



Los Hispanos

a report on

HISPANIC VETERANS

by the Hispanic Veterans Working Group

Readjustment Counseling Service
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

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Dedication



Medal of Honor recipient Master Sergeant Roy P. Benavidez U.S. Army, Retired

On May 2, 1968, Benavidez was credited with saving the lives of eight wounded members of a 12-man U.S. Army Special Forces reconnaissance team which was buffeted in a jungle battle with North Vietnamese troops near Loc Ninh, Vietnam.

He was repeatedly wounded himself as he dragged and carried his comrades to the safety of a rescue helicopter. As he helped one comrade, he was clubbed from behind by an enemy soldier. Benavidez turned and fought hand-to-hand until he killed his adversary.

His fearless personal leadership, tenacious devotion to duty, and extremely valorous actions in the face of overwhelming odds are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service.



Acknowledgements

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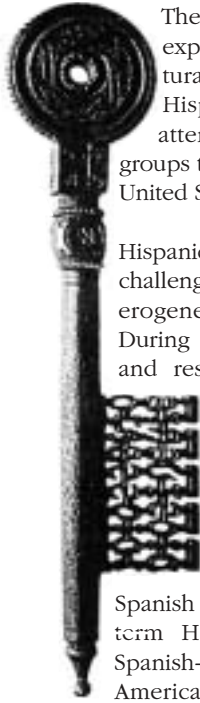
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Introduction



The purpose of this project is to expose a point of view on the cultural diversity that exists among Hispanic veterans, with special attention to the different ethnic groups that live in Latin America and the United States of America.

Producing this project about Hispanics has been a great odyssey and challenge due to the pluralistic and heterogeneous details about Hispanics. During the course of the investigation and research, even minimum details were emphasized to complement the historical contribution of this population called Hispanics.

The term Hispanic is used most of the time as a generic label to include all people of Spanish origin and descent. Also, the term Hispanics is used to describe Spanish-speaking Americans, Mexican-Americans, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, Colombians, Salvadorans, Nicaraguans,

and people from other Latin American countries. Most Hispanic groups are comfortable with the term. Another name, Latino, has gained favor, especially on campuses, because it implies that Latin America has a distinctive, indigenous culture, rather than being just a stepchild of Spain.

Hispanics have cultural diversity. This is a heterogeneous group whose ancestors and roots are combined with the different cultural roots of the Spaniards, Arabs, Native Americans, Africans and Europeans from the northern part of Europe. The Hispanic population in the United States is approximately 22.4 million. The majority, 13 million, are Mexicans or Mexican-Americans, 2.75 million are Puerto Ricans, 1 million are Cubans and the rest are Central and South Americans. Due to differences in the cultural aspect, differences between subgroups can be found. Although these details exist, there are factors that unify these groups: family, language and religion.

It is important to understand these aspects with the purpose of enabling more effective intervention in any attempt at helping this population.

Carmen Amalia Reveron-Pagan, M.S.N.

Hispanics

the historical perspective

by Luisardo Carmona, M.S.W.

The term “Hispanic” is used as a generic label to include all people of Spanish origin and descent. Approximately 22 million Hispanics are residents of the United States of America. While this figure certainly underestimates the current size of the Hispanic group, the Hispanic population appears to be growing continuously, attaining considerable size and having an impact on North American society.

Demographic data presented about Hispanics demonstrate how they differ from the general population. It is important to understand that Hispanics are seen, first, as members of a single cultural group, with historic similarities in language, values, and tradition. Second, the Hispanic population is highly heterogeneous and, for some purposes, should be conceptualized as an aggregate of distinct subcultures, each possessing a recognizable pattern of unique traits. Third, information about history and culture is important for non-Hispanics when the difference between Hispanic subcultures is unknown.

From the subcultural aspect it is important to point out that psychosocial and social-economic problems affecting this population are often approached erroneously in the same mode without consideration for subcultural differences across groups.

Spanish explorers who arrived in the New World in the early 16th century brought with them a relatively homogeneous culture similar in language, values, traditions and costume. In Mexico, they overthrew the Aztec empire, intermarried with the natives, and soon thereafter began to emigrate north. The Rio Grande, or Big River, current border between the United States and Mexico, was crossed in 1528.

By the mid-16th century, settlements had been created in what today is northern New Mexico. Original immigrants included Spaniards from Europe, Native Americans from Mexico, and the *mestizo* (mixed blood) progeny of both groups.

These events contribute to, first, a genetic

merger resulting in the gradual creation of a new Indo-Hispanic culture, and secondly Spaniard and *mestizo* offspring sought new lands to explore and colonize. Third, settlers who reached northern

New Mexico remained relatively isolated from Mexico and Spain because of the geographic distance and slow transportation. Later, they were outnumbered by immigrants who came to call themselves “Americans” of the United States.

Net result was the formation of a number of Hispanic subculture groups. As ethnohistorical analysis reveals, Hispanics differ in genetic heritage, as indicated by observable physical characteristics, and in cultural traditions relative to the extent which a given subculture is based in influences from Europe and the New World or Africa.

Skin color is one obvious physical characteristic with a genetic link differentiating Hispanic subgroups. The range in skin coloration is from white through *mestizo* and *mulato* (brown) to African. Considering the long standing prejudice in the United States toward people of color, it seems certain that darker Hispanics experience greater discrimination than lighter skinned Hispanics.

The types of subcultures formed also were influenced by original motivation for leaving the country of birth and migrating to a new country. Some Spaniards migrated for immediate personal gain with no thought of creating a new home. These people came to explore, colonize, exploit and return home. Others built new homes and sought economic opportunity and personal liberty. Still others came because of interaction between complex social, political, economic and personal factors. Today, Hispanics have migrated to the United States in waves to seek employment or to escape civil strife in their country of origin.

Thus we can see that a large group of Hispanics can be identified on the basis of shared



La Familia

characteristics, primarily language, values and tradition. Further, this large group includes a number of distinct subcultures which share these characteristics according to varying degrees of acculturation among Hispanics within the majority culture of the United States.

One characteristic which determines rate of acculturation is fluency in English, yet the commit-

The concept of *la familia* (the family) is central to thinking and feeling among Hispanics. There is a closeness among family members which makes the individual feel secure in the present and future due to a comfortable social support group. *La familia* instills its discipline and pecking order on family members. There is also the secondary family circle composed of *primos* (cousins), *tios* (uncles), *padrinos* (godfathers) and *compadres*.

The hierarchy among Hispanic family members is very rigid. In some family circles the members pay respect to adults and elders by kissing their hands as a salutation when meeting, and on departing if the visit lasted long.

Respect is the cause for discipline, the love of family, the sense of unity and reciprocal social support. Hispanics also differ from mainstream Americans with regard to values, e.g., religious preference. The vast majority of Hispanics profess Roman Catholicism, with only a relatively small percentage professing Protestant faiths. In contrast, the dominant religious preference of the majority culture is reversed, that is, more professed Protestants than Roman Catholics.

Hispanic tradition is extremely complex and, therefore, more difficult to describe succinctly in terms of variation from the majority culture. The most prominent features, and those of greater significance, are based in the areas of family structure and attendant gender roles. The extended family structure is most common by far, but characteristically includes formalized kinship relations such as the *compadrazgo* (godfather) system and loyalty to the family which takes precedence over social institutions. In addition, gender roles are traditionally more rigid and demarcated. Males are granted greater independence at an earlier age than females, and there are greater expectations for achievement outside the home for males.

Boys and girls are taught two different codes of sexual behavior (Nieves and Falcon, 1972). Traditional gender roles can be discussed within the context of two codes of behavior: *machismo* and

ment to Spanish among Hispanics is so strong that a significant percentage report Spanish as their native tongue and their preferred "home language."

What we can see is, unlike many other ethnic groups, Hispanics overall have held tenaciously onto Spanish language in spite of the fact that English is the language of schools, jobs and play.

marianismo. *Machismo* literally means that the male is the provider and the one responsible for the welfare and honor of the family. In its authority domain, machismo dictates that the male is considered superior to the female based solely on his gender. Machismo usually is associated with sexual prowess and power over women, expressed in romanticism and a jealous guarding of the fiancée or wife, or in premarital and extramarital relationships (Fitzpatrick, 1976).

Females are socialized into *marianismo* beliefs. Marianismo is based on the cult of the Virgin Mary, where women are considered spiritually superior to men and, therefore, capable of enduring all suffering inflicted by men (Stevens, 1973). Women are expected to be self-sacrificing in favor of their children and husband. They are also expected to remain virgins until their marriage, and it is their father's and/or brother's responsibility to see that this expectation is fulfilled.

There exists an additional pattern of behavior, seeming to stem from family structure and sex roles,

which differentiates Hispanics from non-Hispanics.

Hispanics typically manifest *personalismo*, a term denoting a preference for personal contact and individualized attention when dealing with power structures such as social institutions. Anglos, in contrast, seem to favor an organizational approach which follows interpersonal regulations (a chain of command). Consistent with a preference for more personalized interaction is the desire for more frequent physical contact among Hispanics. For example, a handshake between acquaintances, and *abrazos* (embraces) among friends, are the norm upon meeting and departing.

The influence of *personalismo* appears early and is reflected in play. Hispanic children have been observed using less space between themselves and their playmates and engaging in more physical contact than Anglo or African American children (Aiello and Jones, 1971).

It often has been alleged that Hispanics are fatalists. The belief that Hispanics adhere to predes-

There is a closeness among family members which makes the individual feel secure in the present and future due to a comfortable social support group

tination has been supported by a few studies showing, to use more technical language, higher external reinforcement on tests of locus of control. This finding disappears, however, when socioeconomic status is controlled (Stone and Ruiz, 1974). Related to the myth of fatalism and belief in predestination is the idea that Hispanics possess distorted attitudes toward time. Specifically that Hispanics are present-time oriented, unduly emphasizing immediate grat-

ification, and displaying underdeveloped skills in future planning.

Finally, due to differences in culture, differences between Hispanic subgroups can be found. Although differences exist, there also are factors that unify these groups, such as family, language and religion. It is important to understand unifying factors to enable more effective intervention by social service agencies working with Hispanics.

Hispanics

a military chronology

by Fred C. Forehand, M.S.W.



INTRODUCTION

The Spanish explorers were among the first Europeans to discover the “New World.” Christopher Columbus, an Italian sailing for the Spanish empire, discovered that “other world” known today as Cuba, Puerto Rico and Santo Domingo. Others followed such as Vasco de Gama from Portugal, but it would be Spain that would continue to dominate the exploration and settlement of the Americas.

Juan Ponce de Leon added another dimension to Spanish exploration by advancing inland to places such as Florida, Puerto Rico, Cuba and Jamaica. Hernando Cortes explored the interior of Mexico and history has well documented the military conflicts with the Aztecs.

The Spaniards embarked on a lengthy military conquest that saw Francisco Pizarro invade the Inca empire and subjugated the land between Panama and Santiago, Chile. At about the same time (early 1500s), further exploration took place from Florida, along the Gulf Coast, across Texas and into Mexico. Names such as Panfilo de Narvaez, Cabeza de Vaca, and Hernando de Soto were prominent explorers of that period. Further explorations took place up the Mississippi River and as far northward as present day New Mexico.

The unfolding of Spanish history starting with the establishment of the Spanish empire and continuing through various civil conflicts, two world wars, Korea, Vietnam and now the Persian Gulf War all show the role of Hispanics in combat. Hispanics, right or wrong, have been cast in a warrior role for centuries and it is that heritage and cultural traits that have promoted a significant place in history for Hispanics in the defense of the United States.

AMERICAN REVOLUTION

During the period prior to the outbreak of war between England and its colonists (1775) the three major world powers were England, France and Spain. Periodically tensions would escalate among the super powers and they would fight over territorial rights often exchanging jurisdiction by way of treaties. Spain was apprehensive and felt threatened by several of England’s “holdings” especially Florida and the Gulf of Mexico.

In 1776, Bernardo de Galvez was appointed colonel of the Spanish regiment in Louisiana and a year later he became Governor of Louisiana province. His direct military and political assistance was instrumental in the overall success of the Revolution. He provided food, weapons and military support to American agents. de Galvez led his troops against the British in southern Mississippi. He also attacked Mobile and later Pensacola. Governor de Galvez personally sailed into the harbor of Pensacola Bay. He went on to battle the British on land and eventually captured their forts and accepted their surrender.

It is noted here that the Spanish forces were comprised of Dominican soldiers, Cuban militiamen, Puerto Rican soldiers as well as Spanish and French speaking personnel from the Louisiana Regiment of Infantry. Of further note is that although Bernardo de Galvez was not awarded the Medal of Honor as such, he was authorized by the King of Spain to change the family coat of arms. He added a ship on a shield with the motto, *Yo Solo* (I alone), to the center of the coat of arms to commemorate his leadership in the assault on the city from Pensacola Bay.

THE BORDER WARS

During the Texas-Mexican Wars numerous Mexicans fought and died on behalf of Texas. History often glorifies the Texan defenders of the Alamo such as Davy Crockett and Jim Bowie but gives minimal acknowledgement to the fact that six Mexicans, members of a company led by Captain Juan N. Sequin of San Antonio died at the Alamo.

Sequin fought with distinction at the battle of San Antonio (1835) and the battle of San Jacinto (1836). He later became a two-term mayor of San Antonio.

AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

During the Civil War, Mexican-Americans fought for both the Union and Confederacy. Approximately 2,550 Mexican-Americans joined Confederate units and another 1,000 joined the Union forces. Most Mexican-Americans served in regular army or volunteer units, some served in predominately Mexican units with their own officers. Although much has been written regarding other minority contributions to the Civil War, not much has been printed about the Mexican-American role.

