

Service Over College: Does Military Service Act as a Bridge to Better Economic Opportunities for Post-9/11 Non-College-Degreed Female Veterans?

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Military Service – A bridge to better economic outcomes?

The number of women in the military today continues to rise as their role in our national defense continues to evolve. The educational and occupational training available in the military may provide a pathway to financial stability for women who select military service over college. Unlike previous generations of female veterans, Post 9/11 female veterans found themselves transitioning into a weaker economy despite their experience and training in the military.

In this poster we investigate whether military service acts as a bridge to better economic opportunities for non-college-degreed women who served Post 9/11. We use a historical-time series approach to examine the enduring effects of military service on the life-trajectories of female veterans as they transition into civilian life over a ten-year period.

- Research questions:
- 1) What are the sociodemographic characteristics of Post 9/11 female veterans without a college degree?
 - 2) What are the employment and earnings outcomes of Post 9/11 female veterans without a college degree? How do they vary over time?

Data and Methods

This analysis uses data from the 2005, 2010, and 2015 American Community Surveys. For more information see www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/

Methods of analysis include descriptive statistics as well as logistic regression models to predict the likelihood of employment and OLS regression models to predict earnings at each time period.

The universe for this analysis includes the citizen population of women without a college degree living in housing units in the United States.

The starting population for the historical time-series analysis is 18 to 44 year olds in 2005. The same cohort is followed up at ages 23 to 49 in the 2010 data and then ages 28 to 54 in the 2015 data.

