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War and African American Citizenship, 1865–1965: The Role of Military Service

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Abstract and Keywords

This article first examines the various ways in which scholars explain the relationship between war and racial reform. Upon identifying gaps in the literature on the subject, it then outlines a framework through which at least some of the gaps may be filled. It then examines the effect of the Civil War on African American citizenship in light of the proposed framework. This is followed by the examination of the Spanish-American war and World War I and World War II, followed by an analysis of the World War II and the Korean War. Conclusions of the article illustrate how African American military service influenced change in at least two phases. A top-down mechanism prevailed in the aftermath of the Civil War and one in which many black veterans were integral to the success of local movements, pushing change from the bottom up in the postwar South during the civil rights movement.

Keywords: military service, African American citizenship, racial reform, Spanish-American war, Civil War, civil rights movement

FROM the founding of the republic, war has helped to equalize citizenship for African Americans. This may seem an odd claim given the purpose of each. Citizenship, after all, is a political institution, one that specifies the rights to which the individual is entitled and the correlative duties and obligations for which he or she is responsible. War, on the other hand, is about national defense: an activity undertaken to ensure the physical and cultural integrity of the nation-state. On the surface, then, they have nothing in common insofar as the former is a domestic site, one focused squarely upon the relationship between the individual, the state, and society. The latter, of course, is an extension of diplomacy, an action of last resort reserved for the adjudication of interstate conflict. Yet somehow war helped to move blacks from three-fifths of a person in the late eighteenth century to more equal citizenship by the 1960s, especially if citizenship is commensurate

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with the unencumbered ability to participate in the public life of the nation and the ability to earn a living, both of which symbolize freedom and equality (Karst 1989; Mcclean 2006; Shklar 1991).

Why is it that war, if this pattern is correct, appears to advance the cause of equal citizenship for African Americans? In most cases, scholars attribute the connection between war and the advancement of citizenship for African Americans to political expediency, ideology, or structural shifts that made it (p. 426) possible to lobby for change. This chapter takes a different tack. Instead of illustrating a broader context in which war resulted in more equality for African Americans, something to which Klinkner and Smith (1999) have spoken quite convincingly, I focus more narrowly on one of the conditions within the larger context that is believed to link war to racial progress: military service on the part of blacks.[1] In addition to the political, ideological, and structural factors identified by scholars, I consider what, if any, bearing did military service on the part of African Americans have on the likelihood of change. While considerably less ambitious than Klinkner and Smith's work, this chapter goes further in at least one respect: it furnishes an explicit logic by which military service helped move the nation toward social change. In short, I argue that subscription to the tenets of republican citizenship helps to account for racial progress for African Americans.

In keeping with the theme of this volume in which African American citizenship is examined from 1865 forward, I examine the question focusing upon the evolving relationship between war and African American citizenship from 1865 to 1965. I focus upon the one hundred years because it was a time during which blacks moved from property to membership in the American political community.[2] Of course, 1865 represents the end of the Civil War and the beginning of Reconstruction, an era during which African Americans were recognized as full, national citizens. The Civil War spawned constitutional amendments and legislative acts that paved the way for blacks to participate in the political process in every way, including winning seats in the national legislature. Likewise, 1965 represents the climax of the Second Reconstruction, during which equal citizenship for black Southerners was secured with the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and the voting Rights Act of 1965, respectively, granting equal access to employment and the ballot, among other things. My goal in this chapter is to illustrate how military service contributed to these reforms.

This chapter unfolds in five parts. In the first section, I examine the various ways in which scholars explain the relationship between war and racial reform. Upon identifying gaps in the literature on the subject, I then outline a framework through which at least some of the gaps may be filled. Section two marks the beginning of the substantive examination. In this section, I examine the effect of the Civil War on African American citizenship in light of the proposed framework. This is followed by sections three in which the Spanish-American and WWI and WWII are examined, followed by an analysis of the WWII and the Korean War in the fourth section. The war in Vietnam, officially starting in 1965, is excluded. My conclusions are presented in the final section. There, I illustrate how African American military service influenced change in at least two phases. A top-down

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mechanism prevailed in the aftermath of the Civil War and one in which many black veterans were integral to the success of local movements, pushing change from the bottom up in the postwar South during the civil rights movement.

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(p. 427) Approaches to War and Citizenship

Scholars have proffered several explanations for the relationship between war and racial progress. Among the more general theories, ones that seek to explain the relationship between citizenship and war for African Americans across time, are those that lean upon ideology. For Myrdal (1944) and Higham (1997), total wars forced (white) Americans to examine the core values on which the nation was founded. In light of this re-examination, they argue, whites could no longer justify oppressing blacks, after which an alignment of social practices with creedal values produces a more egalitarian order. Another set of explanations are concerned with war and racial progress during the twentieth century. In this case, war results in more equal citizenship for African Americans through legislation or executive orders in which African Americans were permitted greater access to the political process and discrimination was outlawed. In other accounts, war helped shape racial policy in America, forcing political elites to respond to world opinion in the context of the Cold War by addressing, if not correcting, racial injustice in the South (Dudziak 2000; Plummer 1996; Skrentny 2002). In a similar vein Kryder's (2000) work illustrates how war, and the ensuing mobilization, forced the Roosevelt administration to diminish interracial conflict in the army lest it upset the war effort. War, in this case, facilitated racial progress by forcing the president to make concessions in order to continue prosecution of the war.

These approaches are promising, offering much in the way of explanatory power often missing from accounts of social change during the twentieth century. While the aforementioned approaches to war and racial progress increase our understanding of war and social change in the American context, each remains top-down with an emphasis on political expedience. In each case, American political elites, represented by the executive or legislative branch of government, were forced to react to either international or domestic political pressure. Internationally, in the midst of the Cold War when the global competition for allies was at its height, the United States could not afford to let the Soviets exploit the hypocrisy of Jim Crow. Domestically, insurgent African American organizations pressured the executive into more equal participation in the military and in the military industrial complex.[3] Regardless of the source of pressure, be it world opinion or domestic opposition, the quick fixes generated by political expedience almost always failed to result in lasting change (Anderson 2003).

Perhaps Klinkner and Smith (1999) offer the most complete explanation of the relationship between race, war, and citizenship. During some wars, they argue, American national values are leveraged to generate antipathy toward the enemy by juxtaposing American values to that which the adversary promotes. To this, they add two additional factors: the mass mobilization of African Americans for the war effort and the presence of an oppositional movement. For them, African Americans who are part the war effort in both the military and civil society—especially the (p. 428) wartime economy—are conducive to progress. The presence of an insurgent movement capable of pressuring the

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state into bringing the wartime ideological rhetoric in line with social practice is the final piece of the puzzle. It is only when all three converged that racial progress has occurred in America. The work does a fine job of showing how two of the conditions, ideology and the presence of insurgent movements, complement each other. It seems that oppositional groups were able to appropriate the language of the American creed to force concessions. Less clear, however, is why military service mattered.

During the early stages of the republic, just after the Revolution, it is clear that military service on the part of blacks secured the freedom of at least 5,000 African Americans in the North. African American participation during the Civil War resulted in national citizenship for African Americans. In the twentieth century, Klinkner and Smith suggest that military service encouraged black veterans to contest the racial status quo. Indeed, several black veterans, from the 1940s to the 1960s, contributed in no small way to local movements in the postwar South (Brooks 2004; Dittmer 1994; Payne 1995). There is, however, no way to link the import of military service in the eighteenth and nineteenth century to the twentieth. Prior to the latter period, military service resulted in guided social change in which the state rewards marginalized groups for their contribution during crises (Marwick 1974). Of course, in the twentieth century, military service helped to spur change from the bottom up, or in Marwick's language, contributed to unguided change. Yet we don't know why it was so effective. What Klinkner and Smith imply, and what I plan to make clear, is how normative conceptions of citizenship help bridge the two periods. In other words, it explains why military service contributed to change in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

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Citizenship as a Political Institution

Following Somers (1993, 1994), I argue that citizenship is an institution, something that changes over time according to social convention. Indeed, as Smith's (1997) work illustrates, laws governing citizenship have been quite malleable over time, sometimes guided by America's liberal founding principles. But as his analysis shows, citizenship is more frequently assigned based upon a politics of an illiberal sort, determined by membership in this or that ascriptive category. Put differently, citizenship is inherently political, the result of a process by which individuals are ultimately proclaimed fit or unfit for membership in the political community, often on the basis of one's race or sex.

Like any institution, citizenship is composed of taken-for-granted rules or cultural scripts (at the discursive level) that inform subsequent social practices (Jepperson 1991; March and Olsen 1989; Meyer and Rowan 1991; DiMaggio and Powell 1991), the same practices that, taken together, constitute the everyday (p. 429) materiality of citizenship (Somers 1994). In liberal polities, rights and duties represent some of these practices and cultural scripts. At a minimum, rights that accrue to universal citizenship are designed to encourage legal and political equality. Legal rights include access to courts and counsel, contracts and equal treatment before the law; political rights guarantee access to the franchise and the ability to hold public office (Janoski 1998; Marshall 1950).[4] Moreover, within the American scheme, the first ten constitutional amendments supply the negative rights that shield the citizen from state power.[5]

Ideally, the availability of rights implies correlative duties. Rights and duties are correlative in the following sense: if you have a right to a fair trial, you are obliged to jury duty; if you enjoy the benefits of government, you are obliged to pay taxes; and if you enjoy the protection of the state, you must be willing to serve in its common defense (Kerber 1997). All who reside within the borders of a liberal democratic state are duty-bound to at least pay taxes and obey the law. For citizens, the requirements are more demanding in that they must not engage in treasonous activities, must submit to jury duty, and be prepared to serve in the military.

Without much doubt, military service is the most demanding obligation for which citizens of democracies have been responsible. Notwithstanding mercenaries, since antiquity, only citizens, those in possession of property in need of protection, were deemed fit to bear arms (Pocock 1975). With the rise of the mass armies of the nineteenth century in the West, citizenship and military service during war fostered the rise of political democracy (Janowitz 1976). As nation-states needed to mobilize for war during this period, conscription democratized military service, permitting the masses to bear arms. In this case, citizenship was tied less to owning property as it was to loyalty, your willingness to sacrifice your life, if necessary, to protect the cultural and political values of the nation. Insofar as these men had demonstrated their loyalty to the nation and the way(s) of life to

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which it subscribed, they were entitled to have a voice in the politics that sought to sustain it. Thus, the citizen-soldier tradition, as it has come to be known in the West, equates military service with political equality, particularly the way in which republicans conceive citizenship (Snyder 1999).

