Latino military experiences have historically been under examined during a time when their presence is currently changing the notion of citizenship. This investigation seeks to understand why Latinos are enlisting in the United States Marine Corps at higher rates than other racial groups. Moreover, this research examines the desires and motivations Latinos have that drive them to enlist into specific Infantry combat occupations during a time of war and Latino xenophobia in the US. Approximately 200 surveys were dispersed at the School of Infantry in Camp Pendleton, California. This sight processes and trains all Infantry personnel for the USMC in the western region, making it the ideal location to gather a sample of new Marine graduates. The data indicates that there is a higher percentage of Latinos entering Infantry military occupational specialties, compared to the Latino population in the USMC and military as a whole. Latinos and minorities in the military are challenging the normative concepts of citizenship in the US by simply serving in the American armed forces. This research comes at a time when potential legislation like the DREAM Act is requesting Latinos to serve in the military, without full consideration of what “enlisting” for non-citizens actually means.

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The dominant consensus among institutional scholars is that the military is the most integrated American institution (Moskos 1988; Binkin 1993; Moskos & Butler 1996). David Leal (2003) states that the military has an influence towards transforming culture in minority communities since it forces different racial groups to work together (205). Most of the data concerning minorities in the military has been concentrated on the African-American experience. Although, African-Americans did pave the way for desegregating the military in the 1940s and played substantial roles in American conflicts since the revolution, the racial and ethnic make up of the armed forces now has changed dramatically. Scholars have yet to properly integrate the experiences of other minority groups. Within the last decade, research has focused primarily on the problems associated with Latino military recruitment and the obstacles of their retention (Hattiangadi et al. 2004; Asch et al. 2009) without a focus on race and ethnicity which is an important factor to consider when trying to understand why Latinos are not only enlisting in specific military branches, but also particular occupations.

Research has been conducted concerning which ethnic and racial minorities are currently fighting and dying in our most recent conflicts (Gifford 2005). Although, Parker (2009) has challenged this normative approach with the African American experience post-World War II. We have not asked why Latinos are fighting in the wars overseas during this hostile racial climate in the US and subsequently, why are they dying?

Another problem with studying Latinos in the military is the lack of methodological tools and approaches. Most scholars look at large surveys that vaguely consider the military experience such as the Latino National Politics Survey (LNPS) (Leal 1999). Granted, the LNPS is a great resource to study Latino political participation, however, it lacks the framework and holistic approach when considering military experience. Though, this paper is not concerned
with political participation, it does advance new methodological suggestions for survey research focused on minorities in the military. Considering military service as a component of American political participation is one direction scholars should begin to consider.

The dilemma with scholarship on the military is that not all service members are created equal. Leal (1999) does acknowledge the distinction between combat and non-combat veterans when assessing the political participation of Vietnam veterans (167). But, the heterogeneity of military occupational specialties (MOSs) has been trivially considered. For instance, a service member in the Infantry would have an entirely different experience during wartime compared to service members in the Intelligence field. Making these distinctions is one of the primary goals of this paper.

Latinos have gradually become one of the fastest growing populations in the country, and most significantly within the U.S. military (Asch et al. 2009). The U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) argues that Latinos are underrepresented in the military due to the statistics they produced in their annual population representation in the military services report.¹ For that reason, the DOD has launched several campaigns focused on recruiting Latino youth. This may be problematic to the Latino community since they have significantly lower educational attainments compared to all other ethnic groups (PEW, Education, Table 22). The Armed Forces Qualifying Test (AFQT) is the military’s main entrance exam and it can also show which applicants were prepared for the examination that may also correlate to their educational attainment.

The AFQT score determines which occupations prospective applicants may qualify to enter. The DOD categorizes each potential recruit according to their AFQT score into six

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descending tiers: category I 93rd to 99th, category II 65th to 92nd, category IIIA 50th to 64th, category IIIB 31st to 49th, category IV 10th to 30th and category V below the 10th percentile. A new recruit entering the United States Marine Corps (USMC) must score at least within category IIIB on the AFQT to be considered for basic training. A score of 31 is the minimum requirement to join the USMC and it is also the requirement to join the Infantry. The Infantry has the lowest educational requirement in the USMC, which results in the Infantry containing more Marines with lower educational attainments and access to alternative resources prior to enlisting. Lacking a clear path after high school is one situation that students with below average high school careers find themselves in, which also places them in vulnerable decision making positions (Rendon 2009).