Definitions

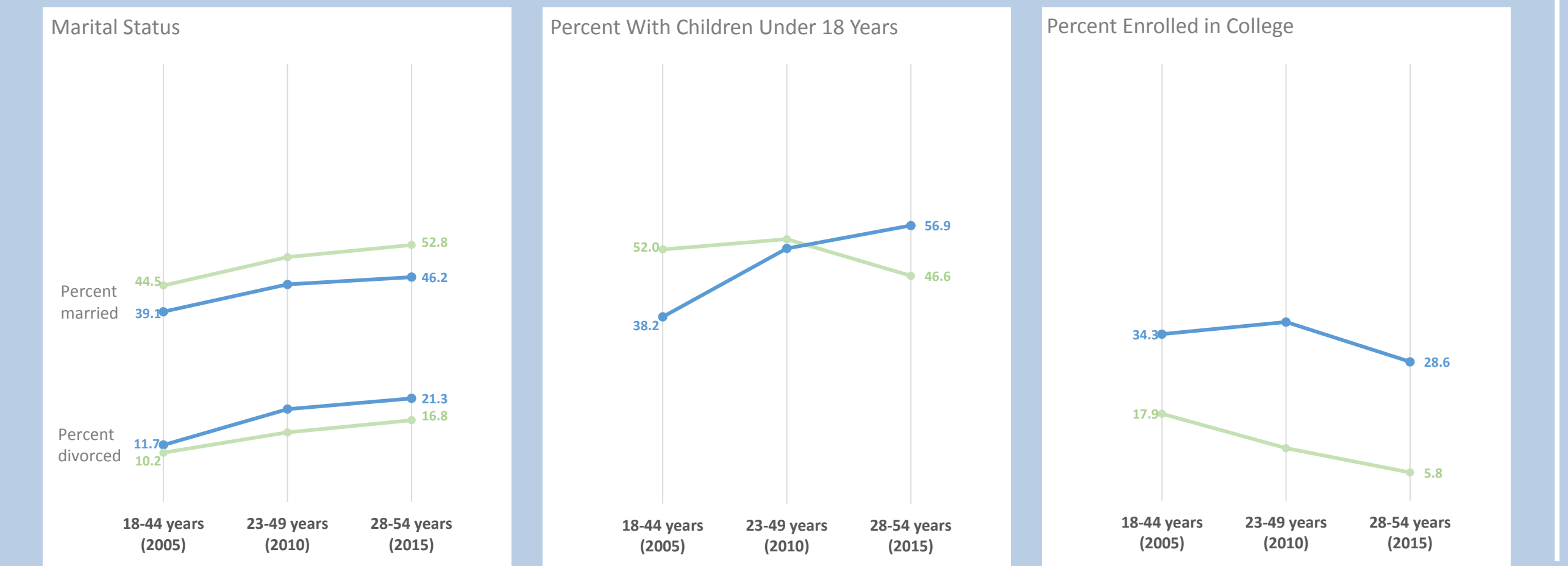
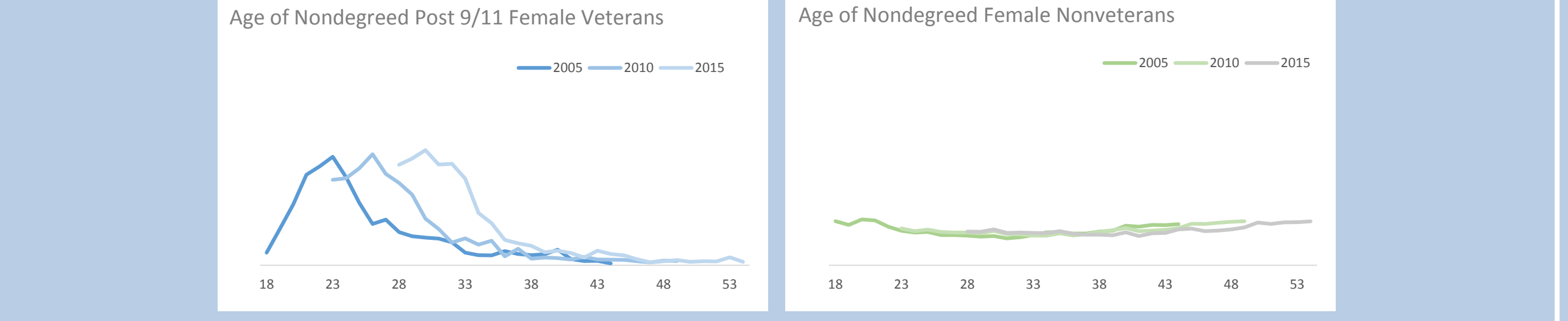
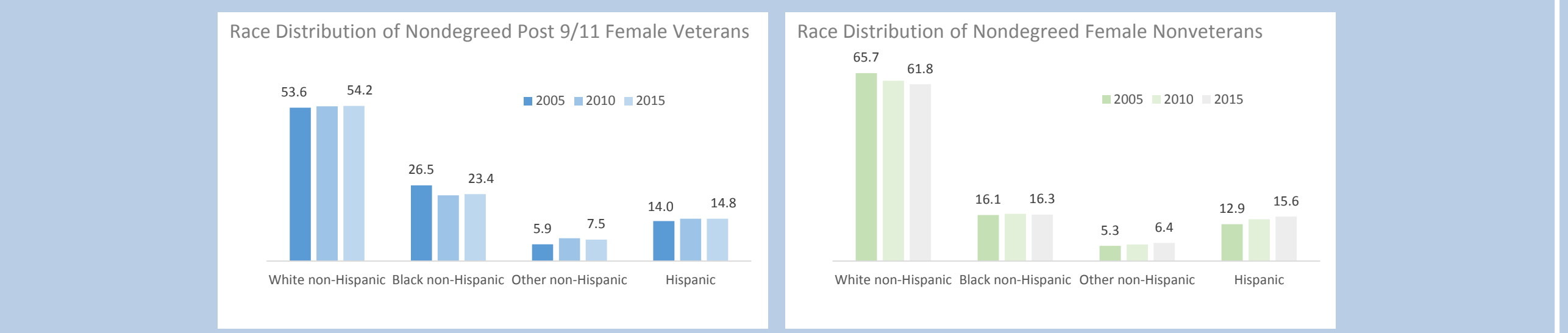