We see evidence of this in the early American republic when, in the early nineteenth century, veterans of the Revolutionary War contested the possession of property as a condition for the franchise. After the War of 1812, in several states, suffrage remained conditional on property ownership, but military service was added as an alternative (Keyssar 2000). The prevailing sentiment among men of all social ranks seems to have been that “every man in the country who manifests a disposition to venture all for the defense of its liberty, should have a voice in its council” (quoted in Keyssar 2000: 14). And so, as the eighteenth century drew to a close, military service was closely connected in the new American republic to the discourse of citizenship. The service-citizenship nexus continued to be influential in the United States in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Suffrage expansion in the aftermath of the War of 1812 was attributed in part to military service. By agreeing to attach voting rights to military service—that is, to militia duty and army service—the social (p. 430) elite secured their interests while sidestepping the moral dilemma associated with the less fortunate shouldering the bulk of the burden of defense (Keyssar 2000: ch. 2). Further evidence emerged almost a half-century later in the *Dred Scott* decision. It is well known that Chief Justice Taney, writing for the majority, argued that blacks had “no rights that the white man was bound to respect.” Not so well known is the fact that at least part of his rationale was pinned to the fact that blacks had not served in the militia, excluded by the Militia Act of 1792 (Kerber 1998).

The Civil War, however, was a departure from the earlier conflicts. Unlike the War of Independence and the War of 1812, in which some men fought to gain the franchise, refusing to serve during the Civil War, some believed, warranted a forfeiture of civil and political rights, including the right to vote. During the war, republicans argued that, when necessary, military service was an important obligation of citizenship (Chambers 1987). General Sherman, a noted Civil War commander, went so far as to suggest that the American government should strip those who refused to answer the call to the colors of all legal and political rights. When New Yorkers resisted conscription, the state militia's adjutant general remarked, “Where the whole population participates in the rights, privileges, and immunities of a free people, they must share equally also in its burdens” (quoted in Chambers 1987: 59). While draft dodgers were never actually stripped of civil or political rights, they were deprived of liberty: they were thrown in jail.

The citizen-soldier tradition (Snyder 1999) enjoys a long, and some would say distinguished, history in American political development. Yet some scholars take issue with the status of the concept. Historian Richard Kohn, for example, maintains that the ideal American soldier is a myth, romanticized for the sake of inspiring patriotism. Kohn (1981) argues that only on rare occasion has the military truly been a reflection of American society. Sometimes, moreover, patriotism alone has failed to motivate sufficient numbers to join the fight. American history, Kohn reminds us, is also full of deserters, of

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soldiers who have fled from the fight or intentionally injured themselves to avoid combat. Even Karsten's (1966) work on the citizen-soldier, which on balance is positive, reveals real deficiencies with the individuals who are charged with realizing the ideal of the democratic citizen-soldier, some of whom were charged with collaborating with the enemy as POWs.

These revelations should not be taken lightly. Every war has its share of people who, for various reasons, fail to join with their co-nationals, or are too weak to withstand interrogation. Nevertheless, the ideal of the citizen-soldier has been important in the development of American citizenship (Ritter 2006). Moreover, for symbolic and practical reasons, the citizen-soldier ideal retains currency in American citizenship discourse insofar as military service continues to be regarded as an obligation of citizenship (Conover, Crewe, and Searing 1991). Symbolically, it has represented membership in the political community, for service has secured the franchise for those who lacked it in most cases. In this regard, eligibility for military service—especially militia duty—has rivaled possession of the franchise as an indicator of social standing (Berry 1977; Shklar 1991). After all, it is irrational to risk one's life to defend a nation in which one has no say in the decision to go to war.

(p. 431) It is with this analytical framework in mind, citizenship as an institution of which the citizen-soldier tradition is a norm, that we begin our investigation of the connection between war and citizenship for African Americans. To reiterate, my central claim is that a full account of the relationship between war and racial progress is difficult to achieve absent perceptions of citizenship. Citizenship is a political institution insofar as taken-for-granted cultural scripts, part of which equates military service with political equality, constitute it. Such reasoning, as one can imagine, is typically reinforced by pubic discourse during and after the nation commits to war (Krebs 2006). Thus, the connection between military service and racial progress lies in blacks' performance of their duty as citizens, and the sacrifice it entails.

Earning Citizenship from Above: State-based Change after the Civil War

On the eve of the Civil War, the possibility of securing citizenship at the state level much less the national level seemed remote. The political tensions of the 1850s produced a rash of additional restrictions on African American citizenship that it would take a civil war to remove. First, Congress passed a new Fugitive Slave Law in 1850 that allowed slave owners to enlist the services of the U.S. Marshals in pursuing runaways—free of charge. The Act also removed the statute of limitations on the pursuit of runaway slaves: as long as slavery received legal sanction, runaways could lose their liberty even decades after

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they had escaped the South (Klinkner and Smith 1999). But it was the *Dred Scott* case that dealt the most serious blow to African American citizenship.

The *Dred Scott* decision (1857) institutionalized the exclusion of African Americans—both free and slave—from the national community. In stinging prose, Chief Justice Taney argued in the Supreme Court's majority opinion that blacks, free or otherwise, could never be citizens because they were "[an] inferior and subordinate class of beings" with "no rights that whites are bound to respect." This claim was partially tied to military service: Scott's petition for citizenship was denied in part because he had never performed even a day of military service. Speaking for the Court, Taney referred to the Naturalization Act (1790) and the Militia Act (1792) as proof of black Americans' lack of fitness for citizenship. His interpretation of the Militia Act is worth quoting at length:

> The language of this [law] is …plain and significant. …It directs that every "free able-bodied white male citizen" shall be enrolled in the militia. The word "white" is evidently used to exclude the African race, and the word "citizen" to exclude unnaturalized foreigners; the latter forming no part of the sovereignty, owing it no allegiance, and therefore no obligation to defend it. The African race, however, born in the country, did owe allegiance to the Government, whether they were (p. 432) slave or free; but it [the African race] is repudiated, and rejected from the duties and obligations of citizenship in marked language.

The Militia Act was indicative of the United States' move to a more bounded citizenry as the republic entered the nineteenth century. Blacks were excluded from participation in one of the foundational obligations of American citizenship—service in the militia. This was part of a broader pattern in which blacks were barred from American civic life. Exclusion from the state militias, however, made it easier to justify blacks' exclusion from the wider political community.

As North and South faced off, Frederick Douglass insisted upon African Americans' having a hand in the liberation of the race. Given the rationale for the decision in *Dred Scott*, Douglass knew that black participation in the war was the best way for African Americans to achieve equality. But there were other reasons why he urged blacks to serve, including appeals to manhood and citizen duty: if they were men they must make a stand. Moreover, if they were citizens, or hoped to be one someday, black men must observe the duties associated with citizenship. Douglass also believed that serving would help black men recover a sense of self-respect and allow them to demonstrate courage to whites who remained skeptical of their worthiness as potential citizens. In short, military service during the Civil War was an opportunity for black men to prove something to themselves as well as whites (Quarles 1948: ch. 12).

The quickening pace of the war eventually provided black men the opportunity to see if Douglass was right. Upon realizing that successfully prosecuting a civil war would require the use of all able-bodied males, Congress passed a new Militia Act (1862) permitting President Lincoln to enlist free and enslaved blacks on a limited basis. However, the legislation failed to address the issue of equal pay between black and white

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soldiers, something that would eventually become an issue. The following year, the Emancipation Proclamation (1863) opened the door to the North's unencumbered accession of black soldiers. For both administrative and social purposes, the United States Colored Troops (USCT) was established in May 1863; approximately 75 percent of the soldiers were drawn from the slave population (Costa and Kahn 2005).

During the war, the USCT was partitioned into approximately 140 regiments. Not all of these units saw combat: in some cases, prejudice prevented black units from engaging the enemy; other times, there was simply a paucity of action. Black troops did, however, engage the enemy 449 times, and 39 of these were major battles (Cornish 1987). By the end of the war, over 178,000 black soldiers and sailors had donned the Union blue, 144,000 of them from slave states (Cornish 1987; Edgerton 2002). All told, black troops accounted for 10 to 12 percent of Union manpower. More than one-third (70,000) of the black troops who served during the war were either killed in action or died from subsequent wounds or disease (Cornish 1987).

As it turned out, Douglass was correct in his assessment of how black participation in the war would be received—at least in the North. General Butler, a Union general who commanded black troops, cited the battlefield deeds of blacks to justify (p. 433) the extension of civil rights to them. In congressional testimony in 1874, the general recounted the scene that crystallized his support for equality:

> There, in a space not wider than the clerk's desk and three hundred yards long, lay the dead bodies of 543 of my colored comrades, slain in the defense of their country, who had laid down their lives to uphold its flag and its honor, as a willing sacrifice. …as I looked at their bronzed faces upturned in the shining sun, as if in mute appeal against the wrongs of the country for which they had given their lives, and whose flag had been to them a flag of stripes, in which no star of glory had ever shone for them—feeling I had wronged them in the past and believing what was the future duty of my country to them—I swore to myself a solemn oath: "May my right hand forget its cunning, and my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if ever I fail to defend the rights of the men who have given their blood for me and my country this day and for their race forever." And, God helping me, I will keep that oath. (Quoted in Edgerton 2002: 37)

African American participation did more than earn the gratitude of the general: it was a decisive factor in the outcome of the war (Berry 1977; Cornish 1987; Du Bois 1935; Foner 1988). In return, African Americans received freedom from slavery and formal recognition as full citizens following the war. Many believed that the Civil Rights Acts of 1866, 1870, and 1875, along with the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution, would mitigate—if not extinguish—the effects of the Black Codes and white supremacy.[6] The Civil Rights Act of 1866 and the Fourteenth Amendment invalidated the Black Codes within a year of being ratified by state legislatures across the South.

