The ongoing war in Iraq and Afghanistan has led to a growth in the number of veterans in the US, a group that to date has been understudied. This policy brief looks at some of the demographic characteristics of the US veteran population from 2000 and compares them to Georgia's veteran population at that time. We also consider how the characteristics of veterans moving to Georgia between 1995 and 2000 differ from non-veterans during that timeframe.

We use data from the 2000 IPUMS (Integrated Public Use Microdata Series), provided by the Census Bureau. We consider anyone who has answered yes to their veteran status to be a veteran. Moreover, a person is considered a migrant if they lived in one state in 1995 and a different state in 2000. We are unable to observe if more than one move occurred during this five-year period; in essence, we are measuring the last move of individuals.

Table 1 lists the characteristics of the US population aged 25 and over. We break our sample into veterans and non-veterans. As a group, veterans tend to be older, less likely to have worked in the past year, and be higher educated than non-veterans. Veterans also have a mean income of $42,448, which is 40 percent larger than non-veteran income.

When we look at veterans who have migrated to another state between 1995 and 2000, we see that they compose only 11.3 percent of the veteran population in our sample, whereas 12.7 percent of the non-veteran population relocated to another state during this time. Regardless of veteran status, we find that migrants tend to be younger, healthier, more likely to have worked in the previous year, have a higher level of education, and wealthier. When we compare migrant veterans to non-veteran migrants, we see that the veteran group is older and significantly wealthier than their non-veteran counterparts.

Table 1 also breaks down this comparison by age group. We look at three age groups that roughly correspond to the age of veterans from the first Gulf War (25-35), Vietnam (50-64), and Korea/WWII (65+). Note that as we increase the age of our veteran group, the disparity in income between veterans and non-veterans grows. For the youngest group, non-veteran income is about 87 percent of veteran income. For the elderly, this falls to 53 percent. For both groups, migrants always have higher incomes.
### Table 1. National Comparison of Veterans to Non-Veterans from 2000 IPUMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All ages (25+)</th>
<th>Ages 25 - 35</th>
<th>Ages 50 - 64</th>
<th>Ages 65+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OVERALL</td>
<td>OVERALL</td>
<td>OVERALL</td>
<td>OVERALL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>non-veterans</td>
<td>veterans</td>
<td>non-veterans</td>
<td>veterans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>average age</td>
<td>50.3</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>30.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% white</td>
<td>74.6</td>
<td>83.9</td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>67.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>% black</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% disabled</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% working in the last year</td>
<td>66.8</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>83.8</td>
<td>90.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% education &gt; high school</td>
<td>50.1</td>
<td>53.5</td>
<td>56.9</td>
<td>62.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>42448</td>
<td>25909</td>
<td>29850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total volume</td>
<td>96813974</td>
<td>22624467</td>
<td>17805988</td>
<td>1561534</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|                     | NON-MIGRANTS                | NON-MIGRANTS                | NON-MIGRANTS                | NON-MIGRANTS                |
|                     | non-veterans                | veterans                   | non-veterans                | veterans               |
| average age         | 51.2                       | 60.5                       | 30.8                       | 31.4                   | 56.2                   | 56.4                   | 75.4                   | 73.9                   |
| % white             | 74.7                       | 84.4                       | 62.2                       | 64.1                   | 76.7                   | 85.9                   | 81.7                   | 89.4                   |
| % black             | 10.8                       | 9.1                        | 14.3                       | 20.7                   | 10.5                   | 7.8                     | 9                     | 6.2                    |
| % disabled          | 14.6                       | 14.4                       | 12.9                       | 12.8                   | 14.4                   | 14                      | 20.1                   | 15.1                   |
| % working in the last year | 65.4                 | 58.5                       | 81.8                       | 87.5                   | 70.6                   | 80.6                    | 14.8                   | 23.6                   |
| % education > high school | 47.5                 | 51.6                       | 49.3                       | 53.4                   | 49.1                   | 58.4                    | 29.1                   | 42.7                   |
| average total income | 29606                     | 42495                      | 23800                      | 28486                  | 32498                  | 51831                   | 19652                  | 36691                  |
| total volume        | 84456698                   | 20047347                   | 122977700                  | 848130                | 22295192               | 7379682                 | 18476748               | 8356199               |

