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AFTER WORLD WAR I

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ABSTRACT

Nearly 400,000 Black men were drafted into the National Army during World War I, where they toiled in segregated units and received little formal training. Leveraging novel variation from the WWI draft lottery and millions of digitized military and NAACP records, we document the pioneering role these men would play in the early civil rights movement. Relative to observably similar individuals from the same draft board, Black men randomly inducted into the Army were significantly more likely to join the nascent NAACP and to become prominent community leaders in the New Negro era. We find little evidence that these effects are explained by migration or improved socioeconomic status. Rather, corroborating historical accounts about the catalyzing influence of institutional racism in the military, we show that increased civic activism was driven by soldiers who experienced the most discriminatory treatment while serving their country.

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“The hate and scorn showered on us Negro officers by our fellow Americans convinced me that there was no sense in my dying for a world ruled by them. I made up my mind that if I got through this war I would study law and use my time fighting for men who could not strike back.”

– Lt. Charles Hamilton Houston
First Special Counsel, NAACP
Dean, Howard University Law School

1 Introduction

Throughout U.S. history, civil rights activism has tended to swell following major wars. Membership in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the oldest and largest civil rights organization in America today, spiked dramatically after the return of Black veterans from World War I and World War II (Figure 1). These swells have, in turn, preceded landmark advances in the fight for racial equality – from the New Negro movement of the 1920s and 1930s to military and schooling desegregation in the 1940s and 1950s and the passage of the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts during the Vietnam War.

[Figure 1 about here.]

Yet, despite the transformative nature of these movements and the central role of Black veterans like Charles Hamilton Houston, Jackie Robinson, and Medgar Evers in historical narratives thereof (Morris, 1986; Klinkner and Smith, 1999; Payne, 2007; Delmont, 2023), there exists virtually no empirical evidence about the causal impact of military service on civil rights activism. Disentangling this relationship is complicated by fundamental issues of selection and measurement. More civic-minded individuals may be more likely both to enlist in the military and to participate in social movements. Equally challenging is quantifying an individual’s involvement in the civil rights movement. Common political outcomes such as voter participation and party membership may be weak proxies for one’s desire to advocate for racial equality, particularly in settings with discrimination. Indeed, low turnout rates could reflect limited civic interest, significant voter suppression, or both.

This paper aims to document how experiences in the military affected the decisions of Black men to join the early civil rights movement. To overcome concerns about selection, we leverage random variation from the World War I draft lottery, which has never been examined in the literature. The World War I draft included the first class of African American registrants in U.S. history and led to the induction of nearly 400,000 Black men. Due to systemic discrimination, Black draftees received little formal training and were relegated to racially segregated units, where they primarily toiled as menial laborers under white supervisors (Barbeau and Henri, 1996). African Americans comprised roughly 13% of the Army, over 33% of its laborers, and just 0.7% of its commissioned officers (Reddick, 1949). These “unknown soldiers” formed the backbone of the American war effort, and their return home coincided with a radical re-imagining of Black identity that would come to define the New Negro era, a period of invigorated political and cultural assertiveness that shaped the foundations of the civil rights movement (Gilmore, 2009).

To document Black military service and civic activism during this period, we digitize millions of records from the Great War and the infancy of the NAACP. Specifically, we construct a database of the universe of Black draft registration cards – nearly one million – from the first World War I registration. We first merge these cards to detailed military records containing information about

each soldier’s camp, unit, and deployment area. We then link draft registrants through the 1930 full-count census to comprehensive NAACP rosters including the name and exact home address of more than 200,000 member observations from the end of the war through the 1930s, a period when the organization first gained national prominence.

Using random variation in enlistments induced by the draft lottery, we estimate the causal effect of military service on postwar membership in the NAACP. Unlike the World War II and Vietnam War drafts examined by others (e.g., Angrist, 1990; Angrist and Krueger, 1994), an individual’s draft liability in World War I was not determined by his birthday. Instead, it was based on the order in which his specific serial number was drawn in a national lottery. We capture these numbers from the draft cards and reconstruct the draft lottery to infer each individual’s order of liability, which we use as an instrument for military service in World War I. We provide evidence of the instrument’s exogeneity to all observed prewar registrant characteristics as well as its strong relevance with future veteran status.

Our findings reveal the pivotal role of military service in fueling early civil rights activism. TSLS estimates suggest that African Americans randomly induced to enlist were nearly three times more likely to join the NAACP than observably similar registrants from the same draft board. These results are virtually unchanged across a host of robustness tests using alternative first-stage functional forms, instruments, and linking strategies. The effects are also not driven by changes in residential mobility. However, they are well-reflected in other measures of civil rights activism. Matching registrants to compendia of historically prominent African Americans, we show that draftees were significantly more likely to gain renown as leaders in the Black community during the New Negro era.

Examining heterogeneity across prewar registrant and county characteristics, we find suggestive evidence of larger increases in civic activism among individuals who claimed – but did not receive – draft exemptions. We also show that estimates decline monotonically with measures of racial prejudice in a registrant’s home county, as proxied by former Confederate status and the historical presence of Confederate monuments and lynchings (Bazzi et al., 2023). Both results suggest that increased activism was driven by individuals who experienced the largest *shock* of discrimination after joining the National Army. A similar pattern emerges when examining NAACP participation by type of military service, which reveals the highest participation rates among veterans of the 92nd Division, who risked their lives in combat while subject to constant racial abuse from U.S. command, and lower rates among non-combatants and among combat veterans of the 93rd, who experienced less discriminatory treatment while brigading with the French military.

In contrast to recent work demonstrating the modern military’s role as an engine of Black economic mobility (Greenberg et al., 2022), we find little evidence that serving in World War I improved the socioeconomic status of Black soldiers. We recover near-zero estimates for literacy, home ownership, employment, and predicted income in the 1930 census as well as for actual income and education among individuals we are able to link to the 1940 census. These results are consistent with the historical record documenting the limited training, low pay, and scant postwar benefits provided to Black soldiers in this period. We also find little effect of military service on census measures of club involvement – such as employment or residence in clubs, lodges, or nonprofit membership organizations – suggesting that increased NAACP membership rates do not simply reflect greater participation in social organizations more generally.

The pattern of effects aligns more closely with perhaps the most dominant explanation of Black postwar activism discussed by historians: “African American soldiers’ experiences in the war and

their battles with the pervasive racial discrimination in the U.S. military informed their postwar disillusionment and subsequent racial militancy as veterans” (Williams, 2007). To investigate this channel more directly, we identify multiple salient dimensions of discrimination from War Department reports tracking discontent among Black soldiers: racial bias in draft inductions, restrictions on Black officer promotions, and exclusion of Black soldiers from military training. We then calculate measures of each individual’s exposure to these factors by constructing a crosswalk linking registrants to camps by board and order of liability.

Estimating differential effects based on experienced discrimination, a stark pattern emerges. Effects on NAACP participation increase monotonically with draft board discrimination, with the largest effects for men drafted by boards with the greatest racial disparities in induction rates. Consistent with this, we find large and significant effects for men assigned to camps where Black soldiers were denied training and promotion opportunities, and little effect for those who attended less discriminatory camps. In contrast to the human capital gains experienced by GI Bill recipients after World War II (Mettler, 2002) and Vietnam (Angrist and Chen, 2011), these results undercut the possibility that increased activism was driven by the formal acquisition of skills or leadership experience, and instead reinforce the potential salience of perceptions of injustice and discrimination.

To corroborate this narrative, we turn to previously unstudied questionnaires completed by World War I veterans from Virginia and Connecticut. The surveys include questions regarding the effects of military service “as contrasted with your state of mind before the war” and provide rich and unfiltered insight into the views of returned soldiers. Digitizing responses for all surveys completed by returned Black soldiers, we first document the salience of perceptions of racial injustice, especially among those who experienced the most discrimination in the military. Respondents whose camps barred Black men from military training and officer positions were more than twice as likely than respondents at other camps to mention injustice in their survey responses. We then show that mentions of injustice are far more predictive of civic engagement than any other theme discussed by respondents. Together, the results highlight how concerns about racial injustice – fueled by experiences of discrimination in the military – catalyzed Black activism in the New Negro era.

These findings contribute to several literatures across economics and other disciplines. First, we build on a large body of work discussing the importance of Black veterans in shaping the civil rights movement. While most of this scholarship is qualitative (Parker, 2009a; Parker, 2009b; Barbeau and Henri, 1996; Williams, 2007; Williams, 2010), recent quantitative research has shown that Black enlistments during World War II predict higher voter registration among nearby African Americans and less prejudiced racial views among nearby white civilians in the postwar period (Koch et al., 2021; Schindler and Westcott, 2021). To this, we add empirical corroboration of the prominent role of Black veterans at the onset of the civil rights movement. Digitizing hundreds of thousands of early NAACP records, we show that veterans accounted for nearly 15% of all male members – relative to 8% of Black male adults – and were disproportionately likely to become renowned community leaders in the New Negro era.

Beyond a descriptive accounting, this paper provides rare insight into the causal origins of the civil rights movement, one of the most consequential social movements in American history. While a number of studies have documented the lasting impacts of civil rights era legislation (e.g., Cascio and Washington, 2014; Ang, 2019; Aneja and Avenancio-León, 2019; Bailey et al., 2021; Derenoncourt and Montialoux, 2021), little work has sought to understand the underlying forces powering the waves of Black activism that brought about those policies (e.g., Wang, 2021; Dippel and Heblich, 2021; Ramos-Toro, 2021). We provide the first causal evidence that military service galvanized the fight for racial justice at the height of the Jim Crow era. Our estimates imply that the World War I

draft induced more than 10,000 Black men to join the vanguard of America’s most recognized civil rights organization. And, by reconstructing the World War I draft lottery, we complement a rich literature examining American conscription during later wars (e.g., Hearst et al., 1986; Angrist, 1990; Angrist and Krueger, 1994; Card and Lemieux, 2001; Bound and Turner, 2002; Bedard and Deschênes, 2006; Angrist et al., 2010; Angrist and Chen, 2011; Green and Hyman-Metzger, 2024) and introduce a new source of exogenous variation in military service during a critical and understudied period of heightened racial consciousness and resentment.¹

In doing so, our findings shed light on the far-reaching consequences of lived discrimination. To date, economics research on discrimination has primarily focused on understanding the behavior of (generally) white decision-makers, identifying pervasive racial bias in labor markets (Bertrand and Mullainathan, 2004; Kline et al., 2022), mortgage lending (Munnell et al., 1996; Bartlett et al., 2022), and criminal justice (Rehavi and Starr, 2014; Arnold et al., 2018), among other settings. Far less is known about how experiences of discrimination affect the attitudes, actions, and aspirations of minority groups. Our results reveal that the government’s systematic degradation and deprivation of African American soldiers during World War I seeded deep feelings of institutional betrayal and discontent, which in turn manifested in aggressive political challenges to the status quo. Similar narratives echo throughout the past century, from the continued military segregation and “Double V” campaign of World War II (Sitkoff, 1971) to the widespread social upheaval precipitated by recent police killings of unarmed minorities (Ang, 2021; Ang and Tebes, 2024; Ang et al., 2024). Better understanding how encounters with discrimination shape the minority experience may be critical to addressing persistent racial cleavages that exist across nearly every dimension of American life (Chetty et al., 2020; Alesina et al., 2021; Bertrand and Kamenica, 2023).

The rest of this paper proceeds as follows: Section 2 provides historical context about Black military service, the NAACP, and the New Negro movement, Section 3 describes the data and the process we use to link records, Section 4 discusses the draft lottery and our instrumental variables strategy, Section 5 presents our main results on civil rights activism and socioeconomic status, Section 6 explores mechanisms and the salience of discrimination, and Section 7 concludes.

2 Background and setting

2.1 Black soldiers in the Great War

When the United States first entered World War I in April 1917, the combined forces of the Regular Army and National Guard totaled fewer than 300,000 men. Recognizing the need to send millions of soldiers to the Western Front, Congress authorized the conscription of a wartime National Army.

A key point of contention at the time was whether to include Black men in the draft. Many military leaders and politicians opposed the idea, fearing that arming and training African Americans would result in violent insurrection. These concerns were evident in restrictions on Black enlistments in the Navy, West Point, and other military institutions dating back to the 19th century (Wilson, 2015).²

¹Far fewer studies have examined American military service during World War I. Those that do (e.g., Mazumder, 2017; Tan, 2020) focus only on white men and may not be applicable to Black veterans. More broadly, much of the literature on American military service examines economic consequences, though recent work in other contexts has sought to understand the political ramifications of war – for example, in relation to the rise of fascism and autocracy throughout Europe (Cagé et al., 2023; Acemoglu et al., 2022; Koenig, 2023) and support for the French Revolution (Ottinger and Rosenberger, 2023).

²From West Point’s founding in 1802 until 1930, the institution graduated over 10,000 white cadets and just three

War Department memoranda further reveal the prevailing stereotype that “a large percentage of colored men” lacked the “mental stamina or sturdiness to put in [combat] line against German troops.” Despite these prejudices, many Black civic leaders saw the war as a crucial opportunity for African Americans to demonstrate their loyalty and value to the country. Under the editorship of W.E.B. Du Bois, the NAACP’s official magazine *The Crisis* urged its readers to “forget our special grievances and close our ranks with our own white fellow citizens,” with the hope – and expectation – that Black contributions during the war would be repaid with equal rights afterwards.

Ultimately, Black political pressure and the war’s demands led to the inclusion of Black men in the Selective Service Act of 1917 and the induction of 368,000 Black soldiers. The vast majority of these men were drawn from the first registration on June 17, 1917, which included all men between the ages of 21 and 30 as of that date.³ Unlike later drafts which employed birth date-based lotteries, the order in which men were inducted during WWI was determined by a national lottery of unique serial numbers assigned to men when they registered. Additional details about the draft and the construction of our instrument are provided in Section 4.

Racial bias permeated much of the draft process. While white registrants were often able to secure favorable assignments by voluntarily enlisting in the military, Black men were largely barred from volunteering.⁴ An investigation by the Secretary of War’s office further concluded that “it is an actual fact that in a number of instances flagrant violations have occurred in the application of the draft law to negro men in certain sections of the country,” with local draft boards granting exemptions and deferrals to white registrants at far higher rates than to Black registrants.⁵ As a result of draft discrimination and the strict limits placed on Black voluntary enlistments, Black registrants were 57% more likely than white registrants to be deemed service-eligible and 40% more likely to be conscripted.

Once in the military, Black men continued to face significant racial barriers. To limit contact between Black and white soldiers, military units and barracks were racially segregated. To appease pervasive stereotypes held by white officials, Black soldiers were generally denied access to firearms and leadership roles, even in Black units. And, to placate fears of racial insurrection, a “safe ratio” of one Black soldier per every ten troops was maintained at every camp, and an entire section of the Military Intelligence Division was established to monitor “Negro Subversion.”⁶

As a result of these measures, nearly 90% of Black draftees were assigned to labor roles. Roughly half of this group served with the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) in France, while the rest remained in domestic camps. Regardless of location, Black soldiers “performed some of the harshest backbreaking work of the war” such as loading and unloading cargo ships, building railways, and

Black cadets, the last of whom departed in 1889.

³Men who were already in the military as of June 5, 1917 were not required to register (Crowder, 1918), although in practice, many did. Subsequent registrations in June 1918 and September 1918 expanded eligibility to men who turned 21 in 1918 and to those between 18 and 45, respectively. However, because the war ended shortly thereafter – on November 11, 1918 – over 90% of inductions came from the first registration, which is this focus of this paper.

⁴Army policy only allowed Black volunteers to fill vacancies in the four all-Black units of the Regular Army that existed prior to the war. As a result, only 4,000 new Black volunteers were accepted, with all vacancies filled by the time of the first draft registration (U.S. Provost Marshal General, 1919). In contrast, more than one million white men voluntarily enlisted during the war.

⁵Most exemptions were granted to men with a dependent spouse or children, though some were issued for employment in protected occupations or industries, religious beliefs, or moral objections. Eligibility for service also depended on the result of a physical examination.

⁶Segregation of Black soldiers and their relegation to menial roles under white officers continued into World War II.

burying the dead (Wilson, 2015).⁷ Though Army regulations stated that military training and literacy classes were to be provided for all soldiers, Black laborers were frequently denied access. Similarly, non-commissioned officerships – while theoretically open to Black draftees – were found by military investigators to be a “dumping ground for unfit white men ... whose attitude toward the colored soldier is such as might be expected from men coming from the lower strata of the white population” (Loving, 1918).

The remaining Black draftees, about 40,000 men, were assigned to one of two all-Black combat divisions.⁸ The two divisions differed meaningfully in their composition and wartime experience. The 93rd Division, composed of both draftees and seasoned National Guardsmen, was placed under French command, where the men were welcomed with relative hospitality and praised for their combat exploits, ultimately receiving 527 *Croix de Guerre* medals.⁹ In contrast, the 92nd Division, composed entirely of draftees, was prohibited from training together before their deployment to France and was “routinely debased, denigrated, and degraded” by U.S. senior officers once there (Farrar, 2005).¹⁰

Black soldiers continued to be viewed with suspicion and contempt by American officials and citizens after the conclusion of the war in November 1918. During demobilization, President Wilson claimed “the American Negro returning from abroad would be our greatest medium in conveying Bolshevism to America” (McWhirter, 2011). A spate of white supremacist attacks and the dramatic rebirth of the Ku Klux Klan would soon erupt across the country. At least 13 Black veterans were lynched during the Red Summer of 1919, many for the alleged offense of wearing their military uniforms (White, 2002).

2.2 The New Negro and the rise of the NAACP

The return of Black soldiers after Armistice Day also coincided with a sweeping change in the Black community that would come to define the civil rights struggles of the 1920s and 1930s. Characterized by “a renewed sense of racial pride, cultural self-expression, economic independence and progressive politics” (Library of Congress, 2009), the New Negro movement was a wide-ranging and transformative racial awakening. The movement spanned the spread of Black art and music during the Harlem Renaissance to the manifestation of Black political power in the United Negro Improvement Association (Marcus Garvey’s Pan-Africanist group), the American Negro Press (deemed “the single greatest power in the Negro race” by Gunnar Myrdal), and the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (the first Black labor union chartered by the AFL). Binding these diverse phenomena together was a belief in the “efficacy of collective effort” and a rejection of the “conservatism, parochialism, and political accommodationism” of older generations of Black leaders

⁷Historians have equated the experience to “*de facto* slavery with white officers serving as overseers.” One Black veteran wrote, “We were treated like dogs. I mean worse than German prisoners. I would die before I would undertake to go through what I have gone through” (Wilson, 2015).

⁸One by-product of the low rates of Black combat service was that fewer than 800 Black soldiers were killed during the war, compared to over 50,000 white soldiers (Keene, 2002; Huff et al., 2024).

⁹Relations between the 93rd and the French became so friendly that General Pershing, commander of the AEF, delivered a classified missive to his French counterparts stressing that “we must prevent the rise of any pronounced degree of intimacy between French and black officers ... we cannot deal with them on the same plane as with the white American officers without deeply wounding the latter.”

¹⁰At one point, Major General Bullard, commander of the Second Army in France, deemed the men of the 92nd “hopelessly inferior,” prompting Congress to discuss the dissolution of *all* Black units, even those in the Regular Army.

(Mitchell, 1994; Williams, 2007).¹¹

The movement was heavily influenced by the presence and “military spirit” of Black soldiers. Veterans of the 92nd Division founded the League for Democracy, a militant civil rights group and NAACP collaborator, and served as contributing editors at *The Messenger*, a leading radical Black magazine (Williams, 2007). Similarly, “deeply disillusioned Black veterans” played a “key role in . . . setting up the skeleton army for the future African state, and in such paramilitary organizations as the Universal African Legion” (Haywood, 2012). For each of these groups, the service and sacrifice of Black soldiers, their encounters with American hypocrisy and French socialism abroad, and the racial violence and vitriol that greeted their return were dominant themes in public calls for racial stridency.

These same themes are evident in the evolution of the NAACP. Founded in 1909 by a group of Black and white civil rights activists including Du Bois, Ida B. Wells and Mary White Ovington, the organization’s official mission “to advance the interest of colored citizens” through “impartial suffrage,” “justice in the courts,” and “complete equality before the law” stood in direct opposition to the views of older generations of Black leaders like Booker T. Washington, who claimed that “agitation of questions of social equality is the extremest folly.”