In California, Major Salvador Vallejo commanded the First Battalion of Native Cavalry. At least 469 Mexican-Americans served in that battalion. In New Mexico, Miguel E. Pino raised the Second Regiment comprised of 4,000 Mexican-American volunteers. In Texas, the Union raised 12 companies of Mexican-American cavalry, becoming the First Regiment of Texas Cavalry. The most famous Hispanic participant in the Union forces was Navy man David G. Farragut who commanded the sloop-of-war *Saratoga* and later the *Hartford*. Farragut was victorious in forcing the Confederates to surrender several key forts guarding the Mississippi River and was victorious in a fierce battle with the ship, *Tennessee*, in Mobile Bay. Farragut was commissioned Admiral of the Navy on July 26, 1866.

On the Confederacy side many Hispanics served in units such as the Benavides Regiment, commanded by Colonel Santo Benavides, and the 10th Texas Cavalry, commanded by Major Leonides M. Martin. Numerous Hispanics also served in Confederate units in Alabama, South Carolina, Louisiana and Florida.

The Civil War deeply divided the nation which found itself in bitter family and ethnic feuds. In Texas it was estimated that 2,550 Mexican-Americans (*Tejanos*) fought in the ranks of the Confederacy while 950, including some Mexican nationals, fought for the Union. The war in South Texas had become a civil war within a civil war.

SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR (1898)

In the early to mid 1800s Cuba was involved in numerous political and armed conflicts with Spain in an attempt to declare independence and establish self-rule. Spain provided much resistance to this movement and remained an oppressive force in

Cuba as well as in Puerto Rico and the Caribbean. Beginning in 1895, Cuban leaders such as General Antonio Maceo and General Maximo Gomez began a full war with Spain and declared Cuba a republic. The United States remained neutral in the struggle but much sympathy and attention was given by the United States press and public.

In 1897 the battleship *Maine* was sent to Havana harbor to protect American citizens as the political situation deteriorated. On February 15, 1898, a mysterious explosion took place aboard the *Maine* killing 260 Americans. The United States declared war on April 11, 1898, and in June 1898 17,000 Army soldiers landed on the southeastern tip of Cuba near Santiago. This group included the famous "Rough Riders," about 1,200 men of the 1st U.S. Volunteer Cavalry, under Colonel Leonard Wood and Lieutenant Colonel Theodore Roosevelt.

A dozen or more Hispanics served with the Rough Riders including Captain Maximiliano Luna from New Mexico. Captain Luna distinguished himself in battle and after the surrender of Santiago Colonel Wood was named Military Governor. Captain Luna served as his interpreter.

The U.S. continued to provide arms and personnel to support the Cuban guerrillas. Following several city battles the Spanish surrendered on July 17, 1898. Eight days later, American forces landed in Puerto Rico and captured the island by August 12th. The peace treaty that followed saw Spain relinquish control of Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines and Guam, thus ending Spain's colonial empire.

WORLD WAR I

The first world war saw millions of mixed heritage citizens enrolled in the armed forces including thousands of Hispanics. The Spanish speaking soldiers did not have adequate mastery of the English language and remained frustrated in duty posts far away from the war. Some Hispanics did fight in the war such as Nicolas Lucero from New Mexico and Marcelino Serna, both men saw action in the front-line trenches of France. There are many names of Hispanics who served in U.S. forces during World War I and many who served with honor.

WORLD WAR II

It is estimated that between 1/4 and 1/2 million Hispanics served in the Armed Forces during World War II. Except for the Puerto Rican population (53,000) we do not have good data on other Hispanics throughout the nation. We do know that

Heritage and culture have promoted a significant place in history for Hispanics in the defense of the United States

many National Guard units were activated from Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California which must have had a high representation. Hispanic participation in the war effort is difficult to separate from the overall efforts of all the men and women who served in the armed forces.

Some of the first casualties of the war were Hispanics on duty during the Pearl Harbor bombings. As the war progressed throughout the Pacific many Hispanics were among the prisoners of war held by the Japanese. Of distinction is Private Jose G. Martinez from Colorado, the first Hispanic Medal of Honor recipient of World War II.

In Europe, several units comprised largely of Hispanic troops distinguished themselves, for example Company E of the 141st (2nd Battalion) and the 142nd Infantry. Many noncombat units in charge of medical, transportation and quartermaster personnel provided supplies, equipment and life-saving services. Hispanic Americans made outstanding contributions in these units.

Hispanic Americans went on to further distinguish themselves in various Pacific endeavors such as the 158th (U.S. Sixth Army) in New Guinea and the Philippines. The 158th was one of the first U.S. units to see combat in the Pacific and was referred to as "the greatest fighting combat team ever deployed for battle" by General Douglas MacArthur. Further military accomplishments were made by Hispanics in the Marine Corps and Air Force.

KOREAN CONFLICT

The Korean Conflict saw many Hispanic Americans again respond to the call of duty. They served with distinction in all branches of the military. Some served in combat units much like their brothers, cousins and friends had done in World War II. Many Mexican-Americans from barrios in Los Angeles, San Antonio, Laredo, Phoenix and Chicago saw fierce action in Korea. Fighting in almost every combat unit in Korea, they distinguished themselves through courage and bravery as they had in previous wars.

The Puerto Rican 65th Infantry Regiment distinguished itself throughout its three years of combat beginning in 1950. Captain Manuel J. Fernandez, Jr., distinguished himself as an ace F-86 pilot assigned to locate and destroy communist MIG-15s in the air.

VIETNAM

The Vietnam era saw many Hispanics from all cultural diversities as participants of the war. In the early 1960s then Sgt. First Class Issac Camacho with the U.S. Army Special Forces fiercely fought the Viet Cong who overran his base camp resulting in his capture and internment for 20 months. On July 9,

1965, he escaped and found his way back to safety. His exploits earned him numerous military awards and a battlefield commission as a captain.

In an early (1964) Naval air battle with North Vietnamese gun boats, Lieutenant Everett Alvarez, Jr., was shot down. He was picked up by a fishing boat and imprisoned by the North Vietnamese. Lt. Alvarez was the first American and first Hispanic to become a prisoner of war. He remained a prisoner for eight and one-half years, the longest confirmed POW in the nation's history. He was repatriated in February 1973.

Ironically, during a helicopter evacuation from the U.S. Embassy in Saigon on April 30, 1975, Master Sgt. Juan J. Valdez, a two-tour Vietnam veteran, was on the last helicopter to leave, thus ending a 15-year saga in which Hispanics were among the first Americans to enter South Vietnam and among the last to leave.

Hispanic Americans have shown that if there is a theme to Hispanic participation in America's wars it is, first in—last to leave.

PERSIAN GULF WAR

Hispanics played active roles during the United States operations in Lebanon, Grenada, Panama and of course Saudi Arabia and Iraq. We know that current Hispanic representation in the U.S. military is almost four percent, therefore, we can assume again, as in previous military conflicts, that Hispanics from all subgroups and geographical locations are represented.

One case in point is that of the first New York City resident killed in the Persian Gulf region, a young man from South Bronx, U.S. Marine Captain Manuel Rivera. Rivera, 31, a 10-year veteran of the Marine Corps. He was killed on January 22, 1991, while piloting a fighter jet that malfunctioned and crashed.

SOMALIA

The period of U.S. military involvement in Somalia began in August 1992 when U.S. flights from Kenya began delivering food to Somalia. The first U.S. forces arrived to stay on September 17, 1992. These forces immediately encountered banditry, fighting and terrorism. All together 40-50,000 U.S. troops served in Somalia and once again Hispanics played strategic roles. On Sunday, October 3, 1993, about 100 Army Rangers and Special Forces were hunting for warlord Mohamed Farrah Aidid. Specialist Carlos Rodriguez and his Army Ranger unit were dropped into a hot landing zone by helicopter. A bullet soon pierced Rodriguez' right thigh in a 16-hour battle with Somalia gunmen. It was one of the bloodiest military engagements by U.S. troops since the Vietnam War.

Hispanics

American demographics

by Fred C. Forehand, M.S.W.

Hispanics total almost 21 million according to the U.S. Census Bureau. They are the second largest ethnic minority in the United States. Hispanics include Mexican-Americans, Central and South Americans, Puerto Ricans and Cubans.

Hispanics are, on the average, urban dwellers, low-paid and undereducated relative to age peers who are not Hispanics. This diverse but struggling group is on its way to becoming the nation's largest minority.

Census data further indicate that an absolute and relative majority of Hispanics are urban dwellers with concentrations in Corpus Christi and San Antonio, Texas; Miami, Florida; Santa Fe and Albuquerque, New Mexico; Yuma, Arizona; Los Angeles and Fresno, California; Jersey City, New Jersey; and New York City.

Chicanos are heavily represented in the southwest United States: Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico and Texas. Most Puerto Ricans live in Connecticut, New Jersey or

New York. Cubans and South and Central Americans reside in Florida. Hispanic growth is biggest in those booming states picking up congressional seats: California, Texas, Florida and Arizona. There is no question that Hispanics are strategically located and will have greater ability to elect candidates of their choice.

The census survey (1991) also shows that the Hispanic population is increasing faster than anyone expected, including the Census Bureau.

Hispanics are younger than all other Americans by seven and one-half years and more likely to have large families than non-Hispanics. That, plus heavy immigration, boosted Hispanic population by 7.7 million in the last decade, the biggest gain of any minority group.

The Hispanic community is not homogeneous. Cubans have the highest income levels; Puerto Ricans and Mexicans have the highest poverty rates. The report reveals modest economic gains by Hispanics, though wide gaps remain between them and non-Hispanics (*see APPENDIX for more demographic data*).



Growth of ethnic populations from 1980 to 1990

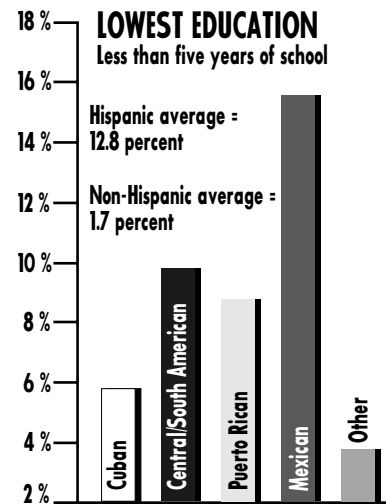
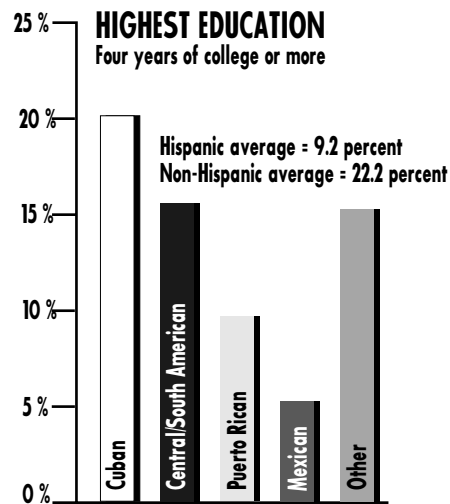
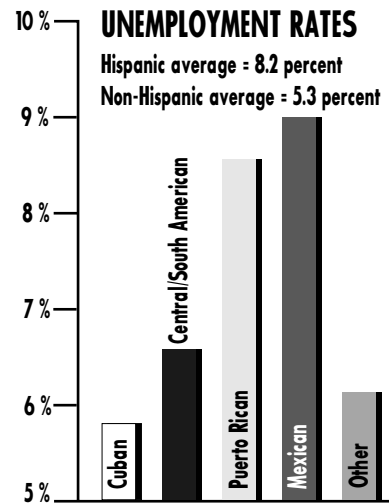
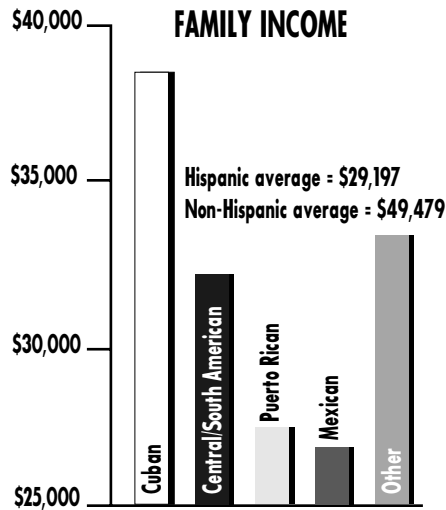
ETHNIC GROUP	1980	1990	% CHANGE
Blacks	26,495,025	29,986,060	13.2
Hispanics	14,608,673	22,354,059	53.0
Asian Americans			
Pacific Islanders	3,500,439	7,232,662	107.8
Total U.S. population	226,545,805	248,709,873	9.8

U.S. Census Bureau data

Hispanic veterans census data

VETERAN GROUPS	MALE	FEMALE
All ages	901,021	43,879
Other service	5,245	918
World War I	525	68
World War II	157,948	3,926
Korea and WWII	10,658	141
Korea	105,172	2,323
Between Korea and Vietnam	87,837	2,420
Vietnam/Korea/WWII	5,206	25
Vietnam/Korea	9,878	63
Vietnam era	320,255	9,160
Peacetime post-Vietnam	182,174	21,407
Sept. 1980 or later IT 2 years	16,123	3,428

U.S. Census Bureau data



See **APPENDIX**
for a complete
review of
census data
by Schwartz
and Klein

DISTRIBUTION OF HISPANIC POPULATION IN THE U.S.A.