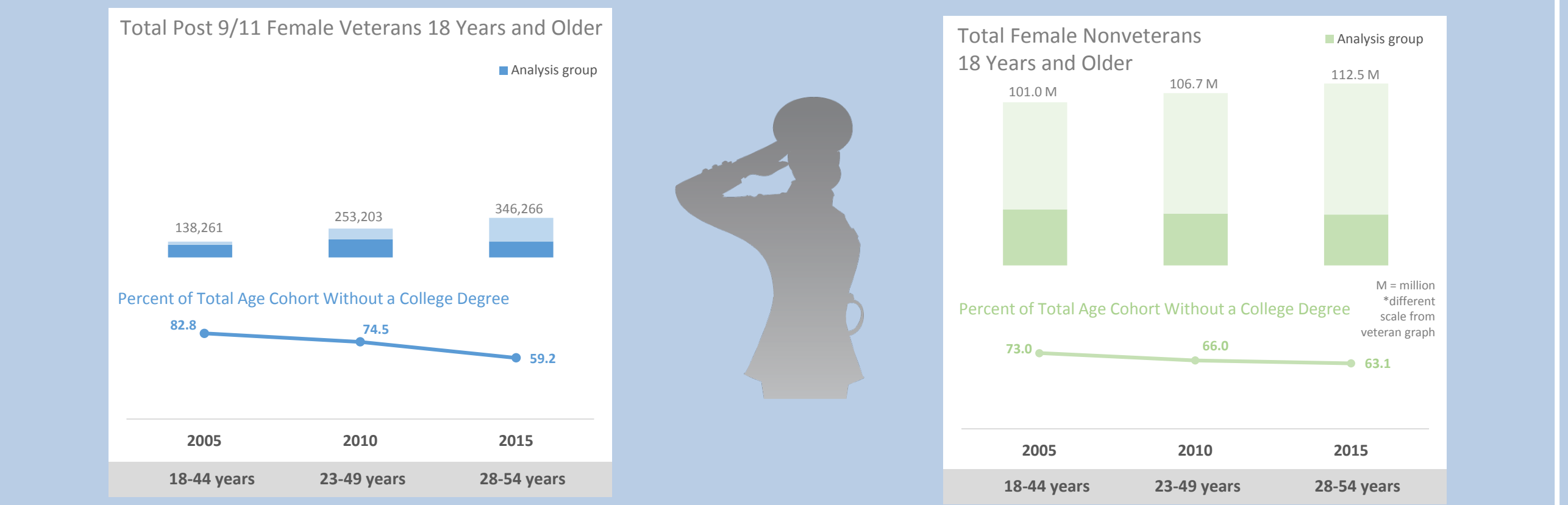
Post 9/11 veterans – veterans who served all of their military service since September 11, 2001.