While the NAACP’s early years were marked by its national advocacy for the inclusion of Black men in the draft and the creation of the first Black officer candidate training camp in U.S. history, the organization adopted a more aggressive stance in the aftermath of the war, turning away from its wartime motto of “First your country, then your rights” towards defeating “the huns of America: lynchings, Jim Crow, and discrimination.” In explaining the organization’s postwar shift, Du Bois wrote “I was convinced and said that American white officers fought more valiantly against Negroes within our ranks than they did against the Germans” (Williams, 2023). Membership and activity exploded with the return of Black veterans from foreign and domestic camps. Between 1914 and 1920, the number of NAACP chapters increased sixfold, reaching nearly every state of the nation, and membership rolls spiked from 6,000 to 90,000. The organization’s racial demographics also shifted over this period, with Black individuals occupying over 90% of member and officer positions (Kellogg, 1967).

With the NAACP’s larger footprint came greater focus on combating Jim Crow at the local level. By the mid-1920s, local branches were responsible for nearly 90% of the national organization’s operating budget and were engaged in a range of protest and advocacy efforts. As two examples, the Charleston branch organized mass protests against the exclusion of Black women from clothing factory jobs, while the Atlanta branch conducted a large-scale, door-to-door voter registration drive to oppose city plans to abolish seventh grade in Black public schools (Sullivan, 2009). Branch members were also involved in the funding and provision of legal aid to support victims of racial discrimination and to challenge discriminatory laws.¹² These efforts often came at substantial personal cost. At a time when the typical Black family earned less than \$500 per year, annual membership fees started at \$1 and increased to as much as \$10 for some individuals (Sullivan, 2009).¹³ Additionally, many NAACP members faced threats of violence and harassment, particu-

¹¹Many of these same themes would be evident in the civil rights and Black power movements of the 1960s and 1970s (Ogbar, 2019).

¹²For example, the Indianapolis branch recruited 1,200 members and raised \$5,000 to strike down a residential segregation ordinance. The New Orleans branch’s opposition of a similar law led to a successful challenge before the Supreme Court. At the national level, funds were directed towards Congressional lobbying for (failed) anti-lynching legislation and legal appeals that ultimately led to the groundbreaking Supreme Court decision in *Moore v. Dempsey* (1923), which expanded federal oversight of state criminal justice systems.

¹³As an alternative benchmark, the annual membership fee was comparable to the median Southern poll tax in

larly in the South, with numerous accounts of white civilians and officials targeting local branch members.¹⁴

In the context of the broader postwar surge in Black activism, the NAACP faced competition and criticism from Black interests across the ideological spectrum throughout the 1920s and 1930s.¹⁵ On one hand, the NAACP was far more politically engaged than fraternal societies like the Knights of Pythias, which were primarily focused on mutual aid and insurance. It was also far more willing to employ aggressive legal threats and boycotts than civil rights groups like the National Urban League, which was often referred to as the “State Department” to the NAACP’s “War Department” (Tucker, 1965).¹⁶ On the other hand, the NAACP’s ultimate objective – for Black Americans to be treated as “full-fledged Americans, with all the rights of other American citizens” (Du Bois et al., 1926) – fundamentally clashed with the ideals of radical Black separatists like Marcus Garvey and the UNIA, who advocated for the return of Black people to Africa. Similar tensions existed within the organization itself and came to a head during the Great Depression, when Du Bois resigned after a confrontation with executive leadership over his public advocacy of a Black separatist economy (Meier and Bracey, 1993).

Nevertheless, the NAACP continued to hold a central role in the struggle for civil rights throughout the movement’s long arc. This position came with intense suspicion from white citizens and authorities, and the organization was subjected to government surveillance from its inception until at least the 1970s.¹⁷ Despite these efforts, the organization outlasted competitor organizations from the New Negro era and continued to be “the leading advocate of Black civil rights” heading into World War II (Sullivan, 2009). From there, the group grew in scale and influence, reaching nearly half a million members at its peak and playing a key role in numerous milestones of racial progress during the 1940s and 1950s. Today, the NAACP remains arguably the most prominent civil rights organization in American history.

3 Data and linking strategy

To examine the role of Black veterans in the early civil rights movement, we digitize millions of historical records from the era. In this section, we describe our main data sources and outline how we link draft cards, military records, NAACP rosters, and the 1930 full-count census. Further details on linking are in Appendix B.

1920 of \$1 (Williams, 1952).

¹⁴In Anderson, South Carolina, NAACP members were driven out of town after the local newspaper blamed the organization for “the increasing insolence of many Negroes in the city.” In Austin, Texas, the NAACP’s executive secretary was beaten by a mob – which included the county judge and local constable – for asserting that the local branch operated legally (Sullivan, 2009).

¹⁵Though there remains debate about the NAACP’s role in the New Negro movement, Alain Locke’s anthology popularizing the term concluded with Du Bois’s essay “The Negro Mind Reaches Out” and acknowledged “the effort and output of such progressive race periodicals as *The Crisis*” in promoting the next generation of young Black writers (Wilkerson and Zamir, 2008).

¹⁶It is worth noting the often blurry distinction between Black civic and political activities during this period. African Americans were excluded from many forms of formal political participation, and almost any organized gathering of Black individuals under Jim Crow attracted intense suspicion and carried the corresponding risks. At various points, the National Urban League, Sigma Pi Phi (one of the nation’s oldest Black fraternities), and the Overseas Club (a charity dedicated to sending small gifts to British subjects abroad) were each labeled politically radical and investigated by the federal government.

¹⁷For example, in a speech to the Peace Officers Association of Georgia, the state attorney general claimed the NAACP was “a front and tool by subversive elements” aimed at “fomenting strife and discord between the white and negro races” (Cook, 1955).

3.1 Data sources

Draft registration cards

We obtained draft cards for the 935,984 Black men who registered during the first draft registration. Card images are held at the National Archives and Record Administration, and an example is provided in Appendix Figure A1. We sent the cards to a data entry firm and captured information on the registrant’s name, draft board, home address, birth date, birth state, occupation, martial status, and exemption claim.¹⁸ The cards contain information only about whether a registrant claimed an exemption, not whether he actually received one. Crucially, we also collect each registrant’s serial or “red ink” number, which is generally stamped or written in the top left of the card. As we describe in Section 4, this number was used to determine an individual’s order of liability and allows us to leverage the random variation from the draft lottery.

Military records

Our primary data source for determining World War I veteran status among draft registrants is the 1930 census. However, we supplement this information with two databases containing more detailed military service records: the Veterans Administration Master Index (VAMI) and passenger lists from the U.S. Army Transport Service (ATS).

VAMI contains the names of roughly four million veterans who served between 1917 and 1920, which provides another measure of military service to correct for significant under-reporting of veteran status in the 1930 census. To appear in the database, a veteran (or their family) must have claimed benefits from the Veterans Administration between 1917 and 1940. The data does not contain information on race, so we are unable to restrict to Black veterans.¹⁹ However, it does contain residence county and exact date of birth, which we use to link to draft registration cards. We successfully link 120,412 draft cards to VAMI.

ATS lists contain the name, home address, and military unit of all soldiers who departed to or returned from Europe during World War I. As military units were racially segregated, we identify soldiers in Black units using information from the Center of Military History’s *Directory of Troops* (1988).²⁰ We then link Black soldiers from ATS lists to draft registration cards using name and residence county, tie-breaking with street address in the case of multiple potential links. We successfully link 100,881 draft cards to the lists. For these registrants, we know not only that the individual served in the military overseas but also the exact unit he served in.

NAACP rosters

To identify early members of the NAACP, we collected novel data from ProQuest History Vault’s NAACP Papers collection. The collection includes historical membership rosters from the 46 largest NAACP branches as well as other digitized documents identifying members from smaller branches,

¹⁸To minimize transcription costs, we recorded indicators for occupations listed as “farmer,” “laborer,” and “farm laborer,” the three most common entries for Black registrants, and for whether any exemption claim was listed, not the specific text of the claim.

¹⁹We first use exact name and date of birth to merge VAMI with the Berkeley Unified Numident Mortality Database, which has race information (albeit with very poor coverage for these birth cohorts). We match 127,099 individuals, which we use to drop 25,640 non-Black individuals, leaving 3,202,013 VAMI candidates for the cards-VAMI linkage.

²⁰In total, the ATS lists contain over six million incoming and outgoing passengers during World War I, about 400,000 belonging to Black units.

such as attendance lists for regional and national NAACP conferences.²¹ The branch rosters are standardized, (generally) typewritten forms containing the name and exact home address of each dues-paying member enrolled in a given year. An example roster is shown in Appendix Figure A2. These forms were completed by local branches and mailed to NAACP headquarters along with the share of membership fees due to the national organization. We sent all documents containing member lists in the collection to a data entry firm to capture names, addresses, branch, and year. In total, we identify 233,517 member observations across 227 branches from 1912 to 1940, with the vast majority of observations after 1925. Appendix Figures A3 and A4 show the distributions of NAACP records by location and year, respectively. Comparing to national membership estimates suggests that our data includes roughly 75% of all NAACP members from the mid-1920s to the late 1930s.²²

3.2 Linking to the census

To examine the effects of military service on our primary outcome of interest – postwar NAACP membership – we link both the draft registration cards and the NAACP rosters to the 1930 census. We do this for two reasons. First, the NAACP rosters contain only name and contemporaneous home address, not other stable identifying information with which to directly link to the 1917 cards. Second, the 1930 census is the most reliable source of WWI veteran status in the full population.²³ Figure 2 summarizes our linking strategy, which we describe in more detail below and in Appendix B.

[Figure 2 about here.]

To link draft cards to the census, we employ the procedure developed by Abramitzky, Boustan, and Eriksson (2012; 2014; 2019, henceforth ABE), which requires an exact match on the state of birth and first and last initials, individuals’ names to be sufficiently close in Jaro-Winkler distance, and individuals’ birth years to be no more than two years apart. Successful links are registration cards that we uniquely link to a single census record using those criteria. For the 825,571 usable draft cards, we achieve a 25% linking rate.²⁴ This is similar to Abramitzky et al. (2021), who link 29% of white boys between the 1910 and 1940 censuses using automated methods, and Doetsch (2012), who hand-links 32% of draft cards to the 1930 census for a sub-sample of Black registrants. We demonstrate the robustness of our main results to various linking choices (e.g., requiring that links are unique within a birth year window of two years and tie-breaking multiple potential links using middle initial, county of residence, and veteran status) that yield linking rates ranging from 13 to 32%.

To link the NAACP rosters to the 1930 census, we search for census records of Black men living in the same city or metropolitan area as a given NAACP member.²⁵ In cases of multiple census

²¹The collection only contains rosters up to 1940, preventing us from examining the organization’s growth after World War II.

²²For example, we observe 16,012 unique name-branch observations from 1927 to 1929 when nationwide membership averaged 22,000 and 41,490 unique name-branch observations from 1938 to 1939 when national membership averaged 54,000.

²³The 1920 census did not ask about veteran status, while veteran status was even more likely to be under-reported in the 1940 census than in the 1930 census (Tan, 2020).

²⁴Usable cards are those for individuals born between 1880 and 1900; belonging to boards for which we are able to obtain the total number of registrants and can identify the typical position of the order and serial number; and that have non-missing serial number, birth year, and birth state.

²⁵We restrict census candidates to Black men because in this era more than 90% of NAACP members were Black (Kellogg, 1967).

candidates with similar names in the same city, we tie-break links using exact residence address. Given that individuals may move over time, we also use addresses from the 1940 census to link NAACP records for which no 1930 census record meets the linking criteria.²⁶ We are able to link 57% of NAACP records to an individual in the 1930 census.²⁷

3.3 Linked samples

Panel (a) of Table 1 describes the cards and the linked sample. Overall, the linked sample is comparable to the sample of draft cards on observable characteristics such as age, occupation, marital status, and exemption claims.

[Table 1 about here.]

Veteran status is significantly under-reported in the 1930 census, which contains only 247,015 Black self-reported WWI veterans relative to 367,710 actual Black inductees. As there were fewer than 1000 Black combat deaths in the war, mortality or attrition alone cannot explain this gap. More likely, some individuals who did serve in the war are not recorded as such in the 1930 census. Thus, in the main analysis, we set our veteran indicator equal to one if an individual reported being a veteran in the 1930 census or we were able to link his draft card to VAMI or ATS lists. Using this definition, 35% of linked registrants are veterans, nearly identical to official estimates of Black service rates from historical sources.²⁸

Panel (b) of Table 1 compares Black men whom we identify as NAACP members to all other Black adult men in the 1930 census. NAACP members were positively selected across a variety of socioeconomic measures. Members were more likely to be employed, literate, and homeowners, and worked in higher-income occupations than non-members. Notably, they were also much more likely to be WWI veterans. Using our combined measure, veterans comprised 15% of NAACP members, relative to just 8% of all adult Black males.^{29,30}

Importantly, we find little evidence that the linking process itself introduces bias to our primary relationship of interest. As shown in Appendix Figure A5, a bivariate regression of NAACP membership on veteran status returns nearly identical estimates in the linked sample (i.e., Black men

²⁶Specifically, we attempt to link NAACP members to individuals with similar names who lived in the member’s city in 1940 using the same linking procedure, keeping links only if we identify a unique individual in the 1940 census corresponding to a given NAACP record. We then use inter-census links from Abramitzky et al. (2020) to link the 1940 census individuals back to the 1930 census. If an NAACP record is linked to two different people in the 1930 census, one directly and one through the 1940 census, we prioritize the direct link. Further details are in Appendix B.

²⁷As many NAACP records correspond to the same person who appears in multiple years, our linked sample includes 34,906 unique census individuals, relative to an estimated 73,000 unique male NAACP members. This is the number of rows in the NAACP rosters that correspond to men (i.e. dropping members with female titles or first names) and are unique by first name, last name, and branch,. However, due to errors in the recording of names and addresses as well as changes therein, there is no way to know the true number of unique members in the rosters.

²⁸In addition to the 367,710 inductions, approximately 20,000 Black men were already part of the Regular Army or National Guard when the Selective Service Act was passed and another 4,000 Black men voluntarily enlisted prior to the first draft registration (Keene, 2002). In comparison, 1,078,331 Black men registered during the first and second registrations (U.S. Provost Marshal General, 1919).

²⁹Our patterns diverge notably from the county-level correlates of NAACP branch formation documented by Aaronson et al. (2023), who find little relationship with average Black income and a significant, negative relationship with Black World War II enlistment rates. These differences highlight the difficulties that may emerge when assessing the individual-level drivers of civic activism with area-level measures.

³⁰In Appendix Table A1, we show that these patterns persist when we focus just on individuals who were eligible for the first draft registration and who, as of the 1930 census, lived in an area from which we obtained NAACP rosters.

in the 1930 census with linked draft registration cards) and in the full sample (i.e., all Black men in the 1930 census of draft-eligible age in 1917). OLS estimates are also highly similar across samples when examining other socioeconomic predictors of NAACP membership from the 1930 census.

4 Empirical strategy

4.1 Estimating equation

To identify the causal effect of military service on NAACP participation, our primary relationship of interest is:

$$NAACP_i = \lambda_b + \beta Veteran_i + X_i'\Gamma + u_i \quad (1)$$

where $NAACP_i$ is an indicator for whether the individual was an NAACP member, $Veteran_i$ is an indicator for whether the individual served in World War I (based on the 1930 census, VAMI, and ATS lists), λ_b are draft board fixed effects, and X_i is a vector of controls including the individual's birth year and birth state as well as occupation, marital status, and exemption claim at the time of registration.

However, OLS estimates of β could be biased by the endogeneity of military service. The direction of this bias is *ex ante* ambiguous. Drafted men who refused to report for military service may have been less civically-minded than others, or they may have been more willing to challenge the status quo and fight for equal rights. Similar ambiguity exists when comparing Black draftees to the Black men who were able to voluntarily enlist. The exemption and physical examination processes could also have generated unobservable differences between veterans and non-veterans correlated with their future NAACP participation. To account for potential endogeneity, we thus instrument for veteran status using the WWI draft lottery.

4.2 Draft lottery instrument

Randomization in the WWI draft lottery was based on an individual's serial number. Serial numbers were assigned to men upon registration, were unique within each draft board, and ranged from 1 to N , the total number of registrants at that board. Six weeks after the first registration round, the national lottery was conducted in Washington, DC. During the lottery, paper slips containing the universe of serial numbers – 1 through 10,500 (the size of the largest draft board in the country) – were drawn one by one from a glass jar and the resulting drawing order was printed in newspapers throughout the country.

The rank order that an individual's serial number was drawn, relative to the serial numbers assigned to other registrants in his board, was his "order number" and was used to determine the sequence in which eligible men were inducted. Because boards differed in size (and thus, the set of serial numbers assigned to men from that board), the mapping of serial number to order number varied with the number of registrants in a board. For example, the first four numbers drawn in the national lottery were 258, 2522, 9613, and 4532. At boards with $N \geq 9613$, order numbers 1, 2, and 3 would correspond to men with serial numbers 258, 2522, and 9613. At boards with $9613 > N \geq 4532$, order numbers 1, 2, and 3 would instead correspond to men with serial numbers 258,

2522, and 4532.³¹

Following the lottery, registrants were categorized by physical exam and exemption eligibility into four classes. Exemptions were granted primarily to men with dependent family members (i.e., wife, children, or parents) and those working in occupations deemed essential to the “maintenance of the Military Establishment,” though local boards wielded significant discretion. Class I registrants – physically fit men without an exemption – were then inducted in order of their order number to fulfill local quotas.³²

Thus, to construct our draft lottery instrument, we predict each registrant’s order number using three pieces of information: his serial number, the order in which serial numbers were drawn in the national lottery, and the total number of registrants in his draft board.³³³⁴ Because the range of order numbers depends on the size of the draft board, we normalize predicted order numbers by dividing by the total number of registrants in a given board. The resulting instrument is bounded between zero and one. Values close to zero correspond to registrants whose serial numbers were drawn earliest in the national lottery and who would have been the first to be called by their draft board, while values close to one correspond to individuals with higher order numbers who would have been the last to be called.

Note that the instrument exploits only random variation that comes from the drawing order of serial numbers among registered men in the same draft board. Thus, as we demonstrate below, while exemptions and voluntary enlistments may reduce the predictive power of our instrument, they do not threaten its validity.

4.2.1 Instrument validity

Using our instrument, we predict veteran status by estimating:

$$Veteran_i = \delta_b + \gamma Order_i + X_i' \Lambda + v_i. \quad (2)$$

Here, $Order_i$ is registrant i ’s predicted order number, scaled by the size of his board. Note that the inclusion of board fixed effects effectively limits comparisons to Black men from the same draft

³¹This procedure created significant variation in draft liability among men from different boards with the same serial number. Consider men with serial number 837, the 100th number drawn in the national lottery. At a board with 1,000 registrants, 837 was the 5th lowest order number. At a board with 4,000 registrants, it was the 36th lowest order number. At a board with 10,500 registrants, it was the 100th lowest order number.

³²Initially, quotas were determined by the total population in a board with deductions for prior voluntary military enlistments in that state. This system led to a much higher share of Class I registrants being drafted in areas with large population shares of individuals who were not eligible to register. After May 1918, quotas were instead based on the number of eligible registrants in a board. In either case, our main analysis includes board fixed effects, thereby restricting comparisons to registrants from the same draft board and conditioning away differences in quotas across boards.

³³Total registrations by draft board are provided in the *Second Report of the Provost Marshal General to the Secretary of War on the Operations of the Selective Service System* (1919). The drawing order of serial numbers is available in Newman (2001).

³⁴In Appendix Figure A6, we show that our predicted order numbers are highly correlated with actual order numbers among the subset of cards for which we observe the latter. Unlike serial numbers, order numbers were not recorded on all cards and vary in card location from board to board. Given that an individual’s order number was only determined *after* the national lottery and was therefore potentially subject to manipulation by draft officials, we focus on predicted order numbers in our main analysis. Nonetheless, as we demonstrate in Section 5, our results are robust to using recorded order numbers.

board with higher or lower order numbers. In accordance with the lottery randomization process, we cluster standard errors by serial number.

To examine the instrument’s relevance, Panel (a) of Figure 3 displays a binned scatter plot of the relationship between the scaled order number and WWI veteran status. We see a strong and significant negative relationship: the later an individual’s position in the draft lottery, the lower his likelihood of being inducted. The difference in likelihood of military service between individuals with the lowest and highest order numbers is approximately 10 percentage points, on average.