Racial and ethnic diversity in selected metropolitan areas

"Other" race category not included, persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race

METROPOLITAN AREA	WHITE (%)	BLACK (%)	ASIAN (%)	INDIAN (%)	HISPANIC (%)
Corpus Christi, Texas	75.7	3.9	0.8	0.4	52.0
Miami-Hialeah, Florida	72.9	20.5	1.4	0.2	49.2
San Antonio, Texas	75.1	6.8	1.2	0.4	47.8
Santa Fe, New Mexico	62.4	0.6	0.8	2.5	43.5
Yuma, Arizona	75.5	2.9	1.3	1.3	40.6
Albuquerque, New Mexico	76.9	2.7	1.5	3.4	37.1
Los Angeles-Long Beach, Calif.	56.8	11.2	10.8	0.5	37.8
Fresno, California	63.3	5.0	8.6	1.1	35.5
Jersey City, New Jersey	68.8	14.4	6.6	0.3	33.2
New York, N.Y.	56.5	26.3	6.5	0.3	22.1

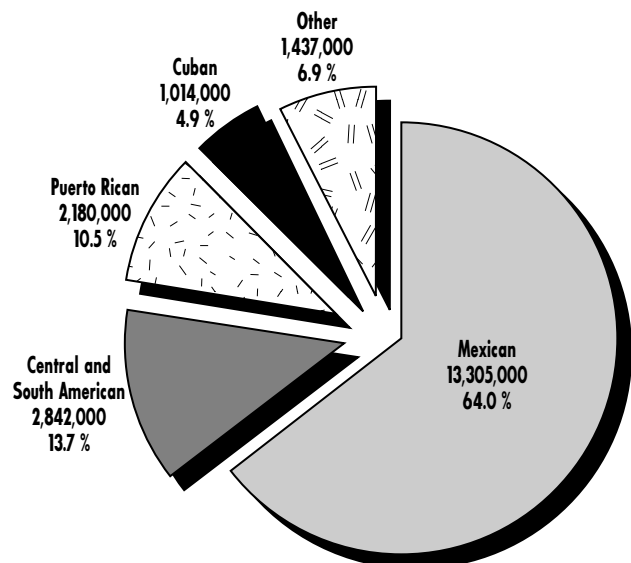
HISPANIC POPULATIONS IN THE U.S.A.

Total Hispanic population is
20,779,000 or 9 percent of the
United States population.

Mexican Americans represent the
largest Hispanic group in the U.S.

Cuban Americans have the highest
income and most education of the
Hispanic groups in the U.S.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, March 1990 survey
of 56,400 households



Religion

among Hispanic veterans

by Carmen Amalia Reveron-Pagan, M.S.N.

Not all Hispanics are involved in *Espiritismo* “Spiritism” or *Santeria*. Many people tend to think that a majority of Hispanics practice *Espiritismo* or *Santeria* but this perception is not true. Media outlets have helped promote this idea, as we saw in a recent movie containing animist rituals which, in all probability, were portrayed by Mexican or Cuban citizens. This vision of Hispanic spirituality is partial and wrong. It is sad that some professionals commit this error based on lack of knowledge about Hispanic culture.

As a counselor I consider religion an important issue that must be taken into consideration during psychosocial assessment. Spiritual experience must be distinguished from any psychopathology. A veteran will not be seen as a whole if we do not pay attention to the religious aspect of his or her being.

In 1994, Patrick Johnstone estimated that the practice of *Espiritismo* in Cuba reached up to 25 percent of the population, compared to 44.1 percent who proclaimed themselves Christians (Catholics or Protestants). An additional 30.9 percent declared no specific religious belief. The practice of *Espiritismo* has African-Caribbean roots as well as different European varieties.

Mexico is very different: 94.6 percent of the population is Christian, 87.5 percent Catholics and 5.2 percent Protestants. A mere 5.3 percent

declare themselves without any religious beliefs. Most Mexicans are culturally Catholics of narrow traditionalism or syncretic religious practices, but only 10 percent are regular churchgoers. The powers of the ancient gods and spiritual world have yet to be broken in the Spanish-speaking majority and more especially in the Christopagan Indian minority groups.

In Puerto Rico approximately one out of three inhabitants is Protestant (28 percent) or Catholic (66.6 percent). Less than 2 percent practice other beliefs, among them *Santeria* and *Espiritismo*.

As we may notice, each country is particular and different. The practices of *Santeria* and *Espiritismo* represent a low percentage in comparison with the general practice of Catholicism and Protestantism. In 1900, almost the entire Hispanic population was considered Catholic.

Changes since then have been dramatic, from traditionalism with strong opposition to Protestant missionary activity, to freedom of religion and a rapid growth of Evangelicals.

Latin America has changed not only politically, but also in its religious practice. The Protestant explosion in Latin America is not only in numbers, but is changing the culture.

As we have seen, the religious practice of Hispanics is complex and for this reason generalization is a bad practice. To avoid misjudgment, Hispanic veterans should be treated as individuals and never generalized.



La Familia

influence on the soldier

by Evaristo Flores, L.M.S.W.

In Research Triangle Institute's National Vietnam Veterans Readjustment Study of 1988, there were 48 items regarding exposure to combat stress, that is, direct engagement with the enemy, exposure to death and dying, exposure to enemy fire, and others. High war stressor exposure was measured among 22.9 percent for whites/others, 32.7 percent for Hispanics and 37.4 percent for blacks.

According to NVVRS, among those experiencing high war zone stressor exposure, there is a 34 percent rate of posttraumatic stress disorder among whites, 38.2 percent PTSD among blacks and 48.4 percent among Hispanics. The severity of adjustment problems has been found to correlate with the amount of combat involvement.

Statistics show that 23.3 percent of U.S. Marine Corps casualties from the Southwestern United States had distinctive Spanish surnames (statistics gathered between January 1961 to February 1967). The U.S. Army says that 19.4 percent of its casualties from the Southwest were Hispanics between 1961 and 1967, and 17.5 percent between December 1967 and March 1969. The total Hispanic population in the Southwest was 11.8 percent during the same timespan. The area includes Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico and Texas.

American Hispanics have a diverse yet unified sense of cultural values because of the Indian mix of the *mestizo*, the black mix of the *mulatto* and the *manito*. Cuban, Puerto Rican and Mexican Americans all have ties to Spanish heritage. The prevailing attitude of Latinos emanates from *la familia* (the family) the primary circle from which life radiates. La familia is a root acknowledgment among cultural participants and others.

Sharing and intimacy help individuals unite into a close family unit. Discipline is hierarchic, usually the father will be the decision maker. Respect of authority is carried over to military duty, furthered by a sense of responsibility for the group.

In Vietnam, la familia included a veteran's platoon, squad and buddies. This cultural concept, ingrained in the soldier, created individual suffering

and an extreme sense of survivor guilt among some Hispanic combat survivors.

A Hispanic veteran is not much different than other Vietnam veterans, but subtle differences exist. Hispanic veterans studied in NVVRS were noted as having a 27.9 percent PTSD rate, compared to 13.7 percent for whites/others and 20.7 percent for black combat veterans according to the landmark study.

The following information is from the National Vietnam Veterans Readjustment Study (NVVRS, Tables IV-1, D-7):

□ Measure of high war zone stressors: 22.9 percent among whites/others, 37.4 percent among blacks, and 32.7 percent among Hispanics

□ Current prevalence of PTSD in theater veterans: 13.6 percent among whites/others, 20.6 percent among blacks, and 27.9 percent among Hispanics

□ High war zone stressor exposure (PTSD): 34.0 percent among whites/others, 38.2 percent among blacks, and 48.4 percent among Hispanics

□ Era veterans' PTSD rate (standardized to high war stressor, but not in war theater): 2.4 percent among whites/others, 5.0 percent among blacks, and 2.2 percent among Hispanics

"The significantly higher rates of PTSD among Hispanics as compared to white and other theater veterans persisted even after taking into account a broad range of predisposing risk factors from war zone exposure. This suggests that neither such background differences nor a higher level of war zone stress exposure among Hispanics explains the difference observed between these groups. The general pattern was also not due to the propensity of Hispanics to report more symptomatology, since



the prevalence rate of PTSD among Hispanic theater veterans was higher than that of Hispanic era veterans or civilian counterparts.” (NVVRS Executive Summary, pp. 16-17)

Predisposing factors do not include cultural values, child rearing practices or emotional needs derived from cultural *familia* beliefs, or religious commitment. The predisposing factors taken into account were whether the father drank, pre-service behavior, crises in their lives and education. A predisposing factor here is anything which makes one susceptible.

No me quiero acordar, pero me acuerdo. I don't want to remember, but I do. I don't know what is happening to me. I think of my brothers in Vietnam, especially those who died. Sometimes I feel like crying, and I do cry, some call me *el lloron* (the weeper). *Este sentimiento*, this emotional feeling I have, is very deep in me. Tell me what is happening to me. A veteran may live alone with his wife, his only friends are those veterans he has met through the Vet Center.

Wayne Gregory, Ph.D., director of the VA inpatient treatment unit for PTSD, Waco, Texas, stated that in 1992 about 25 percent of their program graduates were Hispanic.

He said that Hispanic veterans are different from the average veteran. They tend not to be a problem on the unit; they are not confrontational. They tend to blend into the woodwork. Their problems tend to blend into everyday life. They are more compliant and more passive.

Dr. Gregory reports at least six major differences between Hispanics and other veterans: 1) Hispanics tend to stay married longer, 2) they come in with more religious/spiritual issues and more guilt regarding their Vietnam experience, 3) there is more family support than among average veterans, 4) they are a lot quieter on the unit, harder to get engaged in counseling and they tend to be more passive, 5) their financial problems seem to be huge compared to others and, 6) a confrontational relationship seems to exist between veterans and their mothers.

Number six could result because mom takes on all of the veteran's psychiatric woes until she rebels. She does not understand the veteran; he cannot communicate with mom in a substantial way to get mom involved. Maybe a veteran is afraid to get all choked up when talking to mom, afraid to make her hurt, or doesn't want to hurt her, so he remains aloof.

DISCRIMINATION

There was discrimination in the early 1960s. Chicanos stayed on their own side of the street. In the military, veterans report that they saw what they thought was discrimination. They claim that even if they made up a small percentage of the company, the dirty job roster was usually top heavy for Hispanics. This might be because sergeants and officers got less lip from Hispanics.

Today, some Hispanic veterans are leery of social service agencies. Much of our job at the Vet Center is connecting veterans with service agencies.

When it is a telephone conversation, and they are in the room, they study your face and body language to see if there is any negative response from the other end or from you. If so, they make excuses not to follow through on the referral.

VA psychologist, Dr. Tom Anderson, stated that Mexican Americans may suffer from PTSD to a greater extent because of: 1) volunteering—they are more accommodating, more apt to volunteer for hazardous duty, 2) racism—though there were more of the other ethnic groups, Hispanics in Vietnam were isolated, there may not have been another Hispanic with whom to team up and, 3) family orientation and support—there was no support for a Hispanic who was accustomed to togetherness, no opportunity to align self with others, and as he started losing friends during combat, some Hispanic veterans started isolating, something that carries on today.

FAMILY ISSUES AND DSM-IV

There are 17 symptoms in three clusters regarding posttraumatic stress disorder in DSM-IV. There are signs and symptoms seen in re-experiencing the event, in avoidance, and for increased arousal. War trauma includes developmental arrest leading to family disorientation. Because of the culture in South Texas, the feeling of detachment and estrangement from others (DSM-IV, C[5]), is a two-edged sword. The veteran has a sense of family and unity. Family members might serve to stimulate unwanted traumatic memories.

A frequent question is, “Why am I different from my brothers and sisters. They always gather, laugh and joke, and I can't get into it. I want to be part of it but can't.” We point out that a combat situation, like losing buddies, is a contributing factor in feeling like this and at times we get a sigh of relief. Barriers come down slowly. The veteran needs to be told again and again why he is now dif-

*No me quiero acordar, pero me acuerdo.
I don't want to remember, but I do.
I don't know what is happening to me.
I think of my brothers in Vietnam, especially those who died.*

ferent. His values have shifted due to trauma in the Vietnam family.

Hispanic veterans try to keep their commitments, are very faithful to their spouses and get reciprocal support. Most are extremely jealous and over-protective of their children, almost to the point of being pathological about it. Again, we bring out that, in Vietnam, there seemed to be many abandoned children, or children walking the lonely trails, and the veteran's sense of family, their own closeness to their parents, drives this point home more vividly. Veterans carried this concept home.

The symptom described in DSM-IV as restricted range of affect, e.g., unable to have loving feelings, is another source of ambivalence. Sometimes exemplified by love-hate statements like, "I wish I didn't have my kids, I feel like killing all of my kids, then myself. Some veterans wasted kids over there, or, sometimes I had to waste a kid." Notice the word waste. In context such statements carry a sense of discarding, and the weight of consciousness and hurt about it.

A high degree of cohesion is normal in Mexican families. NVVRS, Table VII, explores family adjustment (couples and couples with children). Hispanic veterans experiencing high war stressor exposure become noticeably less cohesive than their civilian counterparts, as compared to whites and blacks. When adding midrange cohesion and adaptability to extreme cohesion and adaptability, the percentage drops as follows:

For white couples, cohesiveness drops 10 percent, for white couples with children 9.9 percent. For black couples cohesiveness drops 1.8 percent, for black couples with children, 3.5 percent. For Hispanic couples cohesiveness drops 16.9 percent, for Hispanic couples with children, 14 percent. (from NVVRS, Tables VII, 15, 16)

In relation to DSM-IV's re-experiencing traumatic events criteria, recurrent distressing dreams of the event combine with difficulty staying asleep, and hypervigilance in the increased arousal cluster to make the veteran miserable. Some have expressed agony, saying that they wake up with a stranglehold on their spouse's neck. They tell us that they sleep alone, except to have sex, because they are afraid that they might wake up some morning and find they have killed all of the family.

