability. Body mass index (BMI)[4] and its squared term serves as a proxy for physical readiness for enlistment in ADD Health data where both height and weight were reported; in NLSY97, self-reported perceptions of body size were used as a proxy for physical readiness.

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[3] Individuals born in Puerto Rico or with Puerto Rican-born parents may be classified as children of immigrants within the ADD Health dataset, but because Puerto Ricans are technically U.S. citizens at birth, Puerto Rican-born children or children of Puerto-Rican born parents are considered to be children of the U.S.-born in the NLSY97 data. This is an artifact of a less precise survey question that asks respondents whether they were born in 'the United States, its territories or Puerto Rico.' Respondents reply 'yes' or 'no' to this question; they cannot specifically state they were born in Puerto Rico or Guam rather than in the United States.

[4] Body mass index is calculated using the standard formula for children applied by the Center for Disease Control (CDC 2013): BMI=[(Weight in pounds)/(Height in inches)x(Height in inches)]x703. Body mass index equals weight in pounds divided by the square of the height in inches and multiply the result by 703. In this case, I use the weight during Wave I divided by the square of the height measured in Wave I and multiplied by 703.

Family Background. Parental socio-economic status is measured by levels of parental education and household income. Parental education is measured as the highest education completed by either parent: less than high school, high school only, some college, bachelor's degree or higher. Total household income is measured as a continuous, log-transformed variable measuring the value of all sources of household income in 1994 in the ADD Health analysis and the household income in 1997 in the NLSY97 analysis. For those reporting zero household income, $100 was added in order to compute the log-transformation. Household structure in youth describes household structure in the first survey waves of both the NLSY97 and ADD Health, and includes: two biological parents, one biological parent and one other parent such as a step- or adoptive parent, one biological parent only, and household arrangements with no biological parents. English language use in home during adolescence is used to measure linguistic isolation, which may lead to poorer school outcomes and limited job networks. It is coded as a dichotomous variable: those whose families spoke any English in the household versus those who did not.

High School grades. High school GPA (grade point average) is provided in the ADD Health data as the average of all classes taken during high school, reported on a linear 4-point scale. The measure is calculated based on the number of years a student has course data available. Previous research suggests that the relationship between high school grade point average (GPA) and military enlistment is not linear: average 'C' and middle range grades are associated with higher rates of military enlistment than higher or lower grades (Bachman et al.2000).Therefore, the GPA variable is converted to 4 dummy variables corresponding to D average, C average, B average, and A average grades: 0-1.74, 1.75-2.49, 2.5-3.24, and 3.25 and above.

In the NLSY97 data, high school grades are reported as 'mostly Ds', 'mostly Cs', 'mostly Bs', 'mostly As' and 'As to Cs'. (DC). They are not reported as GPAs, but with the exception of the 'As to C's category, are rough equivalents to the ADD Health measures.

CHAPTER 3: Great Expectations: A Qualitative Analysis of Enlistment Motivations

Military Enlistment and the Transition to Adulthood

Children of immigrants face many constraints and opportunities in the U.S. (Alba and Nee 2003; Kasinitz et al. 2008; Waters 1999; Portes and Rumbaut 2001). Family structures, levels of parental education and financial resources influence the types of neighborhoods in which children of immigrants live, the schools they attend and many of the opportunities available to them. As they transition to adulthood, children of immigrants forge their own strategies for upward mobility and weigh the benefits and pitfalls of the various alternatives they perceive to be available to them. In this chapter, I analyze motivations behind voluntary enlistment in the U.S. military institution among today's children of immigrants. In the previous chapter, I discovered that children of immigrants are driven to enlist by mediocre high school grades and working-class backgrounds. In addition, children of immigrants are more likely to enlist than children of U.S. born parents, despite similar military propensities during adolescence.

In this work, I further explore of motivations behind U.S. military enlistment among children of immigrants, using in-depth interviews. Examining motivations unravels how decisions, access to information and institutional forces together eventually influence the incorporation of children of immigrants into host societies. Investigating enlistment motivations reveal information about actual and perceived post-high school opportunities and barriers facing children of immigrants.

First, I examine how respondents learned of military service as a post-high school option. Then I examine the motivations of individuals who join the military as enlisted personnel. In-depth interviews reveal that children of immigrants turn to the military to help them earn money for college and to gain self-efficacy by acquiring soft skills, such as discipline and motivation. They also seek the stable, though short-term employment provided by the military, which also offer better pay and skills-acquisition opportunities than many of the civilian jobs generally available to people with little to no college education. Children of immigrants who enlist in the military blame themselves for their low academic-related self-efficacy – reflected by their reported lack of academic motivation and generally mediocre high school achievement – and perceive the military as a 'second chance' to help them become productive and successful adults.

In what follows, I describe children of immigrants' motivations for enlisting in the military. Borrowing from Alba and Nee's arguments on assimilation as a rational choice (2009) and bounded rationality into scholarship on immigrant integration, I argue that individuals from this demographic enlist in the military because they view it as the *best choice given the options and choices that they perceive are available to them.*

In the short term, military service allows children of immigrants to earn money, transition into adulthood in a structured environment, and have living costs, such as food, housing and transportation covered or subsidized. While college also serves to transition youth to adulthood, it is costly and less structured. Those who do not perceive college as an immediate option, therefore, may prefer the military. Indeed, children of immigrants see the benefits gained through military participation—self-efficacy, technical skills and college assistance—as essential for securing a stable job with higher earnings and advancement opportunities than those obtained by their parents in the U.S. or those available to people with only a high school diploma. Children of immigrants perceive that their long-term opportunities will expand as they will be able to use the

self-efficacy, technical skills and college benefits gained through military participation to secure stable jobs with higher earnings and greater advancement opportunities than their parents have found in the U.S or that they could find with only high school degrees.

Children of immigrants also look to the military to help them meet family obligations and transition to adulthood, escape negative neighborhoods, and fulfill personal ideals and goals, such as service to the country, travel and successfully navigate the physical and mental challenges of military service. Although gaining citizenship has been discussed as a potential incentive among non-citizens, among the few 1.5 generation immigrants in this study who arrived as children, it was not a strong motivator. For example, from 2001 to 2009, approximately 50% of all non-citizen recruits gained citizenship in their first year of service (McIntosh and Sayala 2011).

Although military enlisters hoped to obtain bachelor's degrees and many had completed some college before enlisting, in general, most viewed four-year colleges that lead to bachelor's degrees as out of their reach at the time they made the decision to enlist. They lacked information about financial aid for lower-income individuals or support systems for mediocre students and minority groups. Many grew up in poor neighborhoods with negative influences such as gangs and violence. Instead of taking shelter in the strong ethnic ties that segmented assimilationists argue are protective in difficult environments, most rejected or avoided ethnic ties but sought an alternative protective tie to the military institution. Most were only able to see a few viable opportunities post-high school: enrolling in college full-time, combining work and school, enlisting in the military, or working full-time in dead-end jobs with little opportunity for advancement. All respondents in the study rejected full-time work without at least part-time study, at least initially, because the overwhelming majority of them perceived a college education as the key to future success. Many preferred combining school and work, such as going to school full-time while working part-time. Family and other structural constraints, limited human capital as identified by lower high school grades, and a rejection or lack of co-ethnic ties, limited respondents' work and educational options, leading many to military service.

Data and Methods:

Data was derived from semi-structured in-depth interviews with 33 first- and second-generation immigrants from various country-of-origin groups, recruited using a targeted snowball sampling method from October 2010 to November 2011; one person was interviewed in October 2012. I recruited by advertising with veterans' groups and through my own social networks. Targeted snowball sampling techniques were chosen because veteran children of immigrants are a small, hard to reach population. As within any group of veterans or any cluster of immigrants, only small numbers, if any at all, will fit both categories: veteran and a child of immigrants. This technique may bias the findings because snowball-sampling techniques rely on contacts to refer other contacts. Interview respondents may share similar characteristics, which would lead to a selection bias that are not representative of the wider population. However, respondents come from seven distinct veteran and military organizations as well as my own social networks, reducing the likelihood that participants share very similar qualities as respondents from a single network chain.

To explore the relationships between veterans who are children of immigrants and formerly service in the U.S. I first examine the experiences of 33 veteran children of immigrants, focusing on motivations for enlistment. This study focuses on motivations to assess how children of immigrants engage institutions, in this case the U.S. military institution, in their quest for

employment and post-secondary education. The study fills gaps in the literature by examining factors, characteristics, and information that influence military enlistment of children of immigrants, a group who has never been examined separately, but that accounts for approximately 15% of all living veterans (Current Population Survey 2010).

Data come from 33 semi-structured in-depth interviews from children of immigrants from various country-of-origin groups who entered the military as enlisted personnel. The sample was recruited using a targeted snowball sampling method from October 2010 to November 2011; one person was interviewed in October 2012. Recruitment was achieved by advertising with veterans' groups and through my own social networks. See Figure 1 or details on the snowball sampling. All interview respondents first enlisted in the military during the post-1973 All Volunteer Force (AVF) era; no respondents were conscripted into service. With the exception of one individual who immigrated to the United States at age 17, the rest of the respondents were composed of U.S. born children of immigrants or immigrants who arrived in the U.S. with their parent(s) by the age of 15.

Among the 33 enlisted, 10 were foreign-born children of immigrants who arrived in the U.S. by age 15 (referred to as the 1.5 generation): from Burma (1), Cambodia (1), Ecuador (1), England (1), Mexico (1), Philippines (1), South Africa (1), Taiwan (1) and Vietnam (2). An additional respondent (1) migrated from Granada at age 17 and for analytical purposes is categorized as a 1.5 generation immigrant. 15 were U.S. born children of immigrants with two foreign-born parents hailing from Colombia (2), Cuba (1), Ecuador/Puerto Rico (1), El Salvador (2), Korea (1), Mexico (3), Nicaragua (1), the Philippines (2), Syria (1), and Taiwan (1). Six were U.S. born children of immigrants with one immigrant parent from: Colombia (1), England (1), and Mexico (4). Most respondents were male (22 males, 11 females). Ages ranged from 24 to 54, though the majority (31 of 33) of the convenience sample was composed of persons between 24 and 40 by the date of interview. Most enlisted in the military just before 9/11 or during the early years of the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. 33 respondents entered the military as enlisted personnel; of those, three later became commissioned officers and one was discharged early due to family hardship after completing most requirements of an officer training program. One person was dishonorably discharged from military service which meant that the respondent was not eligible for any military related benefits such as the GI Bill. 17 of the 33 enlisted respondents possessed some college experience before initial military enlistment, including two who enlisted with bachelor's degrees. Respondents are drawn from all five military branches: Air Force (4), Army (9), Coast Guard (4), Marines (7) and Navy (8), but the samples drawn from each branch are too small to produce branch-specific analyses. 17 were married at the time of the survey, 13 single and never married and 3 were divorced; 16 had one or more children and the rest did not.

Officers were not included in the analysis because they select into service on different dimensions than those from the enlisted ranks and experience different outcomes from their service. For example, officers are less ethnically diverse than the larger military institution (Burk and Espinoza 2012) and reap more positive outcomes after service than those from enlisted ranks (MacLean 2008). Indeed, preliminary analyses of qualitative interviews of officers demonstrate that they are more likely to be white or have one white parent than the enlisted sample, they tended to report higher high school grades, and they generally attended four-year colleges and never attended community colleges or struggled with college life.

All interviews were conducted by myself in English and generally lasted one-and-a-half to two hours. Questions covered topics including family background, family or personal

migration history, motivations for military enlistment, employment before, during, and post-military, educational attainment before, during and post-military, and ethnic and American identity. 18 of the interviews were conducted face-to-face and 15 were conducted by telephone. Phone interviews were conducted using Google chat or mobile phone and recorded by a digital audio recorder. The interviews have been transcribed and coded using qualitative data software. See Figures 2 and 3 in the appendix for details about recruiting chains.

Other potential biases may be observed in this data as well; ten respondents were full time students at the time of the interview; eight out of 33 respondents were studying at a large, public and selective four-year university. These respondents may not be representative because of the competitive criteria to gain admission to the university, such as exceptional grades in high school or community college. Some possible selection exists on the dimension of college grades: although each of the eight respondents had poor high school grades, each also reported very high community college grade point averages after completing military service. The general sample, nonetheless, contains six individuals who were not enrolled in college at the time of the survey and did not do as well in community college and/or never transferred to a four-year school, mitigating potential bias in the sample. The sample also contains very few children of immigrants of black African or Afro-Caribbean origin (3) or non-Hispanic whites (1), which may also bias results. However, this study concentrates on the two largest U.S. immigrant groups: children of Asian and Latin American immigrants.

In-depth interviewing introduce information that cannot be harvested from existing large-scale surveys because such surveys do not focus on veterans, are not designed to study motivations for enlistment among children of immigrants, and contain closed questions. Although ADD Health, used in Chapter 2, inquires about military service and captures information about rank achieved, years and period of service, it is fails to ask about motivations behind enlistment or how military enlistment fits into current or future plans. The quantitative analyses from ADD Health were inadequate in explaining the decision-making process behind enlisting. Intensive interviewing was preferred because of the rich detail open-ended questions encourage, illuminating how children of immigrants make choices, react and respond to possible pathways, further allowing me to uncover the respondents' strategies, choices and responses that led them to military enlistment. For example, why did children of immigrants enlist in the military rather than choose other options such as full-time employment, full-time college, or a combination of the two? What other options did children of immigrants perceive they had available? What did children of immigrants expect to gain from military service that they could not or would not gain elsewhere?

Learning about Military Service: Movies & Military Advertising, Recruiters, and Friends & Family

Mass Media

The military's popularity in movies and video games have provided ample opportunities for potential recruits to be exposed to military service and to form opinions and ideas about what the military experience might be like for them. Respondents indicated they were drawn by the movies' depictions of active lifestyles, strict discipline and the potential for heroism. Joshua, a child of South American immigrants, described it like this:

> I've always had a thing – you know ever since I saw *Full Metal Jacket*, I knew I wanted to be in the Marine Corps. So I would say probably my freshman year [in high school] is when I had it set in my mind that I was going to join the Marines.

Eugene, the son of a Mexican immigrant, discussed the influence of a movie "cult classic among Mexican kids" called "Bound By Honor" in which one of the main characters is a young Latino who escapes a life of gangs and drugs by enlisting in the military and later becomes a police officer, while his brother and cousin are unable to escape the lifestyle.

Similarly, Steven, the son of Southeast Asian immigrants, was lured by his fondness of video games based on military or police story lines:

> Because I play games a lot and it was just interesting. I played a lot of first person shooters, you're just a guy with a gun and you're walking around.

The media's 'romanticized' version of military service and the action, heroism and other positive qualities attributed to military service were discussed by many respondents as something that everyone knows about and sees in the movies – and that interested them. Not only were military joiners a group of individuals looking for future college and career benefits from military service, but many were also seeking the military lifestyle they saw portrayed in the media.

Although movies generally highlight military life and service members' roles during conflicts and missions, almost none highlight the military's educational benefits that members can access during or after service. However, military advertising campaigns on radio, television and other media, such as neighborhood billboards transmit such message fairly universally (Giambo 1999). And enlisters get the message about college: service members list earning money for college as a top motivator (Woodruff et al. 2006; Eighmey 2006) across racial and ethnic groups (National Research Council 2004). Recruiters, too, play a significant role in promoting educational and other benefits, such as enlistment bonuses, to potential recruits. The roles and influence of advertising and recruiters are discussed in more detail below.

Military Advertising

> "Most job training teaches you how to make something. Mine taught me what I'm made of." U.S. Army advertisement
>
> "You will become a storied protector of 231 years of tradition. You will faithfully serve with purpose…." U.S. Marines advertisement
>
> "Life, liberty, and the pursuit of all who threaten it." U.S. Navy Advertisement

Military advertisements depict military service as an individual's chance to serve the country, gain educational benefits to pay for college, gain technological training and work related skills, push one's self to the physical limits, experience adventure, and be part of a team (Department of Defense 2011). These ads, while varying by branches, generally promote common elements meant to arouse thoughts of thrill, challenge and pride among potential recruits. These advertisements often include action-oriented shots of military aircraft, ships and tanks with men and women of various ethnic groups in combat uniforms engaging in strenuous and challenging physical activities. These images may also portray young adults in a large room surrounded by radar maps, engaged in advanced technological activities, such as remote reconnaissance. Television, radio and Internet ads commonly add verbal and visual elements to evoke civic and patriotic feelings with images of U.S. flags and words that include 'commitment', 'courage', 'pride' and 'honor."

Advertisements target the young adult market aged 18 to 24 - composing more than 86%

of all new recruits in 2010 (Department of Defense 2011). The Department of Defense (DOD) spends millions of dollars on advertising to ensure military personnel needs are met each year; in 2003 alone, the DOD spent over $600 million (Dertouzos 2009). The millions of dollars spent in advertising make an impact - 75% of youth aged 16 to 21 in 2006 had ever considered enlisting (Fors et al. 2006).

Recruiters

About 15,000 military recruiters work to fill personnel needs each year (GAO 2003), maintaining a presence at more than 5,500 recruiter stations (GAO 1998) across the country. At recruiting stations, potential military candidates may drop-in or make appointments to learn more about service, take the military qualifying test and sign-up for military service on the spot. In addition, military recruiters have long maintained strong connections with public high schools, a tactic stretching from the World War I era (Zeiger 2003) to the present. In some high schools, recruiters have such a strong presence that almost everyone takes the military qualifying test during designated class time – as Dominic, a child of a Southern European immigrant explains about the high school he attended in the 1990s:

> My high school…you all sit down in the cafeteria taking a test [the Armed Forces Qualifying Test].

Recruiters also give classroom presentations. (Williams 2011) and are readily available to students during school hours, as Isaac, a child of South American immigrants discusses below. During a short vacation after he completed boot camp, he visited high schools in his hometown to talk to students about his experiences:

> The recruiters basically have a relationship with the schools, so they come and go as they please. You [the recruiter] go during lunchtime and you might have a table or you might walk around in uniform and if someone comes up to you and has a question, you answer them.

Military recruiters represent a powerful entity - the U.S. government - and make promises and offer possibilities that respondents take to heart. In fact, recent research finds that some high school counselors view military recruiters as better positioned than themselves to offer specifics and guarantees on how to obtain money for college through military service, particularly to low-income students who often are not offered similar guarantees by college recruiters (McDonough and Calderone 2006) to finance higher education. As Edward, the son of a Mexican immigrant points out:

> So the lady [high school counselor] tells you that you can apply for a loan to go to college and at the time, you just think that because you don't have money, you're not able to attend college. So on the other hand, I have this military recruiter telling me that they'll pay for my schooling and then on top of paying me for my school, there's other benefits involved. I thought that was the best opportunity.

Even though Edward discussed the availability of college loans with his high school counselor, he was still convinced he could not afford college. The military recruiter outlined college money as part of the benefits provided by military service, leading Edward to believe that if he wanted to attend college, the military was his best bet.

Family and friends

Friends and family with and without military experience also played roles in the motivation to join. Some respondents had family members and other influential persons, almost always men- generally fathers, step-fathers or father-figures - who served in the military in their countries-of-origin or less often, in the U.S. military. Though most respondents reported that fathers or father-figures never suggested their children follow their military footsteps, respondents generally associated the military as a positive or neutral influence on their father's or other male figure's life.

Growing up, Robert, the son of child of Southeast Asian immigrants heard stories of his step-father's experience in a Southeast Asian military, but his step-father never suggested the route for his step-son:

R: It was never like he was forcing me to do that.
I: He never said, 'Why don't you join the military?'
R: No, no.

But these stories made an impact on respondents and influenced the ways in which they thought about military service. Ray, the son of Central American immigrants remembers his pastor describing the camaraderie he shared with other service members as a result of his military experience. Ray did not recall his pastor ever discussing his military service in a negative manner:

> Growing up in a Baptist church, actually, the pastor was a Vietnam veteran, also, so I heard a lot of stories, I heard about camaraderie and stuff like that. I don't know if that was one of the major reasons, I would say that's part of the reasons, I've always been either near or affiliated some way with the military.

Eugene wanted to follow in the footsteps of a veteran who became his good friend and role model:

> At work I met a friend, one of my co-workers - who became one of my good friends – who's in the Marines, too. I looked up to him because he was older than me. And he seemed like a really together person and highly respected, and to my 20-year old mind, I wanted to emulate him.

Once respondents openly discussed their desires and plans to enlist in the military, many reported that parents themselves had mixed feelings about their children's plans to enlist. Even among the few respondents who enlisted before the recent Afghan/Iraq conflicts, parents were keenly aware their children could be sent into a conflict or to a dangerous mission and die. Rolando, the son of South American parents, had a strong negative reaction from his mother:

> My mom was really, really anti-military for a long time, so she was having a heart attack every time she saw me wearing a uniform.

On the other hand, many parents agreed with their children on the many benefits that the military could offer, as Robert, the son of Asian immigrants, explains:

> My mother and father were extremely excited [that I was joining the military] because they saw the path I was going down. They thought that, I mean they were sad to see me join, to leave…but they also knew that it was probably the best thing for me.

Fathers often served in the military of home countries–of-origin, especially immigrants from Asian countries where conscription is mandatory and near-universal. None of the respondents reported direct encouragement by father figures to explore military as a training or career option. In addition, once their own child expressed plans to enlist, many father-figures reacted negatively. Negative reactions were more prevalent among veterans of Asian militaries in particular. Judy, the daughter of Asian immigrants, discusses the different reactions she received:

> In [parent's Asian country of origin] there's mandatory service, so both my stepdad and my dad both went into the Army. And my dad went in as an officer, so maybe that's why he didn't think what I was doing was that good….My stepdad, on the other hand, he went in as just a rank-and-file soldier, and he was telling me, 'You know what, yes, it's going to be a good experience.' He cried when I came back, because he said, 'You're a real adult now.'

And Isaac, the son of South American immigrants, explains his father was not supportive of his decision to enlist in the U.S. Army, mainly because his father did not have confidence in his son's ability to succeed in the military environment:

> [My father] was in [a South American] Army. It was probably very difficult, so he was thinking-I think he made a comment that 'The military is going to be hard on you and you probably won't last.'

In a few cases, respondents were directly influenced to join by people they knew who convinced them it would be a great opportunity for them. These generally involved close peers – including friends, siblings and cousins who had enlisted previously or were contemplating enlisting with the respondent. Manuel, the child of South American/Caribbean immigrant parents, began attending college, while two of his high school friends enlisted in the military. When these friends came home on leave, they tried to get Manuel to enlist, too, and they succeeded:

> So I had two of my best friends…double-team me, and say, 'This is the greatest thing we ever did, I got a car now, I'm independent, I party, I do this. You're working three jobs and racking up the debt and you're never going to be able to finish.'

Although he had considered it, Manuel rejected military service right out of high school and instead attended college, paying for it by taking out loans and working. His friends highlighted his biggest fears—he was working several jobs, going to college and accumulating more debt without ultimately earning. Manuel found himself convinced the military would free him of these problems by granting him access to college benefits.

Children of immigrants who enlist generally have access to friends and family members with military experience within the U.S. or foreign militaries, and are influenced by their parents' and friends' experiences. Although parents and parental figures with military experience did not present the military as a life choice for their children, their stories and experiences shaped enlisters' ideas about the military. Friends and peers that influenced enlisters generally had very positive opinions about the military or directly encouraged enlistment, further informing and influencing the enlistment decision.

Section Conclusion

Children of immigrants who enlisted in the military learned about military service in a variety of ways – through media, military ads, friends, family and recruiters. In general, enlisters viewed the military, and the messages they received about what the experience would be like, in a positive light - they were convinced that the military would improve their futures. Despite the warnings of media, family and friends, they did not focus on their potential mortality. Enlisters brushed off the negative aspects of military service, and they saw few downsides to service at the time that they decided to enlist.

Transitioning to Adulthood: Planning for the Future and Preparing for Socio-economic Mobility

The greatest motivations behind military enlistment among respondents are the educational benefits available for college, and to a lesser extent, the self-efficacy training, work experience, and technical training that military service provides. As they transition to adulthood, children of immigrants, like all youth and young adults, focus on preparing for adult work roles, leading them to consider and explore many possibilities based on their preferences, talents, and chances to achieve the kinds of jobs that interest them (Arnett 2000). Children of immigrants are generally aware of the sacrifices their parents made when migrating to the U.S. in search of a better life, and this awareness often sparks children to work hard in school so they can attend college and get ahead (Kasinitz et al. 2008).

But many children of immigrants fail to translate their parents' desires for upward mobility into high school success, even if they recognize the importance of a college education. Many youth become caught up in high school social life and work and neglect their studies. Most youth believe that community colleges offer 'second chance' opportunities for high school graduates with lower grades, and assume that they will attend community college on the path to a four-year degree (Rosenbaum 2003). But even community colleges cost money, and juggling college and work can be very stressful. In addition, many children of immigrants have additional home expectations that include financial and care-taking obligations, such as cooking or providing childcare to their parents and siblings. These obligations are more prominent among the second-generation than among children of U.S.-born parents (Fuligni, Tseng and Lam 1999). In order to live up to parents' hopes for upward mobility and to sometimes escape family obligations, children of immigrants with mediocre school performance turn to the military to get ahead.

Military as a Pathway to College

Financing College

As they transition to adulthood, children of immigrants, like all youth and young adults, focus on preparing for adult work roles, leading them to consider and explore work possibilities based on their preferences, talents, and chances to achieve the kinds of jobs that they want (Arnett 2000). Although most respondents were not certain careers they wanted to follow, all respondents viewed college as a necessary element to prepare them for jobs with opportunities for advancement and comfortable earnings. Edward, the son of Mexican immigrants, like most of respondents, viewed college as the best way to get ahead in the U.S.:

> I found that after seeing the struggles that my mother went through without a high school diploma and without a college degree, [college] was something that I was willing to do to try to better my life and do better because of it.

Young adults in the U.S. have a near universal desire to attend college: 87% of high school seniors in 2004 reported plans for postsecondary education (Ingels et al. 2005). Like the vast majority of today's youth, virtually all of the respondents stressed the importance of attaining a college degree to move up in the U.S. today, and this desire played a key role in the decision to enlist: most youth are well aware of the college benefits associated with military service (Giambo 1999). Through educational benefits programs, military service places college within reach of young adults with significant financial constraints, mediocre academic records, a desire to avoid college loans and inadequate knowledge about college financing options.

When contemplating college-going and the application process, students assess their qualifications, consider how to finance college, and develop preferences for certain schools (Berkner and Chavez 1997; Choy and Ottinger 1998). For example, 1.5 generation immigrants are more likely to begin post-secondary education in community colleges than native-born immigrants (Vernez and Abrahamse 1996) because of lower tuition costs (Szelenyi and Chang 2002); Latinos express greater preferences for living at their parents' home or in close proximity to their parents while going to college (Perez and McDonough 2008; Desmond and Turley 2009). As we saw from Chapter 2 of this study, 1.5-generation immigrants are more likely to enlist in the military than are children of U.S.-born parents, suggesting that available information, the decision-making process and perceived and real opportunities for children of immigrants, particularly those from more modest socio-economic backgrounds, differ from children of the parents born in the U.S. in some respects. For example, higher levels of loan aversion among children of immigrants may push them to consider military enlistment because of the educational benefits attached to service.