[Figure 3 about here.]

There are three main reasons why this difference is not 100 percentage points. First, registrants who received exemptions were not drafted even if they had a low order number, which in turn raises the probability of conscription among non-exempt registrants with high order numbers.³⁵ Second, hundreds of thousands of white men voluntarily enlisted in the the military after completing registration cards. While Black men were generally excluded from volunteering, white enlistments nevertheless raised the probability that Black men with high order numbers from the same board would be conscripted.³⁶ Third, because *whether* someone was drafted is not recorded on the registration cards themselves, imperfect linking introduces noise to our veteran status measure, further attenuating differences between individuals with low and high order numbers. Nonetheless, as shown in Appendix Table A2, the first-stage relationship between $Order_i$ and future military service is highly significant and robust to the inclusion of a rich set of controls. Across all columns, we obtain negative coefficients with t -statistics above 20, indicating that individuals with higher order numbers were less likely to serve in the war, even relative to observably similar men from the same draft board. As we demonstrate later, this relationship is also robust to the use of alternative functional forms allowing for nonlinearity in the mapping of order numbers to military service.

To validate exogeneity of the instrument, we regress all prewar registrant characteristics from the draft cards on $Order_i$. These results are shown in Panel (b) of Figure 3. In all cases, coefficients are below 0.01 standard deviations in magnitude and statistically insignificant. That the instrument is uncorrelated with all observed characteristics at the time of registration corroborates the random assignment of order numbers through the draft lottery.

5 Main results

5.1 Effects on civil rights activism

NAACP participation

We now turn to our main results examining the effects of Black military service on participation in the nascent NAACP. Table 2 shows TSLS coefficients from estimating Equation 1. We find a

³⁵Appendix Figure A7 displays the relationship between order number and veteran status separately based on marital status and exemption claim. Among registrants with very low order numbers, the proportion of veterans among single men who did not file an exemption claim is more than twice the rate among married men who did. In addition to exemptions, occupation-specific draft calls also meant that Class I registrants were not inducted strictly in sequence of their order numbers.

³⁶The Provost Marshal General claimed that voluntary enlistments “disturbed every phase of the scientific administration of our task and impaired the efficiency of the whole organization” (U.S. Provost Marshal General, 1919). The difficulty of conscripting the National Army from a pool of registrants who could opt into other branches of the military ultimately led the War Department to ban White voluntary enlistments in August 1918.

significant positive effect of military service on future NAACP membership of about three percentage points. This result is stable as we include controls for birth state and year (column 2), the interaction of marital status and exemption claim (column 3), and prewar occupation (column 4). In column (5), we show that effects are also robust to controlling for postwar residence by including county fixed effects from the 1930 census, suggesting that the NAACP effects are not driven by residential mobility during the first Great Migration (Collins and Wanamaker, 2015; Bazzi et al., 2021).³⁷

[Table 2 about here.]

Across models, IV estimates are appreciably larger than corresponding OLS estimates. This could be explained in part by differences in responses to military service between men who were conscripted and those who voluntarily enlisted. For example, if conscripted men were driven to join the NAACP due to grievances about their induction, we would expect the local average treatment effect to exceed the average treatment effect. Similarly, OLS estimates would be biased downwards if volunteers were more trusting of the government and less inclined to join organizations that were considered radical. Measurement error in veteran status and transcription errors in the serial numbers would also lead us to underestimate the first-stage slope and increase the wedge between IV and OLS estimates.³⁸ However, as we discuss in the robustness subsection, OLS and IV estimates remain positive and significant across a number of alternative specifications addressing these concerns.

The magnitude of the IV estimate in our preferred specification (column 4) implies that military service in World War I almost tripled an individual’s likelihood of joining the NAACP, on average – from a baseline mean of 1.6% for non-veterans to 4.4% for men induced to serve because of the draft. These men accounted for a significant coalition in the early civil rights movement. A back-of-the-envelope calculation implies that the draft led approximately 10,000 Black men to join the NAACP, representing about 20% of the organization’s membership in 1940.³⁹

In interpreting these effects, it is important to reiterate the vast ideological diversity of the New Negro movement and the NAACP’s place as one of several groups advocating for Black advancement. Although we cannot directly examine membership in other Black organizations, Appendix Figure A9 explores how effects on NAACP membership evolved over the 1920s and 1930s. Notably, increases in NAACP membership are most pronounced prior to 1934, when W.E.B. Du Bois resigned over concerns about the group’s waning militancy. While only suggestive, these patterns are consistent with Black veterans rejecting prewar notions of political accommodationism in favor of more aggressive – if still integrationist – approaches.

³⁷While postwar residence could be endogenous to military service, Appendix Figure A8 directly examines migration and finds little impact of military service on whether registrants moved across regions, states, or counties between 1917 and 1930. We also find little evidence of effects on settling in a city with an NAACP chapter, in more urban areas, or in areas with higher Black population shares or higher concentrations of other Black veterans.

³⁸In a simple example with a binary endogenous regressor and a binary instrument, Pischke (2007) shows that $\hat{\beta}_{IV} = \frac{\beta}{(q_1 - q_0)}$, where q_1 is the probability that a veteran is recorded as a veteran and q_0 is the probability that a non-veteran is recorded as a veteran. Due to linking errors, we expect $q_1 < 1$ and $q_0 > 0$.

³⁹This comes from multiplying 0.028 by 367,710, the total number of Black men drafted. Note that this estimate refers to the total number of individuals who *ever* joined the NAACP during our sample period, while national membership estimates reflect total membership at a particular point in time (e.g., 51,000 members in 1940).

Alternative outcomes

Membership duration: To explore intensive margin changes in NAACP participation, we estimate effects on membership duration. We measure this using the number of years between the earliest and latest NAACP observations linked to the same individual in the census.⁴⁰ We then estimate our preferred specification on a series of indicator variables set to one if an individual participated for $\geq N$ years and zero otherwise.

[Figure 4 about here.]

TSLS estimates are displayed in Figure 4. We find that being drafted not only significantly increased whether Black men joined the NAACP but also how long they participated for. The estimates suggest that one out of every 100 Black draftees was induced to participate in the NAACP for more than seven years, pointing to a lasting commitment to civil rights advocacy.

Community leadership: To examine other measures of community leadership during the New Negro era, we leverage records from the African American National Biography (Gates and Higginbotham, 2013) and the ProQuest African American Biographical Database. The former includes biographies of “historically significant black individuals” curated by modern scholars, while the latter includes “national activists, state and local figures, prominent women, lawyers, artists, musicians, church and missionary leaders, society leaders” identified from contemporaneous Black publications such as *Who’s Who in Colored America*.⁴¹ As both databases contain birth date and birth place information, we link entries directly to draft registration cards (i.e., without linking through the census) and estimate Equation 1 on an indicator for whether a registrant appears in either database.

Results are shown in Appendix Table A3. Men induced to service by the draft were significantly more likely to become known as community leaders by Black contemporaries and modern scholars. As with the NAACP effects, the point estimates indicate that military service nearly tripled an individual’s likelihood of becoming a community leader. Though the fight against Jim Crow took a variety of forms during the New Negro era, Appendix Table A4 shows that effects are robust to defining community leadership more restrictively by limiting to individuals in professions commonly associated with the early civil rights movement. These results corroborate our main findings and suggest that increased civic activism among Black veterans manifested not only in greater NAACP participation but throughout their life’s work.

Robustness

Alternative linking strategies: Appendix Table A5 explores robustness of the NAACP effects to alternative linking strategies. Column (1) shows our main specification using the standard ABE linking procedure. Column (2) uses marital status and middle initial to tie-break multiple potential census links, while columns (3) and (4) further use veteran status from VAMI and ATS lists and residence county in 1930 as tie-breakers. Panel (b) repeats this exercise using a more conservative ABE threshold.⁴² The use of endogenous variables like veteran status and postwar county as

⁴⁰Appendix Figure A10 shows similar patterns if we instead define duration by the number of unique years an individual is observed. However, results are noisier under this definition due to imperfect recording and transcription of names in the NAACP rosters.

⁴¹In total, the databases include 7,554 Black men born between 1860 and 1900.

⁴²The more conservative ABE procedure, referred to as the $x = 2$ threshold (compared to the $x = 0$ baseline), requires that each draft card have only one potential link within a two-year birth year window. For example, if a draft card with birth year 1893 were linked to two census records, one with birth year 1894 and one with birth year 1895, the $x = 0$ threshold would keep the 1894 link, but the $x = 2$ threshold would discard both links.

tie-breakers increases the linking rate and decreases the wedge between OLS and IV coefficients, consistent with measurement error explaining some of this gap. In all cases, results remain positive and significant.

Alternative measures of veteran status: Appendix Table A6 shows robustness to alternative definitions of veteran status. Given significant under-reporting of veteran status in the 1930 census, our preferred measure takes the union of the census measure and more contemporaneous military records (i.e., VAMI and ATS lists). However, we continue to find significant positive effects on NAACP membership using the census measure alone, the contemporaneous measures alone, or the intersection of both. Note, though, that the wedge between the IV and OLS estimates grows as we adopt more restrictive measures of veteran status, as increased under-reporting artificially flattens the first-stage relationship.⁴³

Alternative instruments: Appendix Table A7 shows robustness to alternative instruments for veteran status. First, we redefine $Order_i$ based on the actual order number (as written on the draft card) instead of the order number predicted by serial number for the subset of cards for which we observe order number. Second, we use the *un-scaled*, predicted order number (i.e., without dividing by the total number of registrants in the board). Third, we use the rank of the individual’s predicted order number scaled relative only to other Black registrants (rather than all registrants). In each case, we continue to find positive and significant effects of military service with point estimates that are very similar to those from our preferred specification.

Alternative first-stage estimation: Appendix Table A8 shows robustness to alternative first-stage estimation strategies to address potential nonlinearity in the relationship between order number and veteran status and to allow for interactions with marital status and exemption claim. First, we estimate a piecewise linear model by taking the order number, subtracting the number of men inducted at that draft board, and allowing the first-stage slope to vary on either side of zero.⁴⁴ Second, we estimate a single cubic polynomial in order number. Third, we split the (scaled) order number into ten groups (i.e., 0 to 0.1, 0.1 to 0.2, etc.) and regress veteran status on these ten indicators. Fourth, we estimate this nonparametric first stage separately for each of the four mutually exclusive groups based on marital status and exemption claim. In each case, we use the predicted values from the first stage *as an instrument* in the two-stage least squares regression. The more flexible models produce larger first-stage F -statistics and smaller OLS-IV wedges. However, results remain positive and significant in all cases.

5.2 Effects on socioeconomic status

Income and education

In more modern settings, researchers have found positive effects of military service on educational attainment (Angrist and Chen, 2011) and earnings (Greenberg et al., 2022), particularly among African Americans. In a different context, Jha and Wilkinson (2012) show that combat experience among South Asian soldiers in World War II fostered valuable organizational skills. Thus, we next

⁴³For intuition, consider a binned scatterplot of $Order_i$ and veteran status similar to Panel (a) of Figure 3. As veteran status becomes more under-reported, the slope flattens because individuals with low order numbers were more likely to actually be veterans (and therefore proportionally more likely to be miscoded as non-veterans) than individuals with high order numbers. Given that $\beta_{IV} = \frac{\beta_{RF}}{\beta_{FS}}$, this mechanically inflates the IV estimate.

⁴⁴A visual representation can be seen in Appendix Figure A11. The idea is to exploit additional variation based on whether a given registrant’s order number was above or below the “cut-off” point in his board. In practice, for many of the same reasons as discussed in Section 4.2.1 (e.g., exemptions, occupation-specific draft calls, and matching noise), we observe a kink but not a discontinuity at zero.

examine socioeconomic effects using proxies of income and education from the 1930 census (as wages and schooling were not measured directly). For registrants whom we are able to link to the 1940 census, we also examine actual income and education. Results are shown in Panel (a) of Figure 5. We find little evidence that being drafted improved the socioeconomic status of Black men, with near-zero estimates for literacy, home ownership, employment, and income scores.⁴⁵ In Appendix Figure A12, we also find little evidence of mobility into the upper tail of the income distribution.

[Figure 5 about here.]

Given the crudeness of the available income measures, it is possible that these null results mask important changes in the careers of drafted men. To explore this, we estimate our IV regression on employment in each census-defined occupation category. Appendix Figure A13 displays results for the occupations with the 25 largest and 25 smallest estimates. Three points are worth noting. First, the single largest estimate corresponds to occupation strings that have not been classified in the IPUMS census data and therefore do not have valid occupational income scores. Second, a number of professions commonly associated with the early civil rights movement – such as railroad workers, clergymen, lawyers, and undertakers (Meier, 1962; Bates, 2001; Higginbotham, 1994) – are included among the occupations with the largest treatment effects. Third, the top 25 occupations are not disproportionately high-earning, with an average occupational income score nearly identical to the sample mean.

These results are consistent with Tan (2020), who finds little evidence of higher occupational income scores or employment rates among *white* World War I veterans in 1930 and 1960. They are also consistent with the limited government benefits provided to WWI soldiers and veterans. Army privates were paid \$30 a month, less than the average Black income at the time, and Black soldiers were frequently excluded from formal training and education.⁴⁶ Furthermore, the G.I. Bill providing tuition and low-cost mortgages to veterans was not passed until after World War II. Given the rampant discrimination under Jim Crow, it remains possible that Black soldiers acquired important skills that were not rewarded in the labor market. Nonetheless, the results suggest that any economic benefit is unlikely to explain the large increases in NAACP membership.⁴⁷

Club involvement

As Williams (2007) explains, “many former soldiers, although disillusioned with the U.S. Army and its pervasive racism, valued the discipline and homo-social camaraderie of military life.” Thus, a desire to replicate these bonds in civilian life may have driven Black veterans to join a host of social organizations, not just the NAACP. Expanded social networks or elevated social status from military service could also have facilitated participation in clubs and other fraternal organizations

⁴⁵Given large within-occupation differences in income across race and geography, we generate income scores using the approach in Abramitzky et al. (2021). We predict income for Black men using covariates in the 1940 census and use the resulting estimates to predict income for individuals in the 1930 census.

⁴⁶To compensate soldiers for lost wages, Congress passed the World War Adjusted Compensation Act in 1924, which issued certificates worth up to \$625 to be paid 20 years later. In 1932, a “Bonus Army” of 40,000 veterans and family members descended on Washington, D.C. demanding cash payment of their certificates, but a bill approving those payments was not passed until 1936. Comparing veterans to their neighbors, Quincy (2022) finds evidence that the payments increased 1940 home ownership rates.

⁴⁷Multiplying the upper bound of the confidence interval for the TSLS coefficient on occupational income score shown in Figure 5 by the OLS estimate from a regression of NAACP membership on occupation score among Black draft-eligible men in the 1930 census (i.e., $0.0856 \times 0.00650 = 0.000556$) suggests that income gains can explain less than 5% of the overall effect of military service on NAACP membership (i.e., 0.0282 from column (4) of Table 2).

(Cagé et al., 2023). To test this, we examine indicators of club involvement from the 1930 census. Specifically, we estimate Equation 1 on indicators for occupations coded as “officials of lodge, society, union, etc.,” group quarters residence coded as “club” or “YMCA,” and industry coded as “nonprofit membership organizations.” As shown in Panel (b) of Figure 5, we find little evidence that military service increased other measures of club participation. Consistent with the null effects on co-location with other Black veterans and migration into Black neighborhoods shown in Appendix Figure A8, these results suggest that the effects on NAACP membership do not simply reflect a broader proclivity for group participation among returned Black soldiers.

5.3 Heterogeneity

Prewar characteristics

To explore heterogeneous effects of military service on NAACP membership, we estimate Equation 1 separately for registrants grouped by prewar characteristics: occupation type, marital status, exemption claim, and age. Panel (a) of Figure 6 shows these estimates. Although we lack the statistical power to distinguish between groups, we find larger point estimates for Black registrants who were denied draft exemption claims. In contrast, we find little evidence of larger effects for registrants from lower-skilled occupations (i.e., farmers and laborers), as expected if increased civic activism were driven by improvements in income, education, or organizational skills obtained through military service.

[Figure 6 about here.]

Given large differences in racial dynamics across different parts of the country, Panels (b) and (c) examine heterogeneous effects by proxies of prewar racial prejudice and postwar racial violence in a registrant’s home county. We first adopt an analogous approach to Bazzi et al.’s (2023) Confederate Culture Index and construct a measure ranging from zero to three that increments by one if a county is located in the former Confederacy, had a Confederate monument, or experienced a lynching prior to the war. We separately link counties to the postwar incidence of racial violence during the Red Summer of 1919, when a spate of race riots erupted following demobilization (Sieber, 2015). Examining differential effects across these measures, a striking pattern emerges. Point estimates decline monotonically with measures of prewar racial prejudice but increase with measures of postwar racial violence.⁴⁸ These results suggest that increased civil rights activism may have been mediated by the *shock* of discrimination experienced by men after they were drafted into the military, which we examine more directly in Section 6.⁴⁹

Wartime service

We next examine differences in NAACP participation by type of military service. Although the vast majority of Black draftees held menial positions such as camp laborers or stevedores, the circumstances of their service varied greatly. Half of the Black noncombatants remained in America, where they served at domestic camps and ports of embarkation. The other half were deployed to

⁴⁸Appendix Figure A14 explores differential effects on economic status by county racism. There is no clear pattern, with null or negative effects on occupational income score and employment in all cases.

⁴⁹The patterns could also be partly explained by suppression of NAACP activity in former Confederate areas. However, as shown in Figure A15, we find similar patterns when standardizing NAACP membership *within* groups of counties with the same prejudice score, suggesting that the relative magnitude of treatment effects are also smaller in more historically racist areas, even when accounting for differences in non-veteran NAACP participation rates across areas.

France, where the relative hospitality of the French led one Black lieutenant to remark: “I have never before experienced what it meant to be really free – to taste real liberty – in a phrase to be a man.” Significant differences also existed among the 10% of Black soldiers selected for combat service in France. While the 92nd Division remained under U.S. command for the duration of the war, the 93rd Division lived and fought alongside French troops.

[Figure 7 about here.]

Figure 7 compares NAACP membership across these four groups. Among men assigned to labor and service units, membership rates are virtually identical regardless of whether they served in the U.S. or were deployed to France. NAACP participation is higher among men assigned to combat units and, among this group, those who served in the 92nd relative to the 93rd Division. Appendix Figure A16 shows that these differences persist when controlling for prewar characteristics that may differ across groups. Given potential selection on unobservables, differences in membership rates are not causal and should be interpreted with caution.⁵⁰ Nonetheless, the patterns are inconsistent with exposure to or interaction with the French driving the large treatment effects on NAACP participation.⁵¹ Rather, the high rates of postwar activism among men of the 92nd Division, who faced constant racial abuse from their compatriots despite risking their lives in battle, further points to the potential salience of discrimination, which we explore next.

6 Mechanisms

A dominant theme in narrative histories of Black postwar activism is the catalyzing role of perceived injustice (Astor, 2001; Delmont, 2023; Williams, 2023). Summarizing the literature on the origins of the New Negro movement, Williams (2007) identifies the “most significantly” discussed factor as Black soldiers’ “disillusion[ment] with Americans’ professed democratic principles as a result of the soldiers’ encounters with racial discrimination in the U.S. Army,” which was then channeled “into creating an American society reflective of their military sacrifice.” While the observed heterogeneity in NAACP membership across exemption claim, county prejudice, and wartime service are consistent with such a mechanism, this section provides more direct tests of the role of discrimination. To do so, we leverage detailed War Department records to identify and measure the most salient forms of racial bias experienced by Black soldiers. We then examine how exposure to discrimination mediates NAACP participation. Finally, we digitize novel veteran surveys to directly measure the prevalence of injustice in postwar narratives and to explore its relationship with military discrimination and civic engagement.

6.1 Draft discrimination

Given the significant discretion that local boards wielded in granting exemptions and deferments, racial bias in the draft process was a persistent concern for many Black draftees. Indeed, a chief responsibility of the War Department’s Special Assistant for Negro Affairs was mollifying the “large number of Negro draftees who sent in countless letters, affidavits, and the like, registering their

⁵⁰We cannot use our instrumental variables strategy to analyze heterogeneous effects by service type because the draft lottery only predicts whether an individual was conscripted, not the type of service he was assigned to.