In DSM's avoidance criteria, item C(7), a veteran with PTSD short-changes a career, quitting jobs, job jumping, and does not have a sense of future or a long life. Most Hispanic veterans stay married, and usually have children, in fact, veterans

sometimes mention the children and/or spouse as the main reason for the veteran still being alive.

Hence, a full circle, the Hispanic youngster who left to fight a war left family as a happy kid and sometimes returned to a miserable family life. The veteran's primary survival instinct is love of family. The National Vietnam Veterans Readjustment Study, Table VII, 10, shows the marital status of veterans who experienced high war zone stressors. Of these veterans, 74.8 percent of Hispanics currently are married compared to 73.9 percent among whites/others and 51.8 percent among black veterans. If more Hispanics with high war zone stressors currently are married, but are

experiencing less family cohesion and adaptability, we can assume that Hispanics may have troubles as noted in criteria C-5, 6, and 7 of DSM-IV, which deal with family issues. The problems are feelings of detachment or estrangement from others; restricted range of affect, e.g., unable to have loving feelings; a sense of foreshortened future, e.g., does not expect to have a career, marriage, children or a long life. The "marriage dichotomy" is that the veteran tends to stay married because of spouse and family support, and because of his cultural past, that is,

prior to Vietnam. Yet, there is a feeling of detachment and a restricted range of affect which psychologically isolates him from his family. In his psychosocial development, isolationism has won out over intimacy.

Some veterans do not expect to have a long life or marriage. The feeling of loneliness makes you want to kill yourself and others, one veteran tells me. "When I get angry," he says, "I want to destroy things. I'm usually angry. I am angry and sad when I remember all my friends who died in Vietnam. The only thing that holds me back is my love for my boy, my girls, and my wife of 20 years. Sometimes I think all would be better off if I killed them, and waited for the cops to try and take me."

This is a Hispanic veteran who saw eight of 12 months of war as a pointman in Vietnam's III Corps. He liked to walk point because he felt more secure. He volunteered as a tunnel rat when needed. He is one of many migrant workers who was drafted while away from Texas in the migrant stream. He left family and culture and acquired a new way of life in his short two years in the military. In Vietnam, he laughed when he killed prisoners. He feels sorry now, but back then the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army troops killed all of his buddies and he was angry. He now says, "This skin is a shield, you are boiling inside. Every day I see

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Vietnam as if it were happening again right now. I did not cry then, *los hombres no lloran*, but now I cry and it does provide some relief.”

In reading case #1 of the NVVRS, Volume I, there is an unnerving resemblance of J. S. to this veteran, and again our veteran represents many of the other Hispanic PTSD veterans.

At the McAllen, Texas, Vet Center as of August 1992, there were 189 Vietnam theater veterans as active clients. Of these, 160 or 84.7 percent were Hispanics, and 29 were white veterans. Of the Hispanics, 55 percent have PTSD, as opposed to 37.9 percent of our white veterans. Of the PTSD

Hispanics, 84.3 percent are married, compared to 72.7 percent of the white veterans with PTSD.

Some interesting comparisons between NVVRS results and McAllen Vet Center clients mentioned in the informal survey above point out Hispanic veterans tend to stay married (see chart below).

From childhood, Hispanic veterans have seen that family is central to thinking and feeling. The trauma of war left a void for those suffering from PTSD symptoms. The therapeutic alliance must help destroy ingrained perceptions. New parameters in relation to *la familia* must be fostered to help manage the disorder.

VIETNAM THEATER VETERANS (PERCENT)	NVVRS	McALLEN CLIENTS
White/others in Vietnam	84.6	15.3
Hispanics in Vietnam	5.0	84.7
CURRENT PTSD (HIGH WAR ZONE STRESSOR)		
White/others	34.0	
Hispanics	48.4	
PTSD		
White/others	13.7	37.9
Hispanics	27.9	55.6
CURRENTLY MARRIED WITH PTSD		
White/others	* 73.9	72.7
Hispanics	* 74.8	84.3
*note NVVRS wording		

Outreach to Hispanic veterans

by Ed Calvo, M.S.

In our continuing efforts to outreach Hispanic veterans and render the services to which they are entitled, we think it is important that mental health counselors become familiar with Hispanic culture. The media, including movies and television, have created an image of Hispanics resulting in distorted and preconceived ideas regarding our culture and, in some cases, our personality and physical characteristics.

Distorted and stereotypical images still persist. We, as counselors, are not immune to these images and can respond to stereotypes like other individuals who are not in the business of healing.

DSM-IV (*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, 4th Edition*) stresses the necessity for cross-cultural perspectives for full and correct assessment when working with minorities such as Hispanics.

"In order to accomplish this," the DSM-IV reports, "counselors need to be informed of the individual's ethnic and cultural characteristics." In other words, counselors need to be aware of the degree of involvement in the client's culture of origin and the host culture, as well as language ability, usage and preference.

Being knowledgeable about the predominant idioms and sayings by which some ethnic minorities report their symptoms, needs or feelings is a demanding assignment. Not being able to communicate in the client's own language carries in itself a number of problems too complex for this article. Nevertheless, a counselor must create a way by which he or she can develop an appropriate level of intimacy sufficient enough to help clients understand and determine whether the client's behavior is normal or pathological. At the same time, and during the assessment period, the counselor needs to monitor personal feelings, checking for any countertransference that he or she might have developed regarding stereotypes.

IDIOMS OF DISTRESS

Depending on their background, Hispanic veterans use certain idioms to identify symptoms related to their problems. Some of these idioms are familiar to

other ethnic groups as well, but the idioms might differ in meaning. On occasions we receive calls from a spouse asking us to help her husband who is having an *ataque de nervios*. Another might call saying her husband is acting as if he had "lost his soul." The need to be acquainted with these idioms is obvious. Some of the idioms with which I have come in contact are as follows:

Mal de ojo

Literally meaning evil eye, is used to describe fitful sleep, crying without apparent cause, vomiting, fever, diarrhea and other childhood illnesses. Children seem to be more at risk, but sometimes adults, especially Hispanic women, are affected.

Ataque de nervios

Attack of nerves, a general feature is a sense of being out of control. Common symptoms are crying, shouting, trembling, verbal and physical aggression and others. DSM-IV reports that "dissociative experiences, seizures or fainting episodes, and suicidal gestures are prominent in some attacks." Although descriptions of some *ataque de nervios* most closely fit with the DSM-IV description of panic attacks, the association of most attacks with a precipitating event and the frequent absence of the hallmark symptoms of acute fear or apprehension distinguish them from panic disorder.

Ataque de nervios frequently occurs as a direct result of a trauma produced by being involved in a stressful situation such as divorce, children with behavioral problems, witnessing a severe accident, or the death of a family member or friend. Amnesia may be experienced after the attack, but a return to normal levels of functioning can occur rapidly.

Nervios

This is probably one of the most-used idioms of distress used by Hispanics. It could refer to symptoms related to a stressful life experience or a response to life in general—a kind of catch-all for stress, irritability, inability to function in a given situation, anxiety, sleep disturbances, frustration and more.

Mal de pelea

This term is used when an individual's behavior becomes violent, aggressive or homicidal. Usually this behavior is directed toward other people and can be provoked by a disagreement, insult or something of lesser importance. Mal de pelea appears to be more predominant among some Hispanic males and is usually accompanied with persecutory ideas and amnesia.

Locura

This term is usually used in reference to a severe form of chronic psychosis. Some of the main symptoms include incoherence, agitation, auditory and visual hallucinations, difficulties in following social rules, possible violence, unpredictability and others. This term also is used when referring to a person's inability to conform to social rules.

Susto

Fright, or *susto*, is also referred to as *perdida del alma*, or loss of the soul, it is an illness attributed to a frightening event. Typical symptoms, among many, are strained social roles, loss of appetite, sleep disturbance or lack of sleep, lack of motivation, low self-esteem and somatoform disorders. Major depressive disorders, such as post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms, may be referred to as *susto*.

HISPANIC VETERANS

According to the National Vietnam Veterans Readjustment Study initiated in 1984, 479,000 out of 3.1 million veterans are suffering from posttraumatic stress disorder symptoms. Among them, 27.9 percent (46,000 out of 168,000 veterans studied) are Hispanic, the highest percentile of former military service personnel afflicted. If we put all this information into perspective and apply it to the Hispanic war veteran, we can see there is a need to reach out to this population and help veterans come to terms with war trauma.

However, due to the idiosyncrasies of this group, the probability of Hispanic veterans seeking counseling or visiting Vet Centers is not very high. A Hispanic counselor on staff, whenever possible, could give Hispanic veterans a sense of being represented. This would be ideal, however, it may not be easy or practical, to have a Hispanic counselor in every center where a significant Hispanic community exists. An alternative would be for counselors to become knowledgeable of Hispanic culture, goals, priorities and way of seeing life in general.

Cultural aspects, differences between groups, demographic aspects and spiritual needs are some of the conditions that make these groups unique and different from one another. Pina, in the book, *The Trauma of War: Stress and Recovery in Vietnam Veterans*, indicated that, "when counseling with the Hispanic veteran, the process of understanding the therapeutic interaction that we think is needed to counsel with this group, we tend to examine the client's variables when in fact it might be more appropriate to look at our own variables."

One of these variables deals with similarities and differences between subgroups that together make up the larger Hispanic veteran population. Language, religion and strong family ties, which at times includes friends and neighbors, appears to be common among Hispanic subgroups. But, depending on their background, there are differences as well. Hispanics can be Jewish, Catholic, Protestant or Santero, as well as black, white, mulatto or mestizo.

HISPANIC SUBGROUPS

Throughout the years we have been exposed to a great deal of information regarding the Hispanic population. Sources of information generally have been movies, television and newspapers. Some of us think we are knowledgeable and have good insight into the culture based on what we have learned from the media. We become surprised when we encounter a client who, somehow, does not seem to fit the concept we have formed regarding the Hispanic population. When this happens, we seldom realize that the problem is with us and that our knowledge is not what we think it is, and we become confused.

To be knowledgeable in regard to Hispanics, we first need to know differences and similarities among them and, for this, we need to know about the subgroups that together make up this culture.

MEXICAN AMERICAN

With a total of over 11 million (approximately) located mainly in California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas and parts of Illinois, Mexican Americans are the largest group among the total Hispanic population. Of Indian and Spanish ancestry, Mexican Americans have a strong religious and spiritual belief as well as well defined family values. Extended family is considerable. Brothers, sisters, parents, grandparents, uncles, cousins, neighbors and friends may be part of the extended family.

During the Vietnam War, for example, fellow soldiers became part of some Hispanic soldiers'

If we put all this information into perspective and apply it to the Hispanic war veteran, we can see there is a need to reach out to this population

extended families, and leaving comrades behind created significant trauma such as separation anxiety, abandonment issues, survivor guilt and more.

Nydia Garcia-Prieto in her paper, "Puerto Rican Families," reports that "Puerto Ricans emphasize spiritual values to the point that they will sacrifice material gains for spiritual goals." The same can be applied to Mexican Americans. This is a people-oriented group which carries the pain and suffering of others willingly, as if their own, a concept reflected in their music, literature and art.

PUERTO RICAN AMERICANS

With a total of approximately two million in the continental United States, Puerto Ricans are located mainly in New York, and parts of the U.S. coast. Nydia Garcia-Prieto reports that, like Cuban Americans, a Puerto Rican family may consist of, "a white mother and a black father with children who are various shades of color. Their cultural ancestry may be a mixture of African, Taino, Corzican and Spanish, though their ethnic identification will be Puerto Rican." Their music, like the Cuban group, is of African influence, happy and carefree.

CUBAN AMERICANS

With a total of about 1.5 million, Cuban Americans are located mainly in Florida. This group has the same characteristics as the Puerto Rican group, except that their ethnic roots are mainly African and Spanish.

Of all the Hispanic subgroups, Cubans have the strongest belief in and commitment to education. The influence of spiritual beliefs, like Puerto Rican Americans, is very strong.

Delgado, in his paper, "Puerto Ricans and the social work profession," reports that "Spiritualism is the belief that the visible world is surrounded by an invisible world inhabited by good spirits who influence human behavior. Spirits can either protect or harm, as well as prevent or cause illness." There seems to be a great number of spiritual healers who use *Santeria* as a way of dealing with bad spirits among this group. The belief that spirits cause innumerable illnesses and mental unrest is a strong belief among Cuban Americans.

LATIN AMERICANS

With a total of over one million, mainly located in Florida and New York, this group is made up of descendants from all the rest of the Central and South American countries which, more or less, respond to the influence of the Indian and Spanish

culture. Exceptions are Argentineans, Chileans and Uruguayans, whose influence is mainly European. Germans, Italians and Spaniards are mixed in a culture that responds, almost in its totality, to the European culture. This is reflected in Latin American art, music, education systems and social interactions. Their religion is mainly Catholic, but it is important to annotate the strength of the Jewish faith, especially in Argentina, which has the largest group of Sephardi Jews in Latin America.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Let me quickly address a point which I consider important in regard to demographics of the Hispanic population. Patricia Arredondo in her paper, "Counseling Latinas," indicated that the localization of these groups in specific areas is not accidental. "Hispanics," she said, "live in every state, but ethnic groups are concentrated in specific regions reflecting the historical and political relationship between the particular ethnic groups and the U.S. Government."