Generally respondents perceived four-year colleges as too expensive and out of reach. One reason many respondents perceived college as very costly was their high school grades. The average military enlister in this sample achieved lackluster academic records in high school. High school students understood that the high school grades and standardized test scores are the main criteria by which colleges decide admissions (Camara and Kimmel 2005). Enlisters assumed they would not be accepted into four-year colleges because of their grades and feared they would perform poorly on the SAT required for four-year colleges but not for community colleges. They lacked knowledge about financial aid for students with low achievement – most thought that only individuals with good grades could receive financial aid for college. Bernard, the son of Central American immigrants, was encouraged by adults in a college-bound youth program he participated in while in high school. He had no idea how he could financially make it happen and those encouraging adults did not explain it to him:

> But I knew deep down inside that there's (the) financial question: 'How am I going to pay for it?' And then the other part was scholarships. I'm having to compete for scholarships. I don't have the SAT scores or the grades that I could turn around and get one of those scholarships. So because of that, I was even thinking about that in my sophomore year then, 'How am I going to do this?' and such. I kind of gave up on that idea because I knew the GPA wasn't going to be high enough. I already knew that my SAT scores weren't going to be what they needed.

Bernard never took the SAT. He predicted a poor SAT performance based on his low GPA, so much so that he did not bother to take the fee-based test like many of the respondents. These

perceptions, combined with desire to attend college and establish upwardly mobile careers, led most enlisters to believe they had few choices for college. In some ways, they were right: by not taking the SAT, many enlisters almost guaranteed non-acceptance to four-year public schools and many private schools requiring the SAT or similar tests as part of the application process. As a response to the lack of information or misinformation about the college application and financial aid process, some enlisted in the military immediately after high school, perceiving even community college as out of their financial or academic reach. Others attended community college for a period of time before dropping out and enlisting.

Regardless of whether they attended community college or went into the military after high school, most expressed uncertainty about their abilities to succeed in college because of their histories of low high school achievement and lack of motivation to do well in school. Their hunches reflect reality: college persistence flounders among students with lower high school grades (Astin and Oseguera 2005; Rosenbaum 2003). Lower-achieving students also prefer to attend community colleges (Rosenbaum 2003), which may be a barrier to degree completion: less than 50% of community college attendants receive any degree 6-years (Hoachlander, Sikora and Horn 2003) or even 10 years (Kane and Rouse 1999) after first enrolling.

Also, respondents did not see college within reach because most did not expect their parents to pay for college, recognizing that such expense would be difficult for financially-strapped parents to absorb. Most families were not financially secure enough to add extra expenses, such as college tuition for an adult child who was old enough to work. Robert, the son of immigrants from Southeast Asia, explains why he enlisted:

> And I thought: money for college. I really didn't want my parents having to pay for it because they were working at the time and it was hard for them to make ends meet. I didn't want to be another burden to them.

Respondents who enrolled in college classes generally paid their own tuitions while a few were assisted by a combination of methods such as parental help, self-financing; a small number had some financial aid. Dominic, the child of a Southern European immigrant describes his strategies for paying college tuition before enlisting – a combination of parent and personal financial contributions:

> That first year between my parents and I, we had it covered. And then after that, we were trying to avoid taking student loans.

Like Dominic, many of those who attended college before enlisting reported receiving some help from parents to pay for tuition, while he paid for part of his schooling as well. In these cases, military enlistment occurred after respondents became unmotivated to continue in school or their academic habits were too poor to keep them on track, causing their grades to slip, their course loads to decrease, or the initiation of a search for alternative paths to get ahead.

But some other military enlisters expressed apprehension at working during college in order to pay for tuition and other expenses because working would not allow them to give full attention to their studies, with an anticipated detrimental effect. Some respondents experienced this problem in high school and were afraid of repeating the experience. Edward, a child of Central American immigrants explains that he did not predict college success if he had 'stayed behind' instead of enlisting to earn money and college benefits:

> If I would've stayed behind I would've had to work through college. And because I suffered through high school working, and my grades suffered, I didn't want to have to repeat that.

Others experienced Edward's fear. Although they pursued college with the understanding that a postsecondary degree generally means higher wages and better working conditions, they often found juggling college and work straining. After a while, most realized their schoolwork or ability to take classes suffered, inhibiting their ability to attain a degree or even earn enough credits to transfer to a four-year institution. Jessica, the daughter of Asian Pacific Islander immigrants, had a hard time fitting it all in:

> I was on the teeter-totter where my classes started to diminish and then my hours with work started to increase, and so making money became my primary focus.

However, few of the veteran children of immigrants reported receiving college loans and many discussed the desire to avoid taking out loans. Avoiding accumulation of personal debt was prominent in respondents' minds. Aware of the dangers of accumulating debt, children of immigrants looked for other ways to finance college in order to get ahead, echoing research indicating that low-income and minority individuals are more risk averse to and less knowledgeable about loans (McDonough and Calderone 2006). Latino and Asian-origin groups, the majority of today's children of immigrants, are more averse to borrowing for college than whites or blacks (Paulsen and St. John 2002; Cunningham and Santiago 2008), suggesting that military enlistment may be viewed as a more attractive choice than loans. Manuel explains his apprehension at taking out loans after his first semester in college before he enlisted in the military:

> When a poor person who's never dealt with $1,000 in one shot looks at the $7,000 figure as a debt on my shoulders –fucking intimidating on a whole different scale.

Similarly, many of the respondents reported knowing little about financial aid. They could not name financial aid opportunities for lower-income students such as Pell Grants and they assumed they or their parents would be paying out of pocket. Concerned about money and looking for another way to finance college, respondents saw the military as an attractive alternative. For Ray, the son of Central American immigrants, his decision to enlist in the military after graduating from high school hinged on his perception that college was not affordable to him:

> I could have gone to school right after high school. I would have gone to [a state school] but I chose not too – I didn't have the money. I didn't know anything about financial aid or grants or scholarships or stuff like that. Nobody in my family's ever gone to college before.

Mediocre High School Grades

Children of immigrants who enlisted generally had mediocre high school grades and did not take school seriously, particularly among the male respondents. Most reported attending large, minority-dominant schools in poor, working-class, or lower middle-class areas. In these environments, schools are overcrowded and understaffed – with overworked and under-resourced high school guidance counselors. Many of the respondents graduated from high school without much guidance about college from parents, teachers, and counselors. Their lack of college guidance from teachers and counselors—professions that require a college degree-- was

not a result of inexperience, but likely the result of negative stereotypes these professionals had about the students or as a result of being overworked. As researchers have argued (Kasinitz et al. 2008; Waters 1999), teachers and counselors often expect little from Latino children of immigrants, even in cases where their grades are good. As a result, children of immigrants with high college aspirations may consider the military, and its loud-and-clear message about educational benefits - as an alternate path to college. Ximena, a child of Mexican immigrants, explained her situation:

> R: And I didn't have any of that counseling that I should have gotten in the high school. And even though I had maintained a 4.0 average throughout my four years, I didn't have any counselor say, 'You know your brains are good. We should have you see about going to college.'
>
> I: And do you have any idea why that might have been?
>
> R: Probably [they] didn't know what to do with me because I'm an immigrant, and maybe they just didn't think I had the aspirations to do anything else in high school. But nobody asked, and I didn't think about it. The people that I hung out with are kids from the neighborhood, and they were immigrants as well. And none of them were going away to college.

Another Latino respondent, Marco, discussed getting pretty good grades in junior high school, particularly in math, even though his behavior was at times problematic. But he was not tracked into good classes in high school, and his grades subsequently faltered:

> I was actually supposed to be in honor classes and AP classes when I went to high school. But because of the people that I associated with, my high school counselor put me in the lower division classes and stuff like that where I guess they would track other problem children.

Not everyone was treated this way. Asian respondents who neglected to do their work and failed classes were viewed as underperforming rather than incapable. Judy, a child of East Asian immigrants, almost did not complete high school because she failed a class. Her teachers regarded her weak grades as a lack of doing work rather than a lack of ability:

> I couldn't graduate high school until I took this one course [I failed]; I had to retake it. So I went to this continuation school, accredited just so I can get that one credit so I can graduate. And [the teacher] said 'Yes, she's really smart'. So I guess they thought - oh, I'm smart but I just don't do my work.

Even those who received college information from high school counselors were not always successful at translating this knowledge into successfully accessing college, as Rolando, the son of South American immigrants explains:

> Well community college was always an option that they presented. I never told them that I didn't apply for SATs - they told me to apply for the SAT and I never told them I didn't. And they never came back and asked me if I did or not, they just told me that I should. But I figured I wouldn't pass it anyways, so I didn't. Since they already told me that community college was an option for people that don't get into college, that was the choice I already made.

In contrast, Bill, a white child of European-origin parents from southern Africa went to a U.S. private school. He did not face problems obtaining college information or believing he would enroll in one:

> There was never that thought that I wouldn't go to college. It was 'always'. And of course at the private school, we had a college counselor.

Respondents lacked basic information and knowledge about four-year colleges, such as the admissions application process, financial aid guidelines, and college life and expectations. Children of immigrants who enlisted saw college as a step to pursue a concrete career or path. Without a concrete vocational roadmap, many were reticent to enroll. Those who did, mostly in community colleges, found their lack of direction resulted into low motivation and low grades. Many turned to the military to find themselves and to prime themselves for a career since such a path does not incur financial costs like college does and it offers a more structured avenue to adulthood.

An individual's college ambitions play a significant motivational role in his or her decision to join the military. Sometimes enlistment occurred quickly after high school and before any college was attempted; these respondents predicted four-year college completion as financially impossible and viewed the military as their best financial path to college. Others enlisted after their first attempts at college floundered, viewing the military as a second chance at financing – and eventually finishing - college. For many children of immigrants, the military is a preferred alternative to pay for college tuition rather than loans, parental and personal financial contributions. Traditionally, college-aged community college enrollees (Hilmer 1998) and military enlisters (Elder et al. 2010; Kleykamp 2006) share similar demographic characteristics; they lie on the margin of entering the labor market full-time and enrolling in four-year colleges. This suggests that the military may seduce community college students who are not doing well or who are unmotivated to continue with school, as well as serve as an employer and job trainer for community college dropouts.

Parents Lacked Resources and Knowledge to Help their Children Prepare for College

With little education beyond high school or with college degrees from foreign countries that generally have different costs and indicator for success in the U.S., parents of immigrant children could provide few details and guidance about U.S. colleges even though they expected their son or daughter to attend college. Matt's mother was surprised when he enlisted in the military because she wanted him to go to college despite his poor grades and lack of college financial planning:

> She was, you know, "You need to be a doctor; you need to be a lawyer."
> I was like "You know, that's not really something that I can do right now." And it was true. I wasn't doing well in school, and being lower, lower middle class, it was just impossible for me to be able to come into to any good school.

After realistically assessing his finances and grades, Matt felt the military would be the only way he could acquire college money and be able to go to a "good school," one with a solid reputation.

Some, though not all parents of respondents, viewed college as an "optional extra" (Kasinitz et al. 2008) beyond high school. They did not push their children into pursuing college, as Adam, the son of South American immigrants stated:

> My parents never stressed the value of school at all, just work. I got a job at 15 and they were proud of me.

Adam's parents, like the parents of some other respondents, sent their children the message that a high school education was 'good enough'.

But even among those with parents who viewed college as important generally did not receive tangible support or advice from parents on how to prepare for college. College was discussed as an abstract idea without concrete steps to make it happen. Parents often had little time to spend with their children and many completed only high school or less in their own countries, limiting their abilities to prepare children for college. Rolando, the son of South American immigrants, identifies his parents' lack of guidance stemming from their inexperience, rather than an unwillingness to help:

> You know my parents, they didn't really help -bless their hearts - they didn't really help too much. My mom didn't have college experience; she didn't really know the process or what to do or anything.

The parents of respondents encouraged their children to get ahead through education – by acquiring high school degrees or a college education. However, parents were unable to provide experienced advice on how to finance and attend college, and as a result many turned to the military to finance college.

Military as Pathway to Skills Acquisition: Interpersonal and Technical

Besides money for college, respondents turn to the military to develop or strengthen 'soft skills,' such as motivation, a clearer sense of direction, discipline, follow-through, and self-efficacy. Military job training, service-related work experience and transferring such knowledge to the civilian labor market were also identified as important motivators behind enlistment.

Searching for Self-Efficacy, College Readiness and Soft Skills

Some respondents, particularly those who enlisted soon after graduating high school, were reticent to attend college because they were unsure they would succeed. Ashley, a child of a Mexican father, explains that many of her high school friends did not want to go to college immediately after high school because, in their words:

> I'm not mature enough. I don't know what I want to do, I don't want to waste so many years and then [have] nothing to show for it.

Respondents did not view college as a place to learn self-efficacy in order to succeed academically. Rather, most commented that to succeed in college, one must possess these skills already. Robert, the son of Southeast Asian immigrants, predicted failure if he attended college immediately upon high school graduation since he lacked the academic skills to do well, such as study habits, time management, and learning strategies:

> Like for me personally, I graduated with a 2.1 GPA in high school. So academically, if they would have just picked me and said "Hey, here, start your college degree program," I would have fell flat on my face.

Military enlistment provided respondents with the chance to mature and gain self-efficacy, skills, and training while also accruing college benefits they could use when they identified the careers they wanted to pursue.

Those who enrolled in college immediately after high school often lacked motivation, had poor study habits, and behaved immaturely, as Ashley's friends wanted to avoid. Jerry, a child of Caribbean immigrants, explains:

> So I get on and lose scholarships, start getting bad grades from partying, two, three semesters go by, I'm messing up.

Often, they found themselves struggling and unsure of what to do next. Why continue paying for school – or in a few cases letting someone else, like a parent, pay for school when graduation seems unlikely – and costly? The military institution was an alternative that, regardless of motivation or grades, respondents and their peers understood would require them to perform adequately – that is a predictable and well-known part of military life. Respondents often described the military an organization that would improve their lives now and in the long – run. Arthur, the son of East Asian immigrants, saw the military as a place to get motivated:

> I wasn't really doing anything or I wasn't really motivated. That's [the military] one of the things that could really help.

Judy, the daughter of East Asian immigrants, confesses her need for strict discipline, a characteristic often associated with military life, as depicted in the movies:

> You watch a lot of movies, and they look like [the military is] very strict. I watched a couple movies where they're doing some kind of strenuous training. I feel like that takes discipline. You can't give up.

Respondents looked to the military to provide a sense of direction, to explore career options, to mature, and to prepare them for future academic and career success. Respondents often indicated they did not feel prepared to attend college because they did not know what they wanted to study or what careers they envisioned for themselves. They pointed to a lack of direction and discipline as a barrier to college success. Adam, a child of South American immigrants, said he believed the military would give him a positive sense of direction and allow him to complete college successfully:

> I knew that the only way that I would change - I needed a turning point - and I knew the only way was to get my ass kicked by the Marine Corps. Because I wasn't going to [change] by myself. I wasn't that motivated to do that.

For individuals looking to improve soft skills before attempting college, the military was viewed as good preparation. Among those who enlisted after some less-than-stellar college experience, the military was perceived as an intervention to create future success by providing soft skills needed for college and career success. Low academic self-efficacy is more common among first-generation college students than others (Darling and Scandlyn Smith 2007), and is indeed likely to lead to lower levels of college persistence among first-generation college students (Chen and Caroll 2005; Choy 2001; Horn & Nuñez, 2000). With less knowledge and information about the U.S., children of immigrants may feel especially unprepared for college and the workforce.

Rising to the Challenge

Apart from the perks of traveling and fulfilling patriotic ideals, many respondents also talked about their desire to prove themselves capable of meeting physical and mental demands required of enlistees. Gretchen, the daughter of Latin American immigrants, identifies the physical challenges of military participation as a strong motivator:

> It was the physical challenge. And I knew that I would get money for college so later on I can come back, but I just thought, "I'm gonna see if I can do this. Is this supposed to be so tough?" I was pretty fit and… I just thought, "This is what I want to do."

Because the post-1973 military is voluntary, selective, and limited in size, military service is a relatively unique experience among recent cohorts of young adults. This selectivity and uniqueness also drew respondents into service: Van, the son of Southeast Asian immigrants explains:

> I like the fact that it's a challenge that very few people go through…. and I thought, "Yeah, if I could do this, I can do almost anything." That's one of my motivating factors, too, for joining the military.

Even when respondents expressed low academic self-efficacy, little confidence in their grades, or ability to succeed academically without further training, they expressed strong motivation to show themselves, and probably others, that they could achieve with the right focus and training. In this way, enlisted children of immigrants may have been seeking an even playing field – although physical fitness is required of service members, there was no belief in some 'military fitness talent' as people might expect of good soccer players or other athletes. They perceived themselves as fit for the military institution but not fit for college institutions. Respondents viewed fitness and mental toughness in the military as goals to work toward--achievements enlisters would be trained to meet – and some would fail, but for the most part, sustained effort and hard work would pay-off in these areas. On the other hand, respondents felt that college would not teach them how to study or to succeed in class; they would have to learn those skills on their own. Given their high school performance, and for some, their pre-military college performance, respondents doubted their ability to learn those skills without explicit guidance.

Counting on Technical Skills

Although cited less frequently than earning college benefits or gaining soft skills, respondents desired to gain work experience and technical skills that could be transferred into the civilian world after completing military service. Many had already worked in low-level jobs during high school and experienced the low mobility afforded to those with high school degrees or less; the technical training offered by the military was considered a step toward upward mobility. Respondents actively thought about how military service could help them get ahead. At the top of Isaac's list of motivations for enlistment were work-related skills, which he projected would lead to a "good future":

> Learning work, getting skills for the job market, learning a trade, money for college, travel and leadership experience…. so I'd have a good future.

Another young enlistee named Elizabeth is the daughter of East-Asian immigrants. She was most drawn to "the appeal of being able to be technically-competent," skills she was not exposed to while attending community college.

When thinking about the jobs available to them based on the military test scores, which take into account scoring, military occupations and personnel needs, acquiring transferable skills was prominent in most respondent's minds, as was the case for Deepak, a child of immigrants from Southeast Asia:

> [Electrician's mate] sounded like a pretty good deal. It was something I could transfer to civilian life if I wanted.

But military enlisters often do not have a good sense of how valuable and necessary certain skills are in the civilian world, and they may find later that their military occupation is not as transferable as they first thought, as Ray, the son of Central American immigrants, points out:

> I decided that I wanted to join the Air Force for future possibilities of employment. I was just like, "If I go into the military, not only will I get experience, but I'll be able to serve my country and then when I get out, I'll be able to fix jets…..While I was in the military I realized that was a very limiting career aspiration actually.

Ray explained it was a limiting career because aviation mechanics is a relatively small field with few opportunities to advance. Actual transferability of military skills after discharge will be explored in Chapter 5.

Military enlisters, though motivated more by educational benefits and gaining soft skills, also described wanting to learn technical skill as important. Respondents viewed the skills and experience they could gain through military service as more suited for upward mobility than those learned in their previous jobs, or those they could obtain in the labor market with just a high school degree. In essence, they believed military advertisements and recruiters' marketing that these technical skills would be beneficial for their future. For individuals without parents who went to college, then, the military's focus on technical skills can be just as appealing as a college degree.

Socio-Economic, Family Background and Neighborhood Factors

Apart from desiring to attend college and gaining skills to improve employment prospects, non-economic factors also played roles in respondents' decisions to enlist. Important themes identified in discussions with respondents included family obligations, problems with peers in the neighborhood, and fulfilling personal goals (traveling) and personal ideals (service to country.) Other factors, such as obtaining U.S. citizenship among the 1.5 generation did not play strong roles in the decision to enlist.

Family Obligations

Family pressures add adult demands on children of immigrants, such as financially supporting parents, at younger ages compared to children of the U.S.-born (Fuligni and Witkow 2004). Often, enlisting in the military was framed as a way to alleviate an economic burden on parents once high school was over and respondents were 'adults'. Ray, the child of Central American immigrants explains:

> The idea literally went into my head about age 15. I knew college was kind of out of reach because my parents weren't well off, and I really didn't want to be

> another burden for them. So I decided kind of early that I wanted to join the military.

This sentiment often compelled respondents to leave home once they completed high school, leaving their adolescence behind, as Manuel, the son of Latin American and Caribbean parents explains:

> My dad beat us over the head with the story that he left at 17 and got on his own two feet and supported his mom and all this stuff. It really set a situation up to where I didn't feel the room to say, "Can I stay here while I study?" I really felt like the clock was ticking once I hit 17. I really need to get out of the house and start supporting the family.

Unlike many white, non-Latino children of the native born (Fuligni, Tseng and Lam 1999), Manuel felt a need to help support his family when he became an 'adult,' which for him was 17-years old.

Underlying these discussions about family obligations was a broader understanding of the sacrifices that parents made by immigrating to the U.S., which played a role in the duty respondents felt toward their parents. Marco, a child of Mexican immigrants, felt that knowing the sacrifices his parents made for their future – and his – by migrating made it important for him to take his own future seriously:

> I always knew that the sacrifice my parents had made to come here and why they had come. I mean, the feeling was always there.

Parental sacrifices and hardships motivated respondents to forge their own paths to get ahead and actively pursue positive futures and maintain or increase the well-being of their families. Bernard, the son of Central American parents, decided college was his best option to avoid the struggles his young widowed mother faced as an immigrant with little education, but he also thought the military would provide him training and funds for college that could improve his life beyond his mother's.

> She was 24 at the time with four kids and she didn't speak a lick of English. So that's the reason why we struggled during those years. And she can only work as a hotel, cleaning hotels and manual labor jobs. So she was really big on us going to school. But she focused on high school. She didn't know any better to say, 'College.'

Judy's parents worked long hours in demanding jobs in order to provide for the family, but they encouraged Judy to find other work:

> My parents had jobs that were very physically demanding, and they're like, I don't want you to go through that. You can get a job where you can sit at a desk or something or do paperwork, then do that. I think that message was very implicit. My dad would come home with body aches and my mom would come home with body aches.

Enlisters were aware of the sacrifices that their parents made to immigrate and the sacrifices they continued to make after arriving, such as working in physically demanding and exhausting jobs for low pay.

Problems in the Neighborhood

Most of the neighborhoods of respondents' childhoods were located in poor- and working- class neighborhoods with low performing public schools and few resources. During (and for some, after) high school, many of the male respondents remarked that they were surrounded by peers who also did not prioritize school and lacked discipline and motivation, and at times engaged in delinquent activities. Segmented assimilation theorists (Portes et al. 2005) warn that individuals in these environments are at high risk for downward mobility into low-skill, unstable jobs, and for some, entry into the penal system or early childbearing. Robert, the son of immigrants from Southeast Asia, reveals:

> I was at a point in my life after high school where I'm, just, you know, going from dead-end job to dead-end job and the people I'm hanging out with at the time weren't really stellar citizens... So a lot of them ended up going to jail or getting into a lot of trouble. I saw the military as a way to get myself out of the situation.

Robert saw military enlistment as a chance to physically remove himself from his friends and activities that were taking him down a negative path. Marco, the son of Mexican immigrants, discusses a similar experience:

> So in high school, I didn't care about anything, just cared about not wanting to get into fights, just doing enough of the bad things to where gang members would leave you alone… So they wouldn't think I was a punk. I'd do enough of the minor stuff so that I wouldn't have to do the really bad stuff, like drive-bys.

Manuel, the son of immigrants from South America and the Caribbean, highlights how the military is viewed as an escape route for youths and young adults from low-income and violent neighborhoods who do not perceive college as a possibility:

> I watched one of my best friends get shot on New Year's Eve. I watched most of my friends end up in a lot of shit… And like most people, you really want to get the hell out of that reality. So when college doesn't look like it's something you can do and there don't seem like many alternatives, the [military] recruiter solidifies that message.

Female respondents rarely brought up these issues, but for many male respondents, the military was often viewed as a chance to change the course of their futures – ones where negative peer pressures led to violence and downward mobility – to prospects that held promise and potential for success.

Lacking and Avoiding Ethnic Ties

Portes, et al. argue that for poorer, minority children of immigrants, when they live in bad neighborhoods, ethnic networks and social capital might be a way to avoid "negative" assimilation and deviant behavior such as getting caught up in gangs, dropping out of high school, etc. But in my interviews, few children of immigrants reported that they or their parents had strong ethnic ties. In this context, the military was an alternative "escape" strategy from less desirable neighborhoods, an alternative to social capital pathways.

Some respondents lived in ethnic-concentrated neighborhoods while some lived in predominantly white neighborhoods during periods of their lives. Steven, the son of Southeast Asian immigrants, describes himself as more 'white' than Asian when he attended a

predominantly white high school with few other Asian students. He did not describe being 'white' as problematic, nor did he feel out-of-place in a mostly white environment. He did not have trouble making friends in his predominantly white school. Instead, he found it 'weird' to be among a lot of Asian students when he later transferred to a predominantly Asian high school:

> So my elementary school —I didn't really have a lot of Asian friends. So I was kind of 'white-washed' - I was more white than Asian, because my middle school and elementary school didn't have that many Asian people. And then my high school was in [an area of predominantly Asian people]. That's when I first had my exposure to a lot of Asian people, and it was kind of weird.

Portes et al. warn that children of immigrants are at risk of downward mobility in poor, minority urban environments because of the negative influence of a sizable underclass in these neighborhoods that are characterized by low levels of education, low-paying and unstable jobs. Particularly among Latino respondents, neighborhoods full of mostly Hispanics with a few African-Americans or whites added into the mix were associated with low income, high crime and high gang activity. The respondents who describe the neighborhoods of their youth in that way were those respondents trying to avoid gangs and gang life. Many children of immigrants in these neighborhoods were drawn into downwardly mobile lifestyles. In this situation, Portes et al. argue that strong co-ethnic ties encourage school success and rejection of delinquent behaviors, protecting children of immigrants from these negative influences.

However, respondents generally lacked strong ties to their families' countries-of-origin, and did not participate in ethnic organizations or events. Very few of the respondents reported participation in ethnic-oriented organizations in high school or college, although a few were asked by their superiors to participate in events such as Hispanic Heritage Month during their military service tenure. Some reported that their ethnic ties were limited to soccer teams, sports events or a cultural pride that did not reflect an allegiance to their family country-of-origin. Edward states:

> I'm very proud to be an American and to be born in the United States, but at the same time, I root for the Mexican team to win in soccer or any other sports because my mom is a foreign-born national and I'm first generation here in the U.S.

In addition, several of the respondents noted difficulty in 'fitting in' with their ethnic communities, particularly if they were not fulfilling others' expectations of them. Judy was not doing well in high school, which disappointed her parents as well as her Southeast Asian community:

> I also grew up in a Southeast Asian church, so I think that's why that bad connection happened there, too, because I was kind of the black sheep at that time. I've never been that comfortable with just Southeast Asian-Americans.

Judy was not comfortable in the protective environment that Portes et. al. argue keeps disadvantaged minority children of immigrants from downward mobility. She did not focus on school and even failed a class, but she did not reject college. She wanted to become successful and chose the military as result of an active search to get ahead and succeed in college even though her school performance was poor. Though she partially

rejected protective co-ethnic ties, neither did she fully embrace a downwardly mobile lifestyle even though she chose not to focus on high school.

Families without Two Biological Parents

However, as Neftali, the daughter of a Mexican immigrant pointed out, family problems were not just reported by males. She moved in with her grandmother to attend college in the fall semester after high school:

> I grew up on a very small town and I wanted to get away, and have a big city experience and some adventure, so I moved in with my Grandma in [a big city], and I didn't like it. It's not a very nice area, not as fun and cool as I thought it would be. I didn't like living with her. She had her adult children living with her, and they were former drug addicts. So I decided that I wanted to get out of there - I didn't want to hurt her feelings, so I joined the military.