⁵¹The results also cut against the possibility that effects were driven by active targeting of Black veterans by the NAACP. If the NAACP hoped to attract well-known and celebrated Black veterans to champion its cause, one would expect higher membership rates for the 93rd Division, which included the renowned Harlem Hellfighters and “enjoyed considerable status in the black community” (Barbeau and Henri, 1996). Recruitment efforts alone are also unlikely to explain the stark heterogeneity by military discrimination that we discuss in Section 6.

complaints against the unfair treatment of various Draft Boards” (Scott, 1919). To examine the salience of draft board discrimination in postwar NAACP participation, we first calculate the difference between Black and white induction rates at each draft board.⁵² We then estimate Equation 1 separately by quartiles of the induction rate disparity.

[Figure 8 about here.]

As shown in Figure 8, effects on NAACP membership increase monotonically with racial disparity in induction rates. For registrants from boards that were far more likely to draft Black men than white men, we find large and significant increases in NAACP participation. Conversely, estimates are near zero for registrants from boards with more equitable induction rates. Given that Black and white conscription rates could differ for reasons other than racial bias, Appendix Figure A17 further adjusts induction rates to account for local racial differences in marital status and agricultural employment, the two primary considerations for draft exemptions.⁵³ Doing so reveals even starker differences in NAACP participation between boards with above and below median draft disparities. These patterns are consistent with the large effects we observe for men whose exemption claims were denied and suggest that the veterans who joined the NAACP may have felt unfairly targeted in the draft.

6.2 Military discrimination

To examine discrimination while in the military, we turn to reports on “Negro Subversion” produced by the Military Intelligence Division, which monitored sources of dissatisfaction among Black soldiers through surveys of camp intelligence officers. A summary of those reports reveals two systemic issues fueling concerns of discrimination among Black soldiers.⁵⁴ The first relates to the exclusion of Black men from officer positions: “Much of the unrest among colored troops at the various camps is due to the fact that white non-commissioned officers are assigned to colored units, viz: labor and service battalions.” The second concerns the lack of training provided to Black soldiers: “The negro in noncombatant units that is not given drill feels he is not a soldier but merely a laborer . . . [drill] makes him feel he is in reality a part of the army.”

We use the military intelligence surveys to identify, for each camp, the share of Black non-commissioned officers (NCOs) in Black units and the share of Black soldiers that received military training.⁵⁵ We then construct a crosswalk linking each registrant’s board and order number to camps. This is generated from a map of camp recruitment areas published in *National Geographic* and draft call lists from Southern boards.⁵⁶ Importantly, this crosswalk allows us to predict camp

⁵²Black induction rates are determined from the share of veterans in our linked sample of Black draft cards. We infer white induction rates by subtracting the number of Black draftees and registrants in a board from the total number of inductions and registrants in the *Second Report of the Provost Marshal General* (1919).

⁵³Appendix Figure A18 explores the relationship between board discrimination and veteran characteristics. Registrants conscripted by more discriminatory boards are more likely to have claimed an exemption and to be laborers, and less likely to be married or to work in farming.

⁵⁴Specifically, we examine a report to the Chief of the Military Morale Section titled “Recapitulation of Investigation of Military Camps” by Major W.H. Loving, a Black Military Intelligence Officer tasked with visiting camps to monitor race relations, and a report by Captain L.C. West titled “Summary of Replies to Questionnaire from Intelligence Officers at the Large Training Camps” summarizing the camp intelligence officer surveys.

⁵⁵The intelligence surveys vary widely in their reporting precision. Some camps provided the exact share of Black NCOs and trained Black regiments. Others provided only broad descriptions such as “only a few,” “most,” or “nearly all”. Thus, we code each discrimination measure into three categories: camps with Black NCO shares greater than 50%, between 25 and 50%, and between 0 and 25%; and camps where military training was provided to all Black regiments, to some Black regiments, and to no Black regiments.

⁵⁶Draftees were generally sent to a camp near their home. However, due to concerns about racial insurrection,

assignment for all registered men, not just those who were drafted. Using this information, we estimate Equation 1 separately for registrants assigned to more and less discriminatory camps.

[Figure 9 about here.]

Results are displayed in Figure 9. Panel (a) examines Black NCO share and reveals large and significant effects on NAACP membership for soldiers assigned to camps with few or no Black non-commissioned officers. Effects then decline as the Black NCO share increases, with near-zero estimates for soldiers assigned to camps where the majority of NCOs in Black units were Black. Panel (b) suggests similar dynamics when considering military training. We find large treatment effects for those who attended a camp where Black soldiers were uniformly excluded from military training and insignificant effects for those at camps where some or all Black soldiers received training.

Given earlier evidence of heterogeneous effects by registrant characteristics and board discrimination, it is possible that the differential effects by camp type are driven by differential selection into camps along other dimensions. To account for this possibility, Appendix Figure A19 replicates our analysis using samples of registrants constructed to match the distribution of observable characteristics among registrants assigned to the most discriminatory camps.⁵⁷ We continue to find null effects on NAACP participation among registrants assigned to less discriminatory camps, indicating that differences in registrants’ backgrounds explain very little of the differential effects by camp conditions. As the samples are also matched on induction rate disparities, these patterns do not simply mirror upstream exposure to draft discrimination.⁵⁸

Together with our previous results, these findings help to illuminate the specific aspects of military service that led Black veterans to fight for equality at home. Consistent with the null effects on literacy and economic status, the null effects on NAACP participation among soldiers who received military training suggests that underlying skill gains are unlikely to explain increased activism. In contrast, the large effects we observe among Black soldiers who were drafted by biased boards and systematically denied promotion and training opportunities are consistent with claims that “African American soldiers’ experiences in the war and their battles with the pervasive racial discrimination in the U.S. military informed their postwar disillusionment and subsequent racial militancy” (Williams, 2007).

6.3 Veteran beliefs

While the patterns we observe point strongly to the salience of injustice in fueling civil rights activism, such a claim invariably requires inferring the beliefs and motivations of men who served more than a hundred years ago. To better understand the contemporaneous views of returned Black

the military maintained strict limits on the share of Black draftees in each camp. As a result, many Black draftees from the South were assigned to distant camps in areas where fewer Black people resided. We use “Men Ordered to Report” lists from Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee to identify, for each Southern draft board, the range of order numbers of registrants sent to each camp.

⁵⁷For each registrant assigned to the most discriminatory camps (i.e., camps with 0 to 25% Black officer share and camps where no Black troops received training), we select registrants assigned to less discriminatory camps of the same age quintile, marital status, occupation, and exemption claim and from boards of the same quartile of the racial disparity in induction rates. Observations are weighted by one over the number of matches to maintain sample balance on match characteristics.

⁵⁸Notably, correlations between induction disparities at a registrant’s draft board and discrimination at his camp are near zero (i.e., ρ equals 0.10 and 0.15 between the unadjusted board disparities and the military training and NCO measures, respectively; ρ equals 0.03 and -0.05 when using the adjusted board disparities).

soldiers, we turn to questionnaires of WWI veterans conducted by state war history commissions in the years after the war.

While most states only collected basic information about when and where individuals served, two states – Virginia and Connecticut – included additional questions about the impact of military service on soldiers’ lives and attitudes. Veterans were asked to describe the “effects upon yourself” of their draft, camp, overseas, and combat experiences “as contrasted with your state of mind before the war.” An example survey is provided in Appendix Figure A20. Though fewer than 10% of veterans responded, the questionnaires nonetheless provide some of the most comprehensive and unfiltered insight into the minds of WWI service members.

We transcribed all completed surveys from Black Army veterans, roughly 1,300 in total.⁵⁹ Each response was then read and categorized according to the broad themes it discussed, such as expanded worldviews, training benefits, feelings of patriotism, duty, or injustice, among others.⁶⁰ With this data, we document the prevalence of various postwar narratives as recounted by the veterans themselves, examine how reported views vary with exposure to military discrimination, and identify which views predict civic engagement among Black veterans.

[Figure 10 about here.]

First, Panel (a) of Figure 10 presents a histogram of the most prevalent themes mentioned in the surveys. The results reveal the rich and varied influence of military service on the worldviews of returned Black soldiers. Nearly 20% of veterans describe how military service broadened their mind, exposing them to a fuller understanding of the military, the world, or government.⁶¹ Similar shares discuss experiences of hardship and increased religiosity. Mentions of masculinity and manhood arise in 12% of surveys, while discussions of fulfilling one’s civic duty and of the benefits of military training each appear in 8% of surveys. Finally, 6% of surveys reference feelings of injustice, with smaller shares discussing heightened patriotism or camaraderie. Representative examples of each survey theme can be found in Appendix Table A9.

Next, using information on camp attendance drawn from the questionnaires, we map responses onto our measure of military discrimination. Panel (b) of Figure 10 shows the difference in prevalence of survey themes mentioned by veterans who attended the most discriminatory camps relative to those who attended less discriminatory camps. Notably, respondents who served at camps where Black soldiers were denied training or promotion opportunities were more than twice as likely to mention injustice in their survey responses. This difference dwarfs those for all other themes, with the exception of moderate increases in mentions of civic sacrifice and religiosity.⁶² Though military camps may have differed across a number of unobserved dimensions, the survey patterns help to illuminate how these differences were experienced by Black soldiers and corroborate the particular salience of perceived injustice among attendees of discriminatory camps.

Finally, we explore how these narratives relate to postwar civic activism. While our NAACP records do not include rosters from Virginia or Connecticut, the surveys themselves include an important

⁵⁹ Another 1,300 surveys were returned without responses to any of our questions of interest.

⁶⁰ A single survey response may mention multiple themes.

⁶¹ The thematic prevalence of “broader mind” in veteran survey responses aligns with historical narratives of how exposure to African Americans from diverse backgrounds fostered heightened racial consciousness among Black soldiers (Williams, 2007). However, we do not find a clear pattern when examining differential effects of military service by the share of camp attendants from a registrant’s home area, as shown in Appendix Figure A21.

⁶² Appendix Figure A22 finds similar patterns when examining draft board discrimination, with more frequent mentions of injustice among men conscripted by boards with the largest Black-white induction disparities.

measure of civic engagement: voter participation. Thus, we regress whether a veteran reported voting on a set of indicators for each of the narrative themes.

[Figure 11 about here.]

Results are shown in Figure 11. Strikingly, injustice is the single strongest predictor of voter turnout: individuals who mentioned injustice were twice as likely to vote (24 percentage points, mean = 24 p.p.) as those that did not. This relationship remains large and significant when controlling for respondents’ prior military experience, county of residence, birth year, and birth state. Estimates are smaller in magnitude and statistically insignificant, or borderline so, for all other themes.

As a whole, the surveys highlight both the multifaceted nature of military service and the specific mechanisms informing its impact on NAACP membership. Consistent with research documenting the effects of wartime service on religiosity (Mill et al., 2024), skill formation (Jha and Wilkinson, 2012), and national identity (Ronconi and Ramos-Toro, 2022), respondents discuss a wide range of changes to their beliefs, abilities, and preferences. At the same time, the correlations with camp type validate that our observational measures of discrimination capture salient concerns about injustice, while the correlations with voter turnout suggest that these concerns played a pivotal role in the decisions of veterans to engage politically. While Black soldiers came away from the war transformed along a number of dimensions, their encounters with discrimination and injustice – specifically – appeared to catalyze their activism during the New Negro era.

7 Conclusion

In urging Congress to join the Allied Powers, Woodrow Wilson declared “the world must be safe for democracy.” For many Black soldiers, the Great War entailed a battle not only against German aggression abroad but also against racial oppression at home. In this paper, we leverage novel variation from the World War I draft lottery and millions of digitized records to document the pioneering role that these men played in the early civil rights movement. Our estimates reveal that military service causally induced thousands of Black men to join the NAACP and fight for racial equality at the height of the Jim Crow era, corroborating historical narratives of how “systematic discrimination during military service politicized black soldiers” (Williams, 2007).

[Figure 12 about here.]

Still, our findings likely understate the multifaceted impact of Black veterans in the civil rights movement for a number of reasons. First, as shown in Figure 12, Black induction rates are strongly correlated with local NAACP membership rates among *undrafted* Black registrants, pointing to the potentially large influence of veterans in spurring community activism throughout the New Negro era. Second, many of the defining features of Black military service during World War I – biased draft boards, segregated units, and menial relegation – as well as the key traits of returning Black soldiers – racial pride, militancy, and collectivism – would be echoed during World War II, suggesting the heavy involvement of aggrieved veterans in the landmark civil rights achievements of the 1940s and 1950s.⁶³ Third, the fight for equal rights was but one political manifestation of the Black military experience. Indeed, early Gallup surveys reveal Black WWI veterans’ marked oppo-

⁶³These include: Executive Order 9981 (1948) desegregating the armed forces, *Smith v. Allwright* (1944) declaring white primaries unconstitutional, *Shelley v. Kraemer* (1948) striking down race-based housing covenants, and *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) desegregating public schools.

sition to American imperialism abroad and federal intervention domestically, highlighting potential spillovers onto other critical policy domains (Appendix Figure A23).

In this light, further work is necessary to trace the role of Black veterans in the evolution of racial discourse, civil rights, and national politics throughout the 20th century. Through a broader lens, many of the same concerns about institutional discrimination expressed by those men continue to pervade communities of color today, though now directed towards other public agencies including police, hospitals, and schools. Surveys indicate that nearly 90% of urban Black Americans believe that racism remains a serious concern and that more changes are needed to secure equal rights (Alesina et al., 2021). Thus, better understanding the causes and consequences of these concerns may be as critical to the safety of democracy today as it was in 1917.

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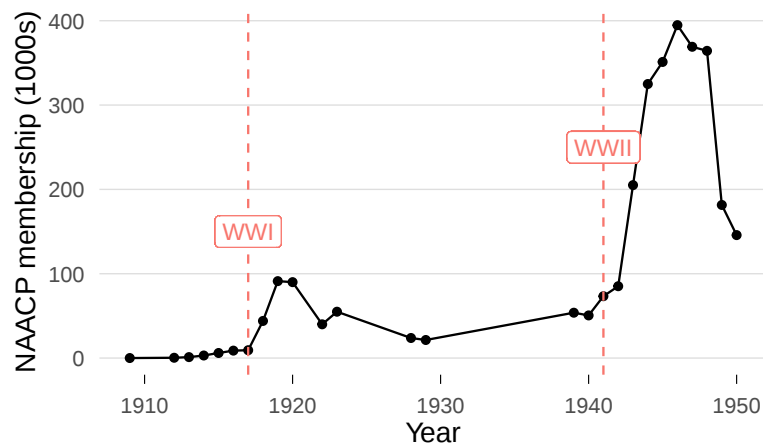


Figure 1: NAACP Membership, 1909 to 1950

Notes: This figure shows the estimated number of NAACP members nationwide at various points between 1909 and 1950. Membership estimates are from Estrada and Gregory (n.d.).

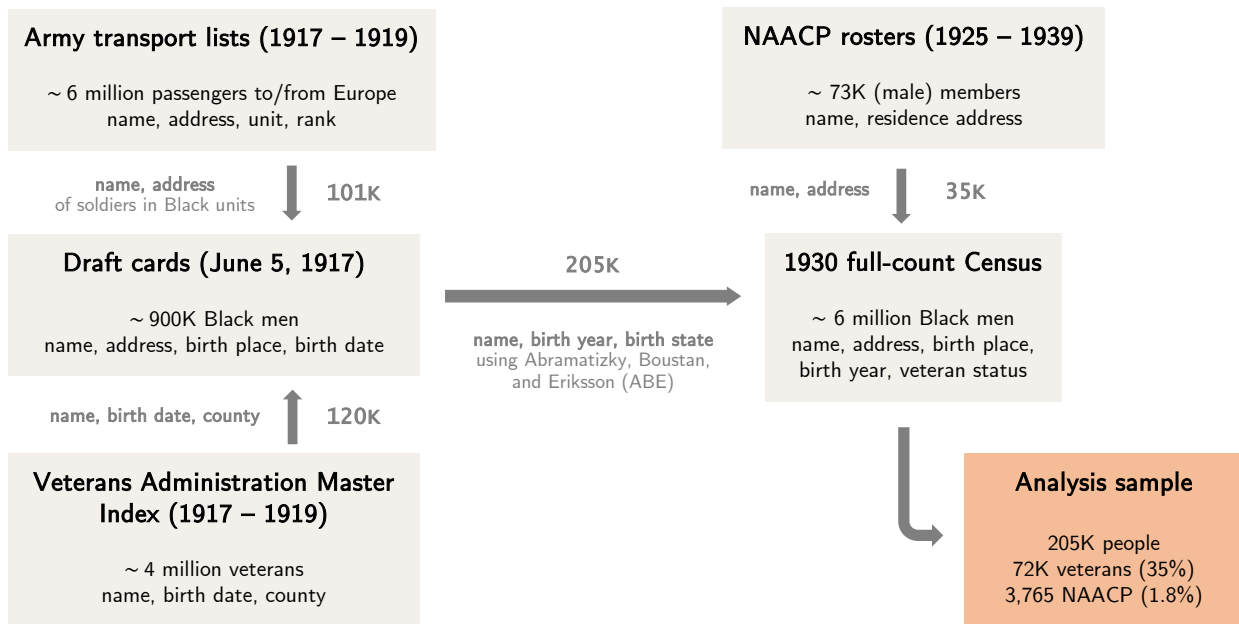
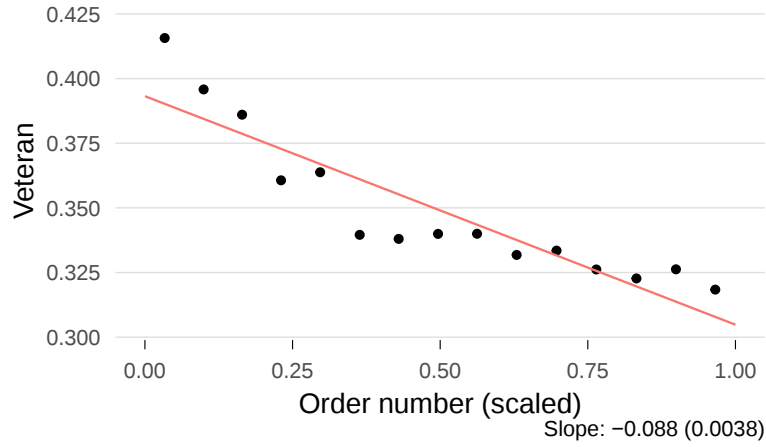


Figure 2: Overview of Linking Strategy

Notes: This figure summarizes the procedure we use to link draft cards, other military records, NAACP rosters, and the 1930 full-count census. Further details are in Section 3 and Appendix B.

(a) First-stage relationship between order number and veteran status



(b) Relationship between order number and other registrant characteristics

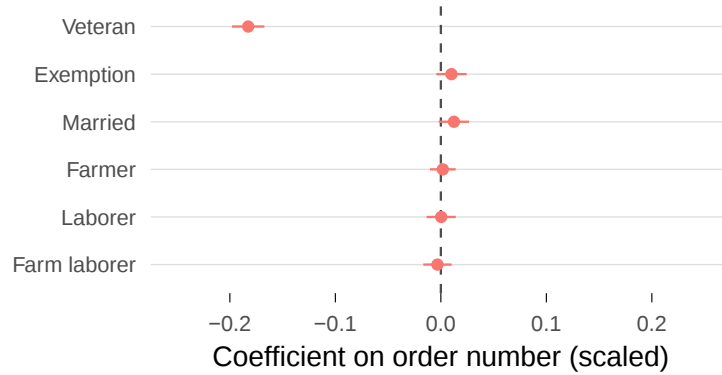


Figure 3: Relevance and Exogeneity of the Draft Lottery Instrument

Notes: Panel (a) shows the first-stage relationship between order number (scaled by the total registrants in an individual's board) and veteran status, as determined by information from the 1930 census, the Veterans Administration Master Index (VAMI), and Army Transport Ship lists (ATS). The unit of observation is an individual draft registrant. The slope and heteroskedasticity-robust standard error are displayed in the bottom right. Panel (b) shows estimates from separate OLS regressions of various registrant characteristics on order number (scaled by the total number of registrants in an individual's board). All outcomes are standardized. Regressions control for birth year, state of birth, and draft board fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered by serial number. Horizontal bars are 95% confidence intervals.