Mexican Americans are located mainly in the Southwest because, prior to the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, that territory belonged to Mexico. In Chicago,

the Bracero Program created jobs for Mexican Americans, a population which now has grown to considerable size. Puerto Ricans are located mainly in the Northeast. Their entry to the U.S. began in 1917 during the onset of World War I. Puerto Rico's proximity to the mainland U.S. determined migration as Puerto Ricans sought economic betterment. The smallest of the Hispanic subgroups, but greatest in economic power, are the Cubans. Garcia-Prieto reports that their migration coincided with the rise to power of Fidel Castro (1956-59) and the Cuban government's take over of American-owned sugar plantations, cattle ranches, oil refineries and other businesses in Cuba.

CULTURAL ASPECTS

Hispanic culture is unique in many ways. Historical events from colonial times, migration, religious beliefs and the influence of African, Indian and European ancestry created a culture full of tradition, conviction and unique values. Subgroups all share a common language and a common religion, but are also different in many ways. Padilla and Ruiz in their paper, "Latino Mental Health: A Review of Literature," talked about the extended family structure that includes "formalized kinship relations, such as the *compadrasco* (godfather system) which

Historical events from colonial times, migration, religious beliefs and the influence of African, Indian and European ancestry created a culture full of tradition, conviction and unique values

calls for family first and then social authority and loyalty. *Familismo*, they added, “is supported by reciprocal obligations when members establish their own families. In this context, sex roles are demarcated and individuals are socialized and behave accordantly.”

Stevens, in his paper, “Marianismo: The Other Face of Machismo,” refers to machismo as, “a desirable male characteristic defined as the Cult of Virility: arrogance and sexual aggressiveness in male to female relationships.”

A belief in female spiritual superiority also teaches that women are semidivine, morally superior and spiritually stronger than men. “Marianism,” Stevens said, “is directly connected with the veneration of the Virgin Mary by most of the Hispanic Catholics.” This cultural attitude creates a double bind not easy to overcome.

SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE

Stereotyping of Hispanics includes the belief that all, or most Hispanics, are Catholic. In reality Hispanics can be Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Santeros, or members of a spiritual cult.

Santeria is widely practiced in the Caribbean basin and in Central and South America. It has spread to the continental U.S. via Mexico, mainly through migration into California, Arizona and southwest Texas. Cubans and Puerto Ricans

brought this practice to Florida and New York. Garcia-Prieto indicated that Puerto Ricans tend to attribute stressful situations to external factors and to express stress through somatic complaints. When in stress, an individual turns to family members who direct the individual to a physician. If the problem is considered to be nonphysical, it is usually categorized as spiritual.

CONCLUSION

Hispanics are not one group of people, we are made up of many subgroups. We are white, black, mestizo and mulatto. We have different goals and principles, different ambitions and dreams, different ways to see life and different motivators. We are Catholic, Protestant, Santeros and Jews. We are located in different parts of this country, not by chance, but for a reason.

When we are in counseling, we want to be represented, or at least be with someone who understands our culture. As a sign of respect, we are taught to avoid having eye contact with figures of authority. For some of us, this behavior is part of our culture. Do not use it as a psychological or neurological indicator.

Address males first, then spouses and children. This is not because we think wives and children are not important, but because it is our custom.

Hispanics

community outreach ideas

by Blas Falcon, M.S.W.

If you are like me you may find outreach enjoyable but may not be sure where to start. One solution I have found helpful is to identify one day a week that is a day solely to do outreach.

HISPANIC ORGANIZATIONS

When identifying how to access Hispanic veterans, look for Hispanic organizations in your community. In Albuquerque, New Mexico, there is the American G.I. Forum, the oldest Hispanic veterans organization in the United States, which was founded in the 1920s because Hispanic veterans felt the traditional veterans organizations were not advocating for Hispanic veterans nor making them feel welcome.

Another non-veteran organization in Albuquerque is the Hispano Chamber of Commerce. This is a good organization to network with other community businesses and non-profit agencies to inform them of services the Vet Center provides. Hispanic organizations also exist within educational institutions like colleges and universities where Hispanic veterans can be found through veterans counselors who are responsible for student recruitment and assistance with financial aid.

The Albuquerque Vet Center, as part of an ongoing outreach effort, has asked veterans who are participating in posttraumatic stress disorder counseling groups to volunteer and speak to students at local high schools. Some teachers are teaching modules on Vietnam as part of their curriculum. Students may have parents who are Vietnam veterans and students may feel more comfortable asking questions about Vietnam from veterans they don't know rather than asking their family members directly.

DEMOGRAPHICS

You need to know the size of the Hispanic community in your town and the number of Hispanic clients you are representing to develop a realistic outreach plan.

The City of Albuquerque has a population that is 40 percent Hispanic, ten percent Native American, one percent Black; less than one percent Asian, and 49 percent Anglos. Fourteen percent of the population lives in poverty.

The Albuquerque Vet Center, for the month of March 1995, has seen a total of 436 clients both in individual and group sessions. Thirty-one percent of total clients seen were Hispanic veterans.

LANGUAGE

Every Vet Center will not have a bilingual counselor or needs one. However, I believe it is important to have Spanish speaking counselors in those communities where you have a large community of Hispanic veterans; especially states like New Mexico, Texas, California,

Illinois, as well as areas like Boston, New York City, Chicago, and Milwaukee that have large Hispanic communities. Spanish language being spoken in the Vet Center makes veterans feel more at ease and allows him or her to express themselves at another level and they can identify more readily with the counselor.

WORKSTUDY STUDENTS

In addition, we have been fortunate in being able to hire Hispanic veterans as VA workstudy students to assist us in greeting veterans, making coffee, assisting with filing and answering the phone as part of an overall effort to make veterans feel comfortable. These workstudy students are Persian Gulf veterans as well as Somalia. We recently assisted them in sponsoring a softball team called the "Screaming

You need to know the size of the Hispanic community in your town and the number of Hispanic clients you are representing to develop a realistic outreach plan

Chickens” as part of our recreation effort and outreach to other veterans. If you do not have any Hispanic or bilingual staff you may want to consider hiring a Hispanic workstudy student intern majoring in social work, psychology or nursing.

CORRECTIONAL PERSONNEL

There are also Hispanic veterans working in corrections, police and fire departments, city and county jails, and local prisons as administrators, social workers and guards who can benefit from outreach.

The nature of their work is stressful and they have experienced not only trauma in Vietnam but they also have similar traumatic experiences in their day-to-day employment where they could benefit from counseling similar to employee assistance programs. If you are able to do so, speak with someone who is Hispanic as your contact person. They can help you identify other Hispanic employees.

LEGAL COMMUNITY

In the court system, both the misdemeanor and felony courts are another good area to consider in your outreach efforts.

In the Albuquerque Vet Center and our Farmington and Santa Fe outstations, we have DWI (driving while intoxicated) counseling groups comprised of veterans who have been referred to us by the court system. Some of these veterans are both combat and Vietnam era veterans and initially we see them in group. However, we may refer them to inpatient counseling for chemical dependency or to our post-traumatic stress disorder group, if needed, as an alternative to incarceration.

Outreach to the legal community means going to the county jail on a weekly basis and working the mental health component of the jail, interviewing veterans on an individual basis in a big bullpen area and discussing how we can help them once they get out of jail. This outreach effort includes contacting the chief justice in both the felony and misdemeanor court and making presentations about PTSD symptoms and the counseling services offered at the Vet Center and local VA Medical Center. We also make contact with state probation and parole officers, as well as federal probation officers, providing them with status reports on veterans’ progress in counseling. We may testify in court on behalf of a veteran. This usually occurs at the sentencing phase to assist the judge in considering alternatives to incarceration if appropriate.

State and public defenders are also good sources of referrals and can be contacted by work-

ing with their investigators. The best referrals we receive from the legal community are usually from other veterans. An example of an outreach effort we planned was for two of our staff members to hike the Grand Canyon in September 1995 with a number of probation officers and judges.

VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

Veterans service organizations are important sources for referrals as well as financial assistance to veterans. The Military Order of the Purple Heart, Paralyzed Veterans of America, The American Legion, AMVETS, Vietnam Veterans of America, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Gold Star Mothers and Gold Star Wives and Jewish War Veterans are but a few of the veterans service organizations that we communicate with on a regular basis.

It is important to discriminate between each of these organizations in terms of resources they offer and the individual capabilities of their service officers. The American Legion, for example, has been extremely helpful in providing veterans with smaller amounts of cash and assisting with national grants of \$500 and over available to families with children. This process usually takes approximately ten days to three weeks.

The next level of discernment is the ability of service officers themselves regarding knowledge of the Court of Veterans Appeals recent cases and how these court decisions can impact a veteran’s disability claim. It appears there are more claimants than qualified service officers to advocate on veterans’ behalf. By realistically informing a veteran of the time involved in processing a claim, you will continue to have referrals from each of the service officers you work with and veterans themselves. The important part is establishing a good relationship with a veterans service officer who will walk you through the type of report he or she needs to assist veterans. Ordinarily a thorough intake assessment suffices. The sooner you submit the material, the better.

Equally important is taking the initiative to make a presentation about Vet Centers at state and preferably the national conventions of each veterans service organization.

It is also beneficial for a Vet Center staff member to attend monthly service organization meetings so that members know you and think of the Vet Center first when making referrals. We have made presentations to the Army National Guard and other military reserve units here in New Mexico and it seems this needs to be a continuous outreach effort.

If you do not have any Hispanic or bilingual staff you may want to consider hiring a Hispanic workstudy student or intern majoring in social work, psychology or nursing

VETERANS EMPLOYMENT

The unemployment rate is approximately six to seven percent in Albuquerque. The unemployment rate is 7.1 percent for Bernalillo County, however, unemployment is higher for the Vietnam veterans' community, especially for veterans with PTSD symptoms. We refer many of the veterans who come to the Vet Center to Vietnam Veterans of America because the local VVA office can provide veterans with rental assistance and temporary labor.

VOCATIONAL RETRAINING

Vocational rehabilitation agencies at the state and federal level are charged with the responsibility of assisting veterans with career exploration and retraining.

Hispanics have the lowest income level of any ethnic group in the United States. Some Hispanic veterans who come to the Vet Center for readjustment counseling have spent their entire employment history performing construction work; cutting wood or performing yard work. This age group is now in the mid-40s to early 50s. They are no longer able to perform physically demanding work.

Hispanic veterans have the highest rate of posttraumatic stress disorder symptoms of any combat veteran ethnic group. Consequently, some veterans have histories of difficulty in keeping jobs, having explosive outbursts at work, substance abuse, other chronic medical problems, memory impairment and seizure disorders.

Even with treatment for posttraumatic stress disorder symptoms, a decision must be made whether a veteran is so impaired that he or she cannot be retrained.

This is a difficult decision to arrive at, but it occurs on a daily basis when veterans are denied federal vocational benefits because of posttraumatic stress disorder, but yet their level of service connected disability is typically at ten percent or a level that does not address their unemployability.

For the above mentioned reasons it is especially important to have a Hispanic vocational counselor available at federal vocational rehabilitation offices or have a counselor available on a contract basis. Ideally, this type of counselor would be knowledgeable about posttraumatic stress disorder symptoms, discrimination in education and employment, and other aspects of society affecting Hispanic veterans and other minorities. A counselor without cultural sensitivity offers little assistance to minority veterans.

Some areas to consider when evaluating Hispanic veterans for retraining are careers like drug and alcohol counselors, trauma counselors, working with youth at risk, horticulture and working with computers. These are vocational areas in which veterans can apply their own life experiences. It would be especially helpful if veterans could be trained for self-employment, performing work that veterans have done previously but on a scaled back basis. There is currently a program

ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO, VET CENTER STATISTICS FOR 176 HISPANIC CLIENTS WITH PTSD SYMPTOMS (SINCE START OF S.A.R.S.)

DISABILITY RATING	UNKNOWN EMPLOYMENT STATUS (21 veterans, 12%)	EMPLOYED (55 veterans, 31%)	UNEMPLOYED (100 veterans, 57%)
No rating		7 veterans (13 percent)	
0 percent	2 veterans (10 percent)	1 veteran (2 percent)	10 veterans (10 percent)
10 percent	6 veterans (29 percent)	19 veterans (35 percent)	19 veterans (19 percent)
20 percent	2 veterans (10 percent)	10 veterans (18 percent)	8 veterans (8 percent)
30 percent	3 veterans (14 percent)	8 veterans (15 percent)	14 veterans (14 percent)
40 percent		3 veterans (5 percent)	7 veterans (7 percent)
50 percent	1 veteran (5 percent)	1 veteran (2 percent)	7 veterans (7 percent)
60 percent		3 veterans (5 percent)	4 veterans (4 percent)
70 percent	3 veterans (14 percent)	1 veteran (2 percent)	3 veterans (3 percent)
80 percent		1 veteran (2 percent)	1 veteran (1 percent)
90 percent			
100 percent	4 veterans (19 percent)	1 veteran (2 percent)	26 veterans (26 percent)

available through Social Security called PACE to which we are referring veterans to determine if they can be employable and at the same time not jeopardize other benefits.