Military service is then seen as one of the only honorable occupations Latino youth could acquire since a large majority struggle to achieve a high school diploma or a GED. I argue that military service should not be viewed as a negative option for prospective service members. Instead, there should be an examination on what makes military service more appealing to Latino high school students compared to continuing a traditional college education. Military service can be viewed as an obligation to the State that Latinos are answering. Some scholars argue that military service is more appealing than a traditional college education since the US government can offer more immediate financial options. In addition, enlisting in the military should be deconstructed to consider the unique occupations within the institution, in order to further educate potential recruits of their benefits and hazards.

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This research investigates the kinds of motivations Latinos\(^3\), 18 to 24 years of age, have to join the military, specifically Infantry occupations in the USMC post-September 11. This study focuses on enlistments after 9/11 since it illustrates a time period where the mobilization of troops is in a greater demand. I am also examining the influence recruiters had on the occupational decisions Latinos made directly from the recruits’ perspective. After 9/11, the DOD needed to sustain its manpower in order to maintain its operations overseas, which meant that a steady flow of willing volunteers have to be continuously recruited. There may be a connection between the socioeconomic statuses of people of color along with gender norms, such as citizenship and masculinity, which may motivate young men to join the military (Faulks 2000; Perez 2006). This socioeconomic status may determine the occupational outcome of some potential Latino recruits. These desires and motivations are aspects, which some may consider as vulnerability areas that could be utilized by military recruiters.

**Hypothesis**

There are two hypotheses tested in this paper. First, I hypothesize that there will be a higher percentage of Latinos training to become Infantrymen than is observed in the entire Latino military population as a whole. This hypothesis was constructed by the death rates incurred in both theaters of combat; Iraq and Afghanistan.

[Table 1 & 2 Here]

Tables 1 and 2, illustrate the death rates sustained by all racial groups in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2003. African Americans have a higher population percentage in the entire military

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\(^3\) The author recognizes the heterogeneous groups coincided with the term Latino and is not applying it to establish the homogeneous misconception of the word. The term *Latino* will also be used in place of Hispanic referring to Suzanne Oboler’s definition of Hispanic and it states that, “a person is of Spanish/Hispanic origin if the person’s origin is Mexican, Mexican-American, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Dominican, Ecuadoran, Guatemalan, Honduran, Nicaraguan, Peruvian, Salvadoran; from other Spanish-speaking countries of the Caribbean or Central or South American; or from Spain.” Borrowed from: Oboler, S. (1995). Ethnic Labels, Latino Lives: Identity and the Politics of (re) presentation in the United States. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.
compared to Latinos, but Latinos have higher death rates in both theaters of combat. This would mean that Latinos are being placed in occupations that would sustain higher death rates due to the nature of the job and mission (i.e., the Infantry). It is also stating that history is repeating itself, since African Americans were placed in the most hazardous positions during the Vietnam War. African Americans deaths during the Vietnam War were some of the highest compared to their actual population representation. Latinos, in this case, do not necessarily surpass their population representation in death rates, but they do have the second highest death rate by a group even though they are the third largest racial group in the military.

The second hypothesis states that since Latinos have one of the lowest educational attainment percentages in the country (Chapa & De la rosa 2004), then a majority of the service members will be situated in the AFQT tier IIIB. Therefore, Latinos will not be able to choose a different job other than occupations like the Infantry because of their limited occupational choices due to low AFQT scores. In other words, correlating low educational attainment to low AFQT scores would produce enlistees with fewer opportunities for more technical jobs. This would essentially support the thesis that the military has targeted minority groups to enlist in the most hazardous occupations. Essentially, our education system has done our youth a disservice, since they would not be able to test into different occupations. To acquire this type of information one must go to the source where service members training to serve in non-technical jobs are being indoctrinated.