Nonveterans – individuals who never served in the U.S. Armed Forces or who served on active duty for training only in the Reserves or National Guard.

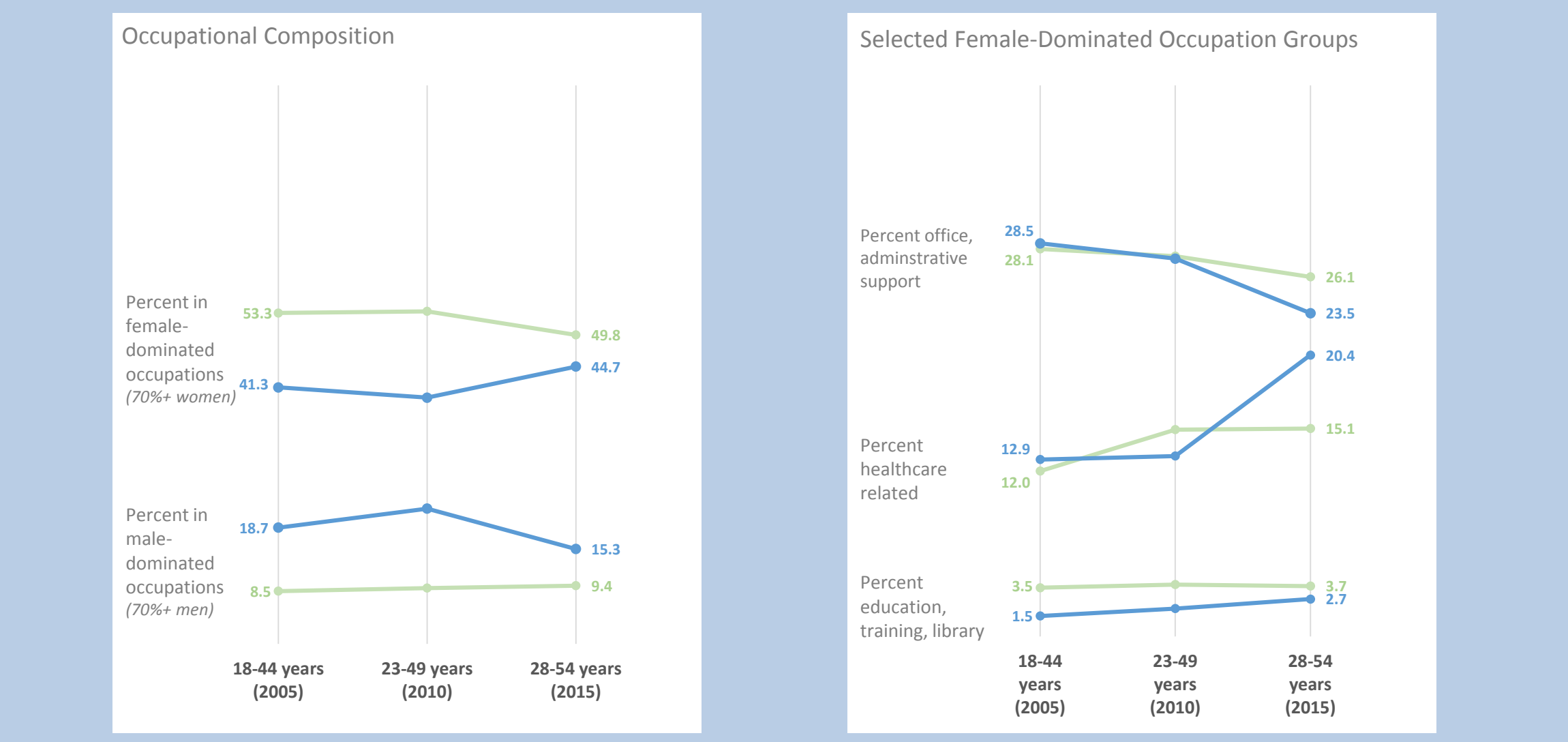
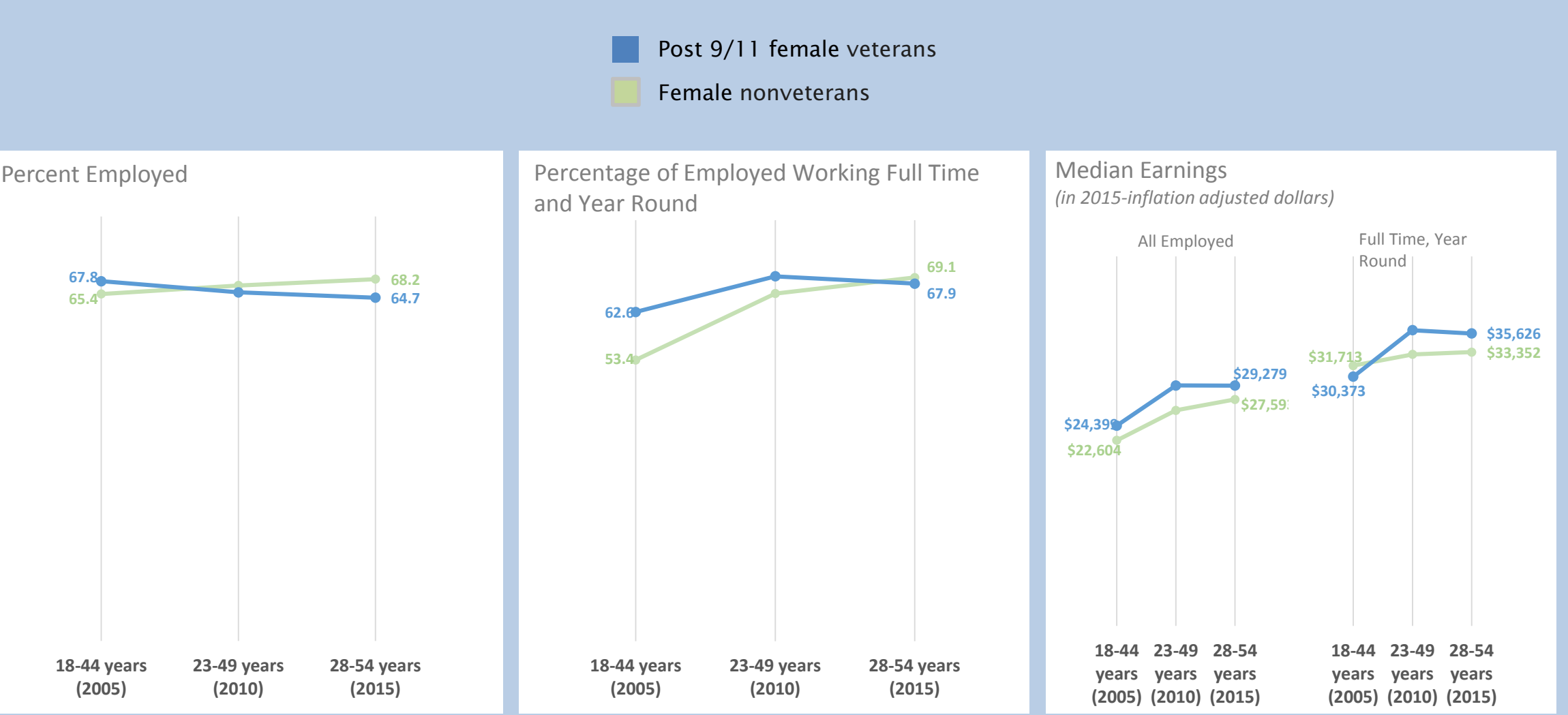
Nondegreed – individuals with educational attainment of less than high school graduate, high school graduate, and some college but no Bachelor's degree.