If, after exhaustive effort providing veterans with a work evaluation period, a veteran is unable to succeed in being employed, it is equally important to document why a veteran is unable to work and how his or her disability prevents working so he or she can qualify for increased service connected disability benefits in proportionate manner.

HOMELESS VETERANS SHELTERS

The Vet Center in Albuquerque is approximately one mile away from the St. Martin's Hospitality Center for homeless people. People can receive mail there, clean clothes, take showers and store their possessions. Our staff goes to this shelter once a week for several hours to do brief intakes on homeless veterans. We take veterans to the VA Medical Center if they have medical problems or make referrals to other agencies in the community for housing and meals. There is a day labor office at the center so many homeless individuals can work if they chose to do so. There are some veterans who still prefer to stand on street corners with a sign and panhandle. My own approach to these veterans is to let them know they are eligible for counseling and hospital care and, when they are ready, we will do whatever we can to assist them.

OUTREACH DYNAMICS

I have attempted to list some of the areas to consider when you are developing an outreach plan. There are also some other dynamics that would be wise to consider.

Look at your own resistance to leaving the Vet Center, getting into the car and visiting veterans in the community. Resistance may just be fear of the unknown. If you tackle outreach as if it is an onerous project your results will probably reflect this attitude. However if you see outreach as an integral part of developing your competency as a counselor, and the people you see are not merely numbers, but veterans who are having difficult readjustment problems, then your outreach will be more rewarding. Also, how do you feel about going into an area where you are in the minority role? Do you perform outreach in pairs or as an individual?

Initially, you will be planting seeds during your outreach efforts; especially when you have to travel considerable distances to isolated rural areas to see only a few veterans. If you are consistent, and

do outreach by also contacting veterans you already know, ask them if they know any other veterans in their community that may need help. Veterans often will assist you.

You also get important insight to add to your clinical understanding of veterans by performing outreach visits to veterans' homes. Social workers exercised the initiative in developing family preservation counseling. Social workers go into a family's home eight to ten hours a week for five to six weeks. We might not be able to spend this amount of time in a veteran's home, however, it is critical to provide outreach to veterans' homes to better understand how a veteran is living.

Performing outreach to veterans' homes affords counselors a chance to extend this protective environment beyond the Vet Center and into the community

The veterans we see on a regular basis in counseling groups often will say that they feel good when they come to the Vet Center and feel acknowledged by other veterans. Performing outreach to veterans' homes affords counselors a chance to extend this protective environment beyond the Vet Center and into the community.

We encourage veterans to cope with their readjustment problems by learning new skills. Learning to interact with others is one goal that has been elusive for some veterans, probably because a veteran's goal has been to remain in his or her home with an adequate income to maintain themselves and their families, going out only when necessary. Homes have become their bunkers no matter how comfortable they are. In their homes, they have a sense of control regarding who comes and who goes.

Some veterans say the place they feel most comfortable and safe besides the Vet Center is in their own homes. Vet Center counselors can extend the counseling process to include social skill development by encouraging veterans to meet and get to know their own neighbors, a task which promotes a sense of safety for veterans in their own community and support for one another.

Veterans know, especially those who survived combat, what it means to look out for one another. When you maintain a comfortable routine of sitting at your desk, interviewing clients within the confines of the Vet Center, clients are still coming to you. When you go to them, there is a special meaning which shows you care enough to look for veterans even though some veterans may not keep appointments, return phone calls, or follow traditional measures which our mental health contemporaries say should take place if the client is really motivated to change.

Vietnam veterans and other trauma survivors are seeking opportunities to participate with others

even though they are not certain they are able or even want to do so. Does this mean that by attempting to reach these veterans we are intruding or imposing ourselves on someone who might be unwilling?

The answer for me is that it is better to err and offer counseling services to the unwilling than not to be available when someone wants counseling, but feels it is unavailable because they have alienated everyone around them.

If we are counseling only the veterans who will

come into our office—even this task can, at times, seem overwhelming—we are only doing half the job.

A Navajo Vietnam veteran in Window Rock, Arizona, used the following phrase, “Vietnam veterans with PTSD are missing in America.” The mission of outreach cannot be understated. We must continue to reach out to veterans whose psychic pain and social isolation keeps them anonymous until they decide it is no longer worth just surviving each day and make a decision to commit suicide.

Dichos

by Ricardo Benavides, Evaristo Flores, L.M.S.W., and Homero Gallegos, M.Ed.

Dichos are sayings or idioms used by people from Latino cultures. Dichos are idiomatic expressions that denote a distinct cultural flavor. They are used as guidelines in the development of attitudes, moral values and social behavior. The following dichos are primarily from the Mexican culture and some are specific to South Texas.

1

El amor es el ultimo que resiste morir.
Love is the last thing that dies.

2

Mas vale amar que ser amado.
It is better to love than to be loved.

3

El amor vence al odio.
Love conquers hate.

4

El amor no se exige, se gana.
Love is not demanded, it is earned.

5

Salud, dinero y amor y tiempo para gozarlos.
Health, money and love and time to enjoy them.

6

Buen abogado, mal vecino.
A good lawyer, a bad neighbor.

7

Vale mas que haya un loco y no dos.
It is best that there be one fool and not two.

8

Cuanto mas trabajamos mas tenemos.
The more we work the more we have.



9

Tras los anos viene el juicio.
With the years comes wisdom.

10

Vida sin amigos, muerte sin testigos.
A life without friends, a death without witnesses.

11

Cada cabeza es un mundo.
Each head is a separate world.

12

Un padre para cien hijos, y no cien hijos para un padre.
One parent for 100 children, and not 100 children for one parent.

13

Cada quien construye su propio destino.
Each person builds his own destiny.

14

Al buen entendedor basta con pocas palabras.
One who really understands needs few words of explanation.

15

Buen principio, la mitad es hecha.
With a good beginning, half the task is done.

16

Ano nuevo, vida nueva.
New year, new life.

17

A menos palabras menos pleitos.
Fewer words, fewer disputes.

18

Bajo su capa de manso cordero se oculta un cruel leon.
Underneath the coat of a gentle lamb hides a cruel lion.

19

Cortesía de boca, mucho vale y poco cuesta.
Courteous words are very valuable and cost little.

20

Acompañate con los buenos y serás uno de ellos.
Associate with decent people and you will be one of them.

21

Cada persona es un mundo.
Each person is a separate world.

22

Un fracaso no quiere decir que la batalla esta perdida.
One misfortune does not mean that the battle is lost.

23

Con los años vienen los desenganos.
With the years come disappointments.

24

Uno nunca debe confiarse en las apariencias.
One should not rely on appearance.

25

Ave de mucha pluma poca carne.
Much appearance but little substance.

26

Al buen caballo no lo canse.
Do not exhaust a good horse.

27

No es el leon como lo pintan.
It is not what it seems.

28

Esta a boca de jarro.
He is right on the edge.

29

No dice que el barro es pardo asta que lo vio.
Says it's true only after he's seen it, or is always truthful.

30

Traes comenzon y no te puedes rascar.
There is something there and you can't get rid of it.

31

Dime con quien andas y te digo quien eres.
Tell me who you are with, and I'll tell you who you are.

32

Anda com burro sin mecate.
An individual without direction.

33

Va de cabeza, a cabeza.
Each head has its own individual opinion.

34

De tal palo salta la estilla.
He is like his dad.

35

Se le van las cabras.
He loses his marbles (or concentration).

36

El que mucho abarca, poco aprieta.
One who tries to cover too much has a weak grip.

37

Vale mas gota que dure y no chorro que apresurre.
It is best a drop that last and not a rush that disappear.

38

Respecto a terreno ajeno es la paz.
Respect for others' property is peace.

39

La cascara guarda el palo.
The covering of an individual is what protects him.

40

Amor de lejos, amor de pendejos.
To love someone who is far away is to be a fool.

41

Plato a boca o se cay la sopa.
Do it quickly, or lose it.

42

No es lo mismo amar, que ser amado.
It's not the same to love as to be loved.

43

Camaron gue se duerme se lo lleva la corriente.
Be attentive, or lose out.

44

El que nace pa tamal hasta del cielo le caen las hojas.
He who was born to be a fool, will continue to be a fool.

45

Tiene cuerpo de limosnero.
Everything fits him, or body of a beggar.

46

Lo de agua, a la agua.
Easy come, easy go.

Appendix

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE VETERAN POPULATION BY SEX, RACE, AND HISPANIC ORIGIN: DATA FROM THE 1990 CENSUS

Steven H. Schwartz and Robert E. Klein

INTRODUCTION

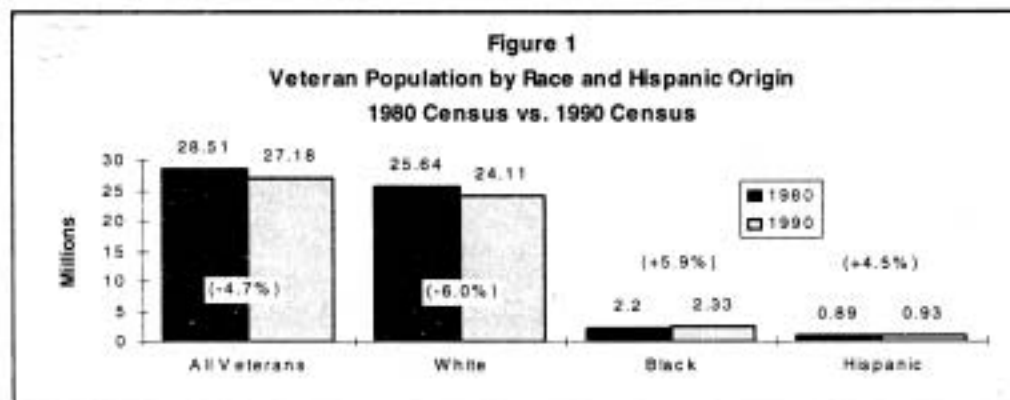
This publication is designed to present a portrait of American veterans based on the 1990 decennial census. It focuses on age, period of service, income, poverty status,¹ educational attainment, and employment and labor force status, showing how these characteristics vary by sex, race (white and black), and Hispanic origin.²

The data presented in this paper were derived from the Census Summary Tape File (STF 3), which contains information based on the 17 percent sample (long form). The analysis in this paper is limited to veterans residing

Hispanic veterans, respectively. On April 1, 1990, the 27.2 million veteran population included 24.1 million whites, 2.3 million blacks, and 925,000 Hispanics.

Also, there were approximately 246,000 Asian and Pacific Islander veterans and 190,000 American Indian, Aleut, and Eskimo veterans. Almost 310,000 veterans did not classify themselves as members of a specific racial group. None of these groups of veterans are included in this analysis.

Figure 2 (following page) shows that in 1990 almost 89 percent of the veteran population were white compared to 8.6 percent black and



in the 50 States and the District of Columbia.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

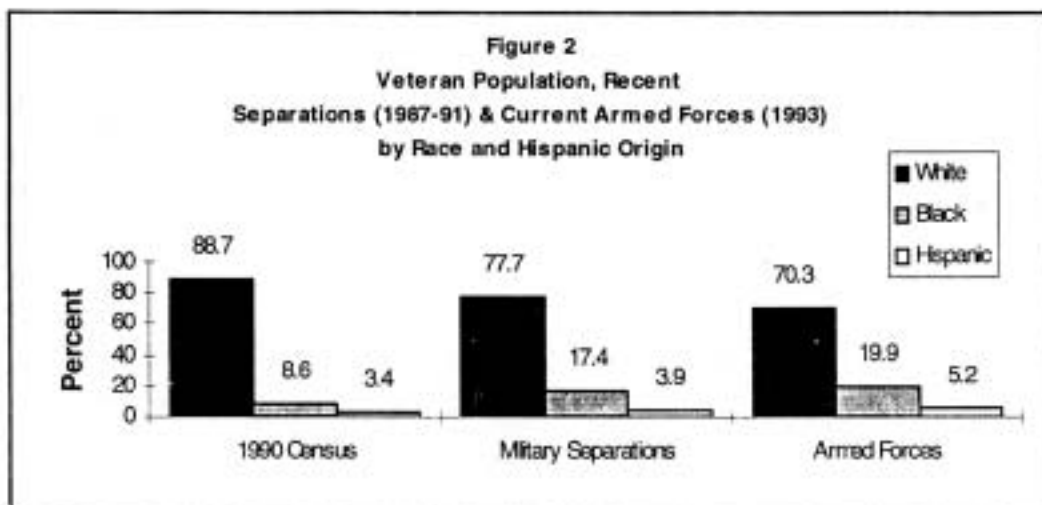
While the total veteran population declined by 4.7 percent between 1980 and 1990,³ the number of black and Hispanic veterans *increased* over the decade. Figure 1 shows that the number of white veterans declined by 6.0 percent between the two censuses compared with 5.9 and 4.5 percent increases for black and

3.4 percent Hispanic. Current armed forces and recent military separations data show higher proportions of blacks and Hispanics than the veteran population identified by the 1990 census. For example, in 1993, approximately 20 percent of the Armed Forces were black and 5.2 percent of Hispanic origin. These data suggest that, at least in the short term, there will be a higher proportion of minorities among veterans in the future.