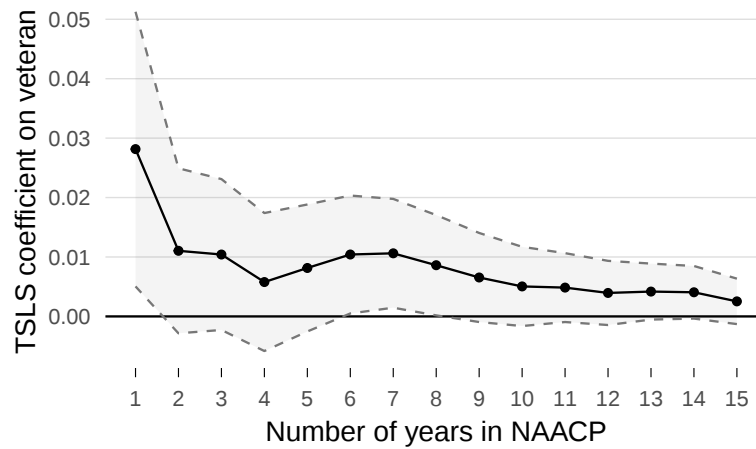


Figure 4: Effect of Military Service on NAACP Membership Duration

Notes: This figure shows estimates from separate TSLS regressions of NAACP membership duration on veteran status. Outcomes are indicator variables equal to one if the individual was in the NAACP for $\geq N$ years, where N is the difference between the latest and earliest years that an individual is observed in the NAACP rosters. The unit of observation is an individual draft registrant. Veteran status is instrumented with the individual's order number, scaled by the number of registrants in his board. Standard errors are clustered by serial number, and the shaded region is a 95% confidence interval. Figure A10 shows a similar pattern when we examine the number of times an individual is observed in the NAACP rosters.

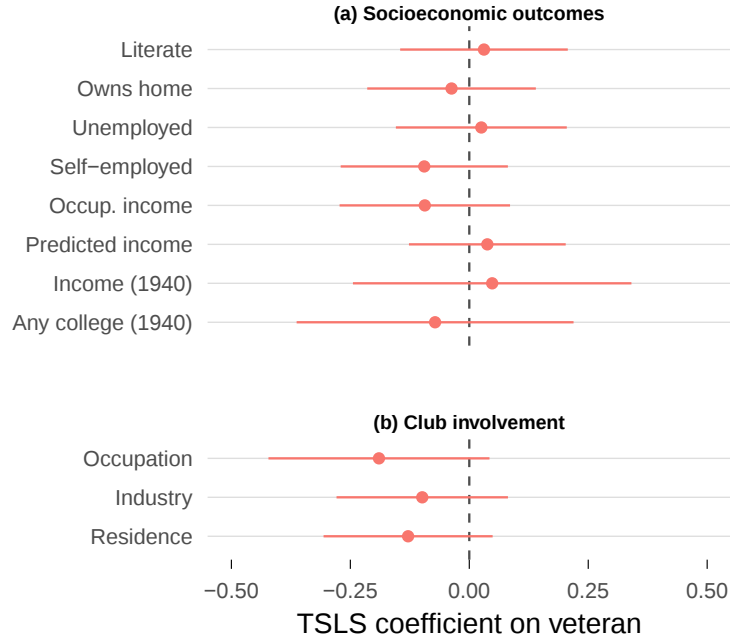


Figure 5: Effect of Military Service on Socioeconomic Outcomes and Club Involvement

Notes: This figure shows estimates from separate TSLS regressions where the unit of observation is an individual draft registrant. All regressions control for birth year, state of birth, and draft board fixed effects as well as prewar occupation and the interaction of exemption claim and marital status. All outcomes are standardized. Unless otherwise noted, outcomes are from the 1930 census. The occupational income score is from IPUMS and is based on median wages by occupation in 1950. We additionally predict income in 1930, as the 1930 census did not record income directly. To do so, we follow Abramitzky et al. (2021): first, we regress wage and salary income in the 1940 census on age and age squared; state, census region, and occupation fixed effects; and interactions of coarse (one-digit) occupation and census region, for Black men ages 30 to 50 in 1940. Then, we use this regression to predict income in the 1930 census. For the subset of individuals whom we link to the 1940 census, we also show effects on wage and salary income in 1940 and whether the individual attended at least one year of college (measured in 1940). For club involvement, “occupation” is an indicator variable that is one if an individual is an official of a “lodge, society, union, etc.”; “industry” is an indicator variable that is one if an individual’s industry is “nonprofit membership organizations”; and “residence” is an indicator variable that is one if an individual lives in a YMCA or a club. Standard errors are clustered by serial number, and horizontal bars are 95% confidence intervals.

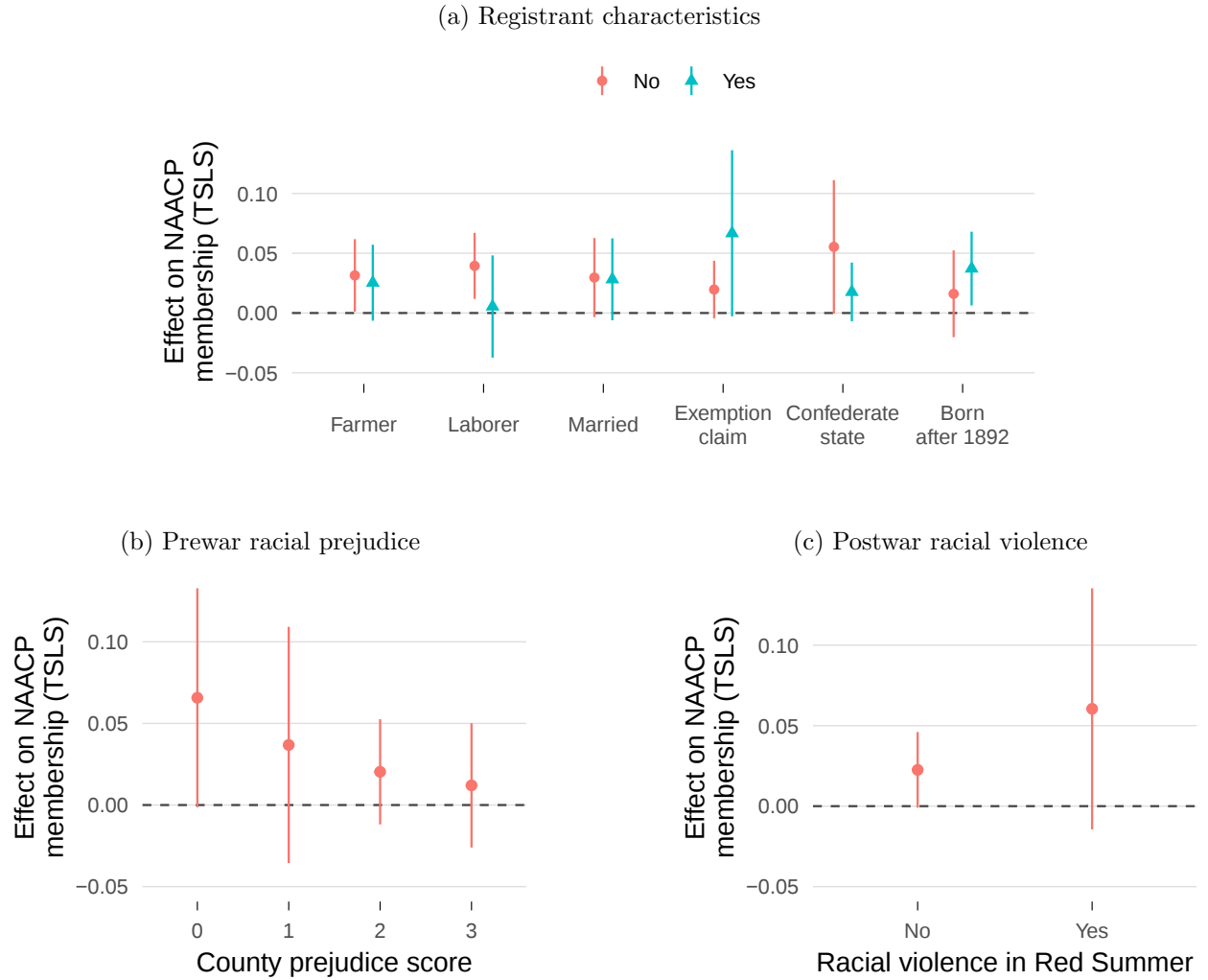


Figure 6: Heterogeneous Effects on NAACP Membership by Individual and County Characteristics

Notes: These figures show estimates from separate TSLS regressions of NAACP membership on veteran status, where veteran status is instrumented with the individual's order number, scaled by the number of registrants in his board. Panel (a) splits the sample by prewar registrant characteristics. Panel (b) splits the sample by county prejudice score, which increments by one if a registrant's county is located in a former Confederate state, had a Confederate monument by 1914, or experienced a lynching between 1880 and 1910. The former Confederate states are Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia. Panel (c) splits the sample by counties that did not versus did experience racial violence during the Red Summer of 1919. All regressions control for birth year, state of birth, and draft board fixed effects as well as prewar occupation and the interaction of exemption claim and marital status (when possible). The unit of observation is an individual draft registrant. Standard errors are clustered by serial number, and vertical bars are 95% confidence intervals.

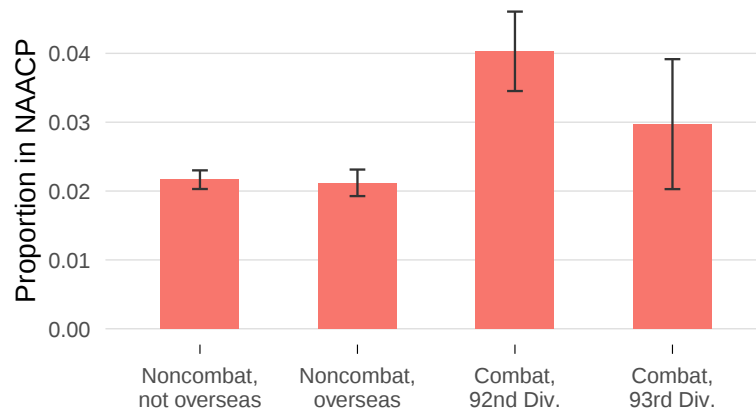


Figure 7: NAACP Membership by Wartime Experience

Notes: This figure shows the NAACP membership rate in four mutually exclusive groups of veterans: veterans who were not matched to the ATS lists (i.e., noncombatants in the U.S.), veterans who were matched to the ATS lists and were part of a division other than the 92nd or 93rd (i.e., noncombatants in France), and veterans who were part of the 92nd or 93rd divisions (i.e., combatants in France under U.S. and French command, respectively). Vertical bars are 95% confidence intervals. Figure A16 shows similar patterns when controlling for registrant characteristics.

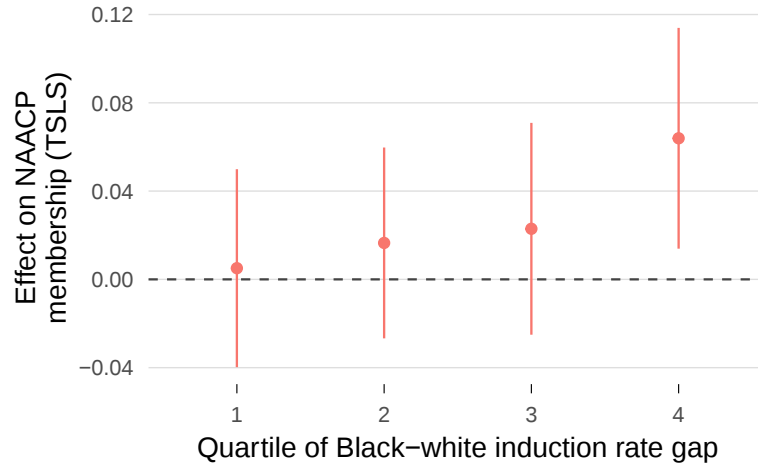


Figure 8: Heterogeneous Effects on NAACP Membership by Board Discrimination

Notes: This figure shows estimates from separate TSLS regressions of NAACP membership on veteran status, splitting the sample by draft board discrimination. Black induction rates are determined from the share of veterans in our matched sample of Black draft cards. We infer white induction rates by subtracting the number of Black draftees and registrants in each board from the total number of inductions and registrants. Quartiles are defined at the card level by the difference in Black and white induction rates at each registrant's board. All regressions control for birth year, state of birth, and draft board fixed effects as well as prewar occupation and the interaction of exemption claim and marital status. The unit of observation is an individual draft registrant. Standard errors are clustered by serial number, and vertical bars are 95% confidence intervals.

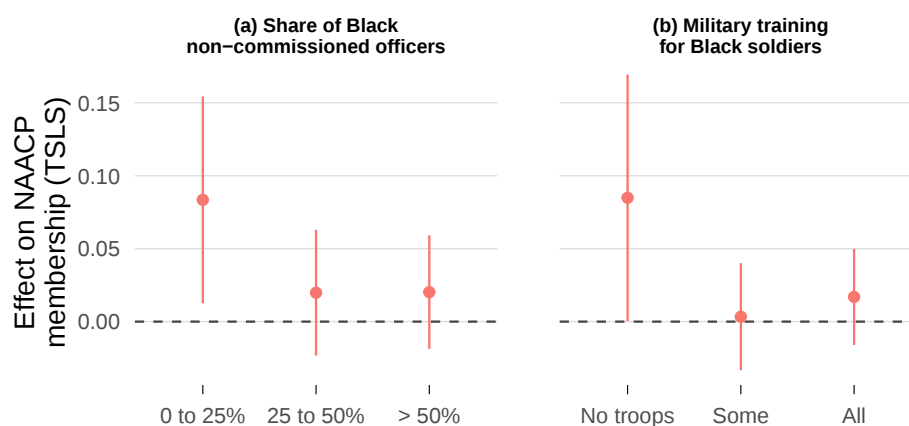


Figure 9: Heterogeneous Effects on NAACP Membership by Camp Discrimination

Notes: This figure shows estimates from separate TSLS regressions of NAACP membership on veteran status, splitting the sample by measures of camp discrimination. The share of Black non-commissioned officers and the share of Black soldiers that received training in each camp are derived from reports on “Negro Subversion” produced by the Military Intelligence Division; see Section 6 for more details. All regressions control for birth year, state of birth, and draft board fixed effects as well as prewar occupation and the interaction of exemption claim and marital status. The unit of observation is an individual draft registrant. Standard errors are clustered by serial number, and vertical bars are 95% confidence intervals.

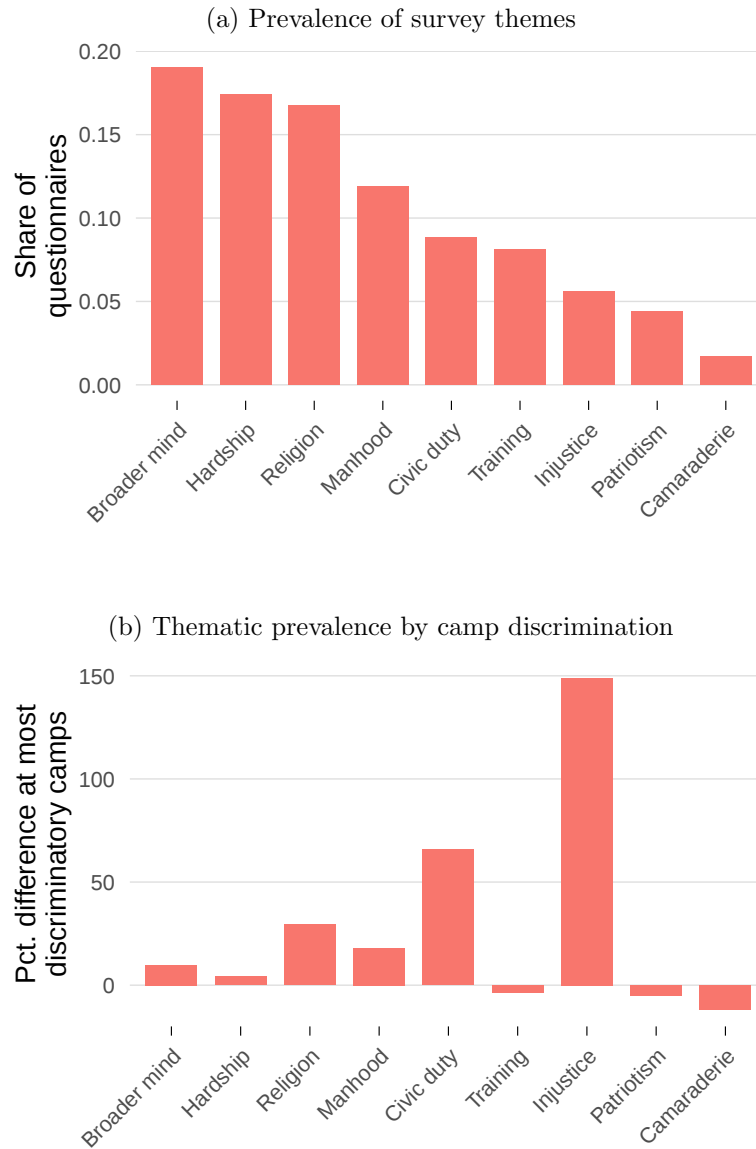


Figure 10: Veteran Survey Responses

Notes: Panel (a) shows the themes discussed in veteran surveys from Virginia and Connecticut, ordered by prevalence. Themes are not mutually exclusive and a given survey may mention several themes. Panel (b) shows the difference in theme prevalence among survey respondents who attended the most discriminatory military camps (i.e., those attending camps with 0 to 25% of Black non-commissioned officers or camps where no Black troops received military training) relative to respondents who attended other camps. The sample includes surveys returned by Black Army veterans with non-missing answers to our questions of interest. Appendix Table A9 provides representative examples of each theme.

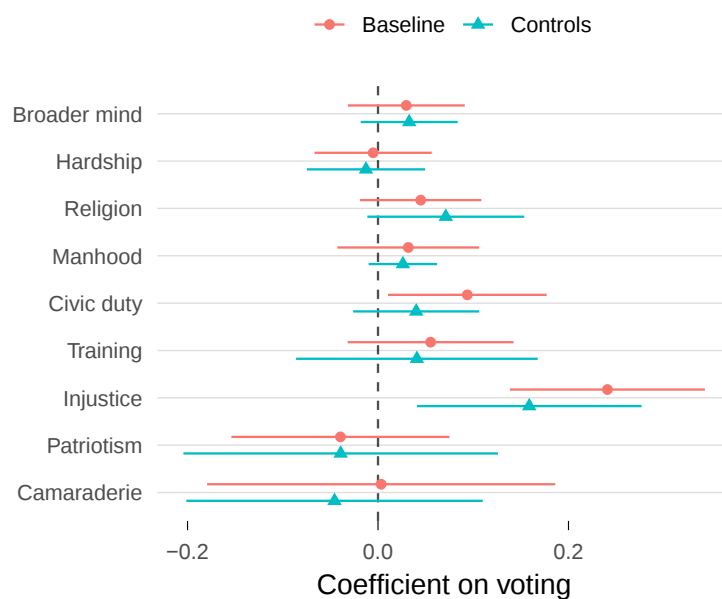


Figure 11: Thematic Predictors of Civic Engagement

Notes: This figure shows estimates from multivariate OLS regressions of an indicator of self-reported voter participation on indicators for each of the survey themes. Orange markers correspond to the baseline regression without controls. Blue markers include controls for birth year, birth state, prior military experience, and county of residence. The sample includes surveys returned by Black Army veterans with non-missing answers to our questions of interest. Standard errors are heteroskedasticity-robust, and horizontal bars are 95% confidence intervals. Appendix Table A9 provides representative examples of each theme.

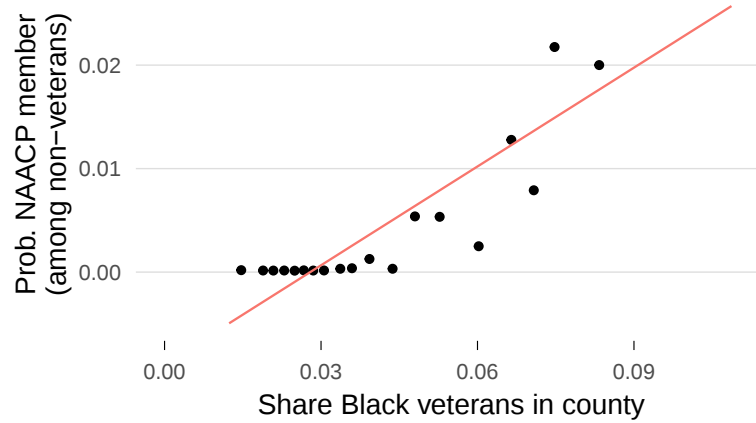


Figure 12: NAACP Membership Among Non-Veterans

Notes: This figure shows a binned scatter plot of the relationship between the share of veterans among the population of Black men in each county as of the 1930 census (on the horizontal axis) and the probability that a Black man who is a non-veteran is an NAACP member (on the vertical axis). Veteran status is determined using the 1930 census, VAMI, and ATS lists.