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The legal status of African Americans, it seemed, had changed once and for all, and military service had something to do with it.[7] For beyond the congressional testimony on behalf of black soldiers given by their former commanders, some members of Congress were eager to praise the sacrifice of African Americans, particularly that of former slaves. Congressman John F. Farnsworth, who helped ratify the Civil Rights Act of 1866 by citing blacks' military service, is a nice example. A Union General during the war, he was sensitive to the sacrifice for which military service called. In making his case for the civil rights bill, he cited the absolute hypocrisy about the ways in which blacks were serving with no guarantee of citizenship, arguing that "in the laws enacted by Congress for enrolling and drafting into military service of the Government those liable to military duty, no exceptions for color have been allowed." He continues with his indictment, comparing the plight of blacks to that of immigrants, observing that: "the foreigner, who is ignorant of our language and institutions, and who has just landed upon our shores" have been rewarded with citizenship "for their brief service in the armies of the United States." Turning to African Americans, he suggests that justice will be served only when African American veterans are rewarded with citizenship in return for their military service, too. "Good faith," he says, "as well as impartial justice demands of this Government [*sic*] that it secures to the colored soldier in the Union their equal rights and privileges as citizens of the United States" (Congressional Globe 1865: 46).[8]

(p. 434) As the Civil War drew to a close and Reconstruction proceeded, it is clear that blacks' contribution to the war effort, particularly their contributions on the field of battle, had something to do with the nationalization of citizenship for African Americans during the ensuing Reconstruction period. Performing their duty as citizens, their willingness to make the ultimate sacrifice for country in which they were not acknowledged as full citizens, it seems, earned for them the gratitude of former commanders, some of whom were called upon to testify before Congress. If Butler's sentiments are indicative of other white officers who commanded black soldiers (and they were, see Glatthaar 1990), we can be assured that their testimony represents at least one mechanism through which blacks' battlefield sacrifices contributed to postwar reform. Members of Congress, as Mr. Farnsworth's comments suggest, also drew on black veterans' loyalty and sacrifice as a means of justifying the extension of national citizenship. This supports the claim that whites' beliefs in the norms associated with the institution of citizenship, among which are military service, fundamentally improved circumstances for African Americans after the war.

Diminishing Returns of Military Service: 1876–1918

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During the roughly forty-year period from 1876 through 1918, the struggle for equality shifted from a national-level battle to one with a regional focus, in which the state governments of the former confederacy undermined reform initiated by the national government. During this period, the social, political, and legal status of black Southerners resembled that of the slavery years. The withdrawal of federal troops from the South as part of the Hayes-Tilden compromise, as well as narrow legal interpretations of Civil War legislation in the civil rights cases of 1883, stripped black Southerners of the physical and legal protection they had enjoyed during Reconstruction. With black troops present, whites were reluctant to harass or abuse black civilians (Du Bois 1935; Fletcher 1974; Franklin 1961), but once those troops were removed, the abuse of southern blacks resumed and grew worse (Litwack 1979; Woodward 1955).

In the civil rights cases of 1883, the Supreme Court successfully retarded the recognition of African Americans as citizens, diluting the impact of the Civil War Amendments and the Civil Rights Acts of 1866 and 1875. The Civil Rights Act of 1866 had been designed as a corrective to the more general Thirteenth Amendment, in which neither equal rights nor the prospect of black citizenship were specified. The Fourteenth Amendment (1868), Fifteenth Amendment (1870), and the Civil Rights Act of 1875 were intended to serve as bulwarks against subsequent encroachment upon African American rights. The 1883 civil rights cases were a direct challenge to the constitutionality of the 1875 Act, which outlawed discrimination on (p. 435) account of race within inns, public conveyances, and theaters. In essence, the Court ruled in 1883 that so long as the state was not complicit in discriminatory action, it was permissible for private concerns to discriminate because the right not to be discriminated against is a “social right” that does not affect its victims’ more fundamental rights that constitute the core of citizenship and the ability to enjoy it (Higginbotham 1996).

In the Court's judgment, congressional enforcement of the Thirteenth Amendment was limited to incidents in which involuntary servitude could be proven. In the absence of such enforcement, however, the continuing stigma of slavery, which the Thirteenth Amendment was intended to proscribe, remained for black Southerners. Questions concerning due process and equal protection also triggered an interrogation of the Fourteenth Amendment. In this case, the Court limited congressional enforcement of the Amendment's guarantee of equal protection to the prevention of state-based encroachment upon the enjoyment of public conveyances and inns, omitting the enforcement of the right of individuals to equal protection in all areas of life.

But it was the decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), which gave constitutional cover to segregation that completed the installation of white supremacy—especially in the South. Taking their collective cue from the Court, state governments of the former confederate South added legal, economic, and political exclusion to the roster of inegalitarian practices imposed upon black Southerners. A combination of the white primary, poll taxes, literacy tests, residency requirements, and the grandfather clause systematically stripped black Southerners of the franchise, extinguishing their political power.

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The Cuban Campaign

The Spanish-American War (1898) furnished African Americans with an opportunity to recover from the social setbacks inflicted on them by the *Plessy* decision and win relief from mob violence—lynching had doubled in frequency since Reconstruction (McAdam 1999). African American editor E. E. Cooper believed that black Americans' service in the Spanish-American War would redound to the benefit of the race. In his estimation, black participation would usher in "an era of good feeling the country over and cement the races into a more compact brotherhood through perfect unity of purpose and patriotic affinity [where whites would] unloose themselves from the bondage of racial prejudice" (quoted in Nalty 1986: 64). Other black leaders disagreed. Henry M. Turner, senior bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, believed that in the context of war, patriotism presumes that one has a home to protect. In his view, however, blacks "had no home [in America] and never [would] have one" (ibid.). Turner advised against "rushing into a death struggle for a country that cares nothing for [black men's] rights and manhood," concluding that "Negroes who are not disloyal to the United States deserve to be lynched" (ibid.). Moreover, black leaders who were sympathetic to Turner's view also rejected the Cuban and Philippine campaigns on ideological grounds: it (p. 436) was imperialism, pure and simple. More to the point, they knew what the Cubans and Filipinos were in for and were against the idea of spreading white supremacy beyond America's borders (Gatewood 1972).

If the response to President McKinley's call for volunteers is any indication, however, most of black America agreed with Cooper. Black volunteers from several states rushed to demonstrate their patriotism. Since black troops were thought to be especially well-suited to deal with the tropical diseases American forces were expected to encounter in Cuba, five "immune" regiments of black volunteers were organized. The regular army's 9th and 10th Cavalry regiments, along with the 24th and 25th Infantry regiments—all four of which had been designated as standing "colored units" by an act of Congress after the Civil War—fought bravely on the southwestern frontier.[9] On one occasion in particular, black cavalry rescued Theodore Roosevelt's Rough Riders from certain doom. Speaking of their gallantry upon his return to America, the president-to-be recalled: "The Spaniards called them 'Smoked Yankees' but we found them to be an excellent breed of Yankees. I am sure that I speak the sentiments of officers and men in the assemblage when I say that between you and the other cavalry regiments there exists a tie which we trust will never be broken" (quoted in Gerstle 2001: 35). Roosevelt's political ambition and social beliefs required that he deny the contribution of black soldiers in Cuba, however, going so far as to suggest that black soldiers were cowards.[10] In fact, race was at the center of his support for war: it promised to forge white ethnics into a single nation (Gerstle 2001). Nevertheless, black troops earned five medals of honor and more than twenty certificates of merit for their bravery in Cuba. Moreover, their accomplishments in Cuba, particularly

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saving the future president's skin, were an important source of pride and sustenance for black Southerners (Fletcher 1974).

Despite black soldiers' service in the Spanish-American War, however, southern African Americans were scarcely better off as the nineteenth century concluded than they had been when the century began. True, many were no longer enslaved, but the rise of Jim Crow dashed any hopes of fair and equal treatment. Lynching, a means of social control, increased in frequency to approximately one hundred per annum in the aftermath of the Spanish-American War. Suffrage restrictions imposed in the post-reconstruction South were zealously enforced in the eleven former confederate states (Key 1949; Kousser 1974; Woodward 1955).

The Great War

On the eve of America's participation in WWI, white supremacy was ascendant in the South. Jim Crow statutes and customs deprived black Southerners of the ability to vote, live, learn, and earn a reasonable living as full citizens of the United States (McMillen 1989; Ransom and Sutch 2001). White-on-black violence was rampant: from 1916 to 1917, 124 lynchings took place in the South (McAdam 1999). Furthermore, the bravery of black soldiers in the Spanish-American War had been downplayed, and the practice of segregation, in the federal governmental departments, drew support from the newly elected Woodrow Wilson in 1913 (King 1995). But when the (p. 437) United States entered the Great War, the country once again needed to tap the black community for its support.

Black leadership was divided on the issue of whether to encourage black men to enlist. W. E. B. Du Bois urged African Americans to "close ranks" with whites. He believed that black participation in the war effort would result in postwar gains. Du Bois wrote:

> This is the crisis of the world. For all the long years to come men will point to the year 1918 as the great day of Decision, the day when the world decided whether it would submit to military despotism and endless armed peace—if peace it could be called—or whether they would put down the menace of German militarism and inaugurate the United States of the World. We of the colored race have no ordinary interest in the outcome. That which the German power represents today spells death to the aspirations of Negroes and all darker races for equality, freedom and democracy. Let us not hesitate. Let us, while this war lasts, forget our special grievances and close our ranks shoulder to shoulder with our own white fellow citizens and the allied nations that are fighting for democracy. We make no ordinary sacrifice, but we make it gladly and willingly with our eyes lifted up to the hills.

Du Bois implored black Americans to fight, arguing, "Our country is at war. …if this is OUR country, then this is OUR war." From black soldiers' collective sacrifice, he asserted,

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"the right to vote and the right to work and the right to live without insult" would emerge (Du Bois 1918: 111).

Du Bois's stance on the war was controversial and came as a surprise to many blacks who had come to identify him as a staunch militant, a leader who typically condemned accommodation (Ellis 1992). William Monroe Trotter, publisher of the *Boston Guardian* and one-time Harvard classmate of Du Bois's, was one public figure who disagreed with his contemporary's position on the war.[11] Trotter argued that the United States should concentrate upon "making the South safe for Negroes [instead of making the] small nations of Europe" conducive to democracy (Jordan 1995: 1574).[12] A. Philip Randolph, who would later become the president of the most powerful black labor union, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, also spoke out against black participation in the impending war. Randolph believed that the black elite should concern themselves with local issues. He suggested the black leaders who supported black participation in the war should "volunteer to go to France if they [were] so eager to make the world safe for democracy." For his part, he "would rather fight to make Georgia safe for the Negro" (quoted in Barbeau and Henri 1974: 12).

Most of black America sided with Du Bois: over 370,000 African Americans served in WWI, more than in any other war to that point. African Americans constituted 13 percent of all draftees and 9 percent of the total American troop strength (Barbeau and Henri 1974; Chambers 1987). The military rewarded black soldiers for their willingness to serve by attempting to downplay the contributions of African Americans to the war effort, as had happened during the Spanish-American War. Black troops suffered many indignities during WWI. The most experienced units—the (p. 438) regulars of the 9th and 10th Cavalry and the 24th and 25th Infantry—were ordered to remain in the Philippines, Hawaii, and the American Southwest, robbing them of the opportunity to prove their mettle in Europe. Moreover, only 20 percent of the 200,000 black troops who were deployed to France were allowed to participate in combat operations (Nalty 1986: 112), and many of these men were not allowed to fight alongside whites. In France, four regiments of the all-black 93rd Division were "lent" to the French by General "Black Jack" Pershing, who, ironically, had earned his moniker commanding—and praising—black troops of the 10th Cavalry regiment during the Spanish-American War.