Full time and year-round employment – 35 hours or more per week for 50 to 52 weeks per year

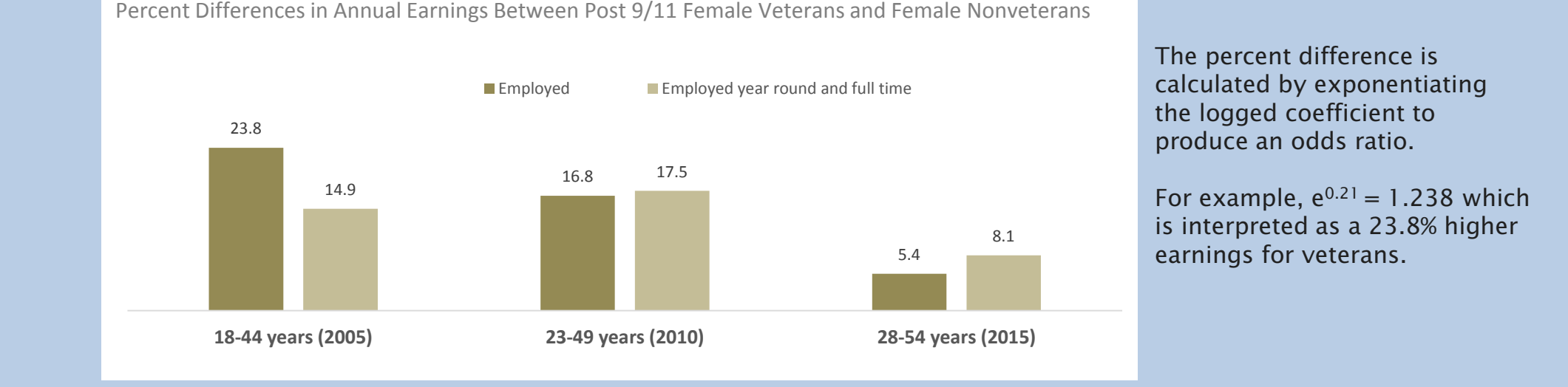
Sociodemographic Characteristics of Nondegreed Cohorts Over Time



Economic Characteristics of Nondegreed Cohorts Over Time



Logistic and OLS Regression Results Over Time



The percent difference is calculated by exponentiating the logged coefficient to produce an odds ratio. For example, $e^{0.21} = 1.238$ which is interpreted as a 23.8% higher earnings for veterans.

Summary and Discussion

Our findings help to illustrate the challenges and opportunities faced by Post 9/11 nondegreed female veterans as they aged between 2005 and 2015.

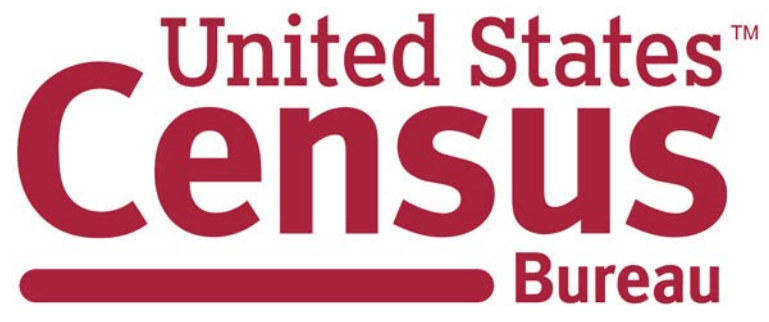
Compared with their nondegreed counterparts:

- Female veterans are younger and more likely to identify as Black.
- More likely to have completed a college degree by 2015.
- More likely to work in a male-dominated occupation. However, the percentage of female veterans employed in male-dominated occupations declined between 2010 and 2015.

Our models of employment and earnings controlled for key variables of interest: veteran status and other factors expected to influence economic outcomes over time.

- Predicted outcome values of employment rates showed nondegreed Post 9/11 female veterans of all races to be at a disadvantage by 2015.
- Nondegreed Post 9/11 female veterans had higher earnings in each year, however by 2015, the wage gap had substantially declined.

Economic reintegration into civilian life for nondegreed Post 9/11 female veterans is not uniform. The benefits of military service may dissipate over time for women veterans who do not go on to college. Future research should consider how Post 9/11 female veterans compare to the male counterparts in terms of employment and earnings.



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