Table 1: Summary Statistics

(a) Draft cards			(b) NAACP members		
	All (1)	Linked (2)		NAACP (1)	Not NAACP (2)
Age in 1917	25.14 (3.06)	25.31 (3.10)	Age in 1930	40.36 (11.91)	39.58 (13.92)
Exemption claim	0.27 (0.44)	0.28 (0.45)	Employed	0.88 (0.32)	0.86 (0.34)
Married in 1917	0.53 (0.50)	0.56 (0.50)	Married in 1930	0.74 (0.44)	0.72 (0.45)
Farmer	0.30 (0.46)	0.31 (0.46)	Literate	0.96 (0.19)	0.79 (0.41)
Laborer	0.26 (0.44)	0.24 (0.43)	Occup. income	24.81 (12.28)	17.64 (6.66)
Farm laborer	0.09 (0.28)	0.08 (0.28)	Owens home	0.41 (0.49)	0.25 (0.43)
Veteran (VAMI/ATS)	0.20 (0.40)	0.22 (0.42)	Veteran (VAMI/ATS)	0.03 (0.18)	0.01 (0.12)
Veteran (Census)	—	0.24 (0.43)	Veteran (Census)	0.14 (0.34)	0.08 (0.26)
Veteran (Any)	—	0.35 (0.48)	Veteran (Any)	0.15 (0.35)	0.08 (0.28)
Observations	825,571	204,923	Observations	32,930	3,199,645

Notes: Panel (a) shows summary statistics for our sample of draft cards for Black men from the first WWI draft registration. Column (1) shows the full sample of cards eligible to be linked, i.e., those with complete identifying information, birth years between 1880 and 1900, and for which we are able to retrieve the individual’s order number and assign them a serial number. Column (2) restricts the sample to our main analysis sample, i.e., cards that we link to the 1930 census. The “Veteran (Any)” measure is the union of the veteran measures from VAMI/ATS and from the 1930 census; thus, it is defined only for cards that we link to a census record. Panel (b) shows summary statistics for individuals in the 1930 census, restricted to Black men ages 21 and older. Column (1) shows individuals whom we link to NAACP membership records, and column (2) shows individuals whom we do not. Note that some individuals we identify as NAACP members were less than 21 years old as of the 1930 census. “Veteran (VAMI/ATS)” can only be equal to one for individuals in the census whom we link to a draft card (and subsequently to VAMI or ATS lists). Standard deviations are in parentheses. In Appendix Table A1, we restrict the sample from Panel (b) to individuals who were eligible for the first draft registration and who, as of the 1930 census, lived in an area for which we have NAACP rosters.

Table 2: Effect of Military Service on NAACP Membership – TSLS Results

	NAACP member				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Veteran	0.0270** (0.0114)	0.0276** (0.0115)	0.0281** (0.0118)	0.0282** (0.0118)	0.0231** (0.0117)
Draft board	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Birth year and state		✓	✓	✓	✓
Exemption claim × married			✓	✓	✓
Prewar occupation				✓	✓
County in 1930					✓
Observations	204,923	204,923	204,923	204,923	204,923
R ²	0.035	0.037	0.037	0.038	0.089
First stage <i>F</i> -statistic	534.0	544.8	564.6	565.1	554.2
Dep. var. mean (nonveterans)	0.0160	0.0160	0.0160	0.0160	0.0160
OLS coefficient	0.0044	0.0043	0.0037	0.0034	0.0017
OLS <i>t</i> -statistic	6.58	6.38	5.31	4.99	2.53

Notes: This table shows TSLS estimates from a regression of NAACP membership on veteran status, where veteran status is instrumented with the individual's order number, scaled by the number of registrants in his board. The unit of observation is an individual draft registrant. Standard errors are clustered by serial number and reported in parentheses. ***, **, and * indicate significance at the 1, 5, and 10 percent levels.

A Additional tables and figures

Form 1 805		REGISTRATION CARD/153/ No. 27	
1	Name in full	James Calloway	Age, in yrs. 25
2	Home address	Richmond Ark	
3	Date of birth	June - 2 - 1892	
4	Are you (1) a natural-born citizen, (2) a naturalized citizen, (3) an alien, (4) or have you declared your intention (specify which)?	Natural born citizen	
5	Where were you born?	Richmond Ark	
6	If not a citizen, of what country are you a citizen or subject?		
7	What is your present trade, occupation, or office?	Farming	
8	By whom employed?	Johnson & Dufoury, Ash Grove, Ark.	
9	Where employed?	Little River Co. Ark.	
10	Have you a father, mother, wife, child under 12, or a sister or brother under 12, solely dependent on you for support (specify which)?	Wife	
11	Married or single (which)?	Married	Race (specify which)? Negro
12	What military service have you had? Rank	None	branch None
	years	None	Nation or State None
12	Do you claim exemption from draft (specify grounds)?		
I affirm that I have verified above answers and that they are true.			
James Calloway			
(Signature or mark)			

Figure A1: Example World War I Draft Registration Card

Notes: This figure shows an example of a card from the first WWI draft registration wave, held in 1917. The stamped number in the top left (805) is the individual's serial number. The handwritten number in the top middle and bottom left (153) is the individual's order number, which corresponds to his position in the draft.

2199

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

3. MEMBERSHIP REPORT BLANK

Name of Branch Birmingham Branch Date February 6, 1936

The following members have been enrolled since our last report on (date) _____

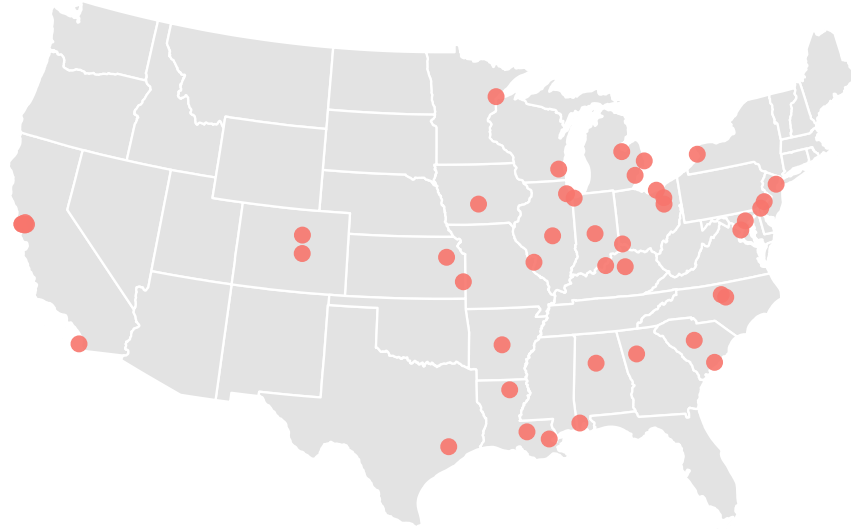
NAME	ADDRESS	Full by Number	Enrolled by Branch	To Richard Allen Branch
1 Mr. John M. Coar	812 Williams Street	100	50	50
2 Mrs. John M. Coar	812 Williams St.	100	50	50
3 Mr. W. J. Hamur	328 1/2 N. 18th St.	100	50	50
4 Mr. E. W. Thompson	Pittsview, Alabama.	100	50	50
5 Mrs. O. B. Howe	204 N. 9th Avenue	100	50	50
6 Mrs. I. G. Blaylock	204 N. 9th Avenue	100	50	50
7 Mr. L. E. Harris	515 N. 4th Court	100	50	50
8 Mr. Gesner Clark	2529 N. 16th St.	100	50	50
9 Mr. S. M. Martin	1015 N. 16th St.	100	50	50
10 Mrs. M. L. M. Hooks	1530 N. 5th Avenue	100	50	50
11 Mr. Richard M. Neely, Jr.	316 N. 10th Avenue	100	50	50
12 Mr. E. F. McCarroll	800 N. 12th Avenue Sta. B'ham	100	50	50
13 Mr. Wm. Haygood	5504 Ave. I, Vinesville, Ala.	100	50	50
14 Rev. S. S. Washington	530 N. 14th St.	100	50	50
15 Miss Pansy Holloway	505 So. 14th St.	100	50	50
16 Mr. U. Bernard Nichols	1201 N. 9th St.	100	50	50
17 Mrs. S. A. Hunt	804 Dillard Avenue	100	50	50
18 Rev. M. Thornton	1111 N. 7th Avenue	100	50	50
19 Miss Alma Bohannon	424 So. 1st St.	100	50	50
20 Mr. P. S. Wainry	1808 Ave. K., Ensley, Ala	100	50	50
21 W. T. Woods, G. M.	P. O. Box 377,	100	50	50
22 Mr. Luther B. Hill	715 N. 29th St.	100	50	50
23 Rev. L. A. Smith	2726 6th Ave., Bessemer, Ala.	100	50	50
24 Mr. Benjamin W. Austin	Dunbar High Sch., Bessemer, Ala	100	50	50
25 Miss Mildred Verner	Dunbar High Sch., Bessemer, Ala	100	50	50
		25 00	12 50	12 50

(Make report out in duplicate, using typewriter and carbon paper if possible, keeping duplicate copy for your files) (See other side)

Figure A2: Example NAACP Roster

Notes: This figure shows a 1936 roster for the Birmingham, Alabama NAACP branch.

(a) Branch locations from NAACP rosters



(b) Branch locations from Estrada and Gregory (n.d.)

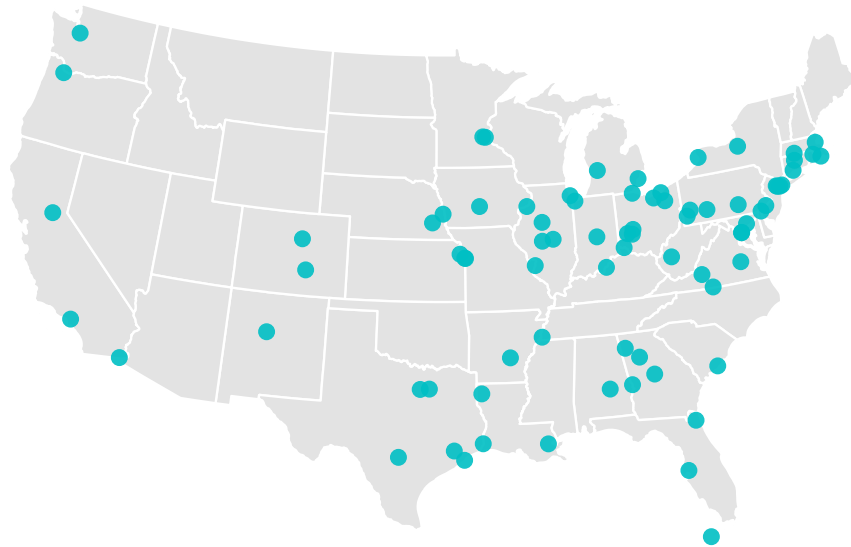


Figure A3: Locations of NAACP Branches

Notes: Panel (a) shows the locations of NAACP branches in our sample of rosters. Only branch locations with at least 100 records are shown. Panel (b) shows the locations of NAACP branches from Estrada and Gregory (n.d.). Only branches with at least 100 members in any year before 1941 are shown.

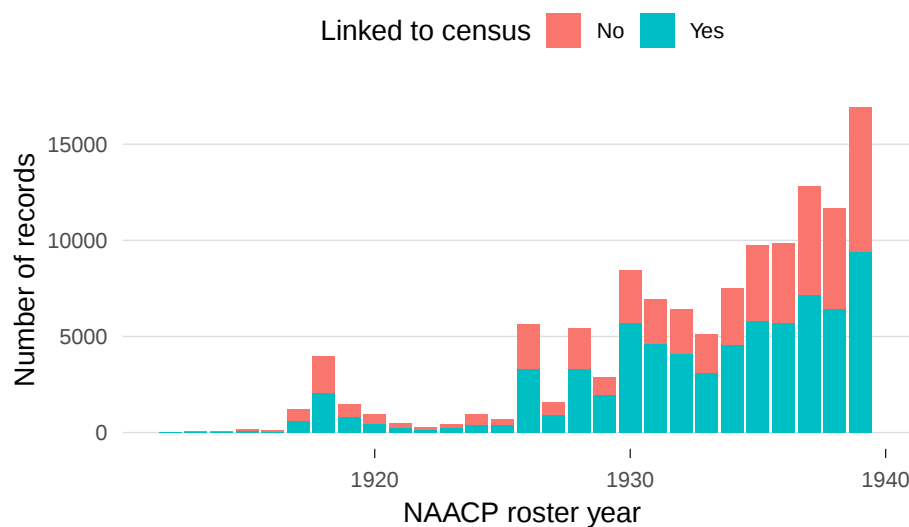


Figure A4: Number of NAACP Records by Year

Notes: This figure shows the number of NAACP records each year in our sample of rosters. The blue bars measure the number of records that we successfully link to the 1930 census, either directly or through the 1940 census and subsequently back to 1930 using links from Abramitzky et al. (2020), while the orange bars measure the records that we do not link.

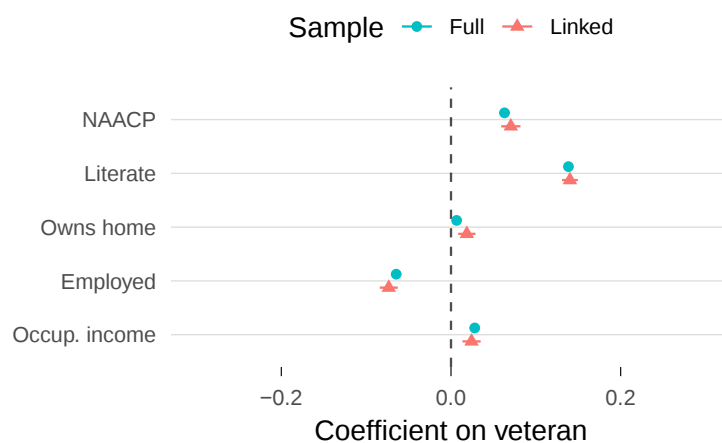


Figure A5: Full vs. Linked Samples: Relationship Between Veteran Status and 1930 Outcomes

Notes: This figure shows OLS estimates of the bivariate relationship between veteran status and various outcomes in the 1930 census. In blue, we show estimates for all Black men born between 1886 and 1896. In orange, we show estimates for our sample of Black men linked to a draft card. To better compare the two samples, veteran status is based on the 1930 census only and does not incorporate additional information from VAMI or ATS. Outcomes are standardized. The unit of observation is an individual in the 1930 census. Horizontal bars are 95% confidence intervals using heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors.

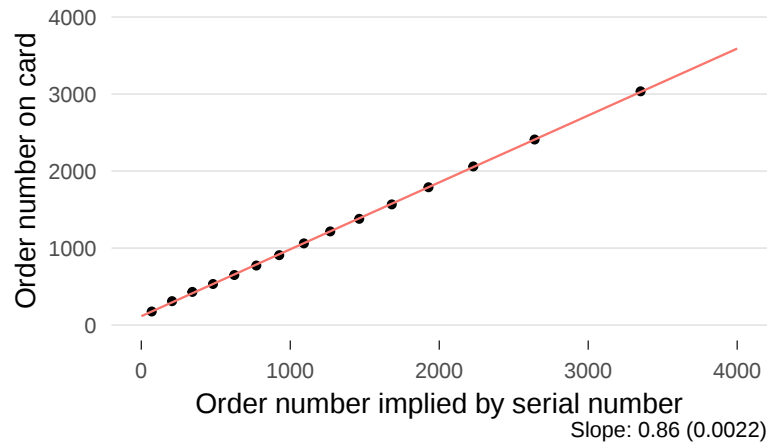


Figure A6: Order Number on Cards and Order Number Predicted from Serial Number

Notes: This figure shows a binned scatter plot of the relationship between the *actual* order number written or stamped on the draft cards and the order number that we *predict* using the serial number on the draft cards. The unit of observation is an individual draft registrant. The slope and heteroskedasticity-robust standard error are displayed in the bottom right.

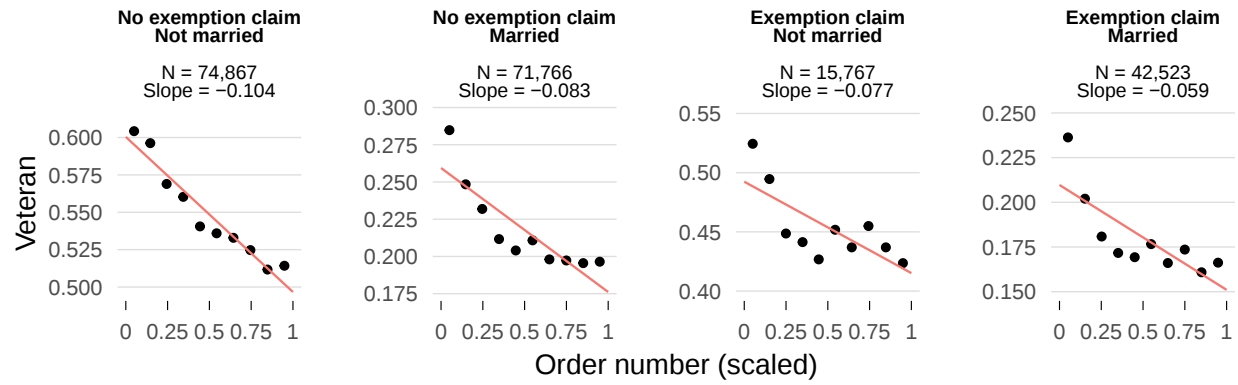


Figure A7: First-Stage Relationship By Registrant Type

Notes: This figure shows binned scatter plots of the first-stage relationship between veteran status and order number (scaled by the total registrants in an individual's board) separately for each of four mutually exclusive groups defined by exemption claim and marital status. The unit of observation is an individual draft registrant. The number of observations in each group and the slope of the first-stage relationship are shown at the top of each panel.

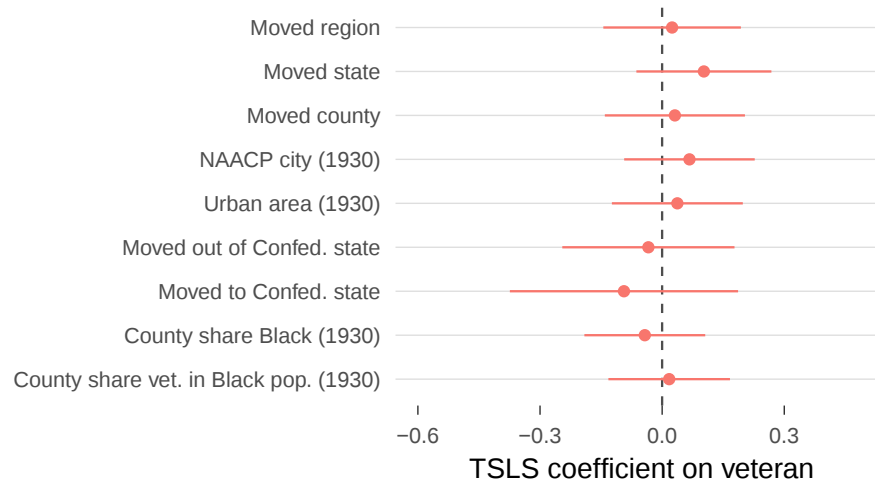


Figure A8: Effect of Military Service on Residential Choice and Migration

Notes: This figure shows estimates from separate TSLS regressions of postwar residence on veteran status, where veteran status is instrumented with the individual's order number, scaled by the number of registrants in his board. The first seven outcomes are standardized indicators for whether the registrant: (1) lived in different census regions in 1917 and 1930, (2) lived in different states in 1917 and 1930, (3) lived in different counties in 1917 and 1930, (4) lived in a city with an NAACP chapter in 1930, (5) lived in an urban area in 1930, as defined by the Census Bureau, (6) lived in 1930 in a state that was *not* formerly part of the Confederacy (defined only for individuals living in 1917 in a former Confederate state), (7) lived in 1930 in a former Confederate state (defined only for individuals living in a non-former-Confederate state in 1917). The remaining two outcomes are standardized measures of (8) the share of Black people in the county and (9) the share of veterans among Black people in the county. The former Confederate states are Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia. The unit of observation is an individual draft registrant. Standard errors are clustered by serial number, and horizontal bars are 95% confidence intervals.