In France, black soldiers were frequently undermined by American commanders alarmed by the relative ease with which black troops mixed with the less race-conscious French, who afforded them a measure of dignity and respect. Fearing the future effects of such egalitarian treatment, American commanders devised a plan to ensure postwar racial harmony in the United States: the army distributed a document titled "Secret Information Concerning Black American Troops" to French officers and civilians who were likely to come into contact with black soldiers. It "advised" the French that the races must be kept apart so as to not encourage miscegenation. According to the document, race mixing constituted an affront to American national values, and tolerant treatment of blacks would furnish them with "intolerable pretensions to equality" (quoted in Barbeau and

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Henri 1974: 115). It was necessary, the document argued, to keep blacks in the place to which they were accustomed in order to avoid “spoiling the Negroes.”[13]

Black conscripts were not the only recipients of poor treatment. As a symbolic gesture intended to secure African American support for the war, the army agreed to train black officers so long as black and white troops were trained at separate facilities. Even with the separate training arrangements, the move was welcomed by many in the black community, including Du Bois. Trotter and most of the black press, however, decried the segregated camp (Jordan 1995). To them it was another slap in the face. Nevertheless, one commentator called the Officer Training School in Iowa “the one constructive movement for the Negro since the Fifteenth Amendment” (quoted in Barbeau and Henri 1974: 57–58). Yet black officers never received a fair opportunity to lead. Few of the army's senior commanders perceived blacks as leadership material; others feared the social implications of black officers’ commanding white troops. Still others believed that black enlisted soldiers would not listen to black officers because the enlisted yearned for white leadership. Official and unofficial barriers were erected to ensure the failure of black officers. On the official side, black officers only constituted 0.7 percent of officer strength, even though 13 percent of all conscripts were black. Many of them eventually faced charges of incompetence, so as to rid the army as much of that 0.7 percent as possible. And those black officers who remained were denied promotion beyond the rank of captain.

When black officers were promoted, the military took steps to prevent the customs of segregation from being violated. The only black field-grade officer, West (p. 439) Point graduate Colonel Charles Young, was selected for promotion to brigadier general, but he was medically retired a day before he was to receive this promotion, apparently because his rank would have placed him in a high-level divisional command post in which he would have commanded at least two dozen white officers. In other cases when a black officer approached a promotion that would make him senior to white officers in his unit, his white commanding officer would simply have the black officer transferred, replacing him with a white officer of the rank to which the black officer would have been promoted. When black officers were made senior to white officers, they were often instructed not to require their white subordinates to salute them.

Stateside, black troops were less tolerant of the attempts made by whites to impose Jim Crow, as a July 1917 incident in Houston, Texas, demonstrated. The pursuit of Pancho Villa required a substantial southwestern military presence; the Third Battalion of the 24th Infantry Regiment drew the assignment.[14] While in Texas, the black soldiers of the 24th refused to observe Jim Crow, ignoring the attendant customs. Houston police responded by beating and generally harassing black troops whenever they saw fit. Soon, however, the soldiers became the aggressors. The conflict began when a black soldier happened upon two police officers beating a black woman. Upon protesting, the soldier was assaulted by the officers and arrested. After a second soldier was also beaten and arrested, word reached Camp Logan, where the soldiers were encamped. Over 100 soldiers armed themselves and marched into town looking for justice. During the conflict

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that ensued, fifteen whites and one Latino were killed; among the deceased were four police officers. At the ensuing courts-martial, 156 black soldiers were tried and thirteen subsequently hanged.

Despite all of the obstacles encountered by black troops who served during WWI, they managed to make their mark on the battlefield. The “Men of Bronze,” as the 369th Infantry Regiment were called by the French, never yielded an inch of ground for over six months and never had a soldier taken prisoner. All told, 750 of the regiment's black soldiers lost their lives and over 5,000 were wounded. But it was the 93rd Division that suffered the bulk of the casualties. Of the approximately 10,000 soldiers in the division, about one-third were either killed or wounded in action (Barbeau and Henri 1974). In the end, three of the four regiments of the 93rd Division that fought under the French flag were awarded the Croix de Guerre, an honor bestowed for bravery.

The long-term implications of black Americans’ service in WWI for the service-progress nexus were grave. The results remind us of the Spanish-American War after which efforts were made to undermine the contributions of blacks to the war effort. Only 11 percent of the black troops who went to war were allowed to fight, and many of these did so under French command, making it more likely that their achievements would be ignored by the mainstream American press. At the same time, less well-trained elements of the all-black 92nd Division, which fought under American command, were blamed for a setback they experienced late the war. The army and the mainstream press seized upon the misfortune and, according to some, (p. 440) overemphasized the failure because the unit was black (Barbeau and Henri 1974; Foner 1974; Nalty 1986). The incident seemed to confirm stereotypes that blacks were ill-suited for combat.

The most experienced of the black fighting forces, moreover—the regular regiments of the infantry and cavalry—were ordered to remain in the Pacific and the Southwest during the war, robbing all-black units of the chance to maximize their combat effectiveness. Most of the 92nd and much of the 93rd divisions were manned by inexperienced conscripts, but the 93rd enjoyed the relative benefit of fighting under the more tolerant French, who did not make a point of questioning the competence of black officers or troops. The 92nd, on the other hand, was commanded by white American officers, many of whom were born and bred in the South. General Bullard, the commanding general of the Second Army, under which the 92nd Division was organized, believed blacks were inferior and unfit for combat (Barbeau and Henri 1974; Nalty 1986). Naturally, his sentiments trickled down the chain of command, resonating most strongly with the general's southern brethren. Perhaps this explains why the 93rd performed better than the 92nd, where the white southern officers often berated their black subordinates. Finally, black officers in the 92nd Division were not given a chance to prove their worth as leaders. At every turn, they were reduced to near irrelevance.

With the service of African Americans so thoroughly undermined, it is no surprise that black Americans failed to benefit from it in the postwar period. In fact, conditions grew progressively worse. In the South, white repression increased in the aftermath of the war.

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If Senator James K. Vardaman's (D-Mississippi) sentiments are any indication, white Southerners were very concerned about the return of black troops. Vardaman feared that black veterans would be spoiled, “French women-ruined …uppity niggers” (quoted in Barbeau and Henri 1974: 175). He encouraged white Mississippians to form vigilante groups to prevent the “rape” of southern white women. Instead of embracing the efforts of black soldiers who had endured many indignities while fighting for their country, many whites chose to focus instead upon the “new negro” they feared would emerge from the war. Black veterans were routinely assaulted, shot, and in some cases lynched upon their return.

More generally, the need to restore the racial status quo in the South and economic competition elsewhere set the stage for the “Red Summer” of 1919. In 1918 and 1919, race riots exploded across America, affecting Chicago and New York in the North and Longview, Texas, Knoxville, Tennessee, and Elaine, Arkansas, in the South (Edgerton 2002). In the mayhem, over 135 African Americans were killed by white mobs, including ten veterans who were lynched in uniform.

African Americans at home had looked forward to the demobilization and return of black soldiers. Since the soldiers had been armed, trained in the ways of war, and hardened by combat, it was presumed by at least some black Southerners that these “men [were] not afraid to die” and were accustomed to “killing white men.” These men would lead the fight against white supremacy (Reich 1996: 1479). This optimism was not unfounded, for the discrimination to which black servicemen were subjected left indelible scars on the men who endured them, some of (p. 441) whom went on to wage war against Jim Crow upon returning home. Charles Hamilton Houston, a Harvard-trained attorney and civil rights advocate, was among them. His service as a Judge Advocate, during which he witnessed gross miscarriages of justice in which black servicemen were repeatedly victimized, was foundational to his life's work: using the law as a means to secure equal citizenship for African Americans (McNeil 1983). In April 1919, he separated from the army, declaring, “My battleground is in America, not France” (Linder 2000: 2).[15] His legacy is the momentous decision rendered in *Brown*, for which he was the principal architect (Higginbotham 1996; McNeil 1983).

William “Boss” Dawson, long-time congressman representing black Chicagoans, was another of the black officers for whom WWI fueled a desire to contest the oppression of African Americans. For starters, he sparked the political mobilization of black Southerners by financing voter registration drives. He was also a force to be reckoned with in presidential politics. In 1944 and 1948, he was a driving force in the Democratic Party, pushing for strong civil rights platforms. Moreover, by delivering black votes in Chicago, he both helped Roosevelt retain the presidency, and helped Truman win it. During the presidential campaign of 1960, in which many blacks remained wary of Kennedy's religious preference, his support helped to convince otherwise skeptical black voters to support Kennedy. Finally, though Dawson, like his black contemporaries, failed to get much in the way of civil rights legislation passed, he sometimes marshaled the

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required resources to block racist legislation, including a proposal for a segregated VA Hospital (Manning 2003).

At both the national and state levels of government during this period, black Southerners, who constituted the vast majority of the African American population (Gregory 2004), were betrayed. At the national level, the judiciary failed them. With unfavorable decisions in the civil rights cases and *Plessy v. Ferguson*, black Southerners were stripped of first-class citizenship. At the state level, the removal of federal troops allowed the state representatives to rewrite their respective constitutions, devising legal and extra-legal means of removing the franchise from black Southerners. In sum, black Southerners, once again, became objects of domination. And, as we have seen, some prominent African Americans saw military service as a means of regaining what was lost in the wake of the Court's ruling in the *Plessy* case.

They were wrong. Unlike the preceding period during and immediately following the Civil War when blacks' military service spurred tangible change, their participation in the Spanish-American War and WWI failed to improve their condition. Earlier I indicated a concerted effort on the part of several white officers to undermine blacks' military sacrifice. The country's need for manpower during the Spanish-American War and WWI was simply too great to deny blacks the ability to serve, but not great enough to prevent blacks' military contribution from being undercut. Only small numbers of black troops were allowed to participate in combat roles, their competence was often called into question, and their valor was frequently **(p. 442)** downplayed or simply dismissed. These events robbed African Americans of the ability to claim equal rights on the basis of their military service.

Based upon the failure of social progress, we have reason to believe the maneuver worked. But their (whites') actions were part of a larger trend in deteriorating race relations since the end of the Civil War, perhaps the most invidious of which was an abiding adherence to scientific and evolutionary approaches to race. Around the turn of-the-century, blacks were judged by some influential whites to have been incapable of the demands of democracy; others felt that it would take time for blacks to develop the requisite capacity for self-governance (Smith 1997). In any case, there is little doubt that the prevailing racial climate influenced the Court's decision on the *Plessy* matter (Klarman 2006), the one that successfully institutionalized segregation. Such thinking also fueled American imperial ambition, driving the country to subjugate "racially inferior" people in the Philippines and Guam under the guise of "Manifest Destiny."