**Methods**

This research seeks to uncover the desires and motivations of Latinos that drive them to enlist in an Infantry combat military occupational specialty (MOS). Answering this question, will provide some insight towards the actual population representation of Latinos training to
acquire an Infantry combat MOS. This research study primarily utilized quantitative data in the form of surveys that were dispersed to Marines training to acquire an Infantry MOS.

The School of Infantry (SOI) in Camp Pendleton, California was the data collection site. The USMC divided the US into two training zones and uses the Mississippi River to demarcate the eastern and western zones (Hattiangadi et al. 2004). Once recruit training is complete, each Marine that has selected an Infantry occupation as their primary MOS will report to a specialized course in their field, ten days after graduating from recruit training, that is approximately two months in length; within the respective zones. For example, if a recruit graduates recruit training at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot (MCRD) in San Diego, they will attend their specialized Infantry training at the SOI in Camp Pendleton, California. During the basic Infantry course, the Marines in student status will earn a designated MOS as a: (0311) Infantry Rifleman, (0331) Machine Gunner, (0341) Mortarman, (0351) Assaultman, and (0352) Tow Gunner. The first two weeks of training for each new class is completely the same. The class is then distributed into their designated MOS training throughout the following six weeks. During this two-month course, the Marines are taught the basics in survival within a combat environment and not the common misconception of learning “how to kill.” Anyone can kill, the USMC teaches its Marines to stay alive long enough to perform in combat.

The SOI is essentially a funnel where each new graduate of recruit training has to eventually pass through in order to move onto their specialized training; regardless if they are going to acquire an Infantry MOS or not. This was effectively the ideal location to gather data concerning the decisions that drove Latinos to join the infantry, since they recently graduated recruit training and was closer to their date of enlistment. I had an initial meeting with the

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4 There are some situations where a Light Armored Vehicle Crewman course is not offered at one SOI and it is offered at the other. In this case, the USMC will send that Marine(s) to the school where the course is offered once the basic infantry course is completed.
Battalion Commanding Officer of the SOI in order to obtain access to the Marines in the Infantry Training Battalion. Once permission was granted to address the Marines, I then established another meeting with three Company Commanders to officially gain access to their Marines and schedule the times they were going to be instructed in a classroom. First, I distributed a survey to a class that was in their third week of training. The Marines had no incentive to fill out the survey and had approximately 20 minutes to fill out the survey prior to continuing their daily training. It was a completely voluntary survey with the option for them not to respond. All Marines were given the opportunity to respond to the survey regardless of race. These surveys contained questions concerning, but not limited to: how the Marine identified himself (e.g., Mexican, White, etc.), age, city and state of residence, educational attainment, income, AFQT score, loyalty and if they would agree to being interviewed. The questions in the survey will have answers corresponding to their potential responses.

The surveys allowed me to identify Marines as Latino and which then allowed me to acquire consent to participate in the qualitative aspects of the study. The data illustrated the amount of Latinos currently entering the Infantry, which may be used in comparison to their actual representation in the USMC and also the military as a whole. The difference between this study’s findings and work conducted by other scholars in the field is that this data is observing the influences leading someone into a certain occupation, the Infantry, as opposed to the military in a general sense.

There are significant limitations towards approaching this research and utilizing only quantitative data. This research is only examining the presence of males in the Infantry, since females are not allowed in Infantry MOS’s, but may be exposed to combat. The lack of qualitative data to understand some of the narratives of the Marines is missing, primarily due to
their inability to be taken away from their training schedule. Another issue is the amount of surveys versus the actual amount of classes that are trained per year, since there is the possibility of having more than fifty Infantry classes per year between the two training zones. The surveys are being conducted in the western training zone where larger concentrations of Latinos are located compared to the eastern training zone (Hattiangadi et al. 2004). This research is also only focusing on Infantry MOS’s and not other military occupational specialties. The Infantry is one of the few occupations focused on training for war and the service members within its field have a higher susceptibility towards experiencing combat compared to all other MOS’s. It would be a more complete project if surveys could be dispersed to the Marine Combat Training (MCT) Battalion where all other non-Infantry Marines complete a three-week Infantry training course before proceeding to their specialized MOS instruction.