In order to escape her family situation, Neftali joined the military in October of 1990 – less than 2 months after starting college. The military served as an escape valve, and it allowed Neftali to experience the 'adventure' she sought. Deepak, the son of Southeast Asian immigrants, also discussed how a combination of family problems and mediocre grades led him to seriously consider military enlistment.

> My stepfather and I didn't really get along and I just knew that—and my grades weren't that great either, maybe like a 2.3 GPA at the time. So I just knew that I couldn't be there. I don't know - the military was probably the best choice for me.

Moving away from families is costly and requires finding a room or apartment and paying for it. Military enlistment, on the other hand, is free – and basic housing is provided. For young adults with few economic resources to strike out on their own, military service is an option that ensures that basic needs are met.

Fulfilling Personal Goals

As explained in the earlier section, military service motivations were primarily for economic and educational benefits. Nonetheless, a relatively few discussed personal goals, such as traveling and patriotism for enlisting, as well as physical and military challenges as reasons for joining. The following segment will explore the role such personal goals played in their decisions.

Although these factors were important to many enlisted service members, they were generally never discussed as sole reason for joining the military, suggesting that although these non-economic factors are important, the lack of structural and educational opportunities available to children of immigrants were equally strong determinants for military service. These findings are similar to research on enlistment motivations among the general young adult population, which show that patriotic and other non-economic motivations co-exist with financial motivations (Woodruff et al. 2006, Segal 1986).

Serving Country/Patriotism

A significant minority of the respondents were moved to enlist by a strong patriotic connection to the U.S. Much of the discussion of patriotism centered around 9/11 and the

conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq that occurred in its aftermath, reflecting the experiences of the young adult cohort that came of age during the few years before or after the initiation of those conflicts. Recent research links a spike of enlistment propensity in 2003, with the onset of the Iraq conflict (Armor and Gilroy 2010).

After enrolling in a local community college and not finding anything interesting, Steven, of the son of Southeast Asian immigrants, connected his interest in joining the military with the destruction of the World Trade Center towers and the attack on the Pentagon on 9/11:

> 9/11 happened about a year prior to me joining. So that was always on my mind, too, 'Something is cooking overseas'. So one day I was just like, 'I want to be part of it.'

Many other respondents joined and served just before or during the initiation of the Afghan and Iraq conflicts, echoing Steven's sentiment. Douglas, the son of South Asian/Western European immigrants joined in 2004, during the early period of the Afghan and Iraq conflicts. He explains a desire to be involved in the conflicts as his top motivator, even though he was born a citizen of a Western European nation and arrived to the U.S. at age six:

> I wanted to serve my country. We were at war. I wanted to do anything to help.

Many children of immigrants viewed military service as a patriotic duty – just as many children of U.S.-born parents do – and enlisted to fulfill this duty. They did not perceive their connections to countries-of-origin as a conflict of loyalty and were not deterred from enlisting because of these connections.

Travel

Arlene, a child of Filipino immigrants, wanted to experience the travel afforded to military enlisters:

> And then there were opportunities - the GI Bill and traveling. For me, I feel the plus of being in the military, was traveling. You get to see the world.

Atef, a child of Middle-Eastern immigrants who traveled back and forth from his country-of-origin relatively often, listed "deploying to a different country, traveling…" as attractive parts of military service.

Because of the financial constraints of most respondents' families, opportunities to travel to foreign countries were generally unavailable – although a few had traveled to their families' countries-of-origin. Travel-- transportation, lodging and other costs paid by the military-- was perceived as a 'perk' of the job.

Gaining Citizenship

All non-citizen enlistees are eligible for expedited citizenship. In periods unmarked by official conflicts, the wait-period for naturalization eligibility decreases to three years, down from five years for non-military legal permanent residents. Since the 2002 Executive Order regarding the post-9/11 hostilities was signed, the waiting period has been further reduced to one day of honorable service, though many non-citizens are only vaguely aware of expedited citizenship; most are unaware of the one day rule (McIntosh and Sayala 2011).

One might think that non-citizen children of immigrants may be driven to serve in the U.S. military to gain U.S. citizenship, but this theme did not materialize in conversations with respondents. U.S. born children possess citizenship by birth, and most of the respondents who

immigrated as youth were naturalized during childhood or some time before their military service. Only a handful did not naturalize by age 18, and of those, not everyone was aware of their non-citizen status when they attempted to enlist. For example, Rolando, an immigrant from South America, was unaware that he was a legal permanent resident, not a citizen, until he had already made the decision to enlist and fill out the subsequent paperwork required. He was brought to the U.S. before he was one year old:

> I always felt like a U.S. citizen. I was surprised and disappointed when I found out I wasn't a citizen. I didn't know that. So when I finally got my citizenship, I was like, 'Ok, fine. I finally got a piece of paper that proves it.'

Like Rolando, most respondents who enlisted saw themselves more socially and culturally connected to the U.S. than to their country-of-birth; a few others saw themselves as socially connected to the U.S. as with their parent's country-of-origin and none commented that they felt much more attachment to their parents' country of origin than to the U.S. The one other veteran who did not obtain his citizenship by the time he joined the military has yet to naturalize, years after the early expedited military path to citizenship was made available to him.

However, the findings of this study regarding citizenship acquisition should be considered speculative because it is difficult to draw firm conclusions from the small number of non-citizen respondents.

Contemplating the Dangerous Side of Service: War, Combat, Injury, Death, and Killing

Throughout this chapter, the study focused on enlisters' perceived positive aspects of military enlistment and gains they would receive from their participation. But what about the downsides of service – the dangers of war, combat, injury, death and killing? Respondents reacted to these possibilities in two main ways: most respondents calculated their risks of dying to be low or did not think deeply about possible mortality while a smaller group intentionally chose to enlist to take part in a conflict that they supported ideologically.

As previously discussed, military propensity and enlistment is determined by a variety of selective factors that influence individual interest in military service. Almost half of all youth identify the 'threat to life' or 'risk of injury/death' (Wilson et al. 2000; Corvalho et al. 2011) as a reason not to join the military. It is likely, then, that individuals who are most concerned about the 'threat to life' do not enlist in the military, leaving those who are less concerned about death or injury to enlist.

Many Young Adult Enlisters Believed their Risk of Dying was Low or No Greater Risk than Everyday Life

Children of immigrant enlisters, most of who were in their late teens or early twenties during enlistment, often did not consider their own mortality very strongly, as Isaac, the son of South American immigrants demonstrates:

> R: So I told my older brother that I was going to Korea he said, 'That's a war zone. You don't want to go there.' And he said they killed a soldier, they killed him with an axe or something, like the North Koreans. And that was really sad.
>
> I: Did that make you pause and think?
>
> R: No, I didn't care…I wasn't worried, you know?

Apart from just brushing thoughts of death away, like Isaac, others thought about their risks in a more calculated manner. Rolando, the son of South American immigrants, enlisted during the Gulf War in the early 1990s and was aware that he may be deployed to the conflict zone. He felt his risk was very low because he chose a non-combat military occupation:

> I didn't go into a combat job, so I thought my chances of actually getting shot at were actually kind of small.

He acknowledged the dangers of military service – revealing that he chose a non-combat position to appease his mother who was very concerned about the danger– but this did not deter him from enlisting.

Ann Deborah, a child of Caribbean immigrants who enlisted in the 1990s as well, had a houseful of concerned relatives. At the time, she and her extended family were living in a lower-income neighborhood where many young men were selling drugs, unemployed or involved in gangs. She viewed life as full of risks which one cannot control. She did perceive her life at much greater risk by serving in the military than by staying in the neighborhood:

> My mom was skeptical, my sisters and my brothers, they were all concerned. I mean, no one wants their family to be in a place where they can be shipped off somewhere and they're not sure what they're doing or if they're safe. So they were always concerned about my safety and what can happen. But they did understand that regardless or not if I was in the military, anything can happen…

But later AnnDeborah contradicted herself when she acknowledged the riskiness of the military lifestyle, revealing that the riskiness itself attracted her to the profession.

> R: I think I'm a little bit more risky than they [family members] are.
> I: Oh really?
> R: Yes. They like to play it safe. I don't know, stuff like the military and police force and those type of careers and jobs have always intrigued me.

Young adults, though aware of the potential hazards of military service, decided that the positive aspects of joining the service outweighed the risk of death.

Some Young Adult Enlistees were Supportive of the War on Terror/Aftermath of 9/11 and Wanted to See Combat, Knowing the Risks

As we saw in an earlier section, a theme arose among those who enlisted in the first few years after 9/11: they intentionally enlisted to be a part of the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, desiring deployment during a dangerous time. Dominic, the son of a European immigrant requested a combat occupation, even though his test scores were high enough to choose many other occupations, and he really wanted to be deployed to the conflict:

> But I would feel like my efforts are best suited in combat arms. That's my mentality. That's – it's – I want to see how far I can push my body and how far I can push the envelope…looking back on it now, it's not glory, but that's where you see who you are. And that's where the best men serve….I asked my recruiter, 'Where can I go to get deployed. I want to get deployed immediately.'

Steven explained that he joined after 9/11 because "something was cooking overseas and I wanted to be a part of it." He went on to explain that he asked to either be put into a military

occupation that had to do with computers – which he had civilian training in – or to the infantry, he didn't want anything else. His chose an infantry occupation purposefully, knowing that infantry is where the action is. His parents were not happy with his decision:

> My dad and my mom had experience with the war back in [a Southeast Asian country], and so I guess they just this bad conception of war. If you just join the military you're going to die or something. So they were worried, but I told them, 'This is what I want to do. I feel that this is a good life experience I need to experience.' And they were okay with it.

Note that Steven remarks that his parents had a 'bad conception of war' – one where everyone dies. Steven did not view war in this way; instead, he viewed his time in the military – which he perceived would include combat and war experience – as a 'good life experience.'
For these enlisters, taking part in the conflict and intentionally serving in the infantry proved their worth as individuals; military service fulfilled personal goals and patriotic ideals that welcomed the risk of death.

Many Young Adults were Concerned with Killing Others but Failed to Mention their Own Mortality

Although concerns about respondents' own mortality was brushed off or welcomed, some respondents discussed concerns about killing other people. Manuel was excited about the U.S. Navy's program with NASA because he assumed that taking part in a non-combat-specific military occupation buffers an individual from combat:

> I was telling everybody, 'You can join the Navy and work for NASA. You don't have to kill nobody. You get to go explore space.'

Gina never mentioned concerns about the risks of military service toward herself or her own life, but she discussed how she "…wasn't interested in going out into the field and going to kill people."

Although enlisters generally brushed off worries about death and many of the Afghan/Iraq War veterans supported the conflicts when they enlisted, some changed their minds. This will be further discussed in Chapter 5.

On the Verge: Enlistment during Peace-time, Duty during War

Several respondents signed up for military service during periods of peace and did not really expect a war to break out during their service stint. Several respondents signed up during the peaceful period before 9/11 and found themselves on active-duty after the initiation of the Afghanistan and Iraq conflicts had complicated feelings about it, as Van, who eventually deployed to Iraq twice explains:

> Obviously I was with the mindset of peacetime military. And then after 9/11, I was like, 'Oh, shit. Looks like things are gonna happen.' I was worried but then I was also excited at the same time to see combat. I thought this would be an experience that very few people would see and even talk about it, pretty legitimately. And it was.

Deepak, the son of Southeast Asian immigrants too, had to come to terms with the onset of a conflict; he graduated from boot camp on 9/11:

R: It was a pretty scary day. But we were in the process of processing out of boot camp and our recruit division commander or drill sergeant for other branches, he took us straight back to the barracks and turned on the TV and we just sat there for most of the day and watched everything unfold.
I: Do you remember any of the conversations that were occurring around you or anything that you were thinking about?
R: I don't remember. Just everybody was in shock that day. And it was just, yes, I just felt like, 'Wow.' In a way, I guess I was sort of relieved that I chose the [specific branch] out of all branches.

Deepak explained that his military branch was known to be 'safer' than others during conflicts because it was generally not directly involved in combat. He was deployed to the Iraq conflict zone, however, during his military tenure. Respondents who found themselves in this situation generally resigned themselves to their fate, explaining that they were aware of the possibility to be involved in a conflict when they initially joined.

Do Young Adult Enlisters have Realistic Outlooks on their Chances of Mortality? What is the Risk of Mortality among Service Members?

During peace time, military enlisters are essentially right: mortality risks are low for service members, in part because enlisters are healthier on average than similar aged youth. However, what about the risks during periods of active conflicts? This depends on whether individuals are deployed in a combat zone. For example, during the first five-to-seven years of the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq (2001-2007), researchers report that the total risk of dying from all causes - combat, non-combat, and disease - when deployed to one or both areas ranged from 4.0 to 4.2 per 1,000 (Buzzell and Preston 2007; Curtis and Payne 2010; Goldberg 2010), much higher than the 1.3 per 1,000 standardized death rates for the U.S. population aged 20 to 34 in 2003. On the other hand, these risks only pertain to the service members deployed in conflict areas and represent the highest possible risk to military enlisters.

The risk of mortality across all service members is lower; hundreds of thousands of troops are deployed in the U.S. and throughout the world each year, in many areas that do not contain conflicts or risky missions. Between 1990 and 2011, for example, the death rate per 1000 person-years of service among active-duty service members under the age of 20 was 0.79; for those 20 to 24 was 0.92; and for those 25 to 29 was 0.71 (Medical Surveillance Monthly Report 2012) – all much lower than the 1.3 per thousand rate for individuals 20 to 34 stated earlier. The lower death rate can be attributed to the physical and health requirements for active-duty service.

Admittedly, the rates rose significantly with the onset of the military combat and peaked near 1.25 across all ages in 2007, and individuals in combat occupations had a death rate of 129 per 100,000 person-years of service, reflecting the higher risk involved in these occupations (Medical Surveillance Monthly Report 2012). Involvement in a conflict significantly increases the likelihood of death and injury, but many service members are never deployed into conflict zones.

Section Conclusion

The risk of dying, killing, and engaging in combat were not big deterrents among children of immigrants who enlisted. Enlisters had two distinct responses to these threats: many calculated their risk of mortality to be low while others intentionally joined to take part of a

conflict accepting, and even welcoming, the risk of mortality. Enlisters perceived the benefits of service to outweigh the risks. Although not interviewed in this study, individuals with great concerns about dying during military service and those who did not want to take part in a conflict are likely to have had much lower tendencies to actually enlist in the military at all.

Conclusion:

The motivations behind military enlistment outlined by children of immigrants are clearly part of respondent's active strategies to avoid downward mobility and to position themselves firmly on a path toward upward mobility. Children of immigrants who enlist seek skills, resources and from the military institution that will allow them to enter middle-class occupations and primary labor market occupations. When weighing their options prior to enlistment, they predict bleak, unsuccessful futures that are headed "nowhere" unless they are able to change their trajectories by becoming disciplined, gaining skills, and completing a college education.

Their fears were not without merit. Evidence demonstrates that lower high school GPA is generally associated with poorer outcomes among children of immigrants, including lower educational attainment (Rumbaut 2005) and higher levels of incarceration and arrests (Haller et al. 2011), disadvantages that lead to further setbacks. Clearly, obtaining these skills and educational benefits through military participation were part of respondents' specific strategies to avoid the downward experiences facing their peers, as Edward, the son of Latin American immigrants, explains. His high school and old neighborhood friends were performing poorly in the labor market:

> Some of the people I was hanging out with were doing other things or they ended up having – they weren't doing very much. They had dead end jobs, a couple of them even dropped out of high school.

Respondents realized during high school or during a failed attempt at community college that unless they made specific plans to excel, they would remain stuck on a path to nowhere. Jessica, who began attending community college after high school, quickly found it difficult to work and pay bills for herself and her parents, leading her to eventually drop out.

> I was like, 'Wow, I'm living this life where, I'm contributing to the family, but I'm going nowhere, just sitting there.' And if this is going to be my life for the next five, 10 years, I'm going to be really, really going to be sad.'

Respondents perceived the military as an institutional pathway to upward mobility, one that provides opportunities and experiences to prosper in ways that community colleges and lower-level, mostly service industry, jobs could not provide.

The majority of participating veterans and service members held mainstream aspirations of completing college in order to acquire stable employment and careers their parents generally did not, and could not, attain. However, their lackluster high school achievements and lack of parental resources – such as the inability of most parents to transmit tools to help respondents navigate and succeed in college and the mainstream middle class job market - pushed respondents to consider the military to provide opportunities for success. They viewed the military as a vehicle to provide short-term benefits, such as job stability, as well as long-term benefits, such as money for college. As a result, such benefits immediately, although temporarily, lifted them into the middle class and taught them skills sought by middle-skill employers, such as punctuality, attention to detail, and task completion.

Despite the popularity of research outlining the U.S. as an hourglass labor market, the U.S. economy is largely composed of middle-skill jobs requiring more than a high school degree but less than a bachelor's degree – occupations in clerical, sales, construction, installation/repair, production and transportation/material moving industries (The Urban Institute 2007). These occupations composed approximately 50% of all employment between 1986 and 2006 (The Urban Institute 2007), falling only 7 percentage points, from 55% to 48% during that period. Sheer numbers of jobs in these categories rose, however, as the population of employed workers grew during this time. Real wage gains occurred for many middle-skill jobs while they fell for many low-skill jobs requiring no post-secondary education or training (The Urban Institute 2007). The technical training promoted by the military translates to training and skills required for many middle-skill occupations in the civilian labor force. Children of immigrants who enlist and seek out specialized mechanic or electrician skill sets, for example, are making rational choices to move up from their parents' largely lower-skill occupations and aspire to work in occupations that offer higher salaries and better conditions than those available to people with only high school degrees. More than two thirds of the jobs with highest growth in 2010-- and projected growth by 2020-- are in middle-skill categories (Lockard and Wolf 2012). Therefore, military enlistment to gain skills in middle-skill occupations is a rational option for children of immigrants who may not otherwise have access to these occupations, which are on average more upwardly mobile and secure than lower-skill jobs held by many parents.

While respondents generally expressed low academic self-efficacy, poor study habits, or lack of motivation to perform well academically, none of them believed they had poor intellectual abilities. Some may have felt 'unintelligent' in certain subjects, but this drawback was not viewed as an indicator of a general lack of intellectual ability. All of the respondents blamed low or average academic performance on low motivation and lack of effort. This finding is not surprising, given that military eligibility criteria generally includes a high school degree and a minimum score on the Armed Forces Qualifying Test (AFQT), which would cull out individuals with very low abilities. Some recent research suggests that the military attracts individuals from the lower middle, but not bottom, level of ability (Elder et al. 2010; Kleykamp 2006).

It is important to point out that the pictures painted by respondents about the expectations associated with the benefits of military service are mostly positive ones. Respondents were attracted to the promise of better skills, better education, and ultimately better lives that were offered by the military. However, non-enlisters, a group not interviewed as part of this research, likely viewed the military in a different light, and likely held such lower expectations from military service. These lower expectations or more negative views may have inhibited non-enlisters from joining the military. In addition, although respondents expressed high levels of positivity and hope about military service, this chapter focuses on motivations and does not explore mobility-related outcomes of children of immigrants with military experience, many of whom may not have achieved outcomes corresponding to their expectations, as we will see in Chapters 4 and 5. Respondents come from a convenience sample, limiting the generalizability of the findings presented here. Nevertheless, this research provides insight into motivations behind military enlistment among the children of immigrants in the U.S.

CHAPTER 4
Does Military Service Impact Outcomes?
Comparing Educational and Labor Market Outcomes of Young Adult Veterans versus Non-veterans Using Nationally Representative Data

Previous Research

As we saw in Chapters 2 and 3, veteran children of immigrants actively and consciously enlist in the military as a strategy for upward mobility. But how does the U.S. military, a large institution with centralized governance and rules, influence the outcomes of children of immigrants who serve? Does military service provide children of immigrants with tools to succeed in educational institutions and the civilian labor market? Or is military service disruptive to labor market outcomes, leading veterans to worse labor market outcomes than otherwise similar non-veterans?

Little research has broached the subject of immigrants and children of immigrants serving in the U.S. military, and when they do, they focus on predictors of enlistment and do not examine post-service socio-economic outcomes (for example, see Lutz 2008, Kleykamp 2006). However, common interest in the intersection between race and class among military and immigration scholars allows theories from military sociology to provide a useful framework in predicting socio-economic outcomes that children of immigrants might experience from military service.

Current and historical debates explain differences between the socio-economic outcomes of veterans and non-veterans in two ways. The first view explains military service as a positive or negative turning point in the lives of individuals (Browning, Lopreato and Poston 1973; Sampson and Laub 1996; MacLean 2005; Elder 1986; MacLean 2010). The second view counters that military service only temporarily influences socio-economic outcomes, reproducing or continuing pre-service advantage or disadvantage among veterans rather than serving as a vehicle for mobility (Levy 1998; Elder et al. 2010).

Among turning point theorists, two perspectives dominate the debate. Those advocating military service as a positive turning point argue that disadvantaged military participants attain upward social mobility by acquiring human and cultural capital during service (Browning, Lopreato and Poston 1973; Elder 1986; Goldberg and Warner 1987), which encompass both hard skills such as job training and soft skills such as discipline. In addition, disadvantaged contexts are replaced by the military context which stresses task completion and orderliness; these expectations coupled with job training bestow advantages in the civilian labor market particularly for minority veterans over non-military peers. Military enlistment may also serve as a positive 'signal' of productivity to prospective employers (DeTray 1982; Kleykamp 2009; Berger and Hirsch 1983), potentially leading to higher levels of employment and earnings.

On the other hand, military service may serve as a negative turning point in the lives of those who serve. Military service can disrupt or delay college and work careers that may prove difficult to resume once military service is over (Elder 1986; MacLean 2005; Dechter and Elder 2004). In addition, military service carries inherent risks. Not only do service members face risks such as training-related accidents, military service members have chances of deployment into dangerous combat zones which carry risks of being wounded, dying, killing, and seeing fellow service members killed or injured. In turn, combat experiences are associated with worse physical and mental health problems among veterans (Elder et al. 1994) such as post-traumatic

stress disorder (PTSD) and service-related disability (MacLean 2010), and a higher risk of suicide among veterans and service members (Fontana and Rosenheck 1995). Combat veterans also face greater levels of unemployment compared to non-combat veterans (MacLean 2010) and worse labor market outcomes (Angrist 1990). Combat and disruption from civilian labor market participation often has long-lasting negative repercussions on veterans that non-veterans do not experience.

Proponents of social reproduction or cumulative disadvantage theories take another perspective. They argue that military service fails to transform individuals. Instead it reproduces pre-service socio-economic status (Levy 1998), failing to remove or reduce existing pre-service disadvantages (Elder et al. 2010; Kleykamp 2006). Individuals are trained for military occupations and success within the military structure, and if training is not viewed as favorably as civilian work experience or college degrees, veterans experience a disadvantage in the labor force (Mangum and Ball 1987). According to these theorists, self-selection of socio-demographically disadvantaged individuals into military service plays crucial roles in shaping the outcomes of military veterans rather than, or in addition to, other factors.

Research Questions

The research reviewed here presents contradictory expectations about the impact of military service on children of immigrants. First, military service may benefit children of immigrants above non-veteran peers by providing a 'signal' to potential employers or by conferring training or self-efficacy that is beneficial in the civilian labor market. Second, veterans may be disadvantaged by their military service because of the disruption of civilian labor market experience. Military service may interrupt or interfere with college, but veterans often have access to educational benefits that encourage college enrollment and completion. In turn, delaying college attendance to the period of life in which many other life events occur, including marriage and children, may suppress potential educational advantage of military service. Third, findings from Chapter 2 demonstrate that individuals who enlist in the military possess background characteristics that are distinct from individuals who do not enlist. In other words, military enlistment is not a random process. Controlling for these factors may mediate the impact of veteran status and military service on actual educational and labor market outcomes and ensures that the veteran status measure captures the effects of military service on outcomes rather than the effects of self-selective factors related to enlistment on outcomes. Fourth, regardless of the impact of veteran status, combat exposure is associated with negative outcomes. These issues are presented as formal null hypotheses to be tested in this chapter:

Educational Attainment and Plans among Children of Immigrants

- Military participation is unrelated to educational attainment.
- Military participation is unrelated to post-secondary enrollment.
- Military participation is unrelated to self-reported perceptions of educational achievement.

Potential Modifying Mechanisms behind Educational Attainment and Plans

- Characteristics that predict military enlistment (self-selective factors) have no impact on the relationship between military participation and subsequent educational and labor market outcomes.
- Combat exposure has no impact on the relationship between military participation and educational outcomes.

Labor Market Outcomes among Children of Immigrants

- Military participation is unrelated to post-military unemployment.
- Military participation is unrelated to post-military earnings.
- Military participation is unrelated to post-military employment sector
- Potential modifying mechanisms behind labor market outcomes among children of immigrants, such as self-selective factors, are not explored in this analysis because they are unavailable in the Current Population Surveys.

This chapter reveals that children of immigrants enlist in the military with high hopes for post-military educational and career success, but they often fail to achieve their original goals. Instead, young adult veteran children of immigrants fail to obtain bachelor's degrees and by the ages of 24 to 32, their post-secondary enrollment rates are too low to position them to catch up educationally to non-veterans.

On the other hand, results demonstrate that labor market out comes of children of immigrants are not impacted much by military service; veteran and on-veteran children of immigrants have similar odds of unemployment, similar earnings, and similar odds of self-employment. The only labor market experience that seems to vary between the groups is a higher likelihood for veterans to work in the government sector. These findings suggest that military service bestows neither gains nor losses to civilian employment among young adult children of immigrants.

Data and Methods

The hypotheses outlined above are tested on data from two surveys. Educational questions are analyzed using the ADD Health data set used in earlier chapters. The labor market questions are analyzed using the Current Population Survey March supplements 2007 and 2009; each are describe more in depth within their respective sub-sections below. The quantitative and qualitative data from Chapters 2 and 3 focuses on young adults aged 24-32, and I continue to focus on this age cohort in the analyses in this chapter. Because individuals are still in young adulthood, lifetime trajectories and outcomes have yet to be established, leaving long-term effects of military service among young adults of this cohort an open question. Short-term educational and labor market effects are tested in this chapter.

ADD Health Data and Analysis

Education-related outcomes are analyzed using ADD Health data. These outcomes include current post-secondary enrollment current educational attainment, and attitudes toward education achieved to date. A description of the ADD Health data can be found in Chapter 2. See Tables 5 and 6 for descriptive statistics of educational outcomes and perceptions.

Current Population Survey Data & Analyses

I turn to the CPS to analyze labor market outcomes for two distinct reasons: first, the CPS are large, nationally representative datasets that contain much larger samples of children of immigrants with military experience than ADD Health, providing greater statistical power to detect the impact of veteran status on labor market outcomes among children of immigrants. I originally turned to the ADD Health data to uncover associations between background characteristics and military enlistment among children of immigrants because it is the longitudinal dataset measuring childhood background factors with the largest number of children of immigrants with military experience.