There were other reasons, beyond deteriorating race relations, which may account for the failure of the Spanish-American War and WWI to induce meaningful change for blacks. For example, we must entertain the notion that the relatively conservative position of some black elites on the issue of racial progress affected the extent to which change was possible. Booker T. Washington, a well-known black conservative and perhaps the foremost black intellectual of his time (Dawson 2001), preferred to accommodate the racial status quo of the time rather than challenge it. Needless to say, he was not without

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mass support, especially in the South. Moreover, as Klinkner and Smith (1999) suggest, the oppositional movement that eventually surfaced after WWI failed to apply sufficient pressure to induce change, especially during the 1920s. With Marcus Garvey, who led perhaps the largest mass African American movement to date (Martin 1976), advocating racial separatism, and the NAACP confined to the black elite, bringing pressure to bear on the state proved an intractable task. Finally, given the brief time during which American forces were actively engaged, there was scarcely enough time to juxtapose American liberal values with those practiced by the enemy, something Klinkner and Smith (1999) cite as a necessary condition for change to ensue. Having said all of this, we should not underestimate the extent to which whites' undercutting of blacks' military service during this period crippled the chances for racial progress.

From the Bottom Up: Military Service and Citizenship in the Postwar Years

The social, political, and economic status of African Americans failed to change much in the two decades following the Great War. During the Depression, African Americans, like everyone else, sought relief from poverty and the prospect of starvation. Roosevelt's answer was the New Deal, but it was a raw deal for black (p. 443) Americans: discrimination initially affected the administration of relief and eligibility for social security (Katznelson 2005; Lieberman 1998; Sitkoff 1978). Later, Harold Ickes and Harry Hopkins intervened to ensure a more equitable distribution of benefits and access to programs (Sitkoff 1978), but this intervention alone could not create economic equality. In 1939, 93 percent of African American families lived below the poverty line, as compared to 65 percent of white families, and in the South, black men earned only 44 percent as much as white men did. Educational disparities ensured the persistence of these gaps. In the South, the state spent, on average, three times more to educate white children than black children (Jaynes and Williams 1989: 59). Since 75 percent of all black Americans lived in the South in 1940 (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1940), three in four African Americans remained disenfranchised and segregated from whites in all facets of life, including hospitals and cemeteries. White-on-black violence also continued to plague southern African Americans. From 1930 through 1940, at least 142 blacks were victims of race-related homicides committed by whites.[16] While Roosevelt condemned lynching, calling it murder, his legislative priorities were elsewhere (Weiss 1983). Consequently, anti-lynching legislation remained unfinished business on the eve of WWII. As this pattern suggests, guided social change, i.e., change generated by the state, was not something on which blacks could count. This time, the path for change would have to ultimately begin from the bottom, from the African American masses.

World War II

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World War II is often cited as an occasion on which Americans were forced to examine their values and beliefs (Higham 1997; Klinkner and Smith 1999; Myrdal 1944). The American creed was employed, at least in part, as a means to rally support for the war effort and the mobilization of the American military machine. It was difficult to reconcile democratic ideology with the plight of southern African Americans, however. The ideological underpinnings of the war and the need for national unity signaled the need for diversity and increased tolerance. The confluence of these factors, Gleason (1980) suggests, crystallized—for the first time—a distinctive American national ideology. Gunnar Myrdal predicted in 1944 that a critical examination of American social practices in light of WWII sloganeering in which the national ideology was emphasized would force whites to bring social practice into alignment with cultural beliefs. Indeed, blacks were quite optimistic about their prospects in postwar America. For change to occur as it had in the aftermath of the Civil War; however, blacks believed they must have an active role in the war effort: they had to be allowed to fight.

Black elites sought to capitalize on the ubiquity of the American creed in the prewar discourse by fighting for the right to fight. They reasoned that tangible social progress was more likely to follow the war if black troops were allowed to participate fully in combat than if they were stuck in non-combat assignments—if they were allowed to serve at all. As it became increasingly likely that America would join the fight in Europe, therefore, the black elite made military service a central goal in (p. 444) the pursuit of civil rights (Dalfiume 1969; Nalty 1986; Wynn 1993).[17] The campaign began in 1938 with black opinion-makers calling for increased African American participation in the armed forces. To work toward the goal of "a more dignified place in our armed forces during the next war," the Committee for Participation of Negroes in the National Defense Program was formed in 1938 (quoted in Dalfiume 1969: 26). A joint venture between the influential *Pittsburgh Courier* and black officers from WWI, the committee sought to avoid the disappointments of WWI and the immediate postwar period by ensuring African Americans' access to full, unencumbered military participation.

Beyond the moral justification for rejecting the separation of races in wartime—that segregation and the doctrine of racial inferiority on which it rested were wrong—were more pragmatic justifications. Segregation denied black soldiers full participation in the war effort, resulting in poor morale and possibly impeding combat effectiveness. It was expensive and inefficient, in that it required the construction and maintenance of separate (if not necessarily equal) facilities. Finally, segregation wasted manpower. While all-black units tended to be overstaffed, white units were more likely to become depleted. With segregation of the military in place, however, black troops could not be used to fill out white units (Dalfiume 1969; McGuire 1983). Black leaders sought full and equal participation for blacks in the armed forces, including integration (Lee 1966).

On the eve of the election of 1940, during which the president was pressed by the Republican candidate, Wendell L. Wilkie, who pledged to assault racism, President Roosevelt thought it wise to cede ground on the issue of more equal military service. As part of this concession, Roosevelt signed off on an antidiscrimination clause in the

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pending Selective Service Bill, agreeing to allow blacks to serve in the military in direct proportion to their representation in American society. He also agreed to permit all officers, black and white, to train together, and he promised to establish aviation training for black officers. In addition, Roosevelt conceded that black officers would be permitted to command black troops—at the junior officer level. Compared to WWI, this was progress, but it was tempered by the administration's insistence on continued segregation of the military and on its maintenance of the condition that blacks would only be inducted if they were deemed mentally and physically fit for service and if separate facilities were available for them. Over the protests of black leaders, these conditions were codified in the Selective Service Act of 1940.[18]

The failure to resolve racial issues as a matter of policy was but a harbinger of things to come. As America's involvement in the war deepened, black soldiers were scarcely welcome in the United States: over half of the base commanders in the North and 70 percent of their counterparts in the South refused to host all-black units (Dalfiume 1969; Lee 1966; Nalty 1986).[19] As it had during WWI, local hostility toward black soldiers bred mutual contempt between the locals and black GIs. Whites attempted to impose Jim Crow upon black GIs who possessed the temerity to venture into town. As they had done during the Spanish-American War and WWI, however, black soldiers balked at the imposition of southern convention. The (p. 445) moral inconsistency of representing Uncle Sam while enduring Jim Crow created a combustible situation between the races, threatening to ignite racial powder kegs on and around southern installations.

Eventually, the repeated attempts of southern whites to break the spirit of black GIs deteriorated into a series of racial confrontations, some of them violent. All told, over 209 racial incidents involving black GIs and authorities (civilian and military) occurred during the war, two-thirds of them at southern bases (Kryder 2000). Judge William Hastie offered an eloquent, succinct account of the racial confrontations that plagued the military at this time: “It is impossible,” Hastie said, “to create a dual personality which will be on the one hand a fighting man toward the enemy, and on the other, a craven who will accept treatment as less than a man at home” (quoted in Klinkner and Smith 1999: 167). A more direct, if brusque, expression of this sentiment came from a GI, who reasoned, “If this is Uncle Sam's army, then treat us like soldiers and not animals or else Uncle Sam might find a new Axis to fight” (quoted in McGuire 1983: 11). Ultimately, some of the returning black veterans followed through on this threat and catalyzed race riots in Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee (Robinson 1997).

Overseas and in the field, much as they had been in WWI, black troops were also forced to deal with the charge of cowardice. The 92nd Division again bore the brunt of the criticism, particularly because of its behavior during the Italian campaign. Led by white officers, almost all of them reared in the South, the division made repeated attacks against German forces that were dug in and had the advantage of high ground. The officers repeatedly ordered the black troops to execute frontal assaults that amounted to suicide runs instead of attempting to flank the position, a maneuver that would have significantly reduced casualties. Critics assert that black GIs disappeared during the

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fighting, but they only did so as they saw their white junior officers doing the same (Edgerton 2002). One platoon, however, stood and fought. Lieutenant Vernon Baker, one of the few black officers in the 92nd Division, assumed command when his white captain deserted the platoon—in the heat of battle. The captain said he was going to get reinforcements, but the reinforcements never arrived, nor did he (the captain) bother to return. Lieutenant Baker was one of a total of six men from his company who ultimately survived the engagement (Edgerton 2002; Foner 1974; Nalty 1986).

When given a fair opportunity, black troops generally acquit themselves well in combat. In the army, the 761st Tank Battalion, attached to General Patton's Third Army, was key to the Allied advance across France and into Germany. On several occasions, the 761st was the lead element in Patton's assaults. All told, the men of the 761st earned 11 Silver Stars and 69 Bronze Stars. In the Air Force, the 332nd Fighter Group—the renowned Tuskegee Airmen—never lost a bomber. Pilots of this group shot down 111 German aircraft and destroyed another 150 on the ground. For this, they earned over 1,000 medals, including 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses. In the process, 76 black pilots lost their lives in combat. During the Battle of the Bulge in 1944, a manpower shortage required the use of black troops in combat in tandem with whites. Over 4,500 troops from black service units volunteered, but there was (p. 446) only room for 2,500. To avoid the spectacle of black noncommissioned officers giving orders to whites, black sergeants were required to relinquish their rank. Ultimately, 84 percent of the white officers and 81 percent of white noncommissioned officers with whom they served said that the black troops performed well (Stouffer et al. 1949). But when General Davis asked that these results receive publicity in order to strengthen the case for more permanent integration his request was denied (Dalfiume 1969).

In the aftermath of the war, some of the most important, if only symbolic, legal changes that occurred to the status of African Americans were instigated by attacks by white Southerners on black veterans. One incident in particular shocked President Truman, solidifying his resolve to combat racism and promote civil rights as a part of his political strategy for the campaign to come in 1948. In February 1946, Isaac Woodard, a recently discharged sergeant who had served in the Pacific theater, donned his uniform and boarded a bus from an army base in Georgia to head home to North Carolina. As the bus made its way through the South, the bus driver cursed the sergeant, accusing him of loitering for too long in the colored restroom at a stop in South Carolina. The veteran took exception to the harassment, sparking an argument between the two men. The driver alerted the local authorities, telling law enforcement that the sergeant was drunk, though in fact he was not a drinker. The officers who arrived at the next stop to arrest Woodard beat the sergeant with a blackjack, and he was permanently blinded when one of the officers jammed the end of a nightstick into his eyes (Nalty 1986: 204–205).