Data & Results

The following data was acquired from one Infantry training company at SOI in Camp Pendleton, California. For the purpose of this paper and the security of the SOI and its students, the training company will be referred to as India Company. Approximately 200 Marines responded to the 20-question survey. India Company was in their third week of training. This meant the Marines were separated into their respective MOS training platoons. About 94% of the respondents were between the ages of 18 to 24. The first part of the survey addressed the first hypothesis. The Marines were asked how they would identify themselves with several options that include, but not limited to: African American, Latino, Asian, Native American or White; with several sub-categories. 52 Marines selected Latino as their identification. This meant that over 25% of the entire training company that was seeking to acquire the Infantry
MOS was Latino. Moreover, Latinos are overrepresented in the Infantry compared to their actual population representation according to this survey.

Another interesting finding from this initial question is that African Americans only accounted for 2% of the Marines and Asians constituted 4%. On average, African Americans make up approximately 18% of the entire military. Within this training company, they are extremely underrepresented. This may be a reaction to their overrepresentation in Infantry roles during the Vietnam War. African Americans were the only group that sustained a high rate of enlistment after the draft was disbanded in 1973. However, their enlistments were primarily focused on more technical occupations in the Army and Navy. African Americans have not had high enlistment rates in the Marine Corps since the Vietnam War. Asians along with Whites were the only groups that mirrored their population representation in the Marine Corps and the military as a whole. Essentially, Latinos are entering positions that were once filled by African Americans in the Marine Corps. This may mean that African Americans are aware of the consequences associated with enlisting in the Infantry compared to other groups. This connection will be explored further.

Question 13 [Survey in Appendix] was concerned with the ASVAB score that each Marine received prior to enlisting. All of the Marines that were present received over a 31 on the exam, since they were provided the opportunity to enlist in the military. This question also addressed the second hypothesis that was concerned with Latino educational attainment and the possibility of having their occupational decisions limited due to a low AFQT score. Graph 1 illustrates the AFQT scores for the 52 self-identified Latino Marines in India Company. The graph demonstrates that the scores are varied, ranging from 31 to 99. It also illustrates that over 50% of the Latinos in India Company earned an AFQT score above 49. Essentially, my
hypothesis was wrong concerning Latino educational attainment and placement into the Infantry. Over 50% of the Latinos in this training company had the opportunity to choose an occupation other than the Infantry, but still made the decision to enlist into one of the most hazardous occupations.

What motivates Latinos to join the Infantry during a time of war? Additionally, what motivates Latinos to join the Infantry when the probability of becoming a casualty becomes higher due to our current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan? We have already observed the casualty rates for Latinos in both theaters of combat and the odds are against them when it comes to a battle scenario. Now we can observe that a majority of the Latinos joining these hazardous occupations are more than able to enter other specialties. There are many factors that may drive a certain individual to enter a specific occupation and the options in the survey reflect some of these mainstream choices. The choices are: adventure, money, patriotism, duty to country,
education, travel, benefits and other. This is by no means an exhaustive list, but just some of the factors that are noticeable for individuals when considering the military.

(Graph 2 Here) Graph 2 illustrates the percentages of responses by the 52 Latino Marines in India Company. The Marines were asked to select the top three choices that motivated/influenced them to join the Infantry. About 80% of the respondents chose adventure as one of the main factors towards making the decision to join the Infantry. The idea of adventure is a bit vague and can mean a lot of different things to a variety of people. But, adventure to Marines may mean a challenge compared to civilians that may view adventure as something entertaining. Infantry Marines, for the most part, have to carry their entire equipment and march with it everywhere they go. Their equipment load can range from 60 to 100 pounds depending on the mission. Infantry Marines are usually the first troops sent into the front lines of combat, which is where the Marine Corps acquired the motto, “First to Fight.”

The notion of being sent into battle first has also instilled this idea of great pride among members of the Infantry; past and present. This idea of pride associated with the Marine Corps Infantry has been able to acquire young men every year for the challenge of sustaining deployable manpower despite the danger (Asch et al. 2009). Essentially, danger constitutes a large portion of the adventure aspect when enlisting in the Marine Corps Infantry. It would be challenging to demarcate danger as an isolated factor for joining the Infantry, but there may be some individuals that were motivated due to the hazards associated with the field.