However, although ADD Health captures data on educational timing and attainment, ADD Health measures of labor market outcomes, particularly employment status and subsequent measure of earnings, are not as precise. Questions about labor market experience are often only applied to respondents who were working for 10 hours or more per week for at least 9 weeks at the time of the survey; those employed less than 10 hours per week were not subsequently asked many follow-up questions. Questions about employment and unemployment do not follow the precise measurements and definitions used by the CPS; rather, respondents are asked to self-identify, among other things, as unemployed. This is problematic because individual definitions of being unemployed may be different while the CPS measures of employment are standardized based on a series of questions inquiring about work during the reference week and measures of unemployment are standardized on questions inquiring about searching for work in the past 4 weeks. Additionally, earnings questions in ADD Health are less standardized as well, asking one single question about all income sources, rather than inquiring about specific sources separately to ensure that all respondents include the same types of income within their responses.

The Current Population Survey collects information on approximately 60,000 households each month to understand characteristics about the U.S. national population, including employment and labor market experiences, population size and demographic composition. This empirical research uses data from the March supplements in 2005, 2007 and 2009 to measure employment and earnings; this timeframe roughly corresponding to the latest available wave of the ADD Health data (2007-2008) and is pooled to create a larger sample size than is available in one cross-sectional survey year. The Current Population Survey serves as the primary source of data measuring labor force participation in the U.S. See Table 7 in the Appendix for CPS descriptive statistics on the labor market variables. 9,840 of the sample individuals were children of immigrants between the ages of 24 to 32 in the CPS pooled data from 2005, 2007, 2009, including 231 veterans and 9,609 non-veterans. Although current military service members are included in the sample, technical documentation of the Current Population Survey notes that they are not representative of all service members and were thus excluded from these analyses.

Data from ADD Health measure college enrollment, bachelor's degree attainment, and attitudes toward educational attainment. College enrollment questions in the March CPS supplements are not utilized because these questions are restricted to individuals between the ages of 18 and 24, ignoring enrollment among the population of interest in this chapter, those aged 24-32.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND ATTITUDES

Veterans and Current Service Members Are Less Likely to Achieve Bachelor's Degrees than Non-veterans by Ages 24-32

Research Question: Military participation is unrelated to educational attainment.

Table 8 in the Appendix presents results of the multivariate regressions predicting educational outcomes from Wave 4 of ADD Health. Results reveal relationships between military service and outcomes that depend on current military or veteran status as well as childhood background factors.

Model 1 in Table 8 shows that among children of immigrants, both current service members and veterans have much lower odds of attaining a bachelor's degree by ages 24-32 than

non-veterans. Females, Blacks and higher high school vocabulary test scores are associated with greater odds of bachelor degree attainment while Latino ethnicity is associated with lower odds.

The story changes slightly in model 2, when background factors sharpen, dampen or erase the influence of some factors. Odds of bachelor's degree attainment among current or past service members increases with the addition of these factors but members of these groups still have much lower odds of having a bachelor's degree than non-veterans. Females no longer have higher and Latinos no longer have lower odds of having a bachelor's degree in this model. Individuals not living in a household with two biological parents in adolescence are less likely to have bachelor's degrees. Individuals with at least one parent with a bachelor's degree, those with higher average high school grades, those attending a non-Catholic private school in high school and those living in the northeast or Midwest during youth had higher odds of bachelor's degree attainment. Metropolitan status in childhood, living in a household where a language other than English was present during childhood and parental income were not associated with higher or lower odds of bachelor degree attainment.

The final full model, model 3, separates veterans and current service members further into those with combat zone experiences and those without. The relationship between veteran status and educational attainment is drastically changed among combat veterans. Even though veterans with no combat experience still have much lower odds of bachelor's degree attainment than non-veterans, combat veterans do not display lower or higher odds of bachelor's degree attainment than non-veterans. In addition, although current service members are still more likely to have lower odds of achieving a bachelor's degree, those with combat experience have slightly higher odds of achieving the degree than currently serving non-combat veterans. Note: respondents who attained a bachelor's degree before enlisting in the military were removed from the sample, because their bachelor degree attainment would be unaffected by the 'treatment' of military service and not appropriate to include in this analysis.

Enrollment in Post-secondary School at Ages 24-32

Research Question: Military participation is unrelated to post-secondary enrollment.

In the section below, I examine current college enrollment, which encompasses post-secondary colleges, universities and vocational schools. This may include 2 or 4-year degree programs or other training programs; college type is not specified in the question or other available data. See Table 8 in the Appendix.

Despite Fewer Bachelor's Degrees, Veterans Are Not Enrolled in Post-Secondary Education at Higher Rates than Non-Veterans at Ages 24-32

Models 4 and 5 in Table 8 show that veterans do not display statistically significant different odds of current enrollment than non-veterans. Females had higher odds of enrollment in both models, while older and married individuals had lower odds of enrollment. Socio-demographic background factors did not predict higher or lower odds of enrollment in a post-secondary institution in Wave 4. Model 6, which separates veterans into groups with and without combat zone experience, gives us more insight into the relationship between current college enrollment and military participation, particularly the impact of combat zone experience. Results further demonstrate that veterans do not enroll at higher or lower rates than non-veterans. These results contrast with recent research that finds that post-9/11 veterans (with no controls for immigrant generation) are more likely to be enrolled in post-secondary education than non-veterans (Kleykamp 2013).

Poised to Catch Up? Current Service Members are More Likely to be Enrolled in Post-Secondary Education than Non-Veterans

In Table 8, model 4 shows that current military service members have more than 4 times greater odds than non-veterans of being enrolled in college or vocational school in Wave 4. The addition of childhood background variables in model 5 does very little to change this relationship; the odds of enrollment among current service members rises slightly. Model 6 gives us a more nuanced picture of the relationship between current service members and post-secondary enrollment: those lacking combat zone experience have greater odds of enrollment than those with combat experience.

All current service members, despite experience in a combat zone or not, were stationed in the United States during Wave 4 (current military service members stationed overseas were not interviewed), suggesting that both groups had equal access to post-secondary classes on base and over the internet. The lower odds of post-secondary enrollment among those deployed to combat zones suggest that combat zone exposure negatively impacts educational outcomes.

Current service members on average have fewer bachelor's degrees than non-veterans. At first glance, high rates of college enrollment at ages 24-32 seem to position current service members to 'catch up' to non-veterans. However, current service members are almost never enrolled full-time and on average take too few credits – less than 3 per year- to earn a 2-year degree during an average 4-year enlistment (Education Working Group, Servicemembers Opportunity College 2012), suggesting that few service members obtain bachelor's degrees during their time in service and on average only complete up to one semester's worth of credits – 12 hours- during their time in service.

Perceptions of Achieving Educational Plans

Fourth, I examine the educational-related desires expressed in the latest available wave to further understand the impact of military participation on educational outcomes. See Table 6 for descriptive outcomes. Here, I examine how respondents make sense of their current education and projected educational attainment, focusing on how educational trajectories may have been affected by military service. See Table 9 in the Appendix for descriptive statistics of the perceptions of educational attainment among children of immigrants.

Veterans Report More Disappointed Educational Plans than Non-veterans but Are Comparable to Non-veterans in their Confidence in Achieving Them

Model 1 in Table 9 shows that perceptions of achieving desired education varies with race/ethnicity, age, and notably, current and past military participation. Veterans have lower odds of believing that they achieved their desired level of education than non-veterans, but veterans are comparable to non-veterans in odds of believing that they have will not obtain the education they hope for.

Model 2 in Table 9 demonstrates that adding in background factors changes the story very little among veterans the magnitude and direction of the odds ratios are almost unchanged. Blacks and Latinos still have lower odds of believing they have achieved their desired education levels, but the size of both grow with the addition of background variables, bringing them slightly closer to an odds ratio of 1. The odds ratio for Asians loses significance with the addition of background factors.

Incorporating combat zone experience into model 3, drastically changes the relationship between veteran status and perceptions about educational achievement: when combat exposure is included, non-combat veterans continue to have lower odds of bachelor's degree attainment compared to non-veterans, while combat veterans have similar odds of bachelor's degree attainment. It is difficult to tell whether the coefficient for combat veterans becomes insignificant because combat veterans are actually as likely to achieve bachelor's degrees as non-veterans or because the small sample size dampens the power of the model to find a significant relationship where there is one. Regardless, this finding suggests that this finding should be explored more in future studies; perhaps combat veterans become much more motivated to complete bachelor's degrees than non-combat veterans. On the other hand, many combat veterans sustain physical injuries, including traumatic brain injuries, and emotional trauma that could suppress the abilities of combat veterans to complete bachelor's degrees, suggesting that the small sample size of combat veterans may be the reason behind the non-significant difference between combat veterans and non-veterans in bachelor's degree attainment.

Findings suggest three main takeaways: First, among children of immigrants, veterans are less likely to have achieved their desired levels of education than non-veterans. Second, combat exposure among veterans may modify the relationship between veteran status and bachelor's degree attainment. Third, while some background factors predict perceptions of educational achievement, controlling for them does not change the relationships between veteran status and educational perceptions.

Current Service Members Report More Disappointed Educational Plans than Non-veterans but Believe Their Goals Are Within Reach

Model 1 in Table 9 show current service members, like veterans are more likely to report that they have not achieved the education they desire. They are more hopeful and are more likely than non-veterans to report that they will achieve their desired even though they have not done so by Wave 4. Perhaps current service members, knowing that they have access to GI Bill educational benefits during and after military service, assume that they will be able to achieve their goals in the future.

Potential Mechanisms Underlying Educational Outcomes among Children of Immigrants

Despite the high college enrollment among current service members and veterans, why do veterans have lower odds of bachelor's degree attainment than non-veteran peers? Results demonstrate that self-selective factors, as measured by childhood background variables, had little impact on these outcomes. However, military participants may have fewer opportunities and greater barriers in the way of completing a bachelor's degree than non-veterans. Because of online and military-base related college programs, current service members may enroll in college and theoretically obtain a bachelor or other degree during their service tenure. Service members often access educational benefits during their active duty stint, which removed some financial barriers to enroll. Indeed, results show that current service members are much more likely to be enrolled in college during Wave 4 than non-veterans regardless of immigrant generation. However, military service itself may interrupt classes or course-taking among current service members. Current military service members work full-time and many hold occupations that require them to be 'on call' during non-scheduled hours – potential barriers to enrolling and completing college courses. Perhaps current service members who enroll generally can only fit in a few units each semester – stretching out the time necessary to complete a degree to many years,

even if this group has high enrollment rates. Current service members may also be less motivated to complete a bachelor's degree even if they have time do to so; they may assume that they will use their educational benefits after military discharge. Time constraints and potential interruptions or barriers due to frequent national and international deployments likely limit the ability of current service members to finish degrees.

Veterans may face different realities than current service members that also inhibit their odds of achieving bachelor's degrees compared to non-veterans. Not only do they have lower probabilities of having completed a bachelor's degree than non-veterans peers of the same immigrant generation, veterans fail to display higher probabilities of post-secondary enrollment in Wave 4 than non-veterans, leaving them unlikely to ever be able to catch up. What different realities do veterans face? Veterans face the transition back into to civilian labor market. This requires them to find jobs to financially support themselves and for many, new families that includes spouses and children. Many veterans, particularly young veterans, may move back in with or very near to their parents after discharge, while they transition to civilian life and work. Moving, searching for jobs and actual employment may interfere with college going. Many of those who accrued college credits during military service may have to shop around among colleges to find ones who will accept their college credits. Some veterans will have to re-take courses that could not be transferred, costing time and money.

Veteran children of immigrants may face other unique challenges. They may have greater family obligations or cultural expectations to work rather than attend school during their young adulthood, suppressing their ability to enroll in and complete college classes after military service is over. Veteran children of immigrants, having taken on adult roles as independent earners, may be expected to continue this role even if they move back home as part of the transition from military to civilian life. Attending college to complete bachelor's degrees may be discouraged because it can limit full-time employment and earnings that could otherwise be shared among the household. However, findings here show that some adult family obligations that were not present during adolescence, such as marriage, do not impact college enrollment among this group of young adults. Though theoretically veterans often seem to have an easy path toward bachelor's degree completion – educational benefits from military service and likely some college credit completed during their service tenure – the road from 'some college completed' to a bachelor's degree is not straightforward or easy.

In addition to financial or family barriers that may exist, understanding and using military educational benefits can also be difficult and confusing, which can discourage many from enrolling (Strickley 2009) or cause financial strain. Military bases generally have educational centers that are knowledgeable about, and connected to colleges in the area or online programs that cater to veterans, such as the University of Maryland. However, veterans often do not have these resources, and administrators at many colleges also fail to understand military benefits programs, particularly when those programs change, which can cause confusion and frustration among veterans trying to enroll and use their educational benefits (ACE 2012). The schools where recent post-9/11 veterans and current service members are enrolled often faced underpayments or overpayments by the Veterans' administration (ACE 2012) and backlogs that can cause delays and problems with enrollment and living expenses. These delays may cause students to go into debt for a short period, scramble to find jobs to cover expenses, live on savings, turn to family members for help, or leave school for short or long periods – all of which can further inhibit bachelor's degree attainment.

Veterans and current service members enrolled in post-secondary programs may be less likely to be enrolled in bachelor's degree-awarding programs than other groups, reducing the probabilities of achieving bachelor's degree. For example, student veterans are highly concentrated in community colleges (Radford 2009) and 2-year programs (Steele et al. 2010), which often do not lead to four-year degrees. As discussed in Chapter 3, the transfer rate out of community colleges is very low. Student veterans are also selecting for-profit colleges at high rates (Field et al 2008), but the aggressive tactics and potentially sub-par education of many of these schools concerns the American Council on Education, the president and congress (ACE 2012).

Work-related attitudes may also impact college-going and bachelor's degree completion among veteran children of immigrants. After a period of economic independence afforded by the military, young adults may not be eager to forego earnings in favor of education, even among those whose educational credits cover tuition and a small living stipend. Veterans who find stable jobs that satisfy them may also feel little need to complete college degrees, particularly because of the time commitment involved in doing so. If they are happy in their post-military jobs, there may be little incentive to attain bachelor's degrees. Such themes will be explored more in Chapter 5.

LABOR MARKET EXPERIENCES

Few direct labor market benefits are associated with military service among children of immigrants between the ages of 24 and 32. Veteran children of immigrants do not show divergent employment status or earnings outcomes compared to non-veteran children of immigrants, but veterans are more likely to be employed in the government sector than non-veterans. See Table 7 in the Appendix for descriptive statistics on these outcomes.

Veterans and Non-Veterans Display Similar Odds of Unemployment among Children of Immigrants

Research Question: Military participation is unrelated to unemployment after military separation.

One might imagine that military service might give children of immigrants an advantage over other candidates looking for jobs. Statistics on the general population reports that veterans under the age of 40 who served in the post-9/11 conflicts have greater levels of unemployment than non-veterans (Kleykamp 2012). However, among children of immigrants, no gap between the two groups exists, and descriptive statistics demonstrate that among children of immigrants, 5.9% of non-veterans versus 6.4% of veterans aged 24 to 32 are unemployed.

Perhaps the sub-population of young adult veteran children of immigrants is able to transfer their military occupational skills better into the civilian labor market than the greater veteran population. Evidence shows that African-American veterans benefit in the civilian labor force because of their high concentrations in administrative and support military occupations and the transferability of the clerical, organizational and materials management skills required in those positions (Kleykamp 2012). Perhaps veteran children of immigrants are also concentrated in administrative positions or other occupational categories that are highly transferable to the civilian workplace.

Additional explanations may also exist. Recent research speculates that veteran status among Hispanics may signal legal status or English language ability which may in turn make Hispanic veterans preferable to non-veterans among employers (Kleykamp 2009). Children of immigrants, largely composed of Hispanic and Asian-origin backgrounds, may similarly benefit from veteran status as a 'signal' of English language ability and legal status.

Among children of immigrants aged 24 to 32, military service does not positively or negatively impact odds of unemployment.

Veterans are More Likely to be Employed in the Government Sector than Non-Veterans

Research Question: Military participation is unrelated to sector of employment after military separation.

Results in Table 10, model 2 in the Appendix show that veteran children of immigrants have almost two times greater odds of employment in the government sector than non-veteran children of immigrants. Military job training, experience and veteran status may provide greater access to government jobs. Veterans Preference policies, veteran-related programs or veteran social contacts may also aid in the acquisition of government employment

Veterans qualify for veterans' preference policies when applying to many federal, state and local government positions. Veterans' preference gives preferences for hiring appointment to eligible veterans. Veterans must have been honorably discharged, and veterans with a service-related discharge are given higher preference than other veterans. These policies explicitly treat veteran status as positive human capital. In addition, years of service in the military accrue into federal retirement plans, making this an attractive feature of working for the federal government.

Veterans' preference is not guaranteed by law for non-federal government positions, but it is often offered by local and state governments, such as local police departments. Again, military service acts as human and social capital – demonstrating to government agencies that the applicant can function in a structured environment and possesses knowledge of government bureaucracy and administration from their years of experience with military bureaucracy. Veterans also accrue social capital from their service; veterans may have access to veteran job networks that permeate federal work due to the higher saturation of veterans in the public sector (Gyourko and Tracy 1988).

Other military-related programs may also explain some of this trend. Since the early 1990s, veterans have also been required to attend Transition Assistance Program (TAP) trainings that include workshops on resume-building, finding and applying for federal government jobs, and accessing veterans' educational and health benefits.

Is working the government sector a good thing? Federal sector occupations may provide safer working conditions, more stable employment and better health and retirement plans than jobs taken by non-veterans. Less harsh working conditions may save long-run health care costs and improve over-all quality of life. Veterans may value these benefits as much as, or more than, earnings when they assess post-service job options. Greater odds of working in the public sector can be viewed as a positive benefit of veteran status or military service.

Veterans and Non-Veterans Earn Similar Wages

Research Question: Military participation is unrelated to earnings after military separation.

Results in Table 11 reveal that young adult veteran children of immigrants do not experience short-term earnings penalties or gains compared to non-veterans, even after controlling for number of hours worked per week, occupational category and education. Perhaps

this stems from the youth of the sample: young adults aged 24 to 32 and the entry-level and lower-mid-level positions that many will hold at these ages.

Conclusion

The data tell us important and related stories. First, military experience clearly shapes educational outcomes of children of immigrants – and the impact is negative. Veterans earn fewer bachelor's degrees and are less likely to be currently enrolled in post-secondary school than non-veterans – even though non-veterans have higher aggregate levels of education. One notable finding is the attitudes of veterans who, despite lower levels of bachelor's degree attainment than non-veterans, report similar confidence in achieving their goals in the future. It is unclear whether this attitude is misplaced or not – as these young adult children of immigrants age into middle adulthood, we will see how their educational trajectories play out.

The impact of military service on employment outcomes is mostly neutral; earnings, odds of being unemployed or participating in the labor force and odds of being self-employed are similar between veterans and non-veterans. However, one clear impact is visible in employment sector: veterans are funneled into government jobs. It is unclear whether this has a positive, negative, or neutral impact on the lives of veteran children of immigrants and should be further explored.

Overall, the lack of an impact of military service on earnings, unemployment, and labor force participation suggest that among children of immigrants, military service is a substitute for civilian work experience.

Limitations:

ADD Health/Educational Outcomes: Given the youth of the sample, some of the young veterans may have yet to cash in their GI Benefits, potentially suppressing current enrollment and eventual educational attainment among veterans. In addition, these short-term results may not reflect other long-term outcomes – earnings and employment trajectories may diverge during middle or later adulthood among veteran and non-veterans of different generations, and those patterns cannot be picked up here. The small samples of current service members and veterans in 1.5 and 2nd generation categories may be too small to detect significant relationships that may exist, though several significant relationships do surface, despite the small sample sizes of these groups.

Finally, Wave 4 data collection for ADD Health took place in 2007-2008, and changes in educational benefits programs and eligibility for service members and veterans changed drastically compared to the previous Montgomery GI Bill. The Post-9/11 GI Bill was enacted in 2008 and implemented in 2009, providing access, in many cases retroactively, to military service members and veterans who served 30 days or more after September 11, 2001. The impact of the August 2009 implementation of the Post-9/11 GI Bill encouraged high growth in the numbers and proportions of military members and veterans attending higher education (ACE 2012). Therefore, impacts of the Post-9/11 GI Bill cannot be analyzed using the last available wave of ADD Health.

CPS/Labor Market Outcomes: Although three years of the CPS, 2005, 2007 and 2009 were pooled to make a larger sample of veteran children of immigrants, the sample is still somewhat small and subject to variation at just 231 observations. Significance that would show up in a larger sample size may not show up here, making the results found here suggestive. In addition, I am unable to examine childhood background characteristics and other self-selective

factors that relate to both selection into military service and the outcomes of interest. However, in analyses not included here, I impute data from the ADD Health survey into the CPS survey to explore how these factors may matter. Results from the analyses show a similar lack of impact from military service even when these factors are taken into account.

Variable Measurement and Definitions:

ADD Health Dependent variables:

Bachelor's Degree Attainment in 2007-2008: Educational attainment is measured as having completed a bachelor's degree attainment or not. Among children of immigrants, 18.5% of current service members, 14.7% of veterans and 35.6% of non-veterans had achieved a bachelor's degree by Wave 4.

Current post-secondary enrollment in 2007-2008: Respondents were asked to respond 'yes' or 'no' in Wave 4 to indicate whether they were currently enrolled in a college or vocational program (not high school or GED program). Those who replied 'yes' are categorized as currently enrolled in post-secondary education in Wave 4. Among children of immigrants, 17.6% of non-veterans, 46.2% of current service members, and 18.6% of veterans were enrolled in post-secondary education in Wave4.

Achievement of Desired Level of Education: In addition, Wave 4 inquired about respondents' desired level of education and whether it had been achieved by the time of the survey. Respondents could choose from among three answers: "I have achieved my desired level of education"; "I have not achieved my desired level of education but I will"; "I have not achieved my desired level of education and I will not". This variable assesses the desired educational attainment of adults in Wave 4. Though most respondents indicated desiring a college degree when they were in middle or high school, many may have re-evaluated their educational aspirations since entering adulthood, and these re-evaluations will be reflected in this measure. If active-duty military veterans and current service members possess lower levels of education than non-veterans, this variable will help to determine whether lower levels of education are desired intentionally, or if lower levels of education stem from a post-secondary educational delay or interruptions due to military service. It will also reveal how the educational aspirations of veterans – defined as individuals who have completed military service - may differ from current service members – who may face institutional and other barriers to enrolling in higher education during military service.

Descriptive details show that 21% of ADD Health respondents achieved their desired level of education by ages 24-32 in Wave 4. More than two-thirds of male respondents answered that they had not achieved their desired level of education but would reach it, while 8% of respondents reported that they had not achieved their desired education and that they would not reach it. The story is somewhat different among those with military experience versus those without. Among military participants, 10% have achieved their desired education, 85% have not but believe that they will, and 5% have not and believe that they will not achieve it. Among non-veterans, 22% have achieved their desired education, 7% have not but believe that they will, and 9% have not and believe that they will not achieve it. Interestingly, when military participants are separated in to current service members and veterans, there are significant differences. Among current service members, 8% have achieved their desired levels of education while 92% have not but believe they will – no current service members report that they do not believe that

they will achieve their desired education. On the other hand, 11% of veterans have achieved their desired education, 81% have not but believe they will and 7% have not and believe they will not. On the surface, it may seem that differences in perceptions about educational achievement between current service members stem from age differences, but this is not the case - veterans, on average, are only 3 months older than current service members.

ADD Health Independent Variables:

Because they impact selection into military service, and therefore may be potentially conflated with the effects of military service, the demographic, military eligibility criteria variables, family background and childhood residential characteristics that were utilized in Chapter 2 to assess determinants of active-duty military service are also utilized here. New variables, such as current educational attainment (when appropriate) and whether the respondent obtained a bachelor's degree before enlisting and current marital status are also included, because these variables may also impact educational attainment and attitudes.

In addition, respondents reporting active-duty military service are split into two distinct groups: veterans who are separated from service by the time of the survey, and those who are currently serving at the time of the survey. Active-duty service is split into two categories because current military service may impact education attainment, current post-secondary enrollment, earnings and employment differently than past military service. In particular, all current military service members are considered employed and their wages are set by the federal government, not by the civilian labor market. Service-related constraints such deployment into a conflict zone can impede current service members from enrolling in college in ways that do not impact veterans.

Active-duty military veteran: Active-duty military veterans are identified as respondents reporting active duty service that has been completed or terminated by the Wave 4 survey. 81 children of immigrants were veterans not currently serving by Wave 4.

Active-duty current military service member: Active-duty current military service members are identified as those who report serving in active-duty military during Wave 4 of the survey. 61 children of immigrants who were interviewed in Wave 4 were children of immigrants. Respondents who deployed overseas during Wave 4 were not interviewed, potentially biasing outcomes of current service members. Individuals serving overseas during their military service have less access to off-base secondary schooling opportunities in other countries because of language and entrance requirements. In conflict areas service members may have less access to the internet and on-line courses and they may face greater time constraints due to the conflict zone experience. Excluding service members from overseas may overestimate the post-secondary enrollment of current service members.

Combat zone experience: Combat zone experience identifies individuals with active duty military experience who reported being deployed in a combat zone for any length of time. Among children of immigrants, 36% of veterans and 46% of current service members have ever served in combat zones.

Educational attainment also becomes an independent variable in the analyses for current college enrollment. As an independent variable, educational attainment is categorized as: those with less than a high school degree, those with only a high school degree or GED, those with some college and those with a bachelor's degree or more. An additional measure is added to the bachelor's attainment and current college enrollment analytical models to control for individuals who enlisted in the military with a bachelor's degree before military service. If an individual

enlisted in the military after earning a bachelor's degree, then they may be less likely to enroll in post-secondary education after completion of military service.

Obtained a bachelor's degree before enlistment is included as a control variable in the analysis for one main reason. If most individuals desire a bachelor's degree, then individuals with bachelor's degree before enlistment may not be as likely or as inclined to enroll in post-secondary school after separation from service as those without bachelor's degrees. This in turn, could impact attitudes toward educational attainment as well.

Currently married individuals may have more family obligation that could interfere with college degree pursuit and attainment.

CPS Dependent variables:

Employment Status: Employment status is measured as employed, unemployed, or not in the labor force. Individuals are identified in the survey as unemployed if did not have a job at the time of the survey, had been actively looking for work in the past 4 weeks, and were currently available for work. Individuals are identified as not in the labor force if they were not employed at the time of the survey and were not seeking work. Among children of immigrants, 82% of veterans and 76% of non-veterans were employed 6.4% of veterans and 5.9% of non-veterans were unemployed and 12% and 18% were not in the labor force in the 2005, 2007, and 2009 pooled March CPS data.

Total wage/salary income: Respondents reported their total wage or salary income. For the analysis here, $1 was added to each respondent to ensure that each individual had a non-zero income. Then wage and salary was multiplied by log, resulting in a log-transformed wage/salary outcome variable.

Class of Worker: Class of worker is divided into self-employed, private, and government workers. Private workers include individuals working in private for-profit and non-profit organizations. Government workers include local, state, and federal government employees. Self-employed workers include incorporated and non-incorporated self-employed individuals. Among children of immigrants, 10% of non-veterans worked in the government sector compared to 18% of veterans; 84% of non-veterans worked in the private sector compared to 77% of non-veterans, and 6% of non-veterans were self-employed compared to 5% of veterans.

CPS Independent Variables:

Active-duty military veteran: These are individuals who reported ever serving in the U.S. military in the past. They are not currently serving in the military.