<p>|                     | MIGRANTS                     | MIGRANTS                     | MIGRANTS                     | MIGRANTS                     |
|                     | non-veterans                | veterans                   | non-veterans                | veterans               |
| average age         | 41.1                       | 48.1                       | 29.7                       | 30                     | 55.9                   | 56.3                   | 75.8                   | 73.1                   |
| % white             | 73.9                       | 80.1                       | 70.4                       | 71.8                   | 80                     | 87.7                   | 85                     | 91.9                   |
| % black             | 9.1                        | 11                         | 10                         | 15.6                   | 7.2                    | 6.1                     | 6.3                    | 4.1                    |
| % disabled          | 11.4                       | 12.9                       | 8.1                        | 8.9                    | 13.9                   | 14.2                    | 27.6                   | 17.1                   |
| % working in the last year | 76.9                 | 73.7                       | 88.1                       | 93.8                   | 63.9                   | 73                      | 11.5                   | 20.7                   |
| % education &gt; high school | 67.4                 | 68.2                       | 73.8                       | 72.8                   | 60.9                   | 70.2                    | 38.3                   | 54.6                   |
| average total income | 33086                     | 42076                      | 30619                      | 31473                  | 33504                  | 55336                   | 20085                  | 39129                  |
| total volume        | 12357276                   | 2577120                    | 5508288                    | 713404                | 1721968                | 658010                  | 1022376               | 475843               |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All ages (25+)</th>
<th>Ages 25 - 35</th>
<th>Ages 50 - 64</th>
<th>Ages 65+</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
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<td>non-veterans</td>
<td>veterans</td>
<td>non-veterans</td>
<td>veterans</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average age</td>
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<td>55.7</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>30.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>% White</td>
<td>68.6</td>
<td>74.8</td>
<td>59.9</td>
<td>51.9</td>
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<td>% Black</td>
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<td>66.3</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>90.3</td>
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<td>54.4</td>
<td>56.7</td>
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<td>% White</td>
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<td>% Black</td>
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<td>73.1</td>
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<td>Average age</td>
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<tr>
<td>% White</td>
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<td>71.7</td>
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<td>% Black</td>
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<td>12.2</td>
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<tr>
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<td>87.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>% Education &gt; High School</td>
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<td>72.1</td>
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<td>74.4</td>
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<tr>
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<td>159732</td>
<td>27905</td>
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</table>
Note also that across the age groups, veterans are more likely to have worked in the past year and have higher educational attainment than non-veterans. The difference in education achievement is most pronounced for elderly veterans, who also suffer less from disabilities than their non-veteran counterparts.

Table 2 performs the same exercise for Georgia. In-migrants are those who have moved into Georgia between 1995 and 2000. As seen in Table 2, in-migrants outnumber out-migrants (i.e. those who have moved out of the state during the same period). Overall, Georgia’s veterans are more disabled than both non-veterans in Georgia and the national average for veterans. Georgia’s veterans are more likely to have worked in the past year than their national counterparts, although they still work less than Georgia’s remaining population. Veterans in Georgia have incomes that are 3 percent higher than the national average for veterans and 48 percent higher than non-veteran incomes in Georgia.1

During the 1995-2000 period, Georgia experienced a net gain of approximately 24,000 veterans, compared to a gain of 191,000 non-veterans. While accounting for 19 percent of Georgia’s population aged 25 and over and 16.6 percent of all migrants in this age group moving to Georgia, veterans account for only 11 percent of Georgia’s net in-migrants for this population. Veterans who relocate to Georgia have an average income of $44,115, which is 25 percent higher than non-veteran migrants. The veterans who move to Georgia have higher incomes than those who leave, whereas we witness the opposite pattern for non-veterans. Veterans who move to Georgia also tend to be more disabled, more educated and more likely to have worked last year than non-veterans.

When we explore breakdowns by age, we see that most of Georgia’s in-migrants come from the youngest age group (age 25-35). In fact, the number of in-migrants (and out-migrants) of this age group is equal to the total number of in-migrants (and out-migrants) over the age of 50. We also see that young veterans in Georgia are different than those in other age groups. Younger veterans tend to be less disabled, more likely to be working and have higher educational achievement. Young veterans who move to Georgia are less disabled, less educated and less likely to be working that those young veterans who leave the state.

The most striking differential is in income. Young veterans moving into the state have $3,000 more in income than their non-veteran counterparts. This amount grows to $25,000 for veterans aged 50-64 and shrinks to $16,000 for elderly veterans. For the young, veterans leaving the state have about $1,500 less in income than those entering the state; older veterans have $1,500 more. The difference for non-veteran movers is never more than $800. If we multiply the mean income of veteran migrants by the volume of veteran migrants, we find that the net in-migration of veterans accounts for an increase in state income of $1.1 billion. By comparison, the net in-migration of non-veterans increases state income by $7.3 billion. Thus, while accounting for 11 percent of Georgia’s net in-migration population, veterans account for 15 percent of the associated increase in income.

In conclusion, the largest difference between Georgia’s veteran and non-veteran population appears to be income, with veterans on average having an income that is 48 percent greater than for non-veterans. Moreover, Georgia’s veterans tend to be more affluent than the national average. In exchange for this higher income level, Georgia is attracting less educated veterans compared to those leaving the state. As we look at older veterans, we see that Georgia is also attracting more disabled veterans than those leaving the state.

With a new generation of veterans currently being created in the U.S., Georgia’s veteran population appears likely to grow along with the rest of the state’s population. Georgia should prepare to support this and other burgeoning population groups.

NOTES
1. Note that when we use data from the American Community Survey (ACS) in 2005, these patterns remain, with veterans having $45,710 in income on average and non-veterans having $30,330 in income on average. We focus on the 2000 Census data because information on migration is much better in the IPUMS than the ACS.

REFERENCE

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Jonathan C. Rork is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Economics in the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies. His research interests are in state and local public finance, focusing on issues of interjurisdictional competition, the economics of state gaming and state lotteries, and the economics of the elderly. He holds a Ph.D from Stanford University.
FROM THE DIRECTOR

This policy brief is one of a series of reports and policy briefs that explores Georgia’s fiscal, economic and demographic features. The demographic reports will consider many different sub-populations. The well being of the state depends on the well being of its residents, so it is important to understand the economic and social conditions of population. The best way to do that is to consider each sub-population.

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A Closer Look at Georgia's Veteran Population - Brief

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**Author(s):** Jonathan C. Rork

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