The factor that was least chosen by Latino Marines was benefits, which was calculated at less than 10%. This meant that a majority of the Marines were conscious of the lack of benefits associated with enlisting in the Infantry. It also solidified the idea that they were aware of the difficulties correlated with the adventure aspect. Some might say that there are some benefits
towards joining the Infantry, while others might argue the contrary and state the field does not inhibit any benefits. Some of the benefits that can be associated with the Infantry range from pride in your occupation to getting medals associated with your deployment. Most Infantrymen that enter into combat are usually awarded special ribbons and medals for their service in a combat environment that a majority of Marines do not acquire due to their MOS. For instance, there may be a higher chance for an Infantry Marine to acquire a Navy Cross or a Silver Star, which are medals for courage, valor and going beyond the call of duty, than a Marine in a different MOS. There may also be a higher chance for an Infantry Marine to acquire a Purple Heart, which is a medal that signifies being wounded in combat, than a Marine in another field due to their continuous presence in combat. Then again, if you were not alive to receive those medals, there would be no point towards earning them. In essence, benefits would be a factor least associated with motivating an individual towards making the sacrifice to join the Infantry.

About 40% of the respondents chose “other.” The Marines were able to fill in a short blank space with what they perceived to be influential towards making the choice to join the Infantry that was not listed in the survey. The responses were varied, but correlated with some of the choices that were provided in the survey. For instance, some Marines stated that going into combat was a motivating factor, which can also be associated with expanding the notion of adventure. Other Marines said that being in the toughest job was a main factor, which can also be correlated with either patriotism or adventure. A majority of the responses within the “other” category expressed similar sentiments towards expanding other categories with a sense of being more specific in their claims.

Two of the options that did make an impression to the Marines were duty to country and patriotism. I will begin with the latter. Patriotism to a service member, in this case future
Infantry Marines, can mean a variety of things. Political theorists Maurizio Viroli (1995) states that patriotism should be distinguished from nationalism. He argues that patriotism is an idea that is expressed when certain individuals encourage support for a territory, whereas nationalism promotes interests towards specific groups (4). In other words, patriotism is established through land. Viroli proceeds to argue that patriotism and love of country are synonymous with each other (21). Love of country would encompass putting public interest before private gains, it goes beyond the love of parents and it is love towards a particular people due to their connection with a territory (23). Patriotism goes beyond showing support for a certain land; it also encompasses love towards the ideals and people that believe in those ideas within the land. It would be wrong to state that individuals joining the military were nationalist, since this paper and many other pieces of literature have stated that the military is diverse in their racial and ethnic composition.

Duty to country is one idea that has not been explored by political theorist when considering patriotism. Within the realm of citizenship, there is a balance that some argue must be met, which is between rights and responsibilities. Some would further argue that patriots are answering an obligation to the State, thereby demanding rights in exchange. Rights and responsibilities should be considered separately from patriotism. There are some citizens that may only exercise the “rights” portion of the idea and then there are others that mostly respond to the “responsibilities” towards the State. It is misleading to say that all citizens agree upon the notion of rights and responsibilities. The idea concerning duty to country represents the propensity of an individual to enlist in the military because they felt an obligation to serve. These individuals would essentially love their patria (fatherland) so much that they felt compelled to protect the land, its principles and the people within it.
About 50% of the respondents stated that duty to country was a primary motivation towards joining the Infantry compared to about 40% who responded that patriotism was a prime factor. There was a slight majority that consciously made the decision to state they felt compelled to serve the country. This does not mean that those joining the Infantry are obliged and are not patriotic. This may mean that there is some factor(s) correlating the individual to the notion of having a sense of obligation toward the state. Enlisting in the military already inhibits a notion of serving the state. Those that chose the option of enlisting in the Infantry due to duty to country may have wanted to be recognized as placing the country before themselves and their families. To further clarify, duty to country does not mean love of country. Recognizing the obligation to the state and answering that responsibility goes beyond the responsibilities of average citizens. For instance, there is approximately less than 1% of the entire population actively serving in the US military. This equates to there being fractions of Latinos serving in the military, representing their respective groups and protecting the homeland. There may also be some Latinos that acknowledge the lack of Latinos in the military and therefore enlist in the most hazardous occupations in order to make a statement.