Race/ethnicity includes African-American, Asian, Latino, White, and others. Latinos refer to individuals of any race who also identify as Latino; African-American, Asian, White and others refer to non-Latino individuals. Native-Americans and respondents who chose two or more race categories are identified as 'other' in this analysis.

Age: Only individuals from 24 to 32 are examined in the analysis; 24 is the base age.

Educational level is measured as: high school only, some college, or bachelor's degree or higher. Individuals with less than a high school education are removed from the analysis to ensure more comparable veteran and non-veteran groups and eliminate bias. As explained in Chapter 2, a high school degree is a general enlistment requirement, so the non-veteran group has a higher prevalence of individuals without high school degrees. A greater prevalence of non-high school degree holders in the non-veteran group could bias the results.

Region of residence is measured as living in the Northeast, South, Midwest, or West.

Married refers to those who are currently married with a spouse present or absent at the time of the survey.

Work disability is a self-reported measure of having a disability that limits or stops one from working.

CHAPTER 5: Success or Struggle?
Qualitative Analyses of Socio-Economic Outcomes from Military Service among Children of Immigrants

As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, children of immigrants from disadvantaged backgrounds and those with mediocre high school grades and higher levels of ability are motivated to join the military in order to improve their socio-economic futures by gaining the college benefits and interpersonal and technical skills training that the military offers. We saw in Chapter 4 that veterans are less likely to obtain bachelor's degrees than non-veteran peers while labor market outcomes are impacted only slightly. I also found that despite lower rates of earning bachelor's degrees, veteran children of immigrants have bachelor's degree aspirations. Children of immigrants enlist in order gain skills and access to bachelor's degrees in order to gain access to upwardly mobile occupations. However, military service inhibits bachelor's degree attainment despite GI Bill benefits and college aspirations among veterans. Although earnings and employment status were little impacted by military service, veterans were more likely to work in the federal sector or in protective service occupations than non-veterans.

This chapter asks how veterans faced and responded to post-military circumstances and to explore mechanisms leading to lower bachelor's degree attainment and different occupational trajectories. What decision-making processes led them to enroll in post-secondary education, go to work, or a combination of the two? Did college and work goals change due to military service? Did military service modify, remove or create barriers to education and work? How did veterans find jobs and enter the labor market? How did their military training and connections impact the job search and job finding? How did veterans approach college enrollment and degree completion (or not)? How did military training and connections impact college enrollment and success?

This chapter explores the education and labor market strategies that veteran children of immigrants utilized when they re-entered civilian life, and in turn, how these strategies and the circumstances and decisions behind them affected young adult socio-economic outcomes. Most of the respondents fell between the ages of 24 and 32, and most had left the military 5 or less years prior to the interview. Half of the respondents (16) were engaged in full-time work in the civilian labor force at the time of the interview and another third (11) were enrolled full-time in post-secondary school, including two with VA disability ratings. Three respondents were currently on active-duty military service and working full-time in that capacity, including one Reservist working on a master's degree who was called to active-duty to fill a full-time social services position that is normally filled by a civilian. Another respondent received a 100% military-related disability rating from the VA and not employed at the time of the survey. Another respondent was working part-time and going to school part-time.

The young age of the sample and the short period of elapsed time since military service are limiting but show the struggles and decisions of a young adult cohort of veterans and their short-term educational and employment outcomes. In addition, potential biases exist that may limit the generalizability of the data. Most of the full-time students in the sample (7 out of 10) were enrolled in a selective 4-year university and the sample consists of few unemployed individuals, potentially creating a positive selection bias. For example, self-reported disability among Iraq and Afghanistan era veterans stands at 25% (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2013), while only 3 of 33 or less than 10% of this sample contains individuals who reported service-related disabilities to me. However, the three who reported disabilities reported ones that were officially

rated as such by the Veterans' Administration; individuals without official VA-rated disabilities may have chosen not to discuss them with me. None of the veterans surveyed had visible disabilities such as limb loss or wheel-chair use. Those with non-visible VA-rated disabilities, such as PTSD, may have been reticent to tell me because of stigma attached to those disabilities.

This chapter reveals that the educational and work goals and strategies of veteran children of immigrants were impacted by their military experiences. Some veterans, known as *smooth job transitioners*, leverage the occupation-specific job skills and military-related networks they gained and used during military service to find similar jobs in the civilian labor force, forgoing or delaying college because they found acceptable jobs without bachelor's degree. Others, known as *GI Bill students*, leverage their GI Bill benefits to attend post-secondary institutions full-time, attempting to attain bachelor's degrees because they do not want to or cannot transfer their military-specific skills to the civilian labor force. Still others, known as *struggling workers*, struggle to find stable and decent-paying work, unable to translate their military-specific occupational training to civilian work, often juggling family responsibilities that inhibit college-going.

Veteran children of immigrants are often sidetracked from completing college because of practical considerations regarding findings jobs after separating from military service. For smooth job transitioners, military skills and military connections provide opportunities to find well-paying jobs in defense-related industry or federal jobs, but for struggling workers, unemployment and underemployment are more common. Still, some veteran children of immigrants are well-positioned to complete their educational plans – particularly those who planned ahead and prepared for post-service life by saving money during their service tenure.

The military shaped and constrained goals and strategies to get ahead. By providing job training and work experience in the military setting, some children of immigrants learned what work they liked and enjoyed; others learned what they did not like, and others still remained uncertain of what kinds of jobs they would like to pursue post-military.

Veterans who enjoyed their military occupations and the skills they picked up during military service and who found a civilian niche where they could translate those skills often transitioned smoothly from military service to civilian work. Completing college to get a good job was not an important goal among this group; they were able to find good jobs without a bachelor's degree.

Others struggled to find good, stable work and sometimes attended college on and off without completing a degree. These veterans were unable or unwilling to transfer their military occupations into a civilian job. For example, combat occupations are generally not transferable to civilian life. Some of the weapons and self-protection training can be transferable in protective service jobs, such as police men and women or security positions. However, many veterans are not interested in a career in the police force or security and they are constrained by their military training.

Still, other veterans found that access to educational benefits opened up an important avenue for them to pursue new careers and get ahead.

Occupational Training and College Enrollment during Military Service

Lies the Recruiter Told Me: Recruiters, Promises, Expectations and Military Jobs – Many Jobs are Non-Transferable or Not Focused on the Skills Enlisters Want to Acquire

Joiners generally enlisted with the assumption that military service would provide a positive work experience that would be an improvement over other jobs available to individuals without a bachelor's degree. However, many respondents report that they were misinformed or misled by recruiters about the occupations in which they would be placed and the skills they would receive while in service. As a result, joiners did not always receive the types of skills they desired or expected.

Furthermore, many layers are involved in the process of qualifying for and selecting a military occupation – military personnel demands, enlistee test scores and preferences, and recruiters' requirements to fulfill monthly recruitment quotas. As a result, hiring for military occupations involves less autonomy among each actor – recruiters and individual enlisters - than most civilian human resources personnel and civilian job-seekers have. First, individuals interested in enlisting must take the Armed Forces Qualifying Test (AFQT) or the ASVAB and meet requirements to be considered for employment in the military. In addition, ASVAB scores also determine what job fields are open to enlistees. Enlistees cannot 'apply' to any occupation of their choosing. Occupations are determined based on combination of ASVAB test scores, current and projected military personnel needs, preferences of potential recruits, the information provided to recruits by their recruiters and training school availability. Higher test scores opens up occupational opportunities while lower scores limit them. In addition, non-citizens are not allowed to enter occupations requiring a security clearance, limiting occupational opportunities.

In addition, some occupations are more popular among enlisters than others, which can further complicate the layers behind occupational sorting in the military. However military Advanced Individual Training (AIT) schools, which provide job-specific training once basic training is completed, only have a limited number of slots available during each training term. Training schools for popular occupations fill up and have waiting lists. This could mean, for example, that an individual who talks to a recruiter and wants to enlist in March to be trained as a legal administrative assistant (and is qualified to do so) may find out that there are no available training slots in AIT until December. The individual then has choices: enlist in the Delayed Entry Program (DEP) and secure the legal administrative assistant position that they want; enlist in March and choose another occupation that has training slots available more immediately; or forgo enlistment altogether and follow another path. In the Delayed Entry Program, individuals sign paperwork to officially enlist in the military, but actual entry is delayed for a period of time determined on a case-by-case basis, depending upon military personnel and occupational needs and availability. For example, if the individual described above enlisted in the DEP, the individual would enter boot camp around October or November, depending upon the branch of service, after which that person will be sent to AIT for the legal administrative assistant position in December.

Robert signed up with the Delayed Entry Program after agreeing to become an intelligence specialist, which involved a 6-month wait at the time he signed his enlistment papers. However, his circumstances changed and he contacted the recruiter so he could enter military service sooner than originally planned, subsequently requiring him to change military occupations:

> I did fairly well to score enough to where I can pick the jobs I wanted, which was to be a corpsmen, which was their [paramedics]. But the problem was the school was a one-year wait. [The recruiter said], 'Hey, all the schools filled up. We can make you become an intelligence specialist which is only about a six-month wait.' So then I said all right, that sounds better, and then you know next thing

> you know things kind of got pretty hot that summer. So then I was like, 'I got to get out of here before people come and try to find me.' So I told my recruiter. He's like, 'Hey, I can put you in as an undesignated airman, just working on aircraft and then you can pick your job later.' And I was like, 'All right, get me out of here.' So after that I was out of there in two weeks.'

Robert learned basic aircraft maintenance in AIT as an undesignated airman, but was chosen for an officer training program not long after he left AIT. The officer training school sent him to a college preparatory course and helped him to enroll in a 4-year college with a Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) program to complete his officer training.

The complexity of the recruiting and placement process is often confusing to many potential enlisters, who rely on recruiters to provide them with details of the process. However, recruiters do not always take the time to talk through options in a digestible manner. Gina remained confused about her options even when she specifically asked recruiters to explain them:

> I went to a recruiter and I talked with him, and I went through testing and all that and it worked out well. They were very ambiguous in terms of what would I be doing in the military, and what sort of occupations existed. They just kept talking around in this really vague language, and I was like, 'That could be anything. I don't quite understand.' And they're like 'Well, you'll see when you go ahead and finalize the paperwork and all that stuff.'

Recruiter selection and training vary by service branch, but generally, recruiters are not selected on aptitude for recruiting, which may dampen overall recruiter effectiveness and performance (GAO 1998), which may in turn trickle down and affect potential recruits. A lack of interpersonal and communications skills paired with the pressure to meet recruitment demands may result in miscommunication, non-communication, or misleading communication to a recruit and their parents, who often know very little about the recruitment and placement processes.

Because recruits often lack awareness about specific options or opportunities – they do not have access to the latest military reports outlining surplus occupations for example - recruiters have a large amount of influence on the occupations into which individuals are placed.

Eugene, the son of a Latin American immigrant talks about his experience:

> I: What made you choose to be an air crewman?
>
> R: My recruiter pushed me into it. I was indecisive. At first I had choices but I was indecisive, and then he just said, 'Let's just move this process along.' He nudged me. He was like, 'This is a good one, this is rare, these don't come up that often. And you have the score and it's a technically demanding job, I think you can handle it, dah, dah, dah.'

Recruiters can also make promises to recruits that they are not authorized to deliver, which can result in disappointment or resentment. Gretchen, the daughter of Latin American immigrants experienced this:

> I wanted to be a legal clerk, a legalist, and the recruiter said that I would get that. And it's pretty competitive, so I think two people out of my class got it out of the whole graduating [class]. I ended up getting that general admin position, but I

> don't regret it. I learned a lot, and I'm glad they didn't put [me] to work on vehicles or on airplanes because that wasn't me.

Gretchen's recruiter told her she would be placed as a legalist, and because many recruits are placed in the specialty they request without a competitive process, she had no reason to believe that she would not be given that assignment. In reality, she was required to compete for the spot and did not make the cut, so she was placed in a more general administrative field. However, instead of discussing her disappointment at not being placed in her original occupation of choice, she shifted the discussion toward placements that she believed were worse for her – like working on vehicles.

Atef, the son of Middle-Eastern immigrants, was also disappointed to find out that the military occupation he was placed into was not quite what he was hoping for. Additionally, the occupation did not involve some of the activities his recruiter told him it would:

> Well, I was hoping to be able to maintain and repair radio equipment, get into the electronic field of radios. But it was when I went to basic and after basic, AIT, which is learning the equipment and whatnot, I found out that it wasn't what I expected. It was basically operating and maintaining. So the recruiter kind of threw me off.

With an air of resignation reflective of many other respondents, Atef was disappointed that the recruiter did not accurately describe the occupation into which he was assigned. Sometimes, disappointment ran deeper than occupational placement, a few respondents mentioned that they may not have chosen military service at all if they were not misled by recruiters; Marco, the son of Latin-American immigrants re-considers whether he would have enlisted if he had been given more truthful statements by the recruiter:

> R: [The recruiter] was a Puerto Rican guy so he knew Spanish, he spoke Spanish. Told my parents a bunch of lies as well.
>
> I: Do you remember any of those lies?
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> R: Not really. I remember being - not upset with him - but a little disappointed afterwards when I was in the [military] and I was like, man, if I would have known then what I know now, I think I would have done something else.
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> I: What else would you have been able to do?
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> R: I won [an] architecture competition - a drafting school from Arizona offered me a scholarship to go to Phoenix and learn architectural drafting.

Recruiters impact enlistment and occupational decisions of joiners. These decisions have repercussions on the later trajectories of service members, who may have made decisions based on incomplete, incorrect, or misleading information.

Attending College during Military Service

Many service members attend college during service, jump-starting or continuing their aspirations to a post-secondary degree. Each year, over 300,000 service members enroll in post-secondary courses (Military Onesource 2012) though rarely do current service members enroll full-time, on average enrolling in less than 3 courses per year (Education Working Group, Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges 2012). As a result, only a small proportion of active-duty

members actually earn associates or bachelor's degrees. For example, the force was composed of 1.4 million active-duty enlisted members in (2010 U.S. Census Bureau 2012 Statistical Abstract), but only about 3% (Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support 2010) earned an associate's or bachelor's degree that year. Educational counseling is available to currently serving military personnel around the globe to help them understand their college benefits and map out educational plans, and GI Bill tuition assistance is available during active duty as well as after service is completed.

Like hundreds of thousands of service members, Isaac, a child of South American immigrants enrolled in college while serving on active-duty:

> I planned on doing college courses - they told us it's available initially when you first come in to the unit. And they had an education center and they let you know where it's at. I just went over there and sat down. They have counselors, you just sit down with a counselor and set up the class….at that time I wanted to work with computers so I just told them I wanted to work with computers and they showed me the degree plans that are available and Network Administration was one of the degree plans. It was like an Associate's. So I was, "Okay, that's probably it," but then I start off with my basics, core required classes.

Isaac completed a few courses, but like most current service members, he did not complete a degree by the time he completed his 4-year contract and left service. Similarly, other respondents often enrolled in college courses while in service. However, only the enlisted members chosen for officer training programs completed bachelor's degrees because it is a requirement of the officer training program and officers-training is specifically structured to guarantee degree completion. None of the other enlisted respondents completed an associate's or bachelor's degree during their military service.

These results indicate that although current military service members gain college course credit during their service, they generally do not leave service with degrees. In addition, transferring college credits to community and four-year college is not automatic and has been problematic, requiring people to re-take similar courses. This can lead to wasted time and inhibit progress to degree completion, particularly if individuals continue their studies part-time. Although barriers to access college during military service are lowered and many service members transition from an education level of 'high school degree only' to 'some college', barriers to college completion are not removed because, until recent legislation (dc), finding colleges that would accept most or all of the credits has often been challenging.

Self-efficacy Gains Encouraged College Enrollment

The overwhelming majority of respondents, particularly those who found it difficult to be self-motived or disciplined to study and focus on school during high school, reported that the military taught them these skills. Those who went to work in the civilian labor market felt confident in their abilities to accomplish tasks well. Although respondents who entered college post-military reported being more prepared because of the discipline the military provided, many still felt unprepared academically. They complained that applied work they performed in their occupations often required only limited use of the math and writing skills to complete core college courses. For example, Matt, the son of Latin American immigrants, wanted to pursue a degree in engineering after separating from military service, but he found that he was lacking in

math skills and he did want to spend extra years (and more college money than he was eligible for with his GI Bill) to catch up:

> I went straight to junior college, a week after I got out [of] the military. I took like this placement test for math and English. I scored really high on my English, but not so high on my math score. I hadn't taken a math course in like, 8 years, so I scored really low. And I had to take basically algebra, rudimentary algebra again, when I was already like pre-calculus in high school. That's what caused me to change my whole plan overall, because I would still be in junior college right now, learning all the necessary requirements for math, and physics, stuff like that. So that's when I decided to change my major to business.

Newfound discipline

The discipline taught by the military and the military lifestyle was one of the core characteristics of military service that attracted children of immigrants to enlist. Respondents reported that their lack of discipline in adolescence concerned them and they predicted that they would not be able to do well in college and careers that offered opportunity for advancement without it. Positions in the civilian labor force with advancement opportunities require discipline, responsibility and hard work. College requires study and dedication to attend class and turn in assignments when no one is holding you accountable. Although most respondents felt they lacked discipline before they enlisted, the overwhelming majority underscored the importance of the discipline that they acquired from the military. Adam stressed the discipline and planning that he learned from this time in service:

> I'm a lot more disciplined. I didn't really plan a lot. I never thought about planning ahead. Military definitely taught me that. Like before the military I never really thought about the future and how something I do today is going to affect me in the future.

Many directly connected the discipline learned in the military to college or other success. They gained confidence in themselves and were willing to work hard to achieve their goals, even though many failed to work hard in high school. Ray, the son of Latin American immigrants, needed a little encouragement to go back to school, but worked hard and followed the work ethic he learned in the military and made high grades in community college:

> [An] administrator at the VA, he told me, '…Go to school, everything's paid for, don't worry about it.'
>
> And I told him, 'Alright, great, I'll go ahead and try school. But I did alright, but I didn't go great back in high school.' He said, 'Look, you're a whole different person now, you went through a lot of different experiences. Go ahead and try it out, see what happens.'
>
> So I went and applied to community college in January of 09 and I knew I only had a certain amount of GI bill, only 36 months, so I knew I had to hustle to get this thing done because I know a lot of guys you know, use their GI bill when they go to community college, and by the time they go to university level, they're out, they're out of funds when they need it the most. So I decided to go back to school. I took 18 units my first semester, pulled a 4.0, never did that in my life.

Others discussed discipline as an important, positive trait of veterans – and one that employers recognize and seek out. Bernard, the son of Latin American immigrants, provides job-search training tools and advice to fellow veterans. In his experience, many employers confidently make positive assumptions about veteran job candidates' reliability:

> You know what their experience and reliability is. So that speaks volumes. So right off the bat, you know what you're dealing with.

Veterans report learning discipline and self-efficacy from military service that they translate into post-military work and educational careers. Indeed, many respondents, when asked, talked about discipline and follow-through as the most important benefits gained from their military service.

Transitioning from Military to Civilian Work and Education

Transitioning from military service to civilian life requires adjustment on a variety of dimensions. Readjustment to non-military life commonly includes financial uncertainties, the interruption of accustomed routines and relocation. Most new veterans contend with the job search, unemployment or integration into a new work environment; choices about if, when and where to use GI Bill educational benefits; integration into new communities or re-integration into former communities; and family living adjustments. Family living adjustments may include moving in with a parent or parents or relying on a spouse as the main source of family income, each of which cause strain on both veterans and their family members (Demers 2009; Faber et al. 2008; Worthen et al. 2012). In addition, some veterans have physical disabilities and psychological issues that may complicate readjustment.

The in-depth interviews reveal three main trajectories after military service: *smooth job transitioners* who moved from military service into civilian work and life without major financial interruption – often to industries and sectors related to government or defense; *struggling workers* who often faced extended job searches, unemployment and underemployment; and *GI Bill students* who generally used their military educational benefits to attend and sometimes complete degree programs. Many *struggling workers* also juggled college classes while working or looking for jobs, but their main focus was not on school. Several respondents started out as *struggling workers* before transitioning into *full-time GI Bill students.* Some *full-time GI Bill students* also worked part-time in lower level positions to help pay for some bills, but their main focus was to complete associate's, bachelor's, or other programs. Regardless of the trajectory respondents followed, most believed that they gained self-efficacy from their time in service, pointing to greater levels of discipline, task completion and time management. And also regardless of trajectory, many also believed that recruiters lied, misled them, or were not as forthcoming about the realities of military service – in particular the job training and occupational specialties, which led to some resentment, disappointment and thwarted plans.

Smooth Job Transitioners: *Capitalizing on Transferable Job Skills*

Smooth job transitioners found full-time jobs relatively soon after separating from the military. They were often employed in occupations resembling their military occupations and in government, defense industry, or veteran services jobs. *Smooth job transitioners* utilized specific skills, training, and experiences they gained as military service members in their new jobs and did not attempt complete career changes. They were concerned about finances and often had

family to provide for – a spouse and/or children, so living on the relatively small stipends available when enrolled in college from the Montgomery GI Bill was not seriously considered in many cases. Edward, the son of a Latin American immigrant discusses his smooth transition from military service to post-service work and his reasoning behind his choice to pursue a job rather than education after discharge:

> Well, upon exiting the [military] my main concern was making sure I had a job and a means of providing and supporting my family with a roof over our head. So pursuing my education was put on a back burner, but I had a smooth transition from the military world to the civilian sector. I got out on a Friday and went straight to work on a Monday.

Edward was trained as a surgical assistant and worked his way into supervisory roles at a military hospital where he performed much of his work during the 10 years he spent in the military. His training in the health field, which faces personnel shortages, was very valuable and directly transferable – surgical assisting procedures, certifications and training are the same in military and civilian environments.

Smooth job transitioners like Edward often choose to forgo pursuing college degrees after military service because they perceive immediate employment as more advantageous or more necessary to their circumstances than a degree. Individuals offered employment in defense-related contracting also took this route. Even though Isaac took college classes during his stint in the military and planned to earn a 4-year degree, he was offered a lucrative contracting job immediately after discharge, and college no longer seemed like the best option for him:

> I looked at…the average salary that someone with a four-year degree from the school that I was looking at, and that was relatively lower than what I could make without a degree supporting the military contractor. So that was one of the things I looked at, and I chose to continue to work for the military as a contractor.

Isaac's perceptions seem to be correct: the median earnings of workers with less than an associate's degree that work full-time throughout the year is $40,000 (Julian and Kominski 2011) while Isaac earned almost 3 times that as a contractor. Gina, like Jacob, also found a job with a military contractor that paid much more than she had expected to be paid without a college degree. For her, finding a well-paying job without a degree came as a welcome surprise, but it also further discouraged pursuing a degree:

> I was raised with this idea that when you go to college that was what got you the job. That's what got you the well-paying job, right? So how is it that I got this well-paying job without the degree? …So the classes, the desire to want to go to college then started to diminish because it was very difficult.. to pursue at that point.

Respondents who were content with the well-paying work they performed as contractors did not see the need to acquire college degrees – they reported that a degree would not gain them a promotion or greater job stability.

A few *smooth job transitioners* earned college degrees during their service tenure, generally as a requirement of an officer training program before they separated from the military. Other smooth job transitioners planned to pursue, or were pursuing, college in fields relevant to their current occupations. Edward, the respondent described above with surgical assistant

training and supervisory experience worked full-time post-military for two years before enrolling in a distance-learning bachelor's degree program in Health Care Administration that he was pursuing at the time of his interview. He used his military college benefits to pay for school and to supplement his income, and he figured that the degree would allow him to advance further and earn more than he could otherwise.

Smooth job transitioners benefitted in the labor market from their time in service because they applied the skills and knowledge they learned from military service to civilian jobs and/or earned a bachelor's degree during their service tenure.

Social Networks

Apart from, and at times in tandem with applying military experience or skill-sets to civilian jobs, smooth job transitioners also benefitted from their social networks. Military service-related and veterans' networks were helpful. Veterans' networks can take many forms. Formal institutions such as the Veterans Administration (VA) provide career-related services such as career planning, resume building and job search boards. Veterans' clubs such as Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) are social organizations that veterans can use to build networks that may benefit the job search. Veterans' clubs often bring together veterans who did not serve together because veterans often return to their hometowns but they did not serve with others from their hometowns. I also define a veteran network as a connection between veterans that is created on the basis of that credential. For example, a veteran who applies for a job may be interviewed by another veteran who they do not know and have never met, and that may serve as a veteran network if the individuals involved build common ground based on their military experiences; this is reported as useful in the job search as Rolando, the child of Latin American immigrants describes:

> I: Being a veteran, or any of your military or ROTC experience - do you think that affected you getting [your first post-military] job in any way?
> R: I'm not 100% sure, but I know bonding, especially at [company name], there's so many ex-military there. I was interviewed by ex-military people, and I think we bond automatically when we start talking about the military experience. And I think they appreciate somebody that's been in the military because they have the discipline, or they've been somewhat disciplined, or broken down I guess, they've been put in stressful situations and stuff like that, so definitely in [my company], we definitely bonded right away when we found out we were in the military.

Rolando perceived his veteran status as a positive building block that facilitated getting his first post-military job with a private organization.

Members in military communications and technology occupations stationed in the Washington, DC metro area, a key hub for these occupations, often had contact with non-military businesses and contractors which were hired by the government to supplement work done in these fields, sometimes by providing expertise that individuals with military training lacked. In general, these jobs relied on the respondent's past security clearance and required specialized military-related experience instead of college degrees.

For example, Arlene, the daughter of Asian immigrants, obtained a security clearance while in the military for her communications occupation. Although she could not reveal the specifics of her job, she was privy to classified conversations and information in that position. Once she left military service, she worked for a private contractor who required the security

clearance and her job skills; she did not reveal further specifics about her current position except to say that she was paid close to six-figures. Most who found jobs in the DC area after discharge were generally connected to these jobs directly from contacts they had made during their time in service. These service members worked with contractors, or had friends and colleagues who worked with contractors during their service tenure. When approaching time to leave military service, they reached out to contractors or their friends with access to contractors, and were hired. In addition, these jobs entailed communications or administrative skills and security clearances, so those in infantry positions and those who did not possess security clearances would have not qualified for these positions even if they had these social contacts.

Gina and Isaac, respondents discussed earlier, both found their jobs this way; they knew individuals in these businesses or knew people who knew people in those businesses and leveraged those ties as they prepared to leave the military. They were also willing to stay in the Washington D.C. area.

Jerry, the son of Caribbean immigrants, was also able to find a job soon after completing military service. He went back to his home town, where his parents still resided, but his training in special operations did not correspond to civilian jobs. The closest work available for someone with that training would be law enforcement, but he had since changed his mind and wondered what else he could do:

> So I go back to [hometown] and I start thinking forward. What do I like to do? I wanted to go into building stuff. I'm burned out on cops. I'm over it.

Jerry tapped into his social network – which was extensive in his hometown – and found a friend of his father hiring insurance adjustors in his company. That connection, rather than concrete military training for work in insurance adjustment, landed him a well-paying job in that industry after he studied and passed a few exams. Jerry was well-connected through his father, a Caribbean immigrant, former U.S. military member, and current U.S. law enforcement professional with over 20 years of experiences and extensive connections his hometown – connections that he used to help his son.