AGE AND SEX DISTRIBUTION

The age distribution of the white and minority veteran populations are very different. Black and Hispanic veterans are younger than their white counterparts, in part, because these

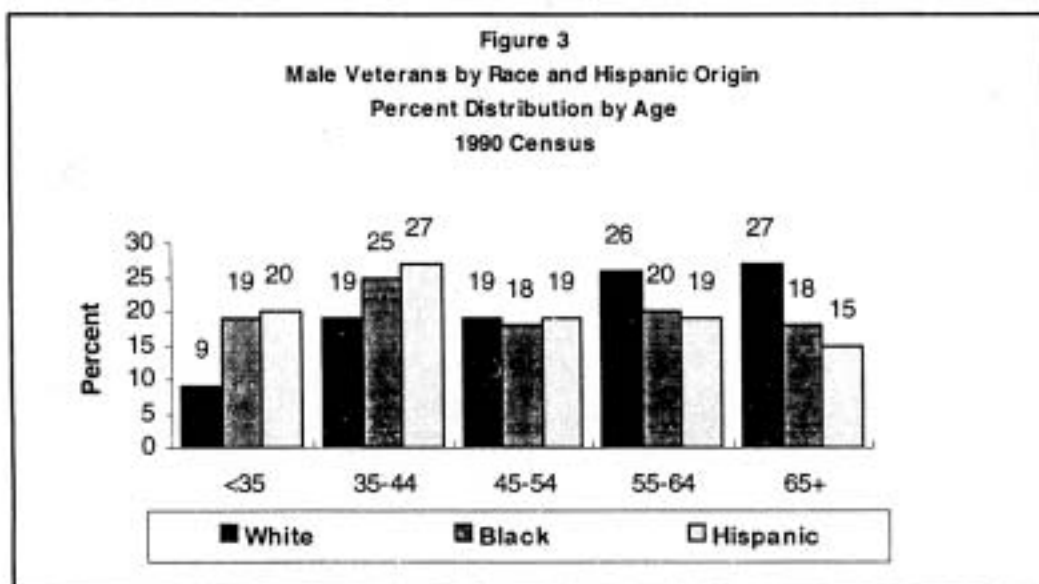
In 1990, about 4 percent of the veteran population (1.1 million) were women. There were higher proportions of blacks and Hispanics among female veterans than among their male counterparts. About 84 percent of the female veteran population was white, 12 percent black,



minorities have in recent years made up a greater proportion of the military than in the past. Among male veterans, almost half of blacks and Hispanics were under age 45 compared to only 28 percent of white veterans. More than half of the white male veterans (53 percent) were over 55 years of age compared to only 38 and 34 percent, respectively for black and Hispanic male veterans (Figure 3).

and 4 percent Hispanic. In contrast, 89 percent of male veterans were white, 8 percent black, and 3 percent Hispanic.

The highest proportions of white female veterans, as observed in Figure 4 (next page), were in the under 35 age group (27 percent) and the over 65 group (34 percent). In contrast, only 9 percent of white males were under 35

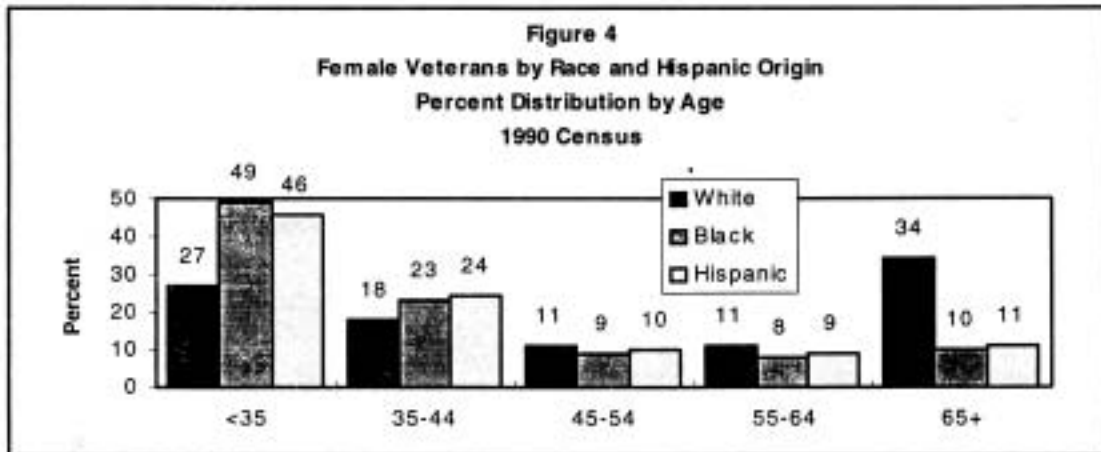


years of age.

Just as black and Hispanic male veterans are generally younger than their white counterparts, so are the black and Hispanic female veterans. Nearly one-half of black and Hispanic female veterans were under 35 compared

white males and females had served during World War II. There were 8.2 million veterans from the Vietnam era.

The proportion of veterans by period of service differed by race, Hispanic origin, and sex. Most black and Hispanic veterans were rela-



to only 27 percent of white female veterans. Only 10 and 11 percent, respectively, of black and Hispanic female veterans were aged 65 or over compared to 34 percent of white female veterans

PERIOD OF SERVICE⁴

The largest group of veterans by period of service were those who had served in World War II (Figure 5), a total of 9.2 million living veterans at the time of the census. This is true also for white veterans who make up 89 percent of the total veteran population. About 1 of every 3

tively younger than their white counterparts and served in the more recent periods of service. Among black and Hispanic male veterans, about 1 in 3 served during the Vietnam era. In contrast, over half of the black female (58 percent) and Hispanic female (53 percent) veterans served during the post-Vietnam era.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Figure 6 displays data on the highest level of education attained by veterans. It shows that 80 percent of veterans have graduated from high

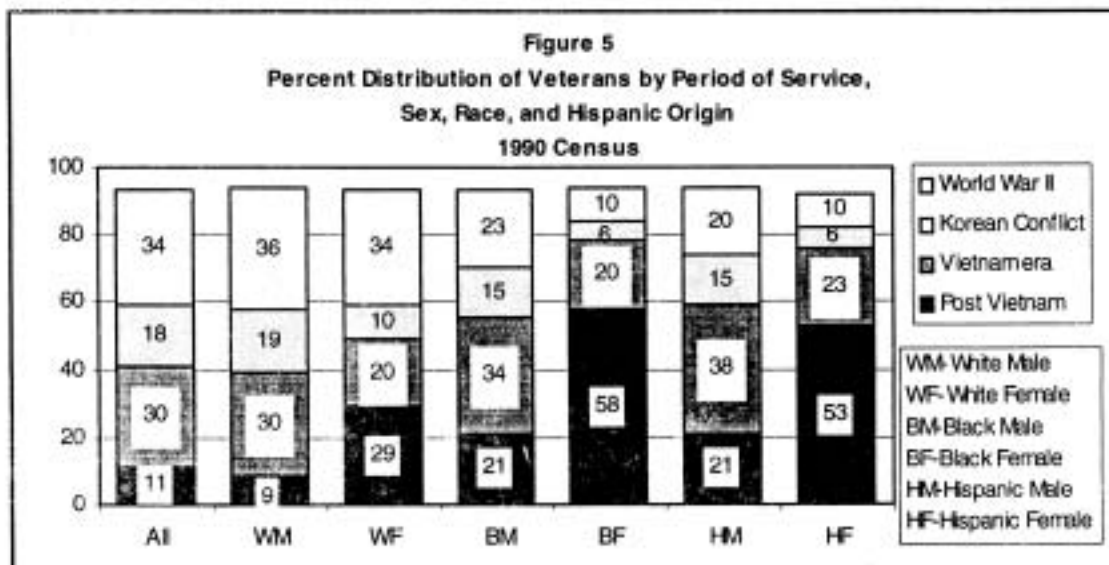
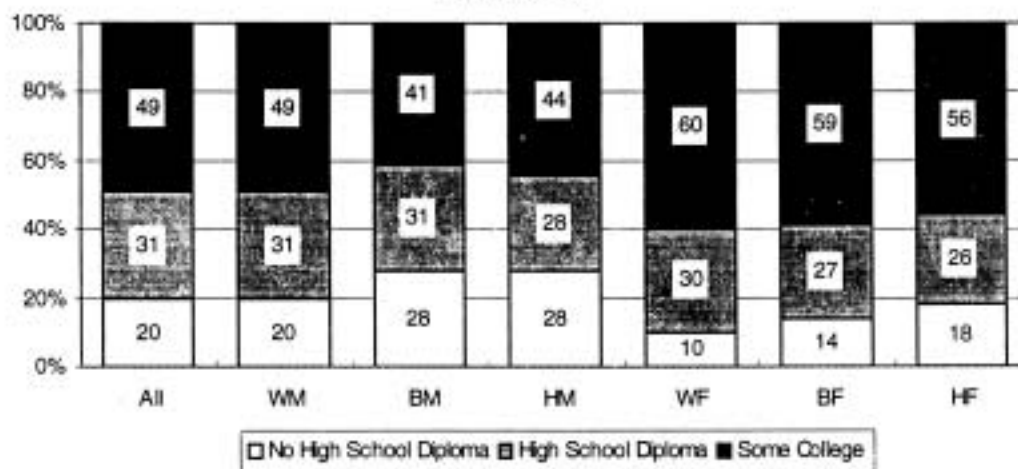


Figure 6
Educational Attainment of Veterans
by Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin
1990 Census



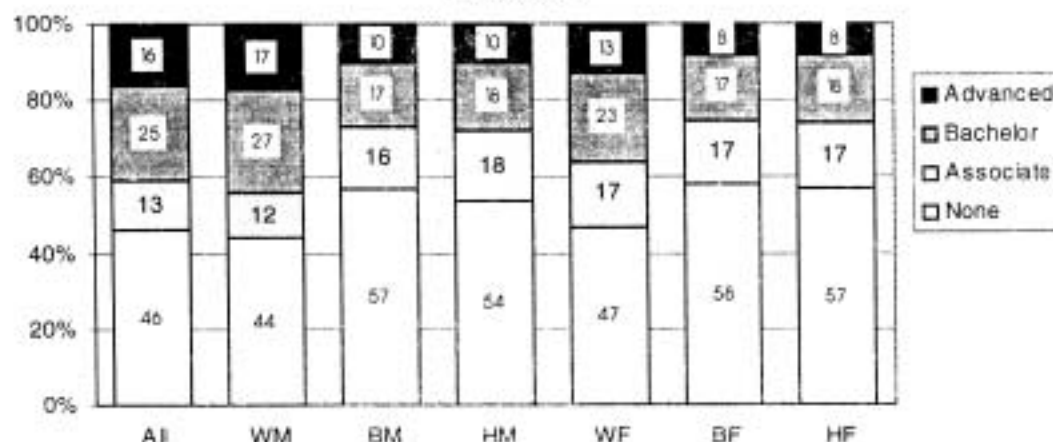
school and nearly 1 of 2 (49 percent) had at least some college education.

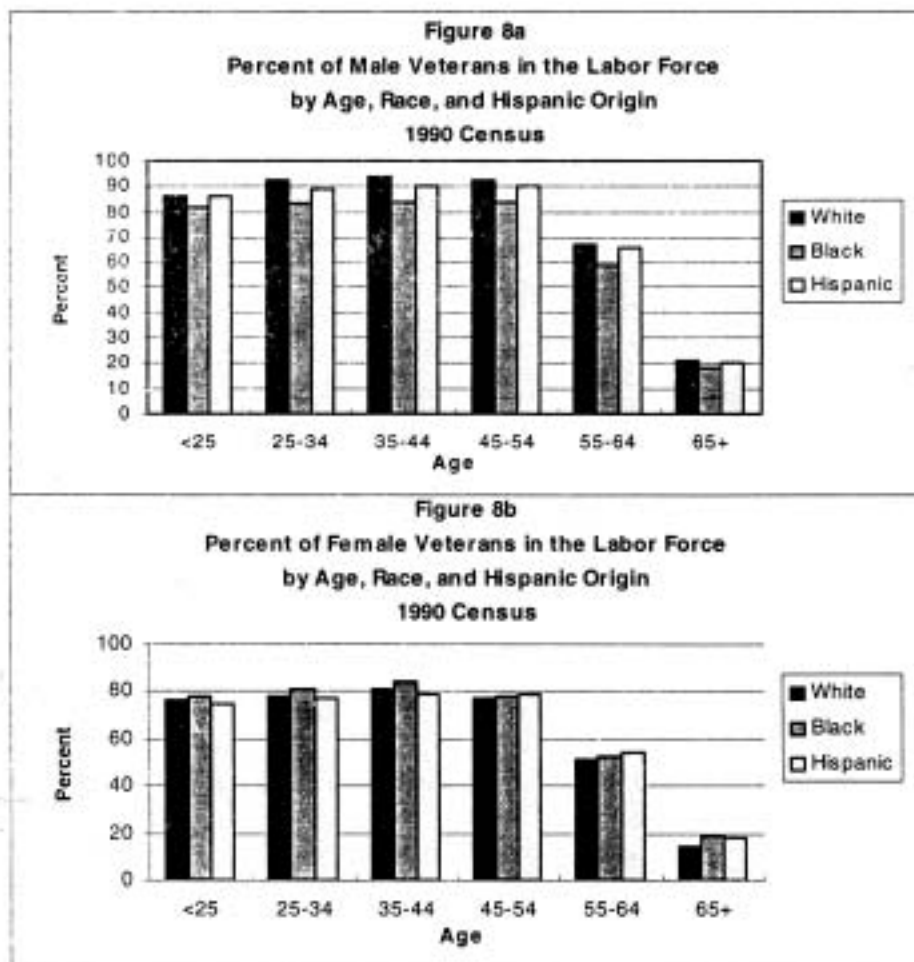
Among both races and Hispanics, females were more likely to continue their education into college and more likely to have graduated from high school than their male counterparts. Approximately 60 percent of female veterans have attended college compared to less than one-half of male veterans. Twenty-eight percent of black and Hispanic male veterans did not graduate

from high school compared with 20 percent of white male veterans. Among black and Hispanic female veterans, the percentages without high school diplomas were 14 and 18 percent, respectively. In comparison, 10 percent of white females did not graduate from high school.