The NAACP saw to it that the incident received maximum publicity, and the attack on Woodard drew the ire of most of the nation, black and white. The president resolved that he could not tolerate such treatment of veterans who had fought a war to preserve American values. This decision did not come easily to Truman; as a Missourian, his

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rearing did not predispose him to racial tolerance (Klinkner and Smith 1999; Hamby 1995). But Truman's own military service in WWI may have moderated his view of race, insofar as he understood the sacrifice associated with defending the country. This much is evident in his declaration about the attack on Woodard: “When a mayor and a City Marshal can take a negro Sergeant off a bus in South Carolina, beat him up and put out one of his eyes, and nothing is done about it …something is radically wrong with the system. …I can't approve of such goings on and shall never approve of it. …I am going to try to remedy it” (quoted in Klinkner and Smith 1999: 204).

Due in some part to the atrocities inflicted on veterans in the aftermath of WWII, Truman appointed a commission on civil rights in December 1946 (Lawson 2004; Nalty 1986: chapter 15). Among the recommendations of the commission's report, *To Secure These Rights*, which was issued in 1947, were the desegregation of the armed forces, the establishment of a permanent Fair Employment Practices Committee, anti-lynching legislation, and a bill banning poll taxes. Beyond claims about how he felt about black veterans coming under attack, however, the president had other reasons to press Congress to pass the reforms proposed by his civil rights commission. In both foreign and domestic spheres, he was pressured to do something about the condition of black Southerners. Cold War pressures, with the Soviets using every (p. 447) blunder committed by white supremacists as a means of interrogating America's fitness to lead the “free world,” forced Truman address the civil rights, if not the human rights, of African Americans (Anderson 2003; Dudziak 2000; Skrentny 2002). However, addressing civil rights proved a tricky proposition; doing so, eventually forced the southern wing of his party to the brink of defecting from the national Democratic Party. Ultimately, prudence and political survival dictated that the president court the black vote (Dalfiume 1969; Lawson 2004; Nalty 1986). Without it, he was advised, he would be a one-term president. Faced with this possibility, he heeded the advice of his counsel and courted African Americans for their support (Sitkoff 1971). Still, it was a risky move on the president's part because it was not clear that he would prevail without the support of the South.

Ultimately, blacks emerged from the war without much in the way of tangible gains. To be sure, on President Roosevelt's watch, the white primary was declared illegal, increasing black turnout at the polls in the South (Lawson 1976; Matthews and Prothro 1966). But Roosevelt's Executive Order 8802, outlawing employment discrimination in war industries and establishing the FEPC to ensure compliance with the order, was not sustained in the long run. After failing to secure enough congressional support as it ran afoul of a bipartisan coalition composed of southern Democrats and conservative Republicans (Chen 2007; Katznelson, Geiger, and Kryder 1993), the Committee was forced to fold in 1946.[20] With the exception of *Shelley v. Kraemer*, in which the Truman administration helped strike a blow for civil rights, filing a brief in support of outlawing racially restrictive housing covenants, many of Truman's proposed reforms failed to amount to anything concrete. For instance, the anti-lynching legislation submitted by

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Truman, as well as other recommendations of the president's commission, stalled, failing to receive enough support in Congress to become law, foiled once again by a bipartisan coalition of conservative Republicans and southern Democrats (Katznelson, Geiger, and Kryder 1993).

Perhaps the greatest achievement of the Truman administration, and the high point for African Americans' aspirations for equality, was Executive Order 9981, ordering desegregation of the armed forces. Although at first the army balked at the presidential order, citing their belief that integration would harm military effectiveness, the president, through the Fahy committee, a body charged with coordinating the desegregation of the armed forces, technically got what he wanted: integration.[21] Still, the army refused to comply in a timely fashion as the president left it up to field commanders' discretion about when to desegregate their units. This resulted in three years of procrastination on the part of the army's senior commanders. It would take the exigencies created by another war, revealing the inefficiency of segregation, for real integration to occur (Dalfiume 1969; MacGregor 1981; Mershon and Schlossman 1998).

The Korean War

As the Cold War deepened, African Americans' struggle for reform grew increasingly difficult. Anyone who dared criticize America, as it remained locked in an ideological battle with the Soviet Union, risked being accused of harboring (p. 448) Communist sympathies. Without the ability to bring more international pressure to bear on the Truman administration, segregation and discrimination continued to haunt African Americans (Anderson 2003). Separate but equal remained a guiding principle in the South. Moreover, on the eve of the Korean War, the army remained steadfast in its commitment to segregation—in principle if no longer policy.

As the Korean War got underway in June 1950, blacks constituted 25 percent of accessions to the army—more than twice the proportion that would have been admitted had the army been allowed to remain wed to its quota system. But because the military remained segregated, this shift in the racial makeup of the military created a problem: white units remained chronically undermanned, while all-black units were overmanned, in some cases by 62 percent (Dalfiume 1969). In the interest of efficiency, among other factors, white commanders in the field began to siphon excess manpower from black units, beginning the piecemeal integration of the army in Korea (Dalfiume 1969: 203–206). By all accounts, integration on a small scale worked well. Black and white soldiers fought well together, and there were few racial incidents (Nalty 1986). Still, General Mark Clark, the army chief of staff, resisted desegregation, as did General Douglas MacArthur, commander of forces in the Far East.

Two factors eventually coaxed the army into full compliance with Truman's order. First, General Matthew Ridgeway relieved MacArthur of command in the Far Eastern theater. For military and moral reasons, Ridgeway wished to desegregate the forces under his

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command. The second factor was a study commissioned by the army to assess the consequences of segregation and integration. Project Clear, conducted by social scientists with appointments at Johns Hopkins University, commenced in the spring of 1951. It surveyed army commands in Korea, Japan, and the United States. Its findings cleared the way for Ridgeway to desegregate the forces under his command in the Far East. According to the report, over 75 percent of army officers and enlisted who had served in integrated units (in basic training and in Korea) praised the performance of black soldiers and officers. White officers and soldiers who had not served side-by-side with blacks were less open to the idea of integration (Bogart 1969). In other words, within units in which segregation had taken place, black servicemen were parts of a larger, more inclusive "us." In the stateside commands in which whites mainly served in segregated units, on the other hand, blacks continued to be perceived as "them," even though they wore the same uniforms.

Desegregation failed to guarantee that black soldiers would receive equal treatment and equal respect. They were subjected to manifold indignities while fighting on the Korean peninsula. Operationally, black soldiers were routinely accused of displaying cowardice in the heat of battle. The all-black (until 1951) 24th Infantry Regiment absorbed the brunt of the criticism. Based in Japan prior to the escalation of hostilities in June 1950, the soldiers received better treatment from Japanese locals than they did from their white, mainly southern-bred, commanders. When the unit was thrust to the front, the imperious, condescending attitudes of some of the white commanders needlessly imperiled their charges. George Lipsitz summarizes black soldiers' mistreatment at the hands of white officers during the Korean War:

> (p. 449) Black soldiers …talked about poor command decisions by white officers, inadequate equipment, insufficient rest periods, unfair and dishonest publicity and high casualty rates in battle. They pointed out that wounded white soldiers could expect evacuation by helicopters, but black GIs had to carry their wounded away from battle on stretchers. They noted that white units pulled back from battle enjoyed long rest periods, but that black outfits had to drill and stand inspection during their brief rest period before rushing back into combat. Many of the black soldiers …were convinced that white officers considered them expendable. (1988: 47)

On several occasions, black soldiers cited incidents in which white officers were so irresponsible as to all but walk them into friendly fire. On one such occasion, Lipsitz writes, "a white officer ordered his black troops to take a hill, then left them in combat while he reported back to company headquarters with a foot wound that his soldiers claimed was self-inflicted" (48).

Army discipline was also decidedly discriminatory. In the first months of the war, almost 25 percent of the front-line troops were black, but black GIs made up fully 90 percent of those charged with cowardice under fire—sixty black soldiers and eight white soldiers accused between August and October of 1950 (Lipsitz 1988). Over 50 percent of the

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accused black soldiers were found guilty, and half of these men were either sentenced to death or life in prison. Among whites, on the other hand, only two of the eight accused (25 percent) were found guilty, and they received light sentences of three and five years' imprisonment (44–45). The sloppy application of military justice moved a young Thurgood Marshall, then the NAACP's chief counsel, to conduct an investigation in person. Marshall later observed: "The life of a Negro meant nothing to those courts. Some soldiers who were charged were eventually convicted of misconduct under fire when they were not even near enemy lines" (quoted in Lipsitz 1988: 45). The black press corps reported the poor treatment of black GIs to the black public stateside.

Black troops nevertheless distinguished themselves in combat. When the armistice was signed in 1953, over 600,000 black troops had served in the Korean War, constituting approximately 8 percent of the total strength of the armed forces. More than 5,000 black soldiers died on the battlefield in Korea. Despite charges of cowardice that persisted throughout the war, black GIs were recognized for their bravery. Lieutenant Colonel Samuel Pierce, Jr., for example, commanded what is regarded as the first successful American offensive in the war. In the same campaign, Captain Charles Bussey won a Silver Star for repelling an attempt by North Korean forces to flank the battalion. His platoon is credited with killing 250 of the opposing force. Of the twenty-five black aviators who served in the war, three earned the Distinguished Flying Cross. Among the recipients was Captain Daniel "Chappie" James, who went on to become the first African American to first wear three, then four, stars. Two black soldiers were posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor: William Thompson and Cornelius H. Charlton, both of whom served in the maligned 24th Infantry regiment. In fact, Thompson was the first American to earn it in Korea.

(p. 450) As the Korean War drew to a close, the black population of the United States was slightly better off than it had been prior to the war. The military was now truly desegregated in both word and deed. Race relations benefited from the integration of the forces, at least in the short term: both black and white soldiers held higher opinions of the opposite group after serving together in Korea (Bogart 1969).[22] The Supreme Court would soon make its momentous decision in the *Brown* case. Despite these small steps forward, however, black Southerners continued to suffer under the lash of Jim Crow, and white Southerners went on terrorizing black Southerners both physically and economically in response to the latter's attempt to enter political life and receive an equal education (Bartley 1969; Lawson 1976; Matthews and Prothro 1966; McMillen 1994; Salmon and Van Evera 1973).