However, even though smooth transitioners found jobs that rewarded them for their military experience and training, this was not a given; military experience and skills training did not always make up for the lack of college degrees in the eyes of potential employers. Gina, the daughter of Asian immigrants recounts her experience when she was separating from service. In order to cut government costs, information technology (IT) contractors were hired to replace military personnel performing IT and communications in the area where Gina worked. She interviewed with the company, for a position performing the civilian equivalent of her military job:

> [A private contracting company] came, and they interviewed me. They really weren't interested in paying me for the work that I did…and they dismissed my skills because of the fact that I didn't have a degree.

Although the company offered her higher base compensation than her military salary, she was aware that other individuals in similar positions were offered more because they had college degrees. The job training and work experience were valued less because of the lack of degree. As described earlier, she found work with another contractor who offered her much more pay for her experience, but if she had fewer social connections, she may not have found that other position and may have ended up in the lower-paying position.

Elizabeth, the daughter of Asian immigrants, discusses how her veteran status and the official point-preferences for veterans likely helped her secure the job there:

> In terms of being a veteran, it definitely helped because of the fact that I'm in a hospital and I know the experiences of members that are going through the type of protocol, the terminology, what they go through and how to help them up, the transition from the services that are offered at the hospital and how to help them out with a better job. And also the fact that I think in terms of the federal government, I get an extra maybe five points for being a veteran.

Section conclusion

Transferable skills and military as well as non-military social connections were crucial to the success of smooth job transitioners and smooth job transitioners took active steps before leaving military service to secure positions in the civilian workforce. Others were less prepared for post-military life and lacked skills that could be transferred to civilian work; others with some transferable skills wanted a career change – struggling workers and full-time GI Bill students.

Struggling Workers and Full-time GI Bill Students

Smooth job transitioners fulfilled and even surpassed the work expectations that encouraged them to enlist in the military in the first place. However, for others, post-service experiences often run counter to pre-enlistment expectations. These individuals imagined gaining experience and college money to transition easily back into civilian life whenever their service terms ended. But post-service transitions were tougher than that for *struggling workers* and many *full-time GI Bill student veterans*. *Struggling workers* and *full-time GI Bill student veterans* shared some common elements but had different goals and used different strategies in response to their circumstances.

Members of both groups had troubles transferring technical skills from military to civilian life or decided to pursue post-military careers that did not use those skills. Full-time GI Bill students went back to school to gain new skills and post-secondary degrees that would allow them to pursue new careers and improve their chances in the labor market. Some respondents started out as struggling workers and transitioned to full-time GI Bill students when the post 9/11 GI Bill was enacted. A small minority completed degrees but were struggling workers at the time of the interview. *Struggling workers* floundered after separating from military service. Their focus after military service was finding full-time work to support themselves and sometimes, young families. However, their initial attempts to find middle- or higher-income jobs failed because of non-transferable technical skills, lacking social connections to find jobs, and difficult transitions to civilian work, education and family life.

Many newly-discharged veterans reported trouble finding jobs and at times, a low motivation to look. For some, finding a job was their primary concern in order to pay bills and re-establish their lives. Some had family obligations – spouses, children, parents or siblings. Some went to live with their parents after leaving the military in order to save money while looking for a job. Others settled near their parents or home communities after discharge, even when their last duty station was thousands of miles and several states away. Jobs were difficult to find for several reasons. Respondents often lacked social contacts connected to upwardly mobile jobs. Respondents' last few years' of job experience were often not transferable or applicable to civilian jobs.

Many of the respondents also discussed how their plans to go to college – for the first time or not – to complete a bachelor's degree also affected their job search. Many respondents wanted to focus on applying and/or attending college and employment was a secondary concern. Some did not desire to 'hustle' to find a full or part-time job that they planned on quitting when they could enroll in college while some only looked for part-time jobs or were open to full-time jobs that would fill time until they were able to start taking classes. Some respondents thought they were qualified for good jobs after years of military service even without a college degree, but they became interested in attending college when the job search did not go as expected and they were unable to find the types of jobs they wanted.

All veterans interviewed in this survey had access to a transition assistance program (TAP) that has existed since the early 1990s. This goal of the program is to provide information and assistance about employment, job training, and other service such as counseling and educational benefits. Mandated by law, current service members in the process of separating from the military are briefed on the benefits and entitlements they are due as a result of their military service. Individuals with medical problems are given information about VA compensation, vocational rehabilitation and employment. Some of the employment-related information includes learning how to apply to federal government jobs and use veterans' preference points. Members can create Individual Transition Plans during pre-separation counseling to outline education, training, and employment goals of the separating service member.

Non-transferable Technical Skills

Technical skills are one of the main draws mentioned by children of immigrants who enlist in the military, as described in Chapter 3. However, much of the skills training children of immigrants received were for jobs not available in the civilian labor market, such as infantry positions, or in fields that offered little remuneration or job advancement in the civilian labor market without college degrees, such as administrative assistants. Therefore, occupation-specific military training may not be valued by civilian employers. Military technology may not compatible or comparable to technology used by civilian companies, making the experience of a communications technician in the military of little value to a civilian communications company, unless the civilian company is in the defense industry. Though individuals possess experience, that experience is often not applicable to civilian work, as Manuel, the son of South American/Caribbean immigrants explains:

> So after boot camp it became really clear that that brochure and the reality of advanced electronics technician training were night and day. I got taught how to troubleshoot a 40-year old electronics radar missile system, the kind of components that it had just don't exist in the real world anymore. One of the cabinets actually had vacuum tubes, and I don't know if you know anything about electronics, but vacuum tubes are just like ancient history. You cannot find anything in any electronics shop that still uses vacuum tubes. So the idea that this was going to prepare me for a job in the real world was just insane.

Some individuals did not have a hard time finding jobs, but the jobs did not always work out or pay the bills. Many respondents felt that civilian work expectations were sub-par or more arbitrary than military work expectations, leading to less efficient and sloppier work. Several cited the ability to cut corners and pay less attention to detail in the civilian world that was not

allowed in the military. For these veterans, attention to detail, possessing formal training and being efficient were more important than college education; they had a hard time understanding civilian work values that they viewed as misguided.

Finding a job after military service was not always easy, because of a mismatch between expectations about what jobs veterans without a college degree could qualify for – even with years of responsibility and experience. Ray, the son of Latin American immigrants, who was promoted to an enlisted officer during his service tenure of 8 years, sought office jobs where he would manage people – he saw his years as an enlisted officer as good experience for entry-level management positions:

> I: So your first goal when you left the service in 2008 was to get a job.
> R: I figured I was a great candidate as far as whatever job was out there. Because I knew I could go ahead and relate my skills that I learned- in infantry, instructor, and every other billet I held - into the civilian workforce. Shoot, I was in charge of 40 guys, in a combat hostile environment. I had a budget of over 2 million dollars, I was in charge of equipment that was of highly sensitive nature, I dealt with classified material. I figured, all right, great, the government gave me so much trust and I was able to accomplish every single task and goal that was set up in front of me without any problems, and yet, I can't even find a job. And the one thing I did find, and I'm glad I did it, was I found a job with a local union [number]. Which was an ironworkers union.

Ray believed that his experience and skills were transferable to civilian managerial roles, but he generally did not receive many call-backs, and no offers, from companies hiring management positions. Instead, he found a job as a blue-collar worker in an ironworkers union. Non-transferable or non-desired military skill sets impeded entry into the civilian workforce among many veterans.

Some of the occupations that required skills that could be transferred from military to civilian work were competitive and limited in number. Steven, a Vietnamese-born son of immigrants thought about joining the local police department after his military service term as an infantryman was over, like two of his friends, who discussed how their military training helped them with the testing required by the police department. However, the police department, like many other government jobs, requires exams that are only available during certain periods and while Steven waited, he enrolled in college to use his benefits. Raphael reported a similar experience. He took and passed the exams to enter the police academy, but there was a backlog during which he found other ways to support himself, and they ultimately drew his interest away from police work:

> It was a large backlog [to entering the academy], and after that - finding myself wanting to do other things…I was doing truck driving. Then I had a girlfriend whose brother owned a computer company, so I learned computers and switched fields over there on computers for a little while.

Even when non-technical skills are transferable to jobs that respondents found acceptable, other barriers may exist that though not veteran-specific, but deter veterans who have just separated from service and who are looking for immediate employment opportunities.

Social Networks

Military enlistment removed all respondents from their home cities for long periods of time, during which most of their friends and family stayed behind. Enlisters met many different people during their time in service – but most were like themselves and only planned to serve in the military for one or two service terms and leave. Joining the military grew the social networks of enlisters, who gained connections to other young adult service members and older, career-military members.

However, a social network of military service members offers few promising civilian labor market opportunities upon discharge. First, the jobs that most service members held before service were low-status, low-paying jobs and unlikely to yield upwardly mobile social network connections. Second, career military personnel often have few civilian connections but many, many subordinates for the few job opportunities they may hear about. None of the respondents interviewed reported finding a post-service job based on a connection with a current military service member or a military colleague with whom they served, although people often exchanged information on where to search for jobs such as websites and other resources.

Because the military enlists from across the U.S. as well as Puerto Rico and other U.S. territories, individuals from very diverse geographic regions are placed in units together and live on or near military bases together. Once service members are discharged, many return to their home towns or home states, without access to familiar former military friends. Veterans' organizations such as the American Legion or the Veterans of Foreign Wars are available to many members and provide a social network of fellow veterans. These veteran networks may be valuable in assisting veterans in their job search, but none of the respondents here described these organizations as directly useful in the job search.

Non-government programs also exist that are specifically designed to help veterans find civilian jobs. Only one respondent took part in one of these programs, called Helmets to Hardhats; that respondent, Ray, also subsequently found blue-collar work in an ironworkers union. He later decided that he could not withstand the standing that was required of him on the job because of a military-related back injury that led him to receive a disability-rating by the VA a couple of years after discharge. He was attending a 4-year college with hopes to embark on a career as a veteran's advocate after completing his degree. He had already completed 2 years of core classes at a community college.

Respondents also often lacked civilian social networks. They entered at young ages, and those who worked before enlisting generally worked in lower-income, low mobile jobs that some of their friends never escaped. Additionally, those who attended college before enlisting often enrolled at community colleges, where commuting and part-time enrollment may interfere with friendship building, even among those who were able to keep up with these friends during military service. Family networks generally yield few upwardly mobile job contacts; parents are often poorly educated and working in low-income and unstable jobs that are not unlike the jobs that many respondents may have taken as teenagers.

Respondents who lacked both civilian or military-related social contacts and military-specific skills required by the defense-related industry faced barriers to upwardly mobile employment.

Decisions and Factors behind Divergent Tracks: Struggling Workers and Full-time GI Bill Students

Positive and Negative Impact on Education and Employment: Moving (back) in with Parents

For financial and personal reasons, many respondents had little choice but to move back in with their parents or other family members for short or long periods after they left military service. Many were motivated to do this because of their plans to attend college. Even though the pre- and post-9/11 GI bills offer some stipends and perks, these benefits do not always provide enough for living expenses, and individuals do not always have the foresight or ability to save money during their service tenure to buffer the transition from military to civilian life.

Respondents who had to do this reported that that living with parents was distracting and felt like a step backwards. They did not want to or like living with parents because they felt less independent and grown-up. However, although respondents severely disliked having to move back in with parents, they were generally grateful to have the support, and it seemed to pay off positively in the end by easing financial strain on new veterans as they searched for employment or attended college.

Eugene, a child of a Latin American immigrant mother explains that he enlisted in the military to get away from his mother who controlled much of his life pre-military. He felt that moving back in with her was going 'right back to what I wanted to escape from basically' because he was dependent on his mother which he felt was less of an adult role. However, with the cost of going back to school and the low level of military educational benefits received, he determined that living at home would allow him to focus on school full-time while working part-time to pay living expenses would negatively impact his college performance. He planned to get enough credits and perform well enough at the local community college in order to transfer to a 4-year program and potentially earn scholarships or other types of support to complete his degree. Although he tried this route before he enlisted in the military, he was certain that the self-discipline he learned in the military would help him stay on track academically, and in fact, this time he was able to carry out his plans successfully. He performed well enough in community college to transfer into a 4-year degree program which he was one semester from completing at the time of his interview.

Because of a non-military related health disorder, Judy was discharged early from the military –after just 3 years – and received a small level of educational benefits. Upon discharge, she moved back in with her parents and her plan was to immediately enroll in a community college close to home. However, she was discharged after a new semester had just begun and she had to wait a few months before she could enroll. In the meantime, she was also transitioning from military to civilian life:

> Yes, oh my god, my transition was so tough. I didn't know what I was going to do. I was getting mad at everybody. I was like, "You're not showing up on time!" because I had that military mentality. And everybody was like, "You need to calm down." I just wanted to do something and I came at a time when school had just started, so I couldn't register. So I just did nothing for the first couple months and that was torture. I did, I tortured everybody around me. But I did cook a lot.

And as Gretchen pointed out earlier, she 'sucked it up and moved back with my parents for six months', but as soon as she got her finances together, she left to rent rooms on her own. This actually may have delayed or inhibited her college completion because of the various jobs she had to take in order to pay her bills and attend school.

Each of the respondents who moved in with parents after military discharge were reluctant to do so but felt that easing the financial strain was well worth it. Most respondents who were most motivated to enlist in order to relieve 'burdens' on their families planned ahead

enough to avoid moving in with their parents altogether, and they were fortunate enough that they were not injured too much to care for themselves. In addition, respondents who did move in with their families felt justified in doing so because they had concrete plans to attend school, which they fulfilled.

Positive Impact on Employment and Education: Planning Ahead

Adam a U.S. born child of Colombian immigrants moved to southern California as soon as he left military service and enrolled in community college there, even though he did not have connections or friends in the area:

> I thought it was a good environment. I didn't want to go somewhere where I had friends. I didn't want a distraction. I really wanted to focus and I thought that if I was in [southern California] people there would seem hungrier than at home, where people look at you like, "Chill"… Hunger, like they want to go to school, they want to transfer, they want to be somebody. I needed that energy around me, people who wanted to do what I wanted to do and motivate me.

Adam was fortunate to have enough educational benefits to cover most of his tuition and fees, and he was quickly able to find part-time work and he lived frugally in order to pay his living expenses. This enabled him to avoid 'distractions' such as his family and old friends who were focused on making and spending money and not focused on school. Adam also benefitted for two other reasons. First, he thought ahead and applied for colleges while he was still enlisted, ensuring that he would be able to enter school soon after leaving service rather than waiting to start the process, which had greater potential to become sidetracked. Second, he was discharged just before the beginning of a new semester, so he did not have to delay enrollment for months, as many must do.

Negative Impact on Education and Employment: Family Obligations

Family circumstances intervened in the educational careers of some respondents. Despite struggling with his grades in high school, Marco performed really well in the military and was recruited for an officer training program that would pay for his college education at a participating college of his choice while he was still enlisted. He wanted to major in electrical engineering, but his mother died and he had four sisters under the age of 18 growing up without a father or mother that he had some responsibilities in caring for. Although he was able to stay in the officer training program, he chose a university nearer to his family than he had originally planned to do and switched his major to History because he did not think he would be able to meet the demands of an engineering degree and his family obligations at the same time. At the time of the interview, he was working at a private company in the defense industry, a job he enjoyed and described as well-paying and utilized some of his military skills training and experience. However, after military service he suffered bouts of unemployment and managed distributions at a national soft-drink company, a job that he was not passionate about:

> So I started college, and trying to be there for my sisters became a priority. So some of my college work suffered, but I knew, at least that's how I try to justify it, that my sisters were more priority than my education. It sucks, looking back, that I had a good opportunity where I could have gotten my engineering degree to try to get a job out in the real world, how much that would have helped. But I still have my sisters and they're not drug addicts or something.

Bernard, a child of Central American immigrants, also had family obligations that made him more interested in having and keeping a job than going to college. His girlfriend became pregnant when he was still enlisted; he was enrolled in college but took fewer classes to spend more time with his wife and baby.

For veterans married to current service members, finding a civilian job is often difficult because of the transitory nature of military service. Ashley, the daughter of a Latin American immigrant, found it hard to be hired as a dental assistant, even though she holds the training and the jobs are in high demand, because she did not know when her husband would be deployed to a different state:

> I'm technically a registered dental assistant in [state]. I could be working in a doctor's office. But because we're leaving, doctors don't want someone that is going to be gone. People get nervous going to the dentist as it is. They don't want a different face every time…So it was really, really hard for me to find a job with him being military, not necessarily because we knew we were going to be leaving in a year. I mean, we had just gotten here… So they don't want to hire military spouses.

Although Ashley does not have to reveal her marriage status or marriage to a military service member during her job interviews, she always does in order to be upfront with her potential employers. She found other, less well-paid, less stable work and was attending college part-time at the time of the interview.

Steven, the son of Asian immigrants, also did not hurry to find a job when he transitioned out of military service, because his wife wanted to complete another semester of college before relocating back to their hometown:

> I was intermittently looking for work. But I knew—well, one of the reasons why I didn't try as hard as I could, because I knew whatever work I got it wasn't going to be long because my wife wants to go home to [town]. So for work it's just going to be a part-time job, and going from working for four years in the [military] to part-time job, it's just kind of weird. So I was looking for work, but more like, 'I'll just wait. I was waiting 'til she's done with this semester and we'll go home and then I'll do something more serious, either go, really join the [police department] this time or go back to school.'

Steven had little incentive to hustle to find a job in a town that he did not plan to stay in, and between their savings and income from her part-time job, they had enough to live on until they moved back to their hometown to be nearer to both their families.

Negative Impact to Post-Military Employment: Deployment to Remote Areas before Military Separation

Van, the son of Southeast Asian immigrants, found it hard to look for and apply for jobs when he was deployed in Iraq.

> That's another thing about the deployment, too, is if you're in the military and you're state side you can at least put your [job] packet in. While you're working your job, you can look for the other one. But when you're employed at Iraq for 15 months, you can't even do anything and so it's unemployment by choice I guess.

Van points out the lack of accessibility related to the job search when deployed in remote areas – in this case, the Iraq conflict zone. He wanted to work for the federal government, too, which imposes application deadlines which may only be a few days after the position is announced.

GI Bill Students Going (Back) to College

Still Lacking: Career Directions

Despite their years in the military, most respondents were uncertain about what careers to pursue after their military careers were over. For most, the military did not provide a direct career path to employment, so most newly-discharged veterans had to start their post-service careers almost from scratch. Many respondents expected this and planned to complete a bachelor's degree after their military service and figure out their career plans at that time, as Deepak discusses:

> I had… [a] plan for me. The military was a place for me to grow up, and I knew that I just wanted to do four years and after that I wanted to use the GI Bill money to go to school. So once I got out that's what I went and did.

Even though Deepak chose the military specialty electrician's mate because the skills seemed transferable to the civilian labor market, once he completed his service term, he did not desire to pursue that as a career - he did not have specific ideas about what he did want to pursue. In addition, becoming an electrician in the civilian labor market would require further training and experience, costing time and money to pursue because his time in the military did not qualify him for an civilian jobs. At the time of the interview, Deepak was completing his last year in a 4-year university, where he was majoring in English. His pathway to his degree was pretty straightforward: upon discharge, he moved back in with his mother, helping out in her small business while he attended community college. He did well in community college, which he attended for two-and-a-half years and transferred to a 4-year college to complete his degree. At the time of the interview, he was in his final year of a bachelor's degree program and was planning to take a year off to travel around the country before finding a job.

In general, children of immigrants who enlisted in the military did so with vague career plans and basic desires to attend college – but few had specific plans or concrete goals about what to pursue when they enlisted. Unlike smooth job transitioners who were often content to stay in a field similar to their military occupation, military service provided little guidance or inspiration to *GI Bill student veterans* about future careers. Either technical skills were not transferable to upwardly mobile jobs in the civilian labor force, or respondents were uninterested in pursuing careers in the areas in which they were trained. Matt, the son of Latin-American immigrants mentioned in Chapter 3, found his original aspiration to be a jet mechanic as a limiting career path and realized that he wanted more. However, most valued the soft skills - the discipline, motivation and self-efficacy - gained during their service tenure much more than the specific technical skills they acquired. The soft skills were viewed as highly transferable to any upwardly mobile job. Respondents' career plans, though often vague, were oriented toward careers with advancement opportunities and stability.

A much smaller group of respondents did have concrete career plans when they completed their military service tenure, but generally these stemmed from pre-military plans.

Financing and Attending College

Educational benefits, which require little input for a large payoff, may motivate upwardly mobile children of immigrants to enlist to help fulfill their college plans. In this section, I will briefly describe the educational benefits available to respondents at the time they enlisted; the benefits described here also correspond to the benefits available for young adults from the ADD Health cohort study. In 1984, the Montgomery GI Bill Active Duty program was introduced. Educational benefits can be used for a variety of degree- and non-degree programs, including college or vocational school, on-the-job training, licensing, certification tests, and flight school (Veterans' Benefits Administration 2011). Benefits covered up to 36 months of education to be used during active duty or after separation; service members were required to contribute $100 a month from their paychecks for 12 months and possess a high school diploma or GED in order to be eligible for the benefit (Veterans' Benefits Administration 2011). Benefits must be used within 10 years and required 3 years of continuous military service. Service members who failed to provide the monthly contribution or who did not fulfill the 3-year obligation were not eligible for the benefit.

More recently, the Montgomery GI Bill was replaced by the Post-9/11 GI Bill, implemented in August of 2009 (National Academies Press 2010), which offers much more comprehensive and generous funding for post-9/11 service members than was previously available. Like the Montgomery GI Bill, individuals can enroll in a variety of degree and non-degree programs such as colleges and trade schools, on-the-job training and apprenticeships and flight schools, licensing and certification testing (Veterans Benefits Administration 2012). Unlike the Montgomery GI Bill, individuals are not required to contribute to the benefit in order to receive it, but service members must have served for a minimum of 90 days since September 11, 2001. The maximum benefits payable depend on time in service; to be eligible for 100% benefits, one must have served for at least 36 months on active-duty since September 11, 2001; the lowest available benefit is 40% for those who served 90 days to 6 months. Benefits include full-tuition and fees for in-state public schools and up to $18,000 per year for approved private institutions, with some exceptions, a monthly housing allowance based on zip code of the school, and a $1,000 allowance for books and supplies per year (Veterans Benefits Administration 2012). Benefits must be used within 15 years.

Because the ADD Health cohort was last interviewed in 2007-08, each enlisted under the Montgomery GI Bill benefits structure, though many of those veterans, because they served at least 90 days since 9/11, are now eligible for the Post-9/11 GI Bill. Likewise, none of the interview respondents enlisted after the implementation of the Post-9/11 GI Bill, and were not motivated by its more generous benefits to enlist. However, the majority is eligible to use the benefits and many were doing so at the time of their interview, impacting outcomes of military service.

Even though children of immigrants enlisted to obtain educational benefits, these benefits are often inadequate for covering tuition, fees and living expenses, particularly before the implementation of the Post-9/11 GI Bill. In most cases, veterans who enrolled in post-secondary school after separation reported attending community colleges in order to keep costs down – many first enrolled and used up all benefits available to them under the Montgomery GI Bill, before the Post-9/11 GI Bill was implemented. In addition, implementation of the Post-9/11 GI Bill has not been smooth; backlogs and processing problems have caused delays in program

enrollment as well as delays in payments of living stipends and tuition fees payments (GAO 2011)

As discussed in Chapter 3, earning GI Bill benefits to complete a college degree during or after military service was listed as a very important determinant of enlistment among children of immigrants. Many individuals who lacked bachelor's degrees before enlistment enrolled in college classes while serving in the military, but only enlisted members who were recruited into officer training programs completed college degrees during their service tenure. Officer training programs require bachelor's degree attainment and provide guidance, programs, and financing for service members to enroll in and complete college during their lengthier service terms.

Sometimes events such as marriage, having children, meeting other family obligations, health issues or just the financial strain of re-establishing independence after military discharge made completing a college degree not as immediate or as universal among veteran children of immigrants as many had hoped. Many service members and some of the respondents experienced physical or mental disabilities including post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury, which sometimes interfered with daily living activities along with work and educational issues.

Stricter pre-9/11 educational benefit GI bills had time limits and other requirements that the more generous post 9/11 GI bills lacked, which also affected college attendance and completion among those serving pre-9/11. For example, Arlene, a child of Filipino immigrants who served in the late 1990s, reported that once she left service, she was so wrapped up in work and family – she was married to a fellow service member and moved around the country with him after her discharge – that she was did not make plans to use her GI bill educational benefits until it was too late, and they had expired.

Those who made plans to attend college often knew they would face challenges and barriers to completing a degree, such as family obligations and the financial constraints of supporting oneself and attending college, and many actively made choices to improve their chances at success. Some moved back home with family members after discharge in order to save on rent and get back on their feet while they prepared themselves to attend school, or in order to attend an affordable community college close by. Others could not or would not move in with family or were hesitant to live in their old neighborhoods, where they may be pulled into circumstances that would sidetrack them. Even though veterans described themselves as more motivated and disciplined than they were before enlistment, they did not view themselves as immune to outside influences – the pressures of everyday living, such as finding jobs, earning money, attending school, and being involved with their families.

Apart from making sure to have enough funds to pay for every-day living, transitioning to college after military service was not always easy. Adam, the son of Latin American immigrants, found being in a classroom really challenging after leaving military service. The pace of the class and the environment were difficult for him to become used to:

> My first class, first of all, transitioning was really, really hard for me, and god, it was a nightmare. I withdrew my first class. I didn't understand what this professor was saying, like everybody was moving so fast. I felt so slow. So I had to withdraw my first class in the summer. And then I was talking to a bunch of people. My mentor was really, really helpful, and I went back in the fall immediately and I was just acing everything. I don't know what happened. They told me something and I sat down with some counselors and things got a lot better. I think it was just transitioning that was difficult for me. And it didn't

> allow me to think and concentrate. But then I was doing well…I was 4.0 which is kind of easy in community college. I was doing very well.

Adam was able to overcome the challenges of the transition, but it is easy to imagine that many others are not. Adam did not connect his difficult transition to any physical or psychological issue, but many individuals with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injuries (TBI) may go through similar or worse experiences when they return to college but they may not reach out to counselors that can help them, or their particular injury or disorder is so severe that it impedes college going. Researchers estimate that 10% to 18% of Afghanistan and Iraq veterans suffer from PTSD (Litz and Schlenger 2009). Post-traumatic stress disorder is an anxiety disorder that some people get after living through or seeing a dangerous event, and have a range of symptoms that can include difficulty concentrating, feeling tense or on edge, having trouble sleeping and other symptoms, all of which can interfere with everyday life (National Institutes of Mental Health 2012). As the discussion in Chapter 3 showed, most military enlisters were not very concerned about their mortality before enlistment, and they were even less concerned with PTSD, TBI, limb loss and other injuries. They did not consider the potential consequences of such injuries, which can impact educational and work trajectories if the injuries impede or slow down learning and concentration, or make every-day living difficult.

Inadequate educational funds not only encouraged moving back in with parents, it also delayed or blocked degree completion. Gretchen, the daughter of Latin American immigrants, talks about her experience:

> I got a job working for Radio Shack, and they were gonna train me to be one of the store managers. I worked there for three weeks and thought, 'This isn't for me.' And then I just sucked it up and moved back with my parents for six months… until I found a room I could rent… I did use the GI Bill, but it wasn't like it is now. Now they get the post-9/11, and they get paid housing and books, and at the time, the old [Montgomery] GI Bill, no, I got $1,200.00 a month for the months I was in school. And they don't give you the money upfront so you can pay for your school. You have to figure out a way to pay for your school, then you start getting paid monthly and so it was hard to manage that, especially living in [state]. So I would rent rooms and I joined the reserve unit. That's how I got affiliated with this unit. I got money for my drill weekends, for gas, I got my GI Bill, I used it for books and rent, and I had a part-time job at the city with the soccer league, I worked at the YMCA after-school program with a group of kids, so I was hustling.