Data in Figure 7 show that most veterans (54 percent), who attended college, earned an associate degree or higher. Among black and Hispanic veterans with higher education, fewer than half received a college degree. Of those

Figure 7
College Degrees Earned by Veterans
by Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin
1990 Census





veterans with a college background, almost 1 in 2 white males (44%) had received at least a bachelor's degree and 17 percent had received an advanced degree. While the proportion of white females receiving a college degree was almost as high as their male counterparts, only 25 to 28 percent of minority veterans who attended college (male or female) received at least a bachelor's degree and 8 to 10 percent received advanced degrees.

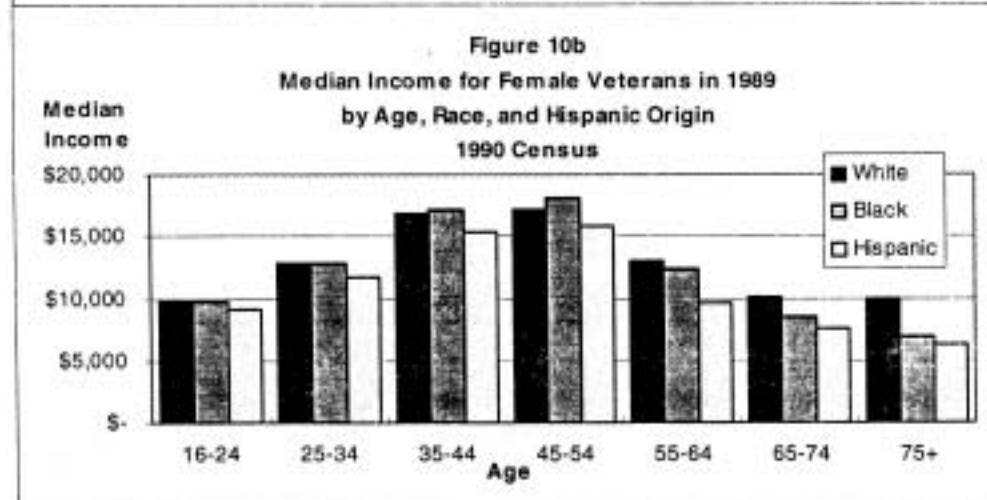
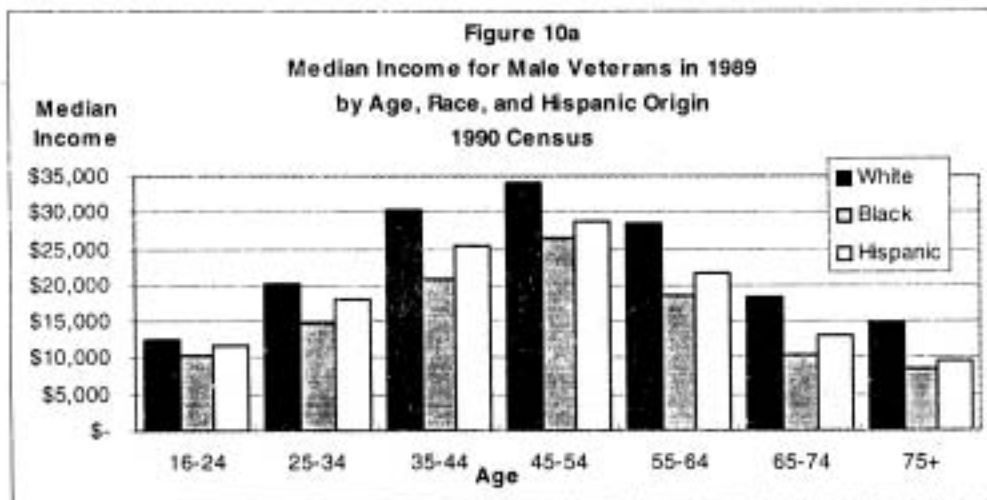
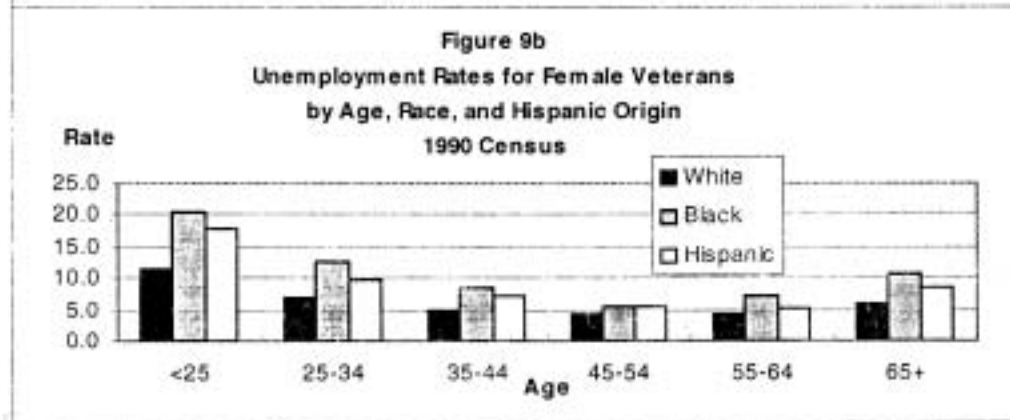
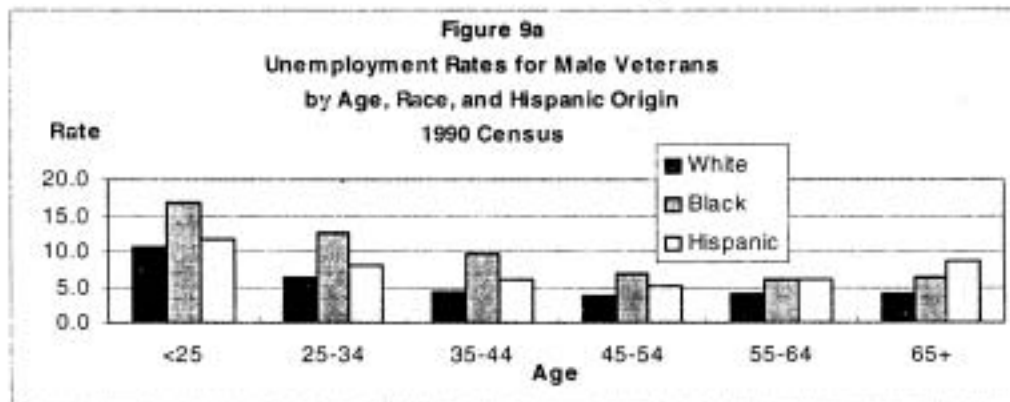
LABOR FORCE AND EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Among both white and Hispanic veterans, males were more likely to be in the labor force than their female counterparts. The data in Figures 8a-b show that, for each age group, white male veterans had higher labor force participation rates than their black and Hispanic counterparts. Among female veterans, blacks

had higher labor force participation rates than their white counterparts. Hispanic female veterans in the age groups 45 to 54 and 55 to 64, however, had slightly higher labor force participation rates than their black counterparts in these age groups.

Among male veterans in the age group with the highest labor force participation rate (35 to 44), 94 percent of whites were in the labor force compared to 90 percent of Hispanics and 84 percent of blacks. In contrast, the labor force participation rate of white females in this age group was 81 percent and the rate of their black and Hispanic counterparts were 84 and 79 percent, respectively.

White veterans of either sex were generally less likely to be unemployed than their black or Hispanic counterparts as seen in Figures 9a-b. The unemployment rates for white males and



females were 4.3 and 5.8 percent, respectively. Hispanic male veterans, in contrast, had the lowest unemployment rate (6.5 percent) among minorities regardless of gender. The unemployment rates for black male and female veterans were 9.1 and 11.1 percent, respectively and 8.9 percent for Hispanic female veterans.

As observed in Figures 9a-b, veterans under 25, regardless of race, sex, or Hispanic origin, were more likely to be unemployed than veterans in the older age groups. Black female veterans in this age group had the highest unemployment rate (20.6 percent) followed by Hispanic females (17.7 percent) and black males (16.8 percent). Veterans in the age groups 45 to 54 and 55 to 64 generally had the lowest unemployment rates within each sex-race-ethnic category. The lowest age-specific unemployment rate (3.8 percent) was for white males 45 to 54.

MEDIAN INCOME

Women of both racial groups and of Hispanic origin had median incomes well below those of men, though the difference by sex was lower for blacks than for whites and Hispanics (Figures 10a-b). The median income of white female veterans (\$12,600) was higher than for Hispanic females ((\$11,500), but lower than black females (\$12,900). The median income for white male veterans (\$25,600) was higher than the median income of black males (\$16,800) and Hispanic males (\$20,900) and substantially above Hispanic females and women of both races. Among male veterans 45 to 54, the age group with the highest median income, the median income of whites was \$34,100, compared to \$28,700 for Hispanics and \$26,600 for blacks.

POVERTY LEVEL

Approximately 5.7 percent of the veteran population (of whom 96 percent were males) fell below the poverty threshold. (See Table 1 for poverty levels.) In contrast, 9.1 percent of all males aged 18 and over (veterans and nonveterans) had incomes below the poverty threshold⁶. The states with the highest percentage of veterans below the poverty level⁷ in 1989 (see Figure 11 following page) were Mississippi (10.4 percent) and Louisiana (10.2 percent).

<i>Size of Family</i>	<i>Poverty Threshold</i>
1	\$6,311
2	\$8,076
3	\$9,885
4	\$12,675
5	\$14,990
6	\$16,921
7	\$19,162
8	\$21,328
9 or more	\$25,480

See note 5

Most of the states with poverty rates above the 5.7 percent national rate for veterans were in the South Central and Northwestern regions of the country. Connecticut and New Jersey had veteran poverty rates below 3 percent. These were the lowest in the nation. Generally, the states with the lowest poverty rates were in New England and the Middle Atlantic regions.

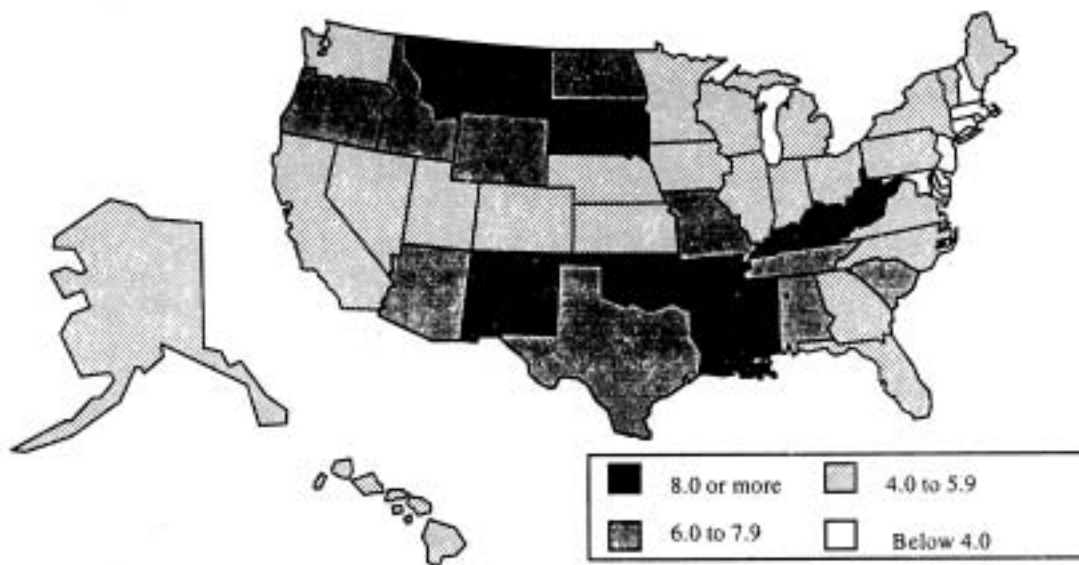
SUMMARY

1. The overall and white veteran populations are declining, while the black and Hispanic veteran populations are growing.
2. The minority veteran populations are younger than the white veteran population.
3. Minority veterans were more likely to be unemployed and had lower median incomes than white males.
4. Female veterans were more likely to be college educated, less likely to be in the labor force, and had median incomes well below those of men.
5. The veteran poverty rate was generally highest in the South Central and Northwestern regions of the country.

NOTES

1. Poverty rates by sex, race, and Hispanic origin were not available.

Figure 11
Percent Veteran Population Below Poverty Level by State
1990 Census



2. Since Hispanics can be of any race, the race and Hispanic origin categories should not be added to get a total. Additionally, races other than white and black are not included.

3. *The Veteran Population First Results From the 1990 Census*, Steven H. Schwartz and Robert E. Klein, Statistical Brief, Department of Veterans Affairs, SB 008-93-1.

4. The major wartime periods of service with surviving veterans include World War II, Korean Conflict, and the Vietnam Era. Wartime veterans may have served in one or more of these periods of service.

5. *Money and Poverty Status in the United States: 1989*, Bureau of the Census, P60, No. 168, Table A-2.

6. Poverty rate denominators includes only persons for whom poverty status is determined.

7. The poverty rate of a state is defined as the percent of all veterans in that state who fall under the national poverty threshold. There are no official state-specific poverty thresholds.

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