The Latino Marines that chose duty to country and patriotism as motivating influences may also not recognize the difference between nations. Some Latinos may not view themselves as Latinos and accept their identity as American. The American assimilation process may have already socialized some Latinos to disregard categories. It would also be detrimental to some individuals to think of the institution categorically, but the reality is demonstrating that certain groups are disadvantaged compared to others. First it was African Americans in the military and now Latinos; Asians are not far behind.
There were some significant limitations throughout gathering this data. First, there are more Latinos concentrated in the Southwest compared to the East coast. Since the Marine Corps divides its training battalions between the two coasts using the Mississippi River as a demarcation, then it would be assumed that more Latinos would be concentrated in the Western region training battalions. In order to account for this factor, surveys should also be dispersed to the Eastern region Infantry training battalions. This may or may not establish a balance among the enlistment rates of Latinos in the Infantry and it may also show a higher increase of African Americans enlisting in the Infantry when accounting for the Eastern region. Due to time, resources and opportunities of the research study, I was not able to evaluate this factor.

Another limitation that must also be taken into consideration is the mindset that these Marines were in when they answered the survey. India Company was in their third week of training, which meant that most of the Marines completed recruit training within two months of starting their Infantry training. These Marines have just been taught Marine Corps history for over four months and also what it takes in order to uphold the image of the institution. Given that these Marines were recently introduced to the hardships associated with the Infantry lifestyle, it would be safe to say that most if not all did not really know what the field was about without having experienced it firsthand. The challenges they will encounter throughout their enlistment will change their perspective towards the institution, which can lead to distorted answers for joining the military. Nonetheless, this is the ideal group to survey due to their close proximity with making the choice to enlist in the Marine Corps and deciding upon a life changing decision to become an Infantryman.

Finally, this study was examining the motivations Latino Marines had towards enlisting in the Infantry almost eight years after the Invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan. It would be
difficult for a majority of 18 to 24 year olds to say that they enlisted in the military due to 9/11. There has to be some factor connecting Latino Infantry enlistment and the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan other than the 9/11 attacks. This paper has shown that Latinos are joining the military at high rates despite conflicting arguments. Latinos are choosing to fight for a cause that might not have affected them when it occurred, which signifies some correlation with loving the land and the country. Further research must be conducted in order to explore the causality of these factors.

I will proceed to suggest a possible prescription towards aiding prospective enlistees with their occupational decisions prior to raising their right hand and swearing allegiance to the state. There are some people that believe recruiters are targeting minorities in order to fill up for front line deployments. This was the case during the Vietnam War where a large majority of minorities were overrepresented in Infantry occupations, which subsequently led to higher death rates. In some inner city schools, military recruiters are usually the only guidance counselors youth have for a future after high school. A majority of parents and teachers criticize the presence of military recruiters in schools; yet fail to observe the decline in educational retention. Instead of pointing the finger at another factor for their downfalls, educators within the system should provide youth with the best possible outcome for their futures; whether it be in continuing their education, joining the military or entering the job force. The only thing that is missing is that youth are not properly informed.

Prospective enlistees should be given all of the information concerning their occupation, training, benefits and lifestyle prior to joining the military. Recruiters, for the most part, have one goal and that is to reach a certain quota per quarter of prospective enlistees. Each military branch requests a specific number of recruits each quarter to enlist for particular occupations.
The job for recruiters is to find those potential recruits and persuade them to enlist for a specific amount of time. Recruiters have been trained in the art of sales in order to present their respective branches in a certain way that becomes appealing to the public. Essentially, recruiters will usually only present the most attractive side of their military branch.

I propose that military veterans that are willing to volunteer their time should counsel potential recruits prior to enlisting in the military. A couple years after the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan, a large majority of service members completed their enlistment contracts and decided not to re-enlist. This forced the DOD to initiate stop-loss orders for the purpose of involuntarily retaining service members. There are numerous factors associated with deciding not to re-enlist, especially during a time of war. These are some of the factors that recruiters may also be hiding from potential recruits. By providing future service members with two perspectives instead of just one, they will be able to make a more conscious decision prior to enlisting in the military and choosing certain occupations.