She left the military in 2004 and used much of her GI benefits before the 2009 enactment of the post-9/11 GI Bill, which she would have been eligible for, had she known that it would be implemented. She also describes the struggle of paying for school, even with GI Bill assistance, and re-enlisted as a Reserve member to supplement her income. She eventually completed a bachelor's degree and was enrolled in a Master's degree program at the time of the interview. Although she served as a Reservist, she was activated to full-time active-duty a few months before the interview because of a shortage of military personnel available for the job; she served as a military family social services coordinator. She wanted the job to transition back to its original form as a civilian position so she could apply for it as a civilian – it pays a lot more as a civilian position than as a military position.

Most of the respondents who were full-time GI Bill students who completed associate's degrees and transferred to 4-year universities were single, without dependents. This may reflect a limitation of the snowball sample or it may suggest that individuals with fewer family obligations are the most likely to use college benefits to attend a 4-year degree program because findings from Chapter 4 did not uncover these relationships. Chapter 4 demonstrated that that married veterans were not more or less likely to have achieved a bachelor's degree than unmarried veterans; veterans with children were also as likely to have attained a bachelor's degree as those without children.

Re-integrating to Civilian Life after Serving during a Period of Conflict

Though generally not related directly to post-military trajectories, serving in the military during a war encouraged enlisters to consider their roles as service members in ways that they may otherwise not have confronted. Some felt positively about their roles, some negative, and others felt a mix of emotions.

Manuel enlisted in the military post-9/11. During his service, which only lasted 2 years, he was never deployed to a combat zone. He did become a conscientious objector of the Afghanistan and Iraq conflicts but was not recognized as such nor was he granted release from his service obligations due to his objector status:

> I was like, "How the hell did I join the military whose main goal, whose main function is to make war?" and I never wrestled with my feelings about war and I never even looked into what war looks like and how it plays out and what my role is in it.

Manuel was eventually court-martialed and dishonorably discharged for refusing to fulfill parts of his service obligation. Individuals who separate from the military with a dishonorable discharge are not entitled to any educational benefits they may have earned from service and generally do not have access to Veterans' Administration programs or medical care.

Still, others felt that their impact as service members in Iraq was positive. Steven, the son of Southeast Asian immigrants remarked that he was proud of doing his part to help the Iraqi citizens; he was deployed to Iraq three times and saw improvements in infrastructure and other areas that he felt were beneficial to the people living there.

Ray, the son of Central American immigrants was proud of his accomplishments and humanitarian assistance during the Iraq war, despite losing belief in the war's cause over time:

> Not everybody can just go in and do what we did. You know I'm not trying to toot my own horn over here or anything like that, but I think we had a sense of accomplishment as far as what we've done. Granted, I honestly believe that the war is you know full of BS [bullshit] and why we went there - I don't even want to get into that. The fact [is] that we were able to go ahead and accomplish all the tasks we were told to do in remarkable time. And what we were able to do for those people out there for humanitarian assistance I think that was more rewarding than the actual firing of my rifle…..Oh yeah, the war, you know– we got lied to. We were told that there were weapons of mass destruction - that was a big indicator of why I wanted to continue fighting the way. We were out hunting down Saddam. We needed to get rid of Al Qaeda. I bought into all that, you know, I bought into it. And of course I felt it was my duty to go ahead and fight those guys out there, because I saw the damage when the plane hit the Pentagon

> first hand, you know. I think it affected me a lot more. So my biggest thing was I didn't want to fight the terrorists here at home, I wanted to make sure I got them in their own ground. Like I said I just bought into it, and I reenlisted when I was in the Middle East.

Some individuals deployed into combat zones were glad that their support occupations were less risky than direct combat roles, while others wished they had more active participation in the conflict. Because of the greater risk of death involved in combat jobs, many veterans and service members saw those positions as more prestigious than other jobs. Eugene, the son of a Mexican mother was deployed to Iraq describes his support occupation as a grunt job that he looked down on; he really wanted to be involved in combat missions:

> But I didn't get to go on all the prestigious combat missions and stuff….I got the bitch work which was testing, testing aircraft.

The higher risk of death among combat roles was viewed as a badge of honor by Eugene, and several other respondents – particularly those who were involved in combat roles during the conflict.

Ximena, the daughter of Mexican immigrants never deployed to a conflict zone and expressed mixed feelings about the Afghan and Iraq conflicts and war in general:

> I don't necessarily advocate for the war. But we need to support our soldiers. But if there's some way that we can bring peace without all this massacre and what's going on right now, I would be the first to [root] for it. And it's a necessary evil.

Although enlisted service members are sometimes depicted as individuals with unquestioned confidence in their service during war, individuals reacted to their service in different ways. A few enlisted in service with neutral to positive thoughts about the conflict; some changed their minds and viewed it as a negative, unnecessary conflict. But the story becomes even more complicated – changing one's mind led one person to work hard to leave the military before his service term was complete, while others bore out their duties to complete their terms and chose not to reenlist.

Section Conclusion

Although one might think that individuals who migrated to the U.S. at a young age or whose parents originated from other countries could feel less obligation or interest in risking their lives as service members in the U.S. military, none of the respondents expressed such a sentiment – even among those who became disillusioned by the war. Self-selection probably underlies this finding. Individuals who feel a weak connection to the United States are probably less to enlist than those who feel stronger ties. In addition, individuals with very negative experience in the military may have been less likely to sign up for the study to talk about their military experiences.

Conclusion

Children of immigrants enlisted in the military with high hopes to improve their educational and labor market trajectories in the long run, but Chapter 4 showed us that veterans experienced an educational deficit compared to non-veterans and labor market outcomes did not suffer or benefit. This chapter digs deeper into the story, finding three separate trajectories

behind those findings. Some veterans, the smooth job transitioners, choose not to attend post-secondary school or complete post-bachelor training because they are satisfied with the careers they establish post-military. Others, struggling workers, struggle to work and cannot add post-secondary enrollment to their plate. Still others, GI Bill students, were in the process of using their educational benefits as they had originally intended to do before enlistment: to gain bachelor's degrees and pursue upwardly mobile careers.

Smooth transitioners and GI Bill students generally remarked that their military experience did engrain them with the discipline and follow-through that motivated them to serve in the first place. They described their current success – in a career or in college – as stemming in part from these characteristics acquired from their military service. They felt that the military molded them into better workers and better individuals than they were before they enlisted. Smooth job transitioners were generally satisfied with their job prospects and their earnings, which they sometimes perceived as higher than others with even more education. GI Bill students often did not want to work in an occupation that was similar to their military job training but still wanted to get ahead. Struggling workers often expressed a wider range of feelings. Some felt that the military transferred positive skills and discipline, and they viewed these skills as relevant and helpful in their lives. Others were more frustrated that the job training they received was not transferable to civilian life.

Although not explored much in this chapter, the consequences of physical injuries and disorders such as post-traumatic stress syndrome likely play roles in the success or failure of veterans to transition into post-service work and education. Some individuals, because of an injury or PTSD, may have difficulty finding and keeping jobs for short periods or for the rest of their lives. Others may benefit from special programs, such as Veterans' Preference policies for disabled veterans, as they transition into civilian work.

Overall, these findings point to divergent employment trajectories among veteran children of immigrants, with some realizing their hopes of job training and upwardly mobile careers, with others realizing their educational aspirations, while others face unemployment or underemployment and blocked access to completing college degrees.

CHAPTER 6
Conclusion

This dissertation asks three questions. Is military enlistment and service regarded as an institutional strategy for socio-economic mobility among children of immigrants? If so, what socio-demographic characteristics predict actual enlistment? If military service is used as a strategy to get ahead, is it a successful strategy? Do children of immigrants who serve in the military reap gains from their service? In this chapter I will briefly review my answers to these three questions before asking a fourth question: what does this study of veteran children of immigrants tell us about processes of immigrant incorporation and in particular, the roles that institutions play in immigrant incorporation?

The Incorporation of Children of Immigrants

Political and popular debates on immigration focus largely on the social and economic outcomes of immigrants and their children. How will newcomers fit into U.S. society? Will they successfully integrate into the middle-class and earn the American Dream like earlier immigrant groups? Or will they become burdens on the American public by relying on welfare and becoming involved in criminal activities?

Early immigration scholars asserted that children of immigrants will become more assimilated into Americans society than their parents. In turn, their children will become even more integrated, and so on for each immigrant generation until the descendants become rather indistinguishable from the mainstream with perhaps the exception of an ethnic surname or the celebration of an ethnic holiday. But today's immigration scholars assert that either outcome is possible but are highly dependent on the racial origin of immigrants and the family resources they have at their disposal. Educated immigrants who arrive and gain entry into middle-class occupations give their children a head start over the lower-skilled immigrants with little education who enter poorly-paid, unstable jobs. But the story becomes even more complicated than that: empirical evidence demonstrates that darker skinned immigrants and their children, such as West Indians and other Caribbeans, face a racialized American society that forces them into African-American neighborhoods, despite their often high levels of education and entrance into middle-skilled occupations in the U.S. On the other hand, this racialized system elevates Asian immigrants and their children above those with darker-skin, allowing Asian-origin immigrants to move into better neighborhoods, with better schools. As a result, the barriers and opportunities afforded to these groups create bumpier or smoother pathways to upward mobility.

But immigrants and their children do not sit idly by as social structures push them in one direction of incorporation or another. Recent immigrant research highlights the choices and decisions in immigrants and their children make in their every-day lives to try to get ahead. These choices and decisions are shaped by the opportunities and barriers presented by social structures, race, and family background, but they are not completely determined by them. This dissertation highlights this dynamic interplay between individual and structural barriers and opportunities, institutional opportunities and individual choice.

Dissertation Highlights and Contribution to Immigration Literature

This research explores an ignored institutional pathway to integration: the U.S. military institution. I assert that the military is perceived as an alternative pathway to incorporation among disadvantaged children of immigrants. Rather than relying on ethnic social ties and

networks to get ahead as segmented assimilation asserts is necessary for success among disadvantaged children of immigrants, they actively avoid downward mobility by choosing military service as an alternative pathway. The military offers stable short-term employment, money for college, and job training in an organized environment away from home and old neighborhoods, offering enlisters many opportunities to scale mobility ladders that may not have otherwise been available to them in ethnic enclaves. I speculate that military enlistment is part of a strategy to fulfill family obligations while positioning oneself to acquire job training and education to get good jobs in the future.

As I have shown in Chapters 2 and 3, children of immigrants with mediocre high school grades but higher levels of cognitive ability, high college aspirations, and low-levels of family financial or educational resources utilized the U.S. military institution to improve their labor market and educational prospects. In other words, children of immigrants who enlisted made a calculated choice based on the options they perceived available to them, anticipating that the military's educational benefits, job training, and self-efficacy training would provide them with the skills, tools, and resources they needed to get ahead. Although these children of immigrants had other pathways available to them, including college enrollment, entry into the labor market or a combination of both, their circumstances encouraged them to consider the military option: free job training, stable financial remuneration for the duration of the military contract, and free money for higher education.

Analyses on the success of the military as a strategy for educational and economic mobility are mixed, however. Chapters 4 and 5 reveal that veteran children of immigrants are not generally successful in fulfilling their pre-service ambitions, at least by the ages of 24 to 32. Results show that veteran children of immigrants are less likely to attain bachelor's degrees or be enrolled in post-secondary institutions than non-veteran children of immigrants, a negative and unanticipated outcome for those who enlisted with such high educational hopes. However, these results are tempered by the finding that although one group of veterans do not achieve the higher education they had originally planned to gain from service, but they successfully acquire good, stable jobs at pay scales they find to be satisfactory. Therefore, although they did not hit their pre-service educational target, they achieved their original goal of finding good, stable jobs. The college degree was not necessary for them to fulfill their goals. On the other hand, another group is highly disadvantaged; they struggle to find work or are underemployed and lacking college degrees is detrimental. Another group were successfully enrolled in 4-year colleges and seemed to be on their way degree completion, but only time will tell how they will fare in the labor market.

Chapter 3 also reveals that unemployment rates and earnings are similar between the groups, showing no particular gain or loss from military service. The only potentially positive outcome is a greater likelihood of working in the government sector – which may provide better working conditions and better health and other benefits plans than civilian positions. If working conditions or benefits of government work translate to greater job stability and quality of life, then military service is indirectly beneficial to veterans who enter government occupations. However, these findings are tempered by qualitative findings in Chapter 5 that demonstrate divergent positive and negative employment pathways among veterans that are concealed in the aggregate outcomes shown in the statistical analyses. As discussed in the previous section on educational attainment, although some veterans are able to translate their military work experience or connections into well-paying, stable civilian positions, another group fails to succeed in the labor market. Transitioning from military to civilian life is disruptive and difficult

and may be further exacerbated by physical disabilities or mental health disorders acquired from military service.

Overall, this research shows that using the military institution as a pathway to upward mobility may have paid off for some, but was detrimental to others who were unable to translate their military occupational skills and job training into civilian jobs and who were unable to complete college degrees.

Recent Policy Changes May Improve the Impact of Military Service on Veterans

However, recent policy changes to improve veterans' employment specifically target those who are least successful in the labor market. The 2011 Veteran's Opportunity to Work to Hire Heroes Act offers tax incentives that encourage private employers to hire unemployed veterans and disabled veterans (White House Business Council 2012). In addition, special job training and education programs are offered to veterans aged 35 to 60 (White House Business Council 2012). This policy has the potential to lower unemployment levels and increase educational attainment of veterans on an aggregate level, potentially creating differences between veteran children of immigrants and non-veteran children of immigrants and tipping military service to an overall positive institutional influence to veterans of all immigrant generations.

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APPENDIX

Table 1: NLSY97 Descriptive Statistics, Wave 1, by Immigrant Generation
(in percent unless otherwise noted)

(in percent unless otherwise noted)		**Children of Native-born**	**Children of Immigrants**
Socio-Demographics			
Race/Ethnicity			
	White	62.5	24.7
	Asian	0.8	12
	Black	16.7	7.8
	Latino	7.5	46.9
	Other	12.4	8.6
Female		48.9	47.5
Year Born (Mean)		1982	1982
Military Enlistment Criteria			
ASVAB Score (Mean)		50.3	47.3
Weight, self-reported			
	Low	2.8	3.8
	Very Low	12.6	15.3
	Average	56.9	54.6
	High	23.8	21.9
	Very High	4	4.3
Family Background during Adolescence			
Language other than English spoken in household		15.1	71.5
Household Structure			
	2 Biological Parents	51.6	62.8
	1 Biological + 1 Other parent	15	10.4
	1 Biological Parent only	28.1	23.7
	No parent	5.3	3.1
Highest Level of Parental Education			
	Less than High School	11.2	28.6
	High school Only	31.8	19.8
	Some College	27.6	21.6
	Bachelor's Degree or Higher	29.4	30
Parental Income, 1997 (Mean)		29,524	27,631
High school grades			
	Mostly Ds	3.2	2.9
	Mostly Cs	19.3	19.3

Mostly Bs	38.5	41.7
Mostly As	36.6	33.9
As to Cs	2.4	2.2
School Type		
Public	90.6	89.7
Parochial	6.1	6.9
Private, not parochial	0.1	1.2
Other	2.4	2.1
Metropolitan Statistical Area		
In MSA, Central City	25.1	34.1
In MSA, Not in Central City	52.9	61.1
Not in MSA	22	4.7
Region		
West	18.3	38.2
Midwest	28.1	15
South	35.6	25.5
Northeast	18	21.1
N	1,540	7,443

Source: National Longitudinal Surveys of Youth 1997

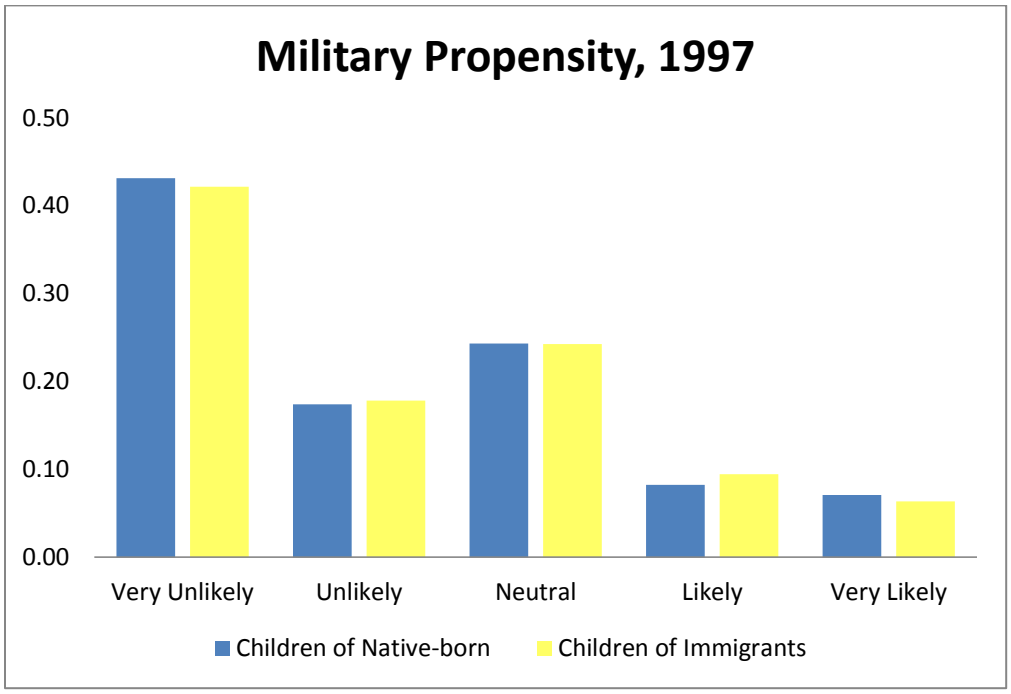
Table 2: ADD Health Descriptive Characteristics, by Immigrant Generation, Waves 1-4

(in percent unless otherwise noted)	**Children of Native-born Original data**	**Children of Immigrants Original data**
Ever Served, Active-Duty Military		
Socio-Demographics		
Race/Ethnicity		
Asian, non-Latino	1.0	19.6
Black, non-Latino	17.7	5.6
Latino	6.1	51.6
Other, non-Latino	2.6	3.6
White, non-Latino	72.6	19.6
Female	49.3	49.1
Picture Vocabulary Test Percentile Score (Mean)	102.2	95.4
Body Mass Index (Mean)	23.4	23.4
High school dropout	7.4	8.4
Family Background during Adolescence		
Language other than English spoken in youth household	1.0	45.2
Household Structure		
2 biological parents	54.7	59.6
1 biological + 1 other parent	10.9	8.5
1 biological parent only	28.6	26.0
No biological parent present	5.9	6.0
Highest Parental Education Completed		
Less than High School	38.3	49.2
High school only	4.8	3.3
Some College	22.6	16.8
Bachelor's Degree or More	34.3	30.1
Parental Income 1994 (Mean)	$ 46,696	$ 38,415
High School Grades (GPA)		
Less than 1.75 GPA	16.4	14.9
1.75 to 2.49 GPA	27.2	26.3
2.50 to 3.24 GPA	32.3	36.1
3.25 or higher GPA	24.2	22.8
GPA (Mean)	2.58	2.6
School Type		
Public	93.7	94.1

Catholic Private	3.1	3.8
Other Private	3.3	2.1
Residential Context during Adolescence		
Region		
West	14.2	32.8
Northeast	13.0	17.4
South	38.9	35.8
Midwest	33.8	14.1
Metropolitan Area		
Urban	22.6	50.5
Suburban	60.5	44.1
Rural	16.9	5.4
N	2,616	12,076

Source: National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (ADD Health), Waves I-IV

Figure 1: Descriptive Statistics: Military Propensity among Children of Immigrants versus Children of the Native Born using the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, 1997



Source: National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (ADD Health), Wave I

Table 3: Determinants of Military Propensity, using the NLSY97: Ordinal Regression Analyses

	Model 1	***Model 2***	***Model3***
	Children of Immigrants	**Children of Native-born**	**Joint: Children of Immigrants + Children of Native-born**
Socio-Demographics			
Race/Ethnicity (White, non-Latino omitted)			
Asian, non-Latino	0.763	0.691	0.727
	(0.190)	(0.217)	(0.133)
Black, non-Latino	0.999	0.920	0.916
	(0.257)	(0.0675)	(0.0658)
Latino	0.952	1.025	0.998
	(0.183)	(0.0951)	(0.0808)
Other	0.915	0.989	0.982
	(0.246)	(0.0882)	(0.0826)
Immigrant Generational Status (Children of Native-born omitted)			
Children of Immigrants	n/a	n/a	0.990
			(0.0788)
Female	0.727*	0.565***	0.585***
	(0.0939)	(0.0289)	(0.0282)
Year Born	1.068	1.034	1.038*
	(0.0464)	(0.0201)	(0.0181)
Military Enlistment Criteria			
ASVAB Percentile Score	0.994*	0.999	0.998*
	(0.00259)	(0.00104)	(0.000951)
Weight 1997, Self-reported (Very Low omitted)			
Low	0.713	1.011	0.951
	(0.213)	(0.190)	(0.159)
Medium	0.765	1.085	1.019
	(0.207)	(0.172)	(0.142)
High	0.848	1.082	1.030
	(0.260)	(0.176)	(0.150)
Very High	0.599	0.930	0.855
	(0.241)	(0.187)	(0.157)
Family Background During Adolescence			
Language Other than English Spoken in Youth Household	1.035	1.020	1.015

	(0.145)	(0.0876)	(0.0717)
Household Structure, 1997 (2 Biological Parents omitted)			
1 biological + 1 other parent	1.289	1.165*	1.176*
	(0.275)	(0.0879)	(0.0835)
1 biological parent only	1.114	1.051	1.064
	(0.162)	(0.0636)	(0.0602)
No parent in household	1.451	1.470**	1.459***
	(0.667)	(0.172)	(0.163)
Highest Parental Education Completed (Less than High School omitted)			
High School Only	1.160	0.858	0.915
	(0.205)	(0.0792)	(0.0733)
Some College	1.171	0.787**	0.852*
	(0.206)	(0.0729)	(0.0690)
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	0.999	0.767**	0.818*
	(0.182)	(0.0790)	(0.0707)
Parental Income 1997 (Logged)	1.029	0.980	0.987
	(0.0316)	(0.0130)	(0.0121)
High School Grades (Mostly Ds omitted)			
Mostly Cs	1.258	0.754	0.804
	(0.478)	(0.117)	(0.118)
Mostly Bs	1.182	0.773	0.815
	(0.463)	(0.115)	(0.115)
Mostly As	0.825	0.646**	0.666**
	(0.326)	(0.0996)	(0.0974)
As to Cs	1.278	0.693	0.741
	(0.665)	(0.151)	(0.151)
School Type (Public omitted)			
Parochial	1.135	0.889	0.933
	(0.278)	(0.0926)	(0.0880)
Private, Not Parochial	1.168	0.863	0.917
	(0.574)	(0.258)	(0.234)
Other	0.634	0.968	0.929
	(0.320)	(0.153)	(0.140)
Residential Context During Adolescence			
Region of Residence (West omitted)			
Northeast	1.114	0.870	0.889
	(0.246)	(0.0762)	(0.0709)

Midwest	1.039	0.935	0.952
	(0.165)	(0.0776)	(0.0690)
South	0.754	0.815*	0.821**
	(0.126)	(0.0715)	(0.0628)
Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) 1997 (In Central City omitted)			
MSA, Not in Central City	0.909	0.957	0.951
	(0.111)	(0.0624)	(0.0558)
Not in MSA	0.520	1.010	0.985
	(0.182)	(0.0780)	(0.0744)
C1	129.0	65.54	72.14*
	(88.58)	(37.91)	(34.00)
C2	129.8	66.27	72.87*
	(88.58)	(37.91)	(34.01)
C3	131.1	67.61	74.20*
	(88.58)	(37.91)	(34.01)
C4	132.1	68.51	75.12*
	(88.59)	(37.92)	(34.01)
N	1,540	7,443	8,983

Source: National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (ADD Health), Waves I-IV.
Significance: ***p<.001; **p<.01; *p<.05; standard errors in parentheses.

Table 4: Determinants of U.S. Military Enlistment by Early Adulthood using ADD Health, Odds Ratio Analyses

	Model 1	***Model 2***	***Model 3***
	Children of Immigrants Only	**Children of Native-born Only**	**Joint: Children of Native-born + Children of Immigrants**
Socio-Demographics			
Immigrant generation (Child of Native-born omitted)			1.411**
Child of Immigrants	n/a	n/a	(0.181)
Race/Ethnicity (White, non-Latino omitted)			
Black, non-Latino	1.490	0.761	1.045
	(0.477)	(0.283)	(0.187)
Latino	1.930	1.223	1.245*
	(0.764)	(0.130)	(0.125)
Asian, non-Latino	1.118	1.018	0.968
	(0.358)	(0.179)	(0.140)
Other, non-Latino	1.886	0.900	0.986
	(1.047)	(0.245)	(0.236)
Year born (1974 omitted)	1.019	1.031	1.032
	(0.0523)	(0.0242)	(0.0220)
Military Enlistment Criteria			
Picture Vocabulary Test Percentile Score	1.013*	1.025***	1.021***
	(0.00629)	(0.00368)	(0.00319)
Body Mass Index	1.041	1.043	1.040
	(0.0800)	(0.0292)	(0.0281)
Body Mass Index, squared	0.998	0.998***	0.998***
	(0.00145)	(0.000538)	(0.000520)
Family Background during Adolescence			
Language other than English spoken in youth household	0.712	0.603	0.823
	(0.148)	(0.288)	(0.140)
Household structure (Two biological parents omitted)			
1 biological + 1 other parent	1.527	1.865***	1.770***
	(0.454)	(0.221)	(0.193)
1 biological parent only	0.616*	1.353**	1.156

	(0.149)	(0.140)	(0.108)
No biological parent present	1.231	1.451*	1.345
	(0.424)	(0.265)	(0.216)
Highest Parental Education Completed (Less than high school omitted)			
High school only	1.201	1.207	1.206
	(0.570)	(0.238)	(0.218)
Some college completed	1.192	1.156	1.159
	(0.308)	(0.133)	(0.121)
Bachelor's degree or higher	0.746	0.981	0.941
	(0.179)	(0.107)	(0.0926)
Parental Income 1994, Logged	1.005	0.989	0.989
	(0.0855)	(0.0483)	(0.0412)
*High School Grades * Gender Interaction (Males, less than 1.75 GPA omitted)*			
Males, 1.75-2.49 GPA	2.984**	1.587*	1.776***
	(1.186)	(0.286)	(0.291)
Male, 2.50-3.24 GPA	1.666	1.158	1.247
	(0.861)	(0.198)	(0.210)
Male, 3.5 & above GPA	0.766	0.765	0.770
	(0.455)	(0.180)	(0.172)
Female, less than 1.75 GPA	0.299	0.158***	0.182***
	(0.219)	(0.0657)	(0.0621)
Female, 1.75-2.49 GPA	0.442	0.280***	0.305***
	(0.231)	(0.0716)	(0.0709)
Female, 2.50-3.24 GPA	0.339*	0.283***	0.295***
	(0.164)	(0.0650)	(0.0627)
Female, 3.5 & above GPA	0.204*	0.123***	0.136***
	(0.146)	(0.0391)	(0.0420)
School Type (private, non-Catholic omitted)			
Catholic private school	0.327	0.406**	0.392**
	(0.263)	(0.132)	(0.118)
Public school	0.723	0.674	0.682
	(0.503)	(0.145)	(0.137)
Residential Context during Adolescence			
Region (West omitted)			
Northeast	0.682	0.747*	0.741*
	(0.238)	(0.102)	(0.0898)

South	1.674*	1.249	1.262*
	(0.384)	(0.154)	(0.132)
Midwest	0.850	1.038	0.991
	(0.267)	(0.161)	(0.133)
Metropolitan Area (urban omitted)			
Suburban	1.162	0.894	0.921
	(0.243)	(0.0938)	(0.0843)
Rural	0.427	1.169	1.123
	(0.269)	(0.148)	(0.131)
N	2,573	11,738	14311

Source: National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (ADD Health), Waves I-IV.
Significance: ***p<.001; **p<.01; *p<.05; standard errors in parentheses.