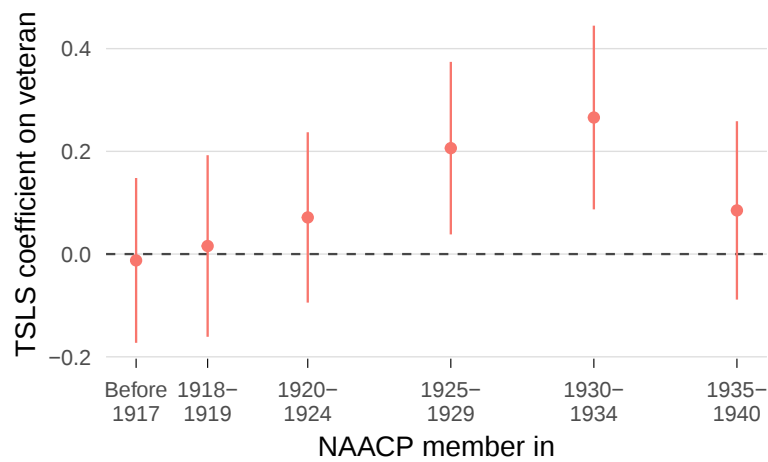


Figure A9: Effect of Military Service on NAACP Membership Timing

Notes: This figure shows estimates from separate TSLS regressions where the outcome is an indicator variable that is one if the individual appeared in the NAACP rosters within the indicated years. Each of these outcome variables is standardized to account for different base rates across time. An individual is considered to be in the NAACP in year y if the earliest year they are observed in the rosters is $\leq y$ and the last year they are observed in the rosters is $\geq y$. The unit of observation is an individual draft registrant and veteran status is instrumented with the individual's order number, scaled by the number of registrants in his board. Standard errors are clustered by serial number, and vertical bars are 95% confidence intervals.

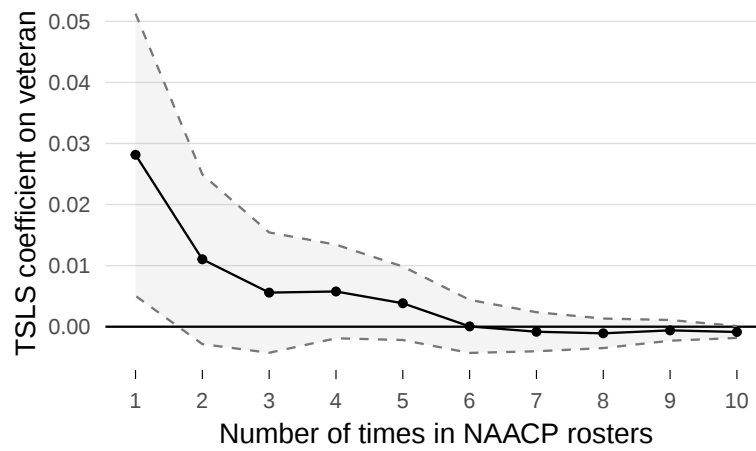


Figure A10: Effect of Military Service on Number of Appearances in NAACP Rosters

Notes: This figure shows estimates from separate TSLS regressions where the outcome is an indicator variable that is one if the individual appeared in the NAACP rosters $\geq N$ times. The unit of observation is an individual draft registrant and veteran status is instrumented with the individual's order number, scaled by the number of registrants in his board. Standard errors are clustered by serial number, and the shaded region is a 95% confidence interval.

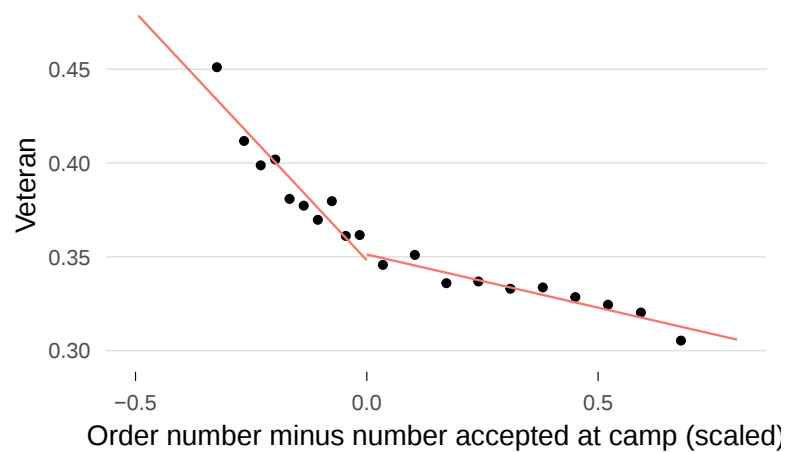


Figure A11: First-Stage Relationship Using Recentered Order Number

Notes: This figure shows the relationship between veteran status and the individual's order number minus the number of men accepted at camp from his board, scaled by the total registrants in that board. The unit of observation is an individual draft registrant.

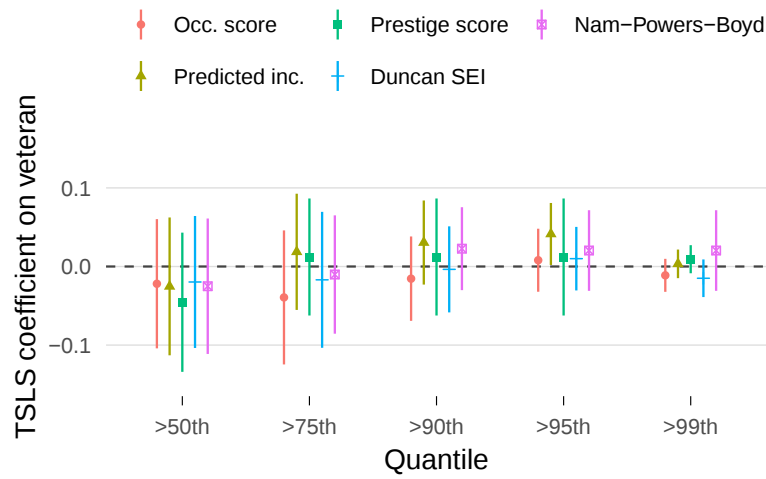


Figure A12: Effect of Military Service on Upper-Tail Economic Status

Notes: This figure shows estimates from separate TSLS regressions of measures of economic status on veteran status. Outcomes are indicators equal to one if an individual's economic status in 1930 exceeds a given quantile. Measures of economic status include: occupational income score, occupational prestige score, Nam-Powers-Boyd occupational status, predicted income per Abramitzky et al. (2021), and Duncan's socioeconomic index. The unit of observation is an individual draft registrant and veteran status is instrumented with the individual's order number, scaled by the number of registrants in his board. Standard errors are clustered by serial number, and the vertical bars represent 95% confidence interval.

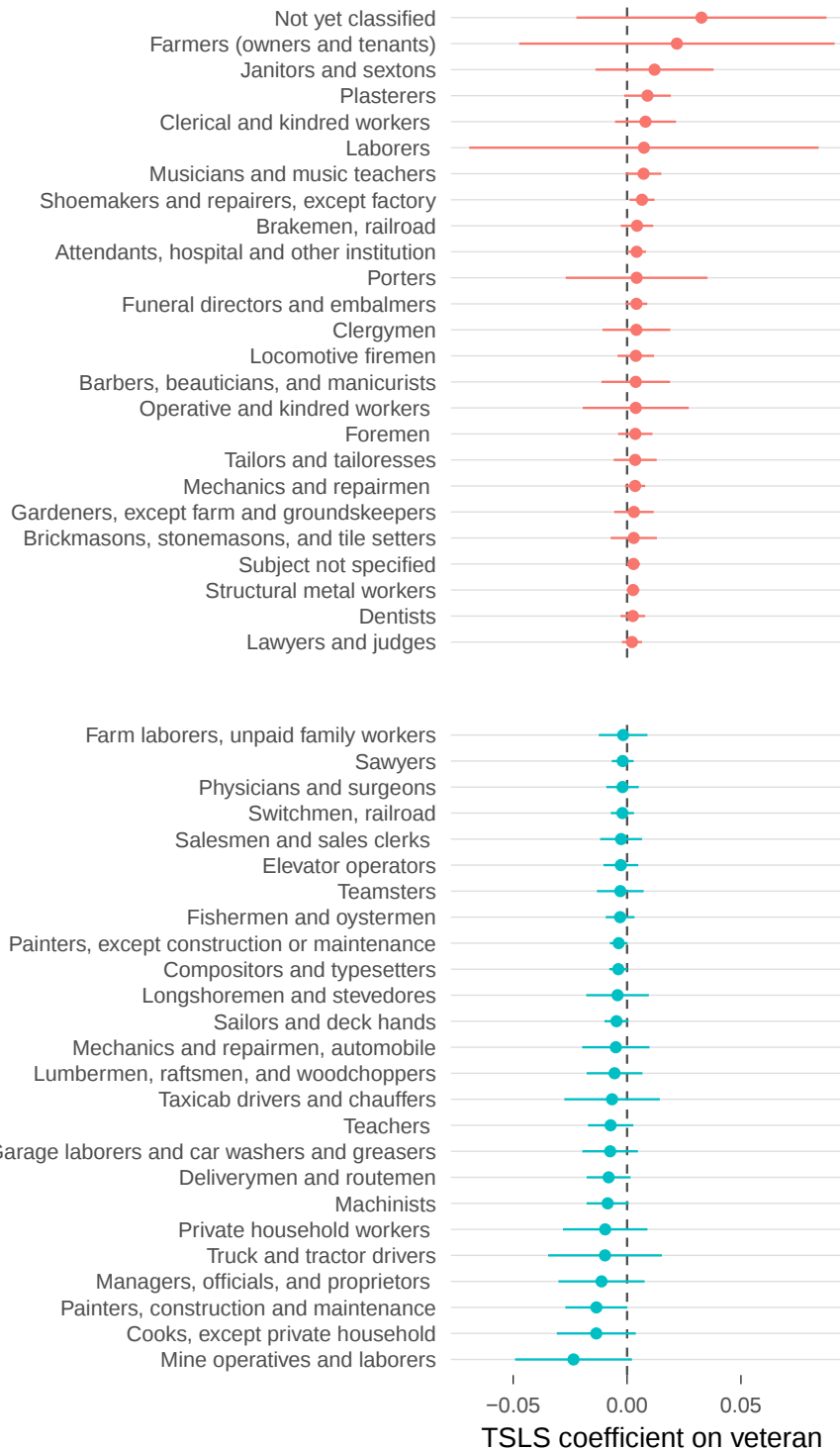


Figure A13: Effect of Military Service on Occupation Choice

Notes: This figure shows TSLS estimates of the effects of military service on an individual's occupation in 1930. We show the occupations with the 25 largest and 25 smallest estimates. The unit of observation is an individual draft registrant and veteran status is instrumented with the individual's order number, scaled by the number of registrants in his board. Standard errors are clustered by serial number, and horizontal bars are 95% confidence intervals.

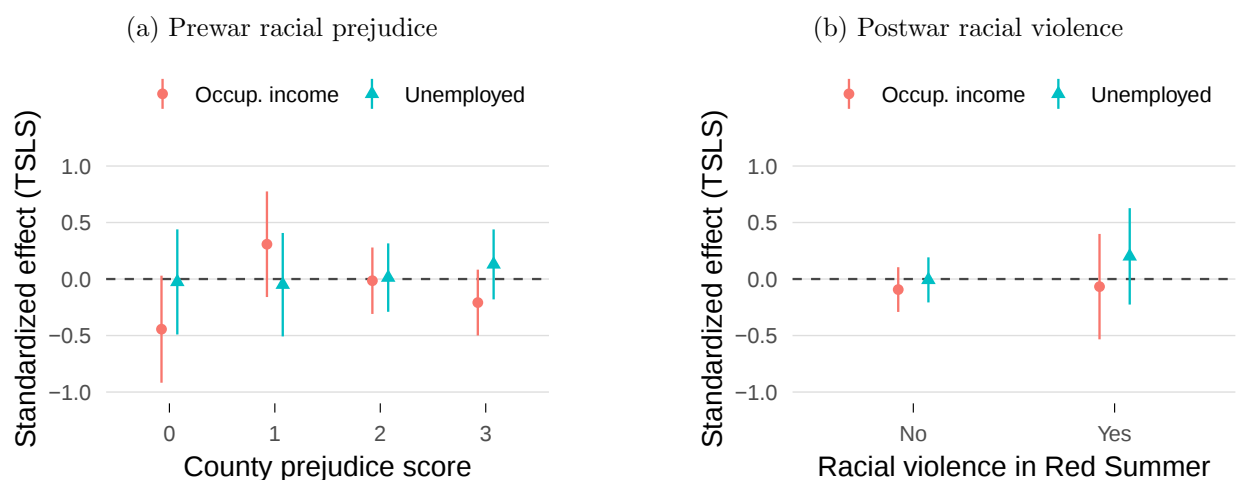


Figure A14: Heterogeneous Effects on Economic Status by County Characteristics

Notes: This figure shows estimates from TSLS regressions where the outcome is occupational income score (in orange) or an indicator for whether the individual was unemployed (in blue), both from the 1930 census. Both outcomes are standardized. Panel (a) splits the sample by county prejudice score, which increments by one if a county is located in a former Confederate state, had a Confederate monument by 1914, or experienced a lynching between 1880 and 1910. Panel (b) splits the sample into registrants from counties that did not versus did experience racial violence during Red Summer in 1919. All regressions control for birth year, state of birth, and draft board fixed effects as well as prewar occupation and the interaction of exemption claim and marital status. The unit of observation is an individual draft registrant. Standard errors are clustered by serial number, and vertical bars are 95% confidence intervals. The former Confederate states are Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia.

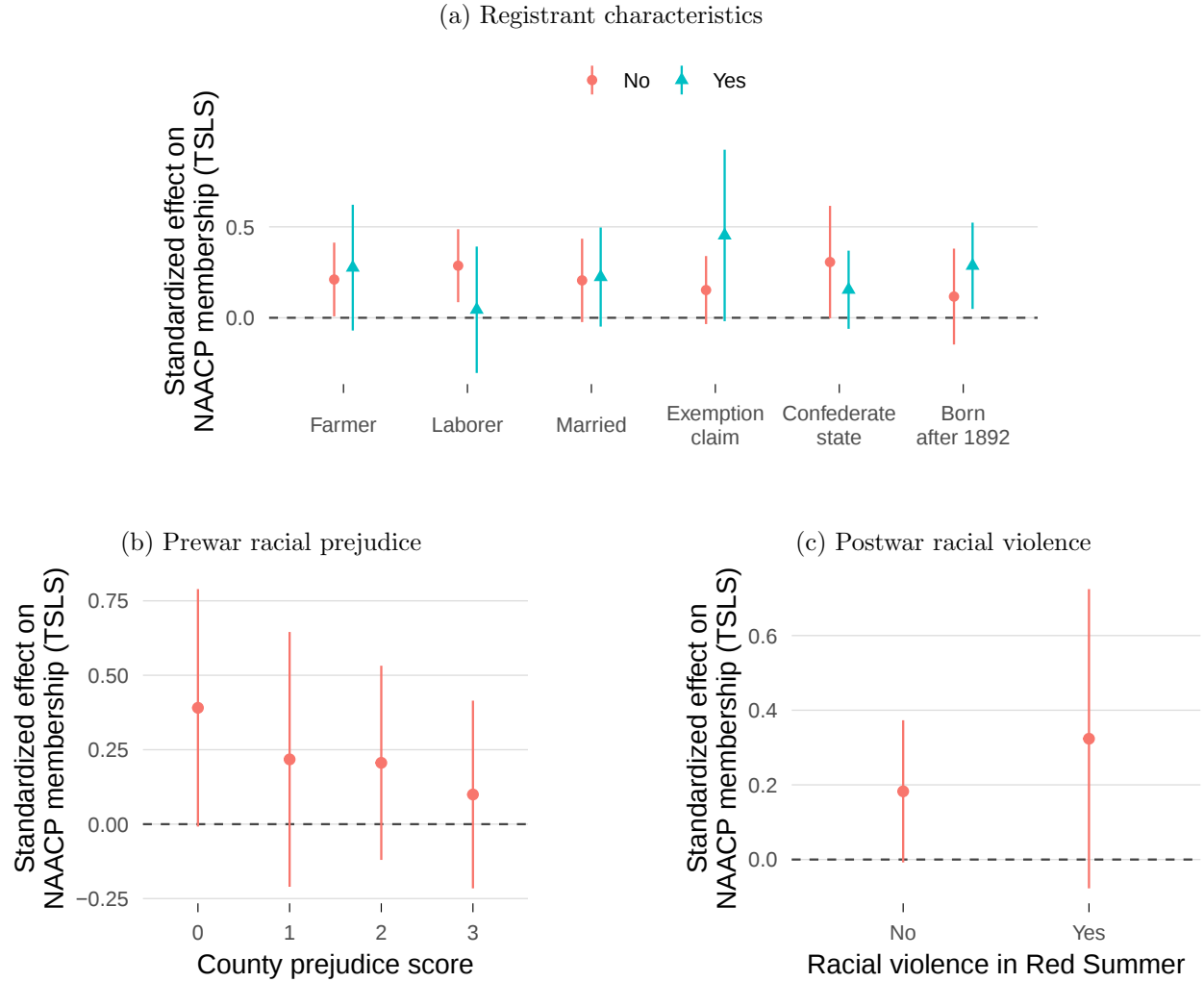


Figure A15: Heterogeneous Effects on NAACP Membership by Individual and County Characteristics – Standardized Effects

Notes: Panel (a) shows estimates from separate TSLS regressions, splitting the sample by registrant characteristics. Panel (b) splits the sample by county prejudice score, which increments by one if a county is located in a former Confederate state, had a Confederate monument by 1914, or experienced a lynching between 1880 and 1910. Panel (c) splits the sample into registrants from counties that did not versus did experience racial violence during Red Summer in 1919. These estimates correspond to those in Figure 6, except that in each regression, NAACP membership is standardized within the specified sub-sample to account for baseline differences in NAACP membership across characteristics. All regressions control for birth year, state of birth, and draft board fixed effects as well as prewar occupation and the interaction of exemption and marital status (when possible). The unit of observation is an individual draft registrant. Standard errors are clustered by serial number, and vertical bars are 95% confidence intervals. The former Confederate states are Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia.

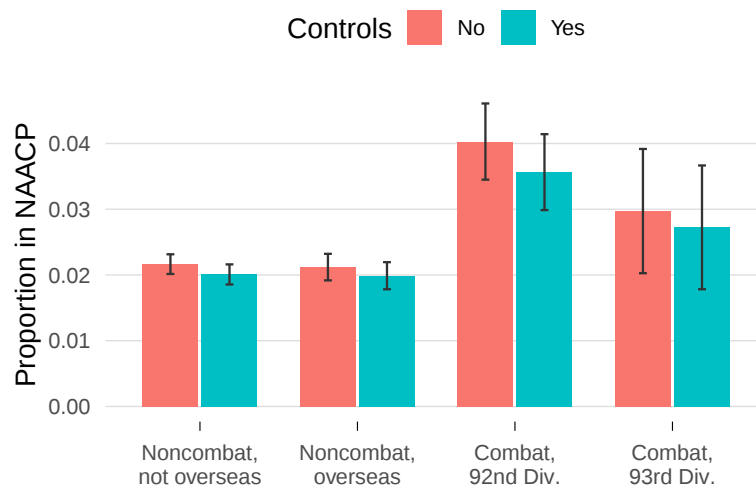


Figure A16: NAACP Membership by Wartime Experience – Adjusted for Card Characteristics

Notes: This figure shows the raw and adjusted NAACP membership rates in four mutually exclusive groups of veterans corresponding to Figure 7. Adjusted estimates are coefficients from an OLS regression of an indicator for NAACP membership on an indicator for each type of military experience, controlling for age, the interaction of exemption claim and marital status, and prewar occupation. We show these coefficients added to the control means for each group. Vertical bars are 95% confidence intervals using heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors.