Dwight Eisenhower replaced Harry Truman in the White House and, in turn, passed the buck on civil rights, at least as it pertained to integration. The president, who failed to fully support the decision in *Brown* (Dudziak 2000), believed it wrong for the state to force integration on the South. In the long run, he thought it better if blacks achieved equality through the ballot, through political pressure. The franchise, after all, was guaranteed by the Constitution. For this reason, the general believed the franchise fair game for the use of state power to guarantee it (Lawson 1976). Although the former

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general dispatched troops to Little Rock, he did so under duress: it was a means of undermining Soviet criticism of American racial practices (Dudziak 2000).[23] Moreover, his support for Civil Rights Bills in both 1957 and 1960 was also done in service to American foreign policy. Like Truman's administration, the Cold War forced Eisenhower's White House to give the appearance of bringing Jim Crow to heel lest America risk losing the global competition for allies to the Soviet Union (Dudziak 2000; Plummer 1996; Skrentny 2002).[24] Ultimately, both Civil Rights Acts were flawed pieces of legislation; each lacked an enforcement mechanism capable of out-flanking southern officials determined to retain political hegemony (Bartley 1969; Klarman 2006; Lawson 1976; Rosenberg 1991).

From the beginning of WWII through 1960, real, tangible reform on civil rights remained elusive. Whether it was WWII, the Korean War, or the Cold War, American ideological consistency and national ambition demanded at least an attempt at racial progress, if not real racial reform. Postwar liberalism, with its emphasis on embracing blacks in the practice of the liberal creed, sought to eliminate antiblack racism and discrimination (Myrdal 1944). Applying the liberal creed to blacks would fulfill the promise of American democracy and rid the country of the hypocrisy with which it had lived for over 300 years. This is one way to view Truman's reforms, as an attempt to institutionalize postwar liberal sentiments (Horton 2005). Indeed, if symbolism is commensurate with progress, progress indeed occurred on both Truman and Roosevelt's watch. For Roosevelt, outlawing employment discrimination in war industries, establishing the FEPC, and appointing some of the justices that declared the white primary illegal certainly counts for something. Similarly, Truman's move to desegregate the military and his willingness to run on a civil rights platform in 1948 was another sign of progress. Even Eisenhower can be credited with establishing the Civil Rights Division in the Department of Justice and (p. 451) pushing for the first civil rights legislation since Reconstruction. Rendering decisions that outlawed the white primary, race-based housing covenants, and separate but equal, the Supreme Court probably contributed most to progress.

War is related in some way to each of these executive orders, court decisions, and pieces of legislation, but it is not the only thing these attempts at state-led change have in common. Another commonality shared by each of these remedies is that each was flawed in some way. Even the *Brown* decision, at least in the short term, failed to achieve tangible change (Bartley 1969; Orfield 2000; Rosenberg 1991). More often than not, domestic political considerations limited the reach of racial reform as southern Democrats and conservative Republicans, at the federal level, conspired to block legislation aimed to ease the suffering of blacks. Political expediency, personal ambition, and a steadfast belief in white superiority ensured that this arrangement received backing at both state and local levels of government (Bartley 1969; Mickey 2011).[25]

There is scant doubt that Cold War pressures played a role in bringing change to the South. And though Truman initially hesitated to push civil rights, his military service made it difficult for him to stomach the treatment received by black veterans on their return from war, and helped pave the way for some reform. That said, with lasting change failing to emerge from above, African Americans pushed for change from below; black

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veterans were in the vanguard of the movement. From both WWII and the Korean War, black veterans emerged prepared to put their newfound skills to the test. They were reluctant to return to the status quo and continued to fight for equality long after the decline of mass militancy in the mid-1940s. Perhaps this had to do with the rising educational levels of black servicemen as they entered WWII vis-à-vis their predecessors as they entered WWI (Stouffer et al. 1949). It is also the case that black servicemen took advantage of the educational opportunities offered in the military. Several thousand draftees were given remedial academic training to make them better soldiers (MacGregor 1981). Moreover, the possibility also exists that the black press impressed upon black servicemen the importance of their sacrifice to the cause of civil rights.

Upon becoming reacquainted with Jim Crow, therefore, many turned toward activism, assuming leadership in some grassroots organizations and founding others that helped to sustain the civil rights movement. W. W. Law is one such veteran. Upon leaving the army after WWII, Law obtained his degree from Savannah State and presided over the Savannah chapter of the NAACP from 1950 through 1976. During his tenure, he succeeded in his efforts to desegregate the public schools in Savannah and led boycotts, sit-ins, and wade-ins (the integration of Tybee Beach). World War II veteran Medgar Evers also fits this mold. Serving in France and England, Evers rose to the rank of sergeant and was part of the Red Ball Express; he went on to become indispensable to the NAACP in Mississippi. Before his assassination in 1963, he helped set up local chapters throughout the state and eventually rose to national prominence as the NAACP's first field secretary.

Hosea Williams, also a veteran of WWII, was part of an all-black unit attached to Patton's Third Army. After twice sustaining serious injuries, Williams returned to (p. 452) Georgia and completed high school (at age 23); he then earned a college degree and a master's in chemistry from Atlanta University. In 1957, he joined with W. W. Law to integrate Tyree beach. Until 1962, Williams led the political arm of the NAACP, the Chatham County Crusade for Voters. After differences with the NAACP board of directors forced him to leave the organization, Dr. Martin Luther King tapped him to join the leadership of SCLC. In 1965, SCLC appointed Williams to lead the now-famous Selma-to-Montgomery march to protest voting inequality. The march culminated in what is referred to as Bloody Sunday. When the marchers crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Montgomery, Alabama, state and local police beat and hospitalized dozens of them, including Williams and the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) leader John Lewis. ABC News captured the spectacle, broadcasting it to a startled nation. The incident is credited with providing President Johnson with the impetus to push the Voting Rights Act through Congress (Lawson 1976; Lee 2002).

Amzie Moore, who served in the Pacific theater during WWII, represents another example of black veterans' activism during the black freedom struggle. A Mississippi native, born in 1911, Moore helped SNCC's Bob Moses organize voter registration drives in the Magnolia state and supplied the original idea on which Freedom Summer was based. As president of the Cleveland, Mississippi, chapter of the NAACP, he met Bob Moses, who would become one of SNCC's most creative field secretaries. Moore wished to enlist

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students for the purpose of registering black Mississippians to vote. Ultimately, he wanted to topple segregation through the ballot. Hence, it was Moore's idea on which Freedom Summer and voter registration was based (Carson 1981). Moore was also a founding member of the Regional Council of Negro Leadership (RCNL), an organization dedicated to promoting black self-help and entrepreneurship. Finally, his home served as a movement headquarters from which he helped coordinate, along with Moses, Freedom Summer and voter registration drives.

The Korean War, like the war that preceded it, also contributed its share of veterans to the fight against white supremacy. To give just two prominent examples, James Forman, a Korean War veteran, served as the SNCC executive secretary from 1964 through 1966. Without his unwavering leadership and organizational skills, it is doubtful that SNCC would have achieved the success it did as the freedom struggle's “shock troops,” mobilizing a new segment of activist (students) and serving as an inspiration to many black Southerners suffering under the lash of white supremacy (Carson 1981; Forman 1972). Earnest “Chilly Willy” Thomas was a founding member of the Deacons for Defense and Justice in Jonesboro, Louisiana. As an airborne radio operator during the Korean War, exposure to a more egalitarian way of life beyond Louisiana, steeled his resolve to realize such freedom at “home.” Like Forman with SNCC, Thomas brought his military training to bear on the organization he led. His organizational and leadership skills steadied the group for its clashes with the Klan. Through the use of force, and threats of it, the Deacons were, on more than one occasion, able to win important concessions from local, state, and federal political authorities (Hill 2004). With protection from the (p. 453) Deacons, moreover, CORE was able to proceed with voter registration drives and community organizing without much interference from the Klan (Fairclough 1995; Hill 2004).

As the brief biographies of black veterans who emerged from this period indicate, several of them played important parts in the rapidly unfolding black freedom struggle that would eventually lead to real reform in the South. At first blush, this may not appear to comport well with our model in which subscription to the norms of citizenship results in social change. Indeed, the only other time in which massive racial reform followed war is when guided social change, pushed from above by white elites, led to the Civil War Amendments and Civil Rights Acts. But this view tends to rob aggrieved groups of agency that is based upon the norms of American citizenship in which military service and sacrifice is commensurate with equal citizenship (Burk 1995; Krebs 2006). One way to correct this is to draw on entitlement as a source of agency.

To the extent that black veterans subscribed to the citizen-soldier tradition in which their sacrifices on the battlefield should have earned for them equal citizenship, it is likely that a sense of entitlement, among other factors, pressed them into action.[26] Strictly speaking, being entitled to something means having a right to it because of one's acts or qualities. A republican social contract in which martial virtue is rewarded, something typically emphasized during and shortly after war (Krebs 2006), is the arrangement that black veterans used to determine their entitlement to equality. Every society rests on a set of

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ideological norms that serve as a benchmark against which entitlement is assessed (Deutsch 1985). In American society, in which merit-based individualism is indigenous to national political-cultural beliefs, one's entitlements are proportionate to one's investment in society (Deutsch 1985; Hochschild 1981; Sampson 1975). Thus, it is easy to see why entitlement is invested with moral force (Major 1994), and why it is therefore affectively experienced and motivationally important. For justice to obtain, the actor's perceived outcomes must be commensurate with the act (Lerner 1975). Otherwise, the actor takes action to correct the perceived injustice (Major 1994).

Doyle Combs, a veteran of WWII, conveys this sentiment rather nicely: “I know I was going to vote because I’m just out of the army …and was going to vote regardless [of] what it take …. I went into combat, and lost a portion of my body for this country, when I didn’t have no right to fight whatsoever ’cause I didn’t have no right in the United States of America, as a black man” (quoted in Brooks 2004: 3). Underscoring his determination, Combs would stop at nothing to reap the benefits for which he fought, insisting that “I would die for my rights, and I would kill for my rights. And I was going to vote if I had to kill someone to vote” (Brooks 2004: 19). Combs was not the only black veteran who felt this way. Indeed, as O’Brien (1999) shows, black veterans in Tennessee were motivated to challenge white supremacy in part because they felt themselves entitled to the equality for which they fought during WWII. Together, righteous indignation and the sense of empowerment often felt by black veterans propelled many of them to assume important roles in the movement (Brooks 2004; O’Brien 1999; Payne 1995). Indeed, black (p. 454) veterans played key roles in helping to sustain the pressure that ultimately led to the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act (Dittmer 1994; Tyson 1999).