Figure 2: Recruitment Connections

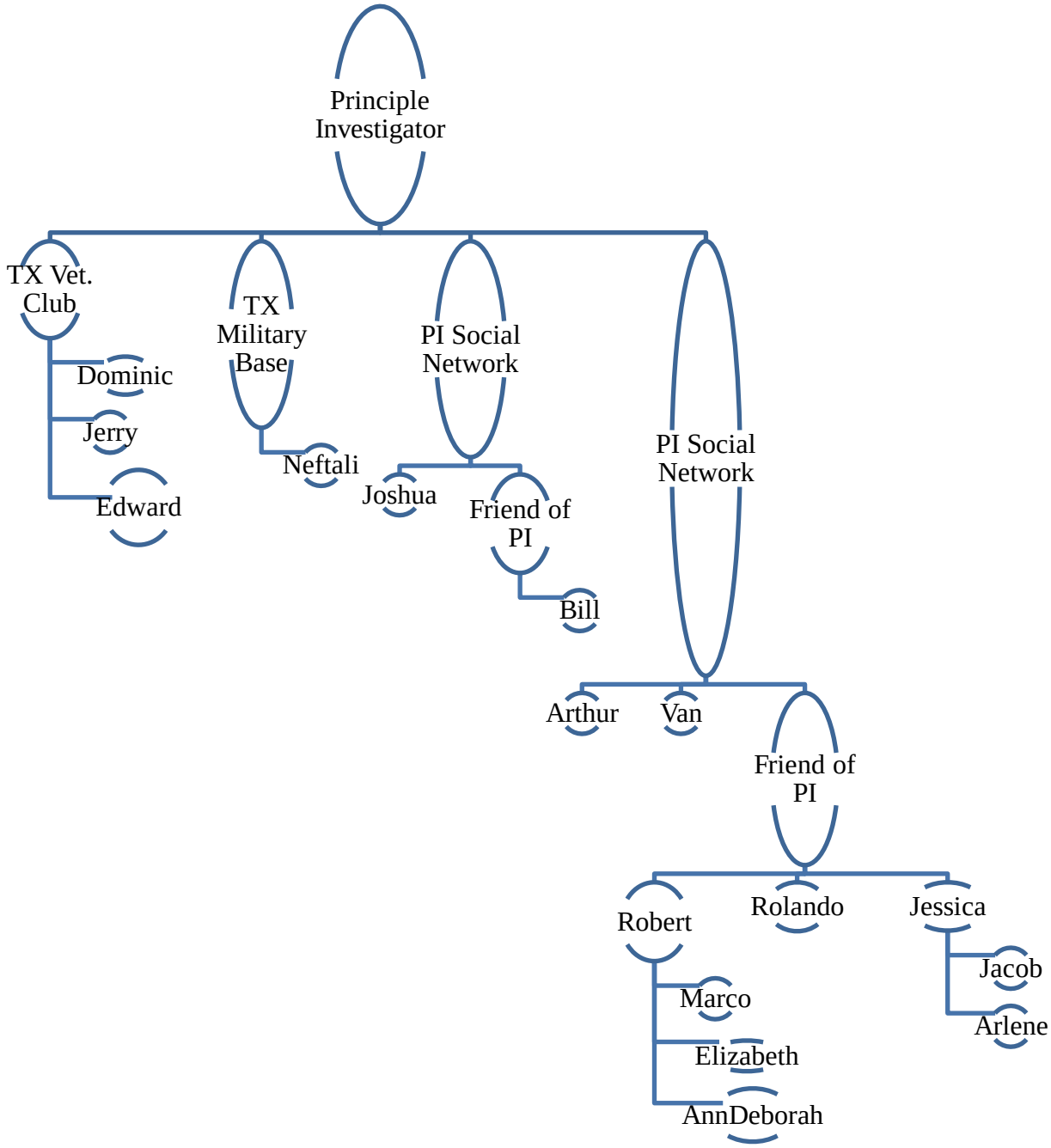


Figure 3: Recruitment Connections, Continued

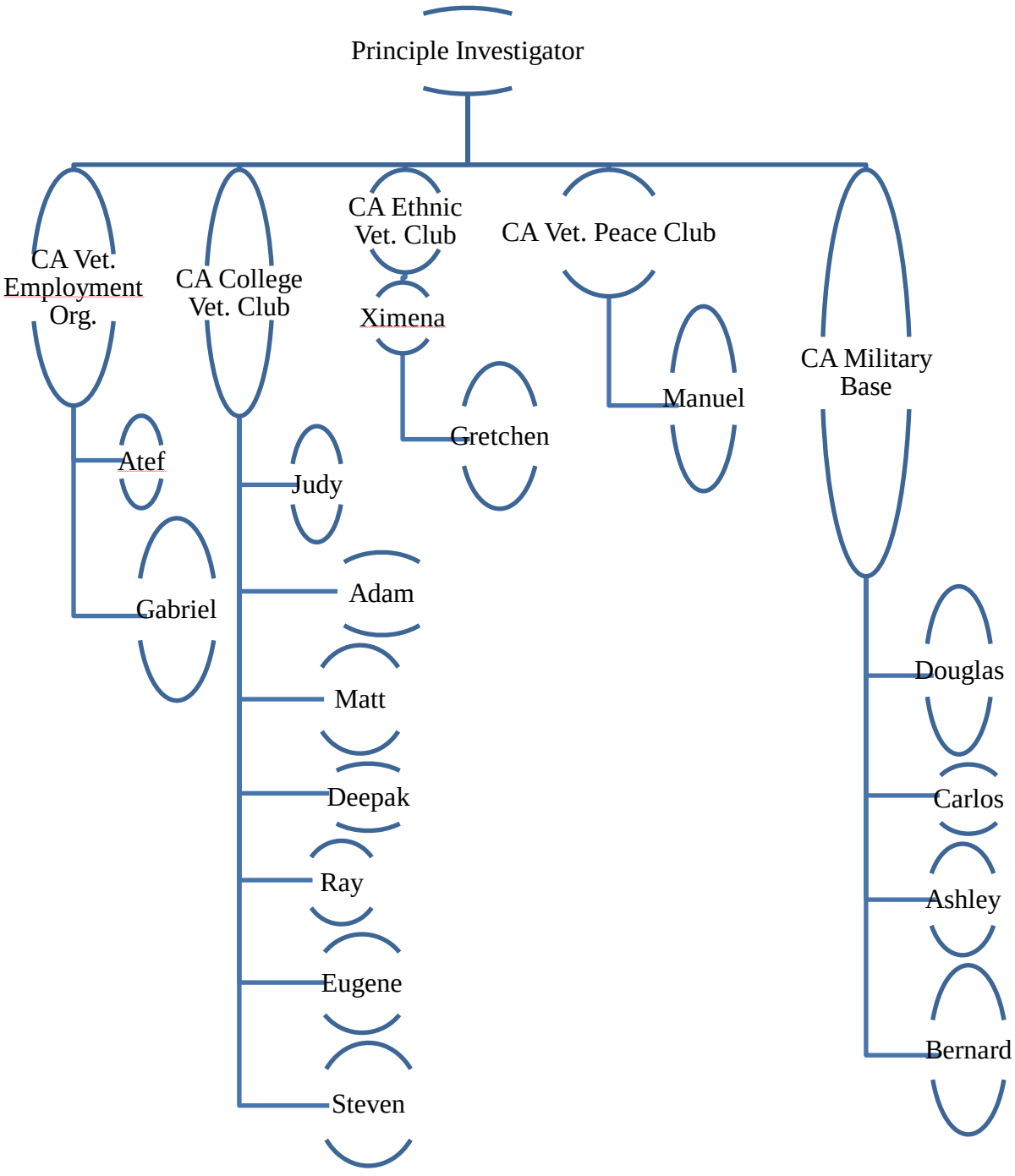


Table 5: Descriptive Statistics, Bachelor's Degree Attainment and Post-Secondary Enrollment among Children of Immigrants by Early Adulthood (Ages 24 to 32) by Military Status, ADD Health

Educational Measures, in percent	Possesses Bachelor's Degree, W4	Enrolled in Post-Secondary Education, W4
Non-veteran	36	18
Current Military member, total	19	46
Current Military member without Combat Zone Experience	18	59
Current Military member with Combat Zone Experience	19	38
Veteran, total	15	19
Veterans without Combat Zone Experience	12	18
Veterans with Combat Zone Experience	19	19

Source: National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (ADD Health), Waves I-IV.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics, Perceptions of Educational Achievement among Children of Immigrants by Early Adulthood (Ages 24 to 32) by Military Status, ADD Health

Perceptions of Educational Achievement (in percent)	I have achieved my desired level of education (in %)	I have not achieved my desired level of education but I will (in %)	I have not achieved my desired level of education and I will not (in %)
Non-veteran	22	70	9
Current Military member	8	92	0
Current Military member without Combat Zone Experience	14	86	0
Current Military member with Combat Zone Experience	3	96	0
Veteran	11	81	7
Veterans without Combat Zone Experience	14	80	6
Veterans with Combat Zone Experience	6	83	11

Source: National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (ADD Health), Waves I-IV.

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics, Labor Market Outcomes among Children of Immigrants by Early Adulthood (Ages 24 to 32) by Veteran Status, Current Population Surveys Pooled March Supplements 2005, 2007 & 2009
(In percent unless otherwise specified)

Outcomes (in percent)	Employed	Unemployed	Not in Labor Force	Government Sector	Private Sector	Self-Employed	Average Total Earnings
Non-veterans	76	5.9	18	10	84	6	$26,872
Veterans	82	6.4	12	18	77	5	$29,592

Source: Current Population Survey, Pooled March Supplements 2005, 2007, 2009

Table 8: Predictors of Educational Outcomes among Children of Immigrants by Early Adulthood (Ages 24 to 32) Using ADD Health, Odds Ratio Analyses

	Model 1	*Model 2*	*Model 3*	*Model 4*	*Model 5*	*Model 6*
	Simple	*Self-selective factors*	*Combat zone experience*	*Simple*	*Self-selective factors*	*Combat zone experience*
	Bachelor's Degree Attainment W4a	Bachelor's Degree Attainment W4a	Bachelor's Degree Attainment W4a	Enrolled in Post-secondary Ed, W4	Enrolled in Post-secondary Ed, W4	Enrolled in Post-secondary Ed, W4
Veteran status (Non-veteran omitted)						
Currently serving in military	0.277***	0.310**		4.448***	4.458***	
	(0.0926)	(0.122)		(1.271)	(1.325)	
Veteran	0.293***	0.383**		1.423	1.413	
	(0.0953)	(0.142)		(0.368)	(0.380)	
Currently serving, no combat zone experience			0.290*			5.439***
			(0.181)			(2.417)
Currently serving, combat zone experience			0.325*			3.851***
			(0.160)			(1.475)
Veteran, no combat zone experience			0.294*			1.333
			(0.150)			(0.445)
Veteran, combat zone experience			0.558			1.572
			(0.279)			(0.674)
Race/ethnicity (white, non-Hispanic omitted)						
Asian, non-Hispanic	1.836***	1.698**	1.684**	1.081	1.215	1.222
	(0.283)	(0.318)	(0.316)	(0.198)	(0.239)	(0.242)
Black, non-Hispanic	1.195	1.371	1.363	1.326	1.382	1.388
	(0.255)	(0.343)	(0.341)	(0.314)	(0.338)	(0.34)
Latino	0.564***	0.731	0.724	0.950	1.151	1.157

	(0.0831)	(0.134)	(0.133)	(0.160)	(0.228)	(0.23)
Other, non-Hispanic	1.262	1.065	1.063	0.941	1.030	1.025
	(0.352)	(0.317)	(0.316)	(0.337)	(0.367)	(0.366)
Female	1.335**	1.169	1.171	1.678***	1.726***	1.723***
	(0.126)	(0.125)	(0.125)	(0.184)	(0.197)	(0.197)
Mean-centered age	0.966	1.014	1.013	0.885***	0.894***	0.895***
	(0.0278)	(0.0326)	(0.0326)	(0.0269)	(0.0290)	(0.029)
% Vocabulary Test Score	1.045***	1.033***	1.033***		1.006	1.006
	(0.00342)	(0.00378)	-0.00378		(0.00373)	(0.00373)
Body Mass Index	1.027	1.038	1.038		1.006	1.006
	(0.0541)	(0.0601)	(0.0601)		(0.0385)	(0.0386)
Body Mass Index squared	0.998	0.998	0.998		1.000	1.000
	(0.00104)	(0.00111)	(0.00111)		(0.000709)	(0.00071)
<u>Childhood Background Characteristics</u>						
Household structure in Youth (2 biological parents omitted)						
1 bio + 1 other parent		0.414***	0.414***		1.064	1.063
		(0.0823)	(0.0824)		(0.205)	(0.205)
1 bio parent only		0.586***	0.584***		0.900	0.897
		(0.0773)	(0.0769)		(0.122)	(0.121)
No bio parents present		0.511**	0.512**		0.632	0.629
		(0.116)	(0.116)		(0.158)	(0.157)
Highest level of parental education (less than high school omitted)						
High school		1.126	1.127		1.464	1.459
		(0.441)	(0.441)		(0.523)	(0.52)
Some College		1.368*	1.371*		1.398	1.401
		(0.212)	(0.212)		(0.248)	(0.249)
Bachelor's degree or more		2.118***	2.118***		1.317	1.316
		(0.307)	(0.305)		(0.225)	(0.224)
Parental Income 1994 (logged)		1.109	1.108		0.943	0.943
		(0.0783)	(0.0781)		(0.0635)	(0.0636)
High school grades (less than 1.75 GPA committed)						
1.75-2.49 GPA		1.695*	1.696*		1.107	1.107

		(0.368)	(.367)		(0.236)	(0.236)
2.50-3.24 GPA		2.983***	2.985***		1.084	1.085
		(0.603)	(.603)		(0.247)	(0.247)
3.25 or higher GPA		6.983***	6.968***		1.036	1.036
		(1.543)	(1.54)		(0.231)	(0.231)
Metropolitan Area (urban omitted)						
Suburban		0.830	0.826		1.156	1.155
		(0.105)	(0.104)		(0.159)	(0.159)
Rural		0.678	0.677		1.087	1.082
		(0.184)	(0.184)		(0.309)	(0.308)
Region of residence (West omitted)						
Northeast		2.065***	2.067***		1.177	1.180
		(0.387)	(0.387)		(0.237)	(0.238)
South		1.171	1.166		1.153	1.157
		(0.169)	(0.168)		(0.174)	(0.175)
Midwest		2.149***	2.136***		1.271	1.275
		(0.367)	(0.364)		(0.219)	(0.219)
Language other than English spoken in household		1.270	1.271		0.994	0.994
		(0.157)	(0.157)		(0.127)	(0.127)
School Type (Public omitted)						
Catholic private		0.895	0.896		0.516	0.515
		(0.288)	(0.288)		(0.205)	(0.204)
Other private		3.154**	3.181**		0.654	0.649
		(1.207)	(1.213)		(0.244)	(0.243)
Earned Bachelor's degree before enlisting	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.558	0.467	0.427
				(0.477)	(0.407)	(0.404)
Currently married, W4	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.740**	0.762*	0.761*
				(0.0800)	(0.0854)	(0.0854)
N	2,559	2,559	2,559	2,573	2,573	2,573

a: Service members earned a bachelor's degree before enlisting were removed

Source: National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (ADD Health), Waves I-IV.
Significance: ***p<.001; **p<.01; *p<.05; standard errors in parentheses.

Table 9: Predictors of Achieving Educational Outcomes of Children of Immigrants by Early Adulthood (Ages 24 to 32) Using ADD Health, Multinomial Analyses

I have achieved my desired level of education			
Veteran status (Non-veteran omitted)	*Model 1 Simple*	*Model 2 Self-Selective Factors*	*Model 3 Combat Zone Experience*
Currently serving in military	0.210**	0.206**	
	(0.100)	(0.106)	
Veteran	0.410**	0.467*	
	(0.136)	(0.155)	
Currently serving, non-combat zone experience			0.362
			(0.223)
Currently serving, combat zone experience			0.0820*
			(0.0866)
Veteran, non-combat zone experience			0.560
			(0.219)
Veteran, combat zone experience			0.318
			(0.191)
Race/ethnicity (white, non-Hispanic omitted)			
Asian, non-Hispanic	0.640**	0.694	0.705
	(0.101)	(0.130)	(0.132)
Black, non-Hispanic	0.424***	0.544*	0.549*
	(0.101)	(0.140)	(0.141)
Latino	0.289***	0.434***	0.440***
	(0.0436)	(0.0834)	(0.0847)
Other, non-Hispanic	0.546	0.616	0.618
	(0.175)	(0.207)	(0.208)
Female	0.879	0.825	0.822
	(0.0892)	(0.0885)	(0.0882)
Mean-centered age	1.095**	1.126***	1.128***
	(0.0346)	(0.0392)	(0.0393)
% Vocabulary Test Score		1.004	1.004
		(0.00379)	(0.00379)
Body Mass Index		0.981	0.981
		(0.0519)	(0.052)
Body Mass Index squared		1.000	1.000
		(0.000971)	(0.000973)

Household structure in Youth (2 biological parents omitted)		
1 bio + 1 other parent	0.792	0.793
	(0.162)	(0.162)
1 bio parent only	0.863	0.866
	(0.116)	(0.117)
No bio parents present	0.926	0.922
	(0.204)	(0.203)
Highest level of parental education (less than high school omitted)		
High school	0.979	0.973
	(0.350)	(0.349)
Some College	1.097	1.096
	(0.180)	(0.18)
Bachelor's degree or more	1.112	1.113
	(0.164)	(0.165)
Parental Income 1994 (logged)	1.080	1.083
	(0.0699)	(0.0698)
High school grades (less than 1.75 GPA committed)		
1.75-2.49 GPA	1.100	1.099
	(0.241)	(0.24)
2.50-3.24 GPA	1.195	1.197
	(0.261)	(0.262)
3.25 or higher GPA	2.024***	2.032***
	(0.414)	(0.416)
Metropolitan Area (urban omitted)		
Suburban	1.357*	1.361*
	(0.180)	(0.181)
Rural	1.185	1.178
	(0.321)	(0.318)
Region of residence (West omitted)		
Northeast	1.698**	1.696**
	(0.326)	(0.325)
South	1.368*	1.380*
	(0.208)	(0.21)
Midwest	1.230	1.241
	(0.212)	(0.214)
Language other than English spoken in household	1.100	1.098
	(0.139)	(0.139)
School Type (Public omitted)		

Catholic private		1.371	1.366
		(0.405)	(0.404)
Other private		3.571***	3.500***
		(1.066)	(1.039)
Earned Bachelor's before enlisting	2.432	1.966	1.714
	(1.750)	(1.365)	(1.265)
Currently married, W4	1.084	1.151	1.153
	(0.112)	(0.125)	(0.125)
I have not achieved my desired level of education, but I will (omitted category)			
I have not achieved my desired level of education, and I will not			
Veteran status (Non-veteran omitted)			
Currently serving	0.000000123***	0.000000342***	
	(2.69e-08)	(0.000000187)	
Veteran	0.686	0.594	
	(0.262)	(0.230)	
Currently serving, non-combat zone experience			0.000000498***
			(0.000000254)
Currently serving, combat zone experience			0.000000294***
			(0.000000151)
Veteran, non-combat zone experience			0.437
			(0.237)
Veteran, combat zone experience			0.927
			(0.497)
Race/ethnicity (white, non-Hispanic omitted)			
Asian, non-Hispanic	0.569*	0.566*	0.565*
	(0.153)	(0.161)	(0.161)
Black, non-Hispanic	0.397*	0.319**	0.313**
	(0.169)	(0.137)	(0.134)
Latino	0.720	0.434**	0.431**
	(0.168)	(0.114)	(0.114)
Other, non-Hispanic	0.776	0.748	0.745
	(0.378)	(0.388)	(0.386)
Female	0.738*	0.754	0.755
	(0.108)	(0.114)	(0.115)
Mean-centered age	1.099*	1.093*	1.094*
	(0.0474)	(0.0498)	(0.0499)
% Vocabulary Test Score	(0.000000292)	(0.00000107)	1.000
			(0.00473)
Body Mass Index		1.000	0.969

	(0.00474)	(0.0521)
Body Mass Index squared	0.969	1.001
	(0.0520)	(0.000908)
Childhood background factors		
Household structure in Youth (2 biological parents omitted)		
1 bio + 1 other parent	0.829	0.830
	(0.227)	(0.228)
1 bio parent only	0.774	0.771
	(0.150)	(0.15)
No bio parents present	1.139	1.137
	(0.327)	(0.327)
Highest level of parental education (less than high school omitted)		
High school	0.403	0.404
	(0.290)	(0.29)
Some College	0.877	0.880
	(0.181)	(0.182)
Bachelor's degree or more	0.577*	0.575*
	(0.133)	(0.133)
Parental Income 1994 (logged)	0.985	0.984
	(0.0765)	(0.0763)
High school grades (less than 1.75 GPA committed)		
1.75-2.49 GPA	1.132	1.133
	(0.267)	(0.267)
2.50-3.24 GPA	0.774	0.774
	(0.224)	(0.223)
3.25 or higher GPA	0.916	0.913
	(0.274)	(0.272)
Metropolitan Area (urban omitted)		
Suburban	0.758	0.757
	(0.144)	(0.144)
Rural	0.523	0.523
	(0.225)	(0.225)
Region of residence (West omitted)		
Northeast	0.538	0.540
	(0.197)	(0.198)
South	1.589*	1.593*
	(0.307)	(0.308)
Midwest	0.907	0.904
	(0.242)	(0.241)
Language other than English spoken in household	0.942	0.945
	(0.164)	(0.165)
School Type (Public omitted)		

Catholic private		0.775	0.776
		(0.482)	(0.483)
Other private		0.547	0.549
		(0.573)	(0.575)
Married, Wave 4	1.184	1.137	1.135
	(0.176)	(0.170)	(0.17)
Obtained bachelor's degree before military service	0.000000498***	0.00000142***	0.00000143***
			(0.000001)
N	2,573	2,573	2,573

Source: National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (ADD Health), Waves I-IV.
Significance: ***p<.001; **p<.01; *p<.05; standard errors in parentheses.

Table 10: Multinomial Analyses of Employment Outcomes of Children of Immigrants by Early Adulthood (Ages 24 to 32) Using the Current Population Surveys 2005, 2007, 2009 March Supplements

Outcome	***Unemployed versus Employed***	***Not in Labor Force versus private***	***Government versus Private***	***Self-Employed versus Private***
Veteran	0.973	0.899	1.785**	0.557
	(0.07)	(0.43)	(2.64)	(1.39)
Age	0.977	0.912***	1.057**	1.095**
	(1.08)	(6.36)	(3.12)	(2.98)
Female	0.685**	2.457***	1.276**	0.544***
	(3.05)	(11.46)	(2.72)	(5.26)
Race/Ethnicity (white, non-Latino omitted)				
African-American/Black, non-Latino	1.294	1.507**	1.991***	0.426
	(1.01)	(2.64)	(3.4)	(1.73)
Hispanic/Latino	0.957	0.819	1.502**	0.562***
	(0.31)	(1.91)	(2.9)	(3.69)
Asian, non-Latino	1.001	1.195	0.859	0.707
	(0.01)	(1.51)	(0.92)	(1.65)
Other, non-Latino	1.57	1.358	1.296	0.833
	(1.17)	(1.22)	(0.85)	(0.41)
Education (High school only omitted)				
Some College	0.879	0.756***	2.030***	0.784
	(1.06)	(3.48)	(4.51)	(1.71)
Bachelor's Degree or more	0.531***	0.561***	4.939***	0.809
	(4.25)	(5.78)	(10.37)	(1.03)
Region of Residence (Northeast omitted)				
Midwest	0.819	0.831	0.834	1.329
	(0.96)	(1.35)	(1.0)	(1.07)
South	0.693*	0.715**	1.321*	1.660*

	(2.08)	(3.28)	(2.0)	(2.37)
West	0.779	0.790*	1.212	2.150***
	(1.68)	(2.32)	(1.5)	(3.7)
Currently Married	0.653**	1.309***	1.087	1.365*
	(3.22)	(3.59)	(0.85)	(2.14)
Work Disability	4.678***	13.59***	2.921**	1.774
	(5.13)	(14.49)	(2.82)	(0.88)
N	***8,265***	***8,265***	***6,511***	***6,511***

Source: Current Population Survey, Pooled March Supplements 2005, 2007, 2009
*Significance: ***p<.001; **p<.01; *p<.05; standard errors in parentheses.*

Table 11: Ordinary Least Squares Regression Analysis of Salary/Wage Income of Children of Immigrants by Early Adulthood (Ages 24 to 32) Using the Current Population Surveys 2005, 2007, 2009 March Supplements

Logged Wage/Salary Income	***Model 1***
Veteran	0.0596
	(0.33)
Age	0.0171
	(1.2)
Female	-0.129
	(2.02)
Race/Ethnicity (white, non-Latino omitted)	
African-American/Black, non-Latino	0.208
	(1.29)
Hispanic/Latino	0.157
	(1.64)
Asian, non-Latino	0.133
	(1.11)
Other, non-Latino	0.0772
	(0.3)
Education (High school only omitted)	
Some College	0.210*
	(2.26)
Bachelor's Degree or more	0.551***
	(5.21)
Region of Residence (Northeast omitted)	.
Midwest	-0.0223
	(0.22)
South	-0.18
	(1.78)
West	-0.302***
	(3.37)
Currently Married	0.268***
	(3.79)
Work Disability	-1.495**
	(2.65)
Current Occupation (professional & managerial omitted)	
Farm, fishery, forestry	-0.530***
	(4.09)

Production, craft, repair	-0.545***
	(4.39)
Service occupations	-2.386***
	(4.11)
Typical Hours A Week Worked	0.0237***
	(7.41)
Constant	8.239***
	(19.36)
N	6,511

Source: Current Population Survey, Pooled March Supplements 2005, 2007, 2009
*Significance: ***p<.001; **p<.01; *p<.05; standard errors in parentheses.*