This could be a program that is sponsored by school districts or privately funded, which focus on providing an honest account of what an individual would face in different branches/occupations. Not all occupations are combat related and not all occupations are safe. This may dissuade some potential recruits from joining the military and it may also help solidify the decision for others, but the most important thing is that youth are not manipulated into making a choice they will regret.

Another possible implication and trajectory for further research is in the role of permanent residents in the military. In March of 2003, four of the first American troops to lose their lives in the “war against terror,” were non-citizens (Amaya 2007, 4). Congressmen from each of the states where these patriots resided quickly introduced legislation that would grant
fallen troops citizenship and also a way to expedite the citizenship process for current non-citizen service members (4). As of 2007, Latinos constituted over 17 percent of the military age population, which ranges from 18 to 24 years of age (Census 2007). Latinos surpass the African American resident population by four percentage points and the Asian population by 14 percentage points. In essence, the Latino population is the largest minority group in the US, but has historically been underrepresented in the military (Asch et al. 2009, xv). Researchers from the RAND Corporation believe that Latinos are not enlisting in the military due to their low high school graduation rates (Asch et al. 2005, 6). This may also lead to misperceptions that since Latinos are not enlisting in the military, they are less likely to be patriotic or loyal to the state given our current conflicts overseas (Parker 2009). One of the hardships with the idea of non-citizens in the military is the concept of America spreading democracy overseas, yet cannot grant its service members the dignity of being accepted as full citizens.

Conclusion

African Americans led the way in breaking barriers for the inclusion of minorities in the military. Without their continuous sacrifice, the US military would not be considered the most integrated institution in America. The performance of African Americans in the heat of battle demonstrated the resilience of individuals that were other than White. This allowed for the inclusion of Latinos and Native Americans in the armed forces. White supremacy was still a cause towards limiting the advancement of minorities and it resulted in concentrating African Americans in the most hazardous occupations during the Vietnam War (Binkin 1993; Moskos & Butler 1996). This phenomenon has currently transitioned to the Latino population, but not through the government’s doing.
This paper has illustrated that Latinos are making the conscious decision to join the military, more specifically the Infantry, despite the hazards associated with the field. Their choice to join the military despite the option of enlisting in more technical occupations is primarily motivated by adventure, duty to country and patriotism. Although, these findings do speak to the loyalty and willingness to serve of Latinos in the US, this paper greatly lacks the holistic story of Infantry Marines that would provide a more nuanced account of true motives.

Nonetheless, some of the correlations between citizenship, membership, masculinity and patriotism are subconsciously present concerning the motivating factors towards enlisting in the Infantry. For the most part, these Latinos are aware of the dangers associated with their decisions and embrace them with their heads held high. They are accepting the responsibilities of being an American citizen by publicly demonstrating their presence in the front lines. These men have voluntarily entered into a field that has the highest probability of making the ultimate sacrifice to their country. They did this when they could have chosen a safer path to serve their country, given their AFQT scores. These are not boys that are the least qualified nor are they at the bottom of American society. These are men that are a caliber higher than the average American citizen, and they should be recognized as such. Latinos currently training and fighting in the Marine Corps demonstrate their love and patriotism for the US without having to say a word.
Appendix

Table 1. Operation Iraqi Freedom Death Rate Percentages, Race and Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race and Ethnicity</th>
<th>Military Deaths</th>
<th>% of Total Deaths</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>1.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>1.9</td>
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<td>9.7</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Hispanic or Latino</strong></td>
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<td><strong>10.6</strong></td>
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<td>Multiple races, unknown</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hawaiian or Pacific Islander</td>
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<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>3,290</td>
<td>74.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,408</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 2. Operation Enduring Freedom Death Rate Percentages, Race and Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Race and Ethnicity</th>
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<th>% of Total Deaths</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td><strong>7.9</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple races, unknown</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawaiian or Pacific Islander</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>1,008</td>
<td>80.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,262</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graph 2. Latino Motivations to Join the Infantry