Conclusion

Much has been written on the relationship between war and racial progress. In this chapter I have striven to focus upon a single, yet significant factor: military service on the part of African Americans. In doing so, it has illustrated the connection—and sometimes the lack thereof—between military service and changes in the social status of African Americans. Black soldiers’ service in the Civil War had a direct, positive effect on the legal status of African Americans. Following the end of Reconstruction and the rise of militant white supremacy in the South, blacks responded to the call during the Spanish-American War and WWI, but were largely prevented from seeing combat. When they were sent to the front lines, they tended to be accused of cowardice, despite evidence to the contrary. Veterans of WWII and the Korean War, however, were given a greater chance to prove their mettle and were ultimately much more successful in their efforts to overturn Jim Crow than black veterans of the Spanish-America War and WWI. This pattern suggests that progress was contingent upon the extent to which blacks were allowed to fight and that their sacrifice drew recognition beyond the black community. Both criteria

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were satisfied during the Civil War, and more or less in the mid-twentieth century, after WWII and the Korean War.

While it is clear that both were important, we remained without a satisfying explanation for why military service was so effective, especially given that war helped drive change. In the nineteenth century, reform was top-down, flowing from white elites. In the mid-twentieth century, change originated from the bottom up, through black insurgency in which black veterans played key roles. It seems that perceptions about the norms associated with citizenship, in which military service is commensurate with civic equality, is one answer. It explains both white elite support for racial reforms during Reconstruction as well as civil rights reforms during the early 1960s. In the latter period black veterans, who bought into normative conceptions of citizenship, helped to bring change to the South by playing key roles in existing movement organizations, and on some occasions, founding their own (Brooks 2004; Hill 2004; Tyson 1999).

Drawing on the citizens-soldier tradition as a means of highlighting the connection between war and citizenship is not without drawbacks. The gender specificity with which it is associated effectively excludes women (Elshtain 1987; Kerber 1998), limiting the theoretical range of the proposed explanation. Using military service as a means of indexing citizenship also carries normative baggage. Women were effectively denied the opportunity to earn citizenship through the martial practice of military sacrifice (Snyder 1999). These are important considerations. Yet (p. 455) we cannot ignore the analytical leverage provided by the citizen-soldier tradition. Through it, we can better understand the relationship between war and racial advancement. More importantly, we should now have a better understanding of how military service helped to improve the postwar condition of blacks.

By now it should be fairly clear how republican citizenship ultimately resulted in racial progress for African Americans through 1965, the height of the Second Reconstruction. What remains at this point is to consider whether or not military service retained its ability to effect racial reform after the Korean War. In other words, can military service contribute to racial reform in the post civil rights era? Wars in Vietnam, the Persian Gulf (the early 1990s), Afghanistan, and Operation Iraqi Freedom (the current engagement), have all fielded fighting forces in which a good portion of the troops have been extracted from the black and Latino communities. However, because these groups at least now have formal recognition as full citizens, with all of the rights that accrue with this status, it is unlikely that military service will bridge the gap between formal recognition as full citizens and the lived experiences of blacks and Latinos, many of whom continue to struggle against discrimination and the invidious effects of residential segregation (Massey and Denton 1993).

Blacks, as we have seen, literally fought their way into the political community. But since formal citizenship is no longer an obstacle, there is no motivation from the political elite to correct a long-standing blemish on the American polity: the exclusion of marginal groups. Likewise, from the bottom up, the quest for formal equality no longer exists,

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something that has been the case—at least for blacks—since the climax of the Second Reconstruction. About the only group for which military service continues to hold the promise of citizenship is the immigrant community. In circumstances that are eerily similar to the circumstances of black servicemen prior to Vietnam and the full integration of the military, many immigrants wear the uniform, willing to give their lives during war, but remain without the benefits of full citizenship. That said, President Bush in 2003, recognized this injustice, expediting the naturalization process for immigrant servicemen and women by reducing their wait from three years to one. Thus, in a limited way, military service continues to benefit some marginalized groups.

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Notes:

(1.) For a comparative perspective on the ways in which war contributes to racial reform, see Sawyer's (2006) work on Cuba.

(2.) African Americans still have a long way to go to achieve full equality. The literature on this is voluminous. However, one might start with Massey and Denton (1993), Oliver and Shapiro (1995), and Wilson (1987).

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(3.) Ideological and political accounts are not the only ways in which scholars have explained the connection between war and social change. McAdam's work (1999) cites structural-level factors induced by war, such as the economic push and pull of war, along with the concomitant interregional and intraregional migration from rural areas to southern metropolises that sparked postwar change. Together, McAdam argues, these forces furnished the opportunity for insurgents to press for change. In short, the political system was vulnerable, providing the incentive for movement forces to exploit them.

(4.) Social rights furnish health, education, unemployment, and workmen's compensation for the disabled. These remain a subject of contention, at least in the American context. See Waldron (1991) and Gewirth (1996) for extended discussions. Economic rights, specifically, the right to work, also remains the subject of some debate in the United States (Shklar 1991).

(5.) Negative rights are those in which noninterference on the part of both the state and civil society is required. Positive rights, on the other hand, invoke correlative duties for those in civil society and state action for them to be observed.

(6.) Of course, black participation in the war was not the sole reason for the burst of reform. Both political and humanitarian motives animated Radical Republicans' desire for pushing reform, ramming it through Congress over President Johnson's objections (Franklin 1961).

(7.) It should also be noted that the Freedmen's Bureau was established in 1865. Among other things, the bureau was charged with easing the transition of former slaves from a state of dependence to one of self-sufficiency (Du Bois 1935). Ultimately, the bureau established or provided funding for schools at all levels. The bureau also established forty hospitals to care for African Americans (Franklin 1961). Because the bureau was not granted permanent status by President Johnson and was reviled by the South, however, it was dissolved in 1872.

(8.) *Congressional Globe*, Volume 38.

(9.) The Army Reorganization Act (1866) ensured a continued African American presence in the Army by calling for the maintenance of these four permanent segregated regiments.

(10.) According to Gerstle (2001), Roosevelt's vision for the American nation galvanized by war had no room for the heroic deeds of black soldiers. Since Roosevelt believed in the citizen-soldier ideal, he placed a heavy premium upon battlefield heroism, which signaled bravery and the makings of a citizen of the first rank. His vision of an American nation at the turn of the century excluded all but those with ancestral ties to Europe.

(11.) Some questioned Du Bois's motive for urging African American cooperation with the war effort after it was discovered that he was offered an army commission in exchange (Ellis 1992; Lewis 1993).

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(12.) Ellis (1992, 1995) and Jordan (1995) engage in a lively debate concerning Du Bois's motivation(s) for encouraging black support for the war.

(13.) Colonel Linard, one of Pershing's staff officers, stated in a document to the French commands: "White Americans consider blacks to be lacking in intelligence, judgment, and civic and professional morals …. It is necessary to avoid any intimacy, beyond civil politeness, between French officers and black officers; the French should not eat with them nor shake hands with them, nor visit or converse except as required by military matters" (quoted in Barbeau and Henri 1974: 114–15).

(14.) Pancho Villa, the rebel Mexican general, attacked a detachment of the U.S. Calvary in Columbus, New Mexico. Villa led a raiding force of 1,500 that seized over 100 horses and mules, burned the town of Columbus, and killed 17 townspeople. Under the command of "Black Jack" Pershing, President Wilson dispatched 12,000 troops to hunt for Villa. After months of searching, American forces never found him.

(15.) For more on how Houston's experience during WWI shaped his desire for equality, see McNeil (1983).

(16.) Data compiled from the Espy File, a National Archive of Criminal Justice Data, deposited with ICPSR.

(17.) Military service was part of a larger campaign in which blacks fought for civil rights during the prosecution of the war. Whereas black Americans had been urged to offer unconditional support for WWI, deferring resolution of their complaints until after it ended, support for WWII would be contingent upon black soldiers' full participation in the war effort. Instead of closing ranks with whites, many in the black elite adopted a new strategy prior to World War II: the Double V campaign. The two victories to which the campaign's name referred were victory abroad for the nation over fascism and victory at home in the struggle for civil rights, over racism.

(18.) Among the protestors was William Hastie. Hastie, a Harvard-trained attorney and the first African American appointed to the federal bench, became assistant secretary of war, though the ongoing segregation of aviation officer training eventually triggered Hastie's resignation in 1943. He believed integration of the armed forces to be of paramount importance to the national mission. The judge reasoned, "Until the men of our Army …believe in and work for democracy with similar fervor and determination, we will not be an effective nation in the face of a foreign foe" (quoted in Lee 1966: 140). Army leaders argued in response to such criticism that the pattern of established relationships between blacks and whites had to be retained in the army. To do otherwise was to risk "alienat[ing] the people from the army and lower[ing] their morale" when both were "vital" to "national needs" (ibid. 140–41).

(19.) Similar conditions obtained overseas, where many of the field commanders in North Africa and Europe refused to accept black units. Segregation did little for the morale of

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black troops and led to less-than-positive perceptions of black troops by white GIs (Stouffer et al. 1949).

(20.) Anthony Chen (2007) shows that, although the FEPC was doomed at the federal level, it nonetheless galvanized a bloc of liberals who were eventually successful at pushing through FEP legislation at the state level.

(21.) The Fahy committee was not the administration's only attempt at addressing the issue of military manpower after WWII. The Gillem board, convened shortly after WWII, was charged with devising an efficient way of using “Negro” manpower in the postwar army. The board recognized that blacks enjoyed the constitutional right to serve and that the army needed to make efficient use of its manpower. But the board also deferred to the army's judgment on the capabilities of black soldiers. This allowed the army to maintain its system of quotas and segregation. The Chamberlain board, convened in 1949, supported the conclusion of the Gillem board (for details, see MacGregor 1981). It is worth noting that the black community, led by A. Philip Randolph, refused to accept this outcome. Along with several veterans from WWII, Randolph threatened to urge black and white youth to resist military service in the future if the army continued to refuse to desegregate.

(22.) Unfortunately, this positive effect was confined to the Korean theater. Project Clear conducted a parallel study of attitudes in the military on American soil, where integration had not yet been implemented. In this part of the study, racial animosity and distrust remained the status quo. For more, see Bogart (1969).

(23.) Another reason for Eisenhower's intervention is that sending troops to quell the unrest was a means through which the former general could assert his authority over what one could call an insubordinate governor. As a retired general, it is not hard to imagine why Faubus's unilateral act to call on the National Guard may have displeased Eisenhower. I thank Rogers Smith for bringing this interpretation to my attention.

(24.) Mary Dudziak (2000) suggests that members of the Supreme Court appreciated the gravity of the Cold War, perhaps even taking international opinion into consideration as they decided *Brown*.

(25.) We should not underestimate the symbolic importance of the Executive Orders or the Court decisions. These small, largely symbolic victories signaled the presence of favorable political conditions, conditions conducive to the possibility of real change (McAdam 1999).

(26.) On the way(s) in which entitlement promotes social action, see Major (1994).

Christopher Parker

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