Motivation to Join the Infantry

- Duty to Country
- Patriotism
- Adventure
- Travel
- Benefits
- Other
Race and Ethnicity—Please mark all that apply

African American-Black U.S.
___African American
___African (from African continent)
___Caribbean (African/Black Ancestry)
___Central or South American
___Other Black or African Ancestry: ______________________

Hispanic/Latino, or Spanish Origin
___Central American
___Chicano / Mexican American
___Cuban / Cuban American
___Puerto Rican
___South American
___Other Latino / Hispanic American Ancestry
   (including Latin Caribbean) ancestry: ______________________

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
___Guamanian / Chamorro
___Native Hawaiian
___Samoan
___Other Pacific Islander Ancestry: ______________________

Asian/American Asian
___Chinese / Chinese American (including Taiwanese)
___Filipino / Filipino American
___Japanese / Japanese American
___Korean / Korean American
___South Asian (ex: India / Pakistan / Sri Lanka / Bangladesh)
___Vietnamese / Vietnamese American
___Other South East Asian (ex: from Cambodia / Laos / Thailand): ______________________
___Other Asian / Asian American Ancestry: ______________________

White/Caucasian
___European / European American
___Middle Eastern / Middle Eastern American
___North African
___Other White / Caucasian Ancestry: ______________________
Please circle, mark an X or fill in the blank where needed

1. What age range are you in? 17-24 25-29 30 & over

2. Are you an American citizen? Yes No

3. If no, what is your country of origin? ___________________________

4. Are you a permanent resident? Yes No

5. If yes, how old were you when you arrived to the U.S? ____________________________

6. How long have you lived in the U.S? ____________________________

7. Primary language from 0 to 10 years of age? ___________________________

8. Primary language from 11 to 18 years of age? ____________________________

9. Are your parents American citizens? Yes No

10. City and State of residence: __________________________________

11. What is your primary household language? ____________________________

12. What is your highest educational attainment? 
   
   ___ High School Diploma or GED  ___ Bachelor of Arts or Science
   ___ Some College  ___ Masters Degree
   ___ Associate of Arts or Science or equivalent  ___ Ph.D. or Doctoral

13. What is your AFQT / ASVAB score? (If known) ____________________________

14. Father’s highest educational attainment?
   
   ___ High School Diploma or GED  ___ Bachelor of Arts or Science
   ___ Some College  ___ Masters Degree
   ___ Associate of Arts or Science or equivalent  ___ Ph.D. or Doctoral
   ___ Other

15. Mother’s highest educational attainment?
   
   ___ High School Diploma or GED  ___ Bachelor of Arts or Science
   ___ Some College  ___ Masters Degree
   ___ Associate of Arts or Science or equivalent  ___ Ph.D. or Doctoral
   ___ Other
16. Average household income?

___ $25,000 and under 
___ $25,000 to $40,000 
___ $40,000 to $55,000 
___ $55,000 to $70,000 
___ $70,000 to $90,000 
___ $90,000 & over

17. Primary motivation for joining the Marine Corps?
(Please choose your top three options by ranking them with: 1, 2 or 3)

___ Adventure 
___ Money 
___ Patriotism 
___ Duty to Country 
___ Education 
___ Travel 
___ Benefits 
___ Other:____________________

18. Primary motivation for joining the Infantry as an MOS?
(Please choose your top three options by ranking them with: 1, 2 or 3)

___ Adventure 
___ Money 
___ Patriotism 
___ Duty to Country 
___ Education 
___ Travel 
___ Benefits 
___ Other:____________________

19. Most influencing factor for choosing the Marine Corps above all other military branches?
(Please choose your top three options by ranking them with: 1, 2 or 3)

___ Family Member 
___ Media 
___ Recruiter 
___ Benefits 
___ Family History 
___ Current Conflicts 
___ School Advisor 
___ Money 
___ Social Inclusion 
___ Other:____________________

20. Would you like to participate in an interview concerning your motivation to join the Infantry?
Yes  No
Works Cited


Census Bureau. 2007. Resident Population of the United States by Race/Ethnicity and Age. Figure A-1.