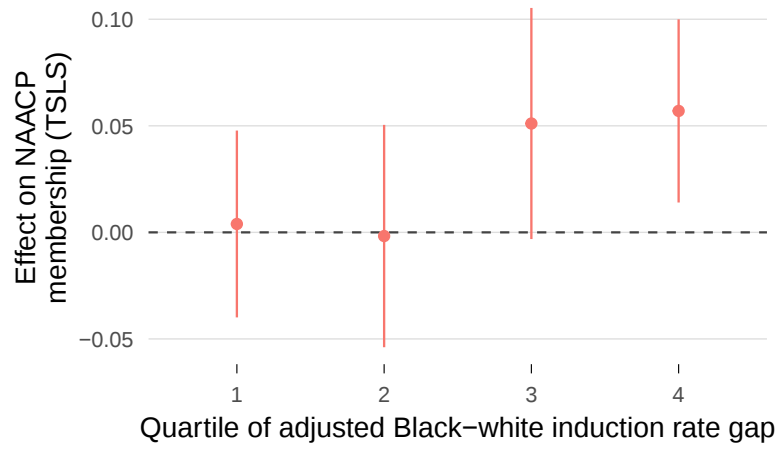


Figure A17: Heterogeneous Effects on NAACP Membership by Board Discrimination – Adjusted for Marriage and Occupation

Notes: This figure shows estimates from separate TSLS regressions of NAACP membership on veteran status, splitting the sample by draft board discrimination, adjusted for local racial disparities in marriage rates and agricultural employment. Black induction rates are determined from the share of veterans in our matched sample of Black draft cards. We infer white induction rates by subtracting the number of Black draftees and registrants in each board from the total number of inductions and registrants. These rates are adjusted to account for the county-level Black-white difference in marriage and agricultural employment (farmers and farm laborers) in the 1920 census. Quartiles are defined at the card level by the difference in Black and white induction rates at each registrant's board. The unit of observation is an individual draft registrant and veteran status is instrumented with the individual's order number, scaled by the number of registrants in his board. Standard errors are clustered by serial number, and vertical bars are 95% confidence intervals.

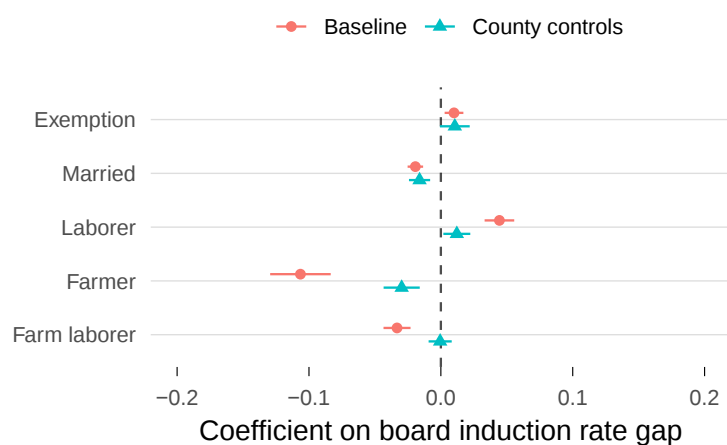


Figure A18: Veteran Characteristics by Board Discrimination

Notes: This figure shows estimates from separate OLS regressions of various registrant characteristics on the Black-white difference in the induction rate at that registrant's draft board. The sample is restricted to veterans, and the induction rate disparity is standardized. In orange, we show estimates without controls. In blue, we show estimates controlling for county characteristics measured in 1920: population, farm household share, rural share, and literacy rate. The unit of observation is an individual draft registrant. Horizontal bars are 95% confidence intervals using standard errors clustered by draft board.

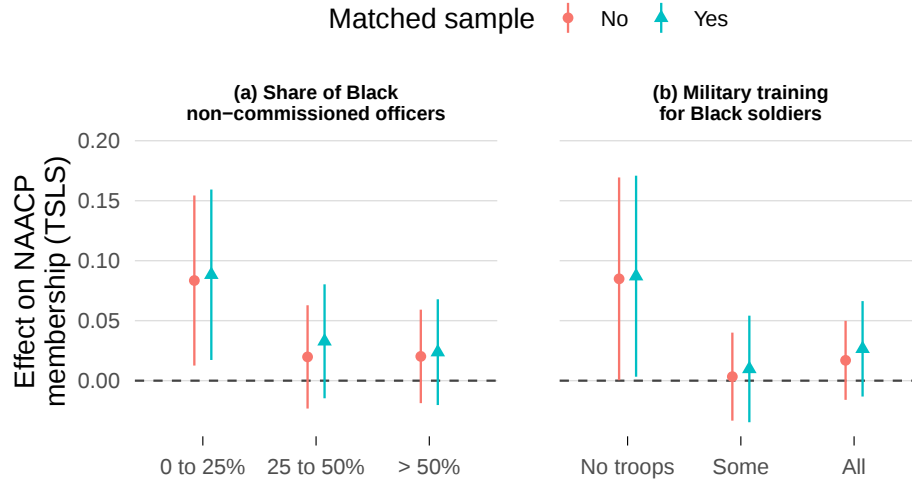


Figure A19: Heterogeneous Effects on NAACP Membership by Camp Discrimination – Matched Samples

Notes: This figure shows estimates from separate TSLS regressions of NAACP membership on veteran status, splitting the sample by measures of camp discrimination. In orange, we show our main estimates using actual and predicted camp assignments as described in Section 6. In blue, we show estimates from matched samples, constructed as follows: for each registrant assigned to the most discriminatory camps (i.e., camps with 0 to 25% Black officer share and camps where no Black troops received training), we select all registrants assigned to less discriminatory camps of the same age quintile, marital status, occupation, exemption claim, and quartile of the Black-white difference in board induction rates. Observations are weighted by one over the number of matches to maintain sample balance on match characteristics. The share of Black non-commissioned officers and the share of Black soldiers that received training in each camp are derived from reports on “Negro Subversion” produced by the Military Intelligence Division; see Section 6 for more details. The unit of observation is an individual draft registrant and veteran status is instrumented with the individual’s order number, scaled by the number of registrants in his board. Standard errors are clustered by serial number, and vertical bars are 95% confidence intervals.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

What was your attitude toward military service in general and toward your call in particular?.....

I did not like it on account of conditions fostered upon us on
account of color prejudice.

What were the effects of camp experiences in the United States upon yourself—mental and physical?

Mentally it created a more ardent spirit to conquer disadvantages.
Physically, I was weakened internally.

What were the effects upon yourself of your overseas experience?

It gave me new ideas and thoughts

What effect, if any, did your experience have on your religious belief?

None

If you took part in the fighting, what impressions were made upon you by this experience?

What has been the effect of all these experiences as contrasted with your state of mind before the war?

My thoughts are broader, purer and better now, than they were before
the war.

Photographs—If possible enclose one taken before entering the service and one taken afterwards in uniform, both signed and dated.

Additional data

Signed at Camp Lee on August 1

Page William West Engineer

The information contained in this record, unless otherwise indicated, was obtained from the following persons or sources:

Figure A20: Example Veteran Survey

Notes: This figure shows an example of a veteran survey from Virginia.

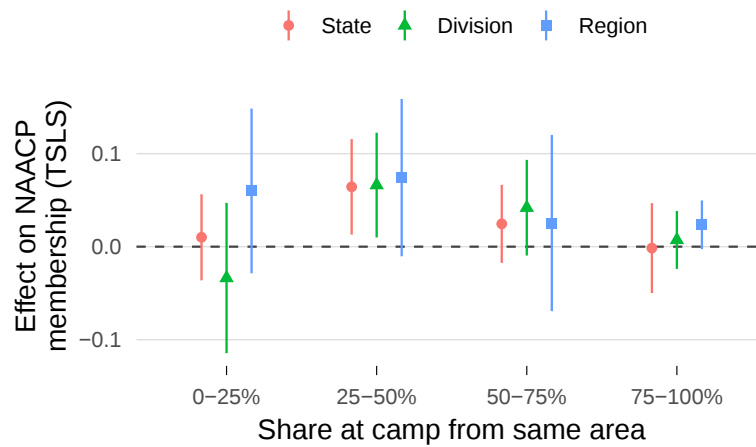


Figure A21: Heterogeneous Effects on NAACP Membership by Share of Camp from a Registrant's Area

Notes: This figure shows estimates from separate TSLS regressions where the unit of observation is an individual draft registrant and veteran status is instrumented with the individual's order number, scaled by the number of registrants in his board. We split the sample into four groups by the share of draftees at an individual's camp (excluding themselves) in our matched sample who registered in the same state (in orange), census division (in green), or census region (in blue). Standard errors are clustered by serial number, and vertical bars are 95% confidence intervals.

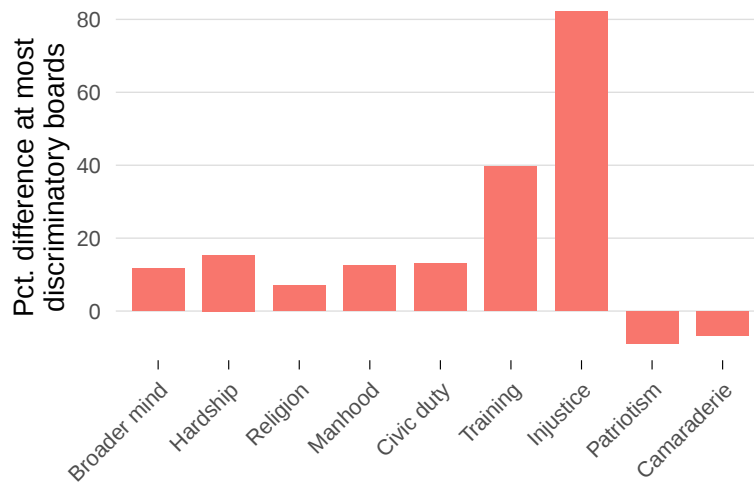


Figure A22: Thematic Prevalence by Board Discrimination

Notes: This figure shows the difference in theme prevalence among survey respondents from the most discriminatory draft boards (i.e., in the fourth quartile of the Black-white induction rate gap) relative to survey respondents from other boards. Like in Figure 8, Black induction rates are determined from the share of veterans in our matched sample of Black draft cards. We infer white induction rates by subtracting the number of Black draftees and registrants in each board from the total number of inductions and registrants. Quartiles are defined at the card level by the difference in Black and white induction rates at each registrant's board. Veteran surveys are identified by county or city, not draft board. Thus, if a county/city contains more than one draft board, we consider it "discriminatory" if any of the boards in that county/city are in the fourth quartile of the induction rate gap. Themes are not mutually exclusive and a given survey may mention several themes. The sample includes surveys returned by Black Army veterans with non-missing answers to our questions of interest. Appendix Table A9 provides representative examples of each theme.

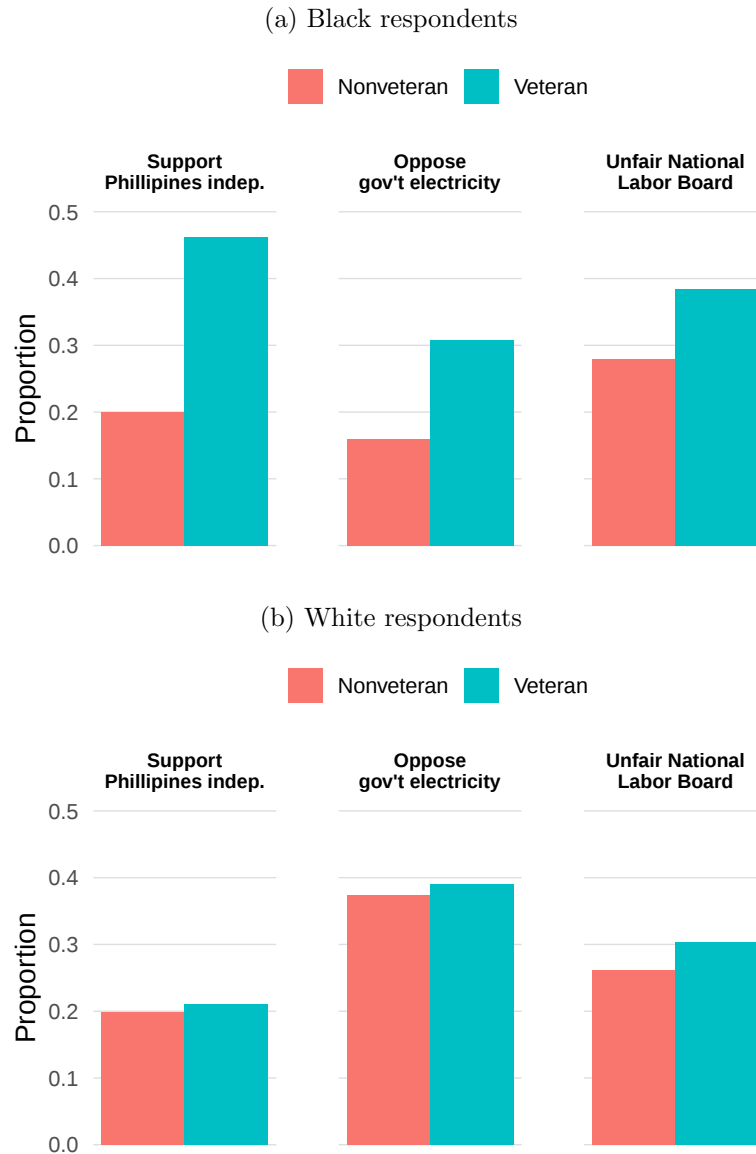


Figure A23: Political Views by Race and Veteran Status – Gallup Survey (1938)

Notes: This figure shows responses from a 1938 Gallup poll disaggregated by race and veteran status. Panel (a) examines Black male respondents and Panel (b) examines white male respondents. Responses for nonveterans are shown in orange and for veterans in blue. This is the only pre-World War II survey from the Roper Center for which microdata is available and both race and veteran status are observed. The figure shows the share of respondents who report “yes” to “Do you think the United States should give the Philippines their independence now?”, “no” to “Would you like to see your local government buy, own and operate the electric power system that serves this community?”, and “no” to “Do you think the National Labor Relations Board has been fair to employers in its decisions?”.

Table A1: Summary Statistics for NAACP Members, Restricted Sample

	NAACP (1)	Not NAACP (2)
Age in 1930	38.63 (3.03)	38.42 (2.97)
Employed	0.90 (0.30)	0.83 (0.37)
Married in 1930	0.80 (0.40)	0.75 (0.43)
Literate	0.98 (0.15)	0.92 (0.27)
Occup. income	25.59 (12.76)	21.12 (6.59)
Owns home	0.39 (0.49)	0.19 (0.39)
Veteran (VAMI/ATS)	0.09 (0.29)	0.05 (0.22)
Veteran (Census)	0.27 (0.44)	0.20 (0.40)
Veteran (Any)	0.30 (0.46)	0.23 (0.42)
Observations	10,847	318,059

Notes: This table shows summary statistics corresponding to Panel (b) of Table 1, except the sample is restricted to individuals born between 1886 and 1896 who were living as of the 1930 census in an area for which we have NAACP rosters. “Veteran (VAMI/ATS)” can only be equal to one for individuals in the census whom we link to a draft card (and subsequently to VAMI or ATS lists). The “Veteran (Any)” measure is the union of the veteran indicators from VAMI/ATS and from the 1930 census. Standard deviations are in parentheses.

Table A2: First-Stage Relationship Between Order Number and Veteran Status

	Veteran			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Order number (scaled)	-0.0883*** (0.0038)	-0.0871*** (0.0037)	-0.0850*** (0.0036)	-0.0850*** (0.0036)
Draft board	✓	✓	✓	✓
Birth year and state		✓	✓	✓
Exemption claim × married			✓	✓
Prewar occupation				✓
Observations	204,923	204,923	204,923	204,923
R ²	0.039	0.079	0.165	0.166
Dependent variable mean	0.349	0.349	0.349	0.349

Notes: This table shows OLS estimates where the unit of observation is an individual draft registrant. Standard errors are clustered by serial number and reported in parentheses. ***, **, and * indicate significance at the 1, 5, and 10 percent levels.

Table A3: Effect of Military Service on Community Leadership – TSLS Results

	Community leader			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Veteran	0.0043** (0.0020)	0.0043** (0.0020)	0.0043** (0.0021)	0.0043** (0.0021)
Draft board	✓	✓	✓	✓
Birth year and state		✓	✓	✓
Exemption × married			✓	✓
Prewar occupation				✓
Observations	825,571	825,571	825,571	825,571
R ²	0.006	0.009	0.009	0.009
First stage <i>F</i> -statistic	1,741.0	1,777.6	1,803.0	1,804.8
Dep. var. mean (nonveterans)	0.0013	0.0013	0.0013	0.0013
OLS coefficient	0.0008	0.0009	0.0007	0.0007
OLS <i>t</i> -statistic	6.83	7.05	5.74	5.48

Notes: This table shows TSLS estimates where the unit of observation is an individual draft registrant and veteran status is instrumented with the individual's order number, scaled by the number of registrants in his board. Community leader is an indicator variable equal to one for draft registrants whom we are able to link to either the African American National Biography or the African American Biographical Database. Standard errors are clustered by serial number and reported in parentheses. ***, **, and * indicate significance at the 1, 5, and 10 percent levels.

Table A4: Effect of Military Service on Community Leadership – Restricted Occupation Types

	All (1)	Exclude sports (2)	Exclude sports, arts (3)	Exclude sports, arts, military (4)	Civil rights affiliated (5)
Veteran	0.0043** (0.0021)	0.0045** (0.0020)	0.0044** (0.0020)	0.0043** (0.0020)	0.0035* (0.0018)
Draft board	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Birth year and state	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Exemption $\times$ married	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Prewar occupation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	825,571	825,571	825,571	825,571	825,571
R ²	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009
First stage F -statistic	1,804.8	1,804.8	1,804.8	1,804.8	1,804.8
Dep. var. mean (nonveterans)	0.0013	0.0013	0.0012	0.0012	0.0010
OLS coefficient	0.0007	0.0007	0.0007	0.0006	0.0005
OLS t -statistic	5.48	5.46	5.53	5.34	4.94

Notes: This table shows TSLS estimates where the unit of observation is an individual draft registrant and veteran status is instrumented with the individual's order number, scaled by the number of registrants in his board. We show results using five different definitions of community leadership. Column (1) shows the baseline estimate, which defines "community leader" as an indicator variable equal to one for draft registrants whom we are able to link to either the African American National Biography or the African American Biographical Database. Column (2) recodes the outcome variable as zero for individuals who achieved prominence in sports. Column (3) additionally recodes the outcome as zero for individuals who achieved prominence in arts. Column (4) additionally recodes the outcome as zero for individuals who achieved prominence due to military experience. Column (5) codes the outcome as one only if the individual achieved prominence in an occupation commonly associated with the early civil rights movement (i.e., Black activists, politicians, writers, educators, lawyers, clergy, and club founders). Standard errors are clustered by serial number and reported in parentheses. ***, **, and * indicate significance at the 1, 5, and 10 percent levels.

Table A5: Effect of Military Service on NAACP Membership – Alternative Linking Strategies

(a) $x = 0$

Tie-breaking	NAACP member			
	None (1)	Prewar (2)	+Veteran (3)	+County (4)
Veteran	0.0282** (0.0118)	0.0333*** (0.0116)	0.0281*** (0.0108)	0.0266** (0.0104)
Birth year and state	✓	✓	✓	✓
Draft board	✓	✓	✓	✓
Exemption $\times$ married	✓	✓	✓	✓
Prewar occupation	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	204,923	242,981	252,266	260,821
R ²	0.038	0.030	0.031	0.033
First stage F -statistic	565.1	586.0	637.4	677.6
Linking rate	0.248	0.294	0.306	0.316
Dep. var. mean (nonveterans)	0.0160	0.0158	0.0156	0.0150
OLS coefficient	0.0034	0.0027	0.0031	0.0032
OLS t -statistic	4.99	4.38	5.04	5.43

(b) $x = 2$

Tie-breaking	NAACP member			
	None (1)	Prewar (2)	+Veteran (3)	+County (4)
Veteran	0.0365** (0.0155)	0.0239* (0.0132)	0.0244** (0.0118)	0.0254** (0.0099)
Birth year and state	✓	✓	✓	✓
Draft board	✓	✓	✓	✓
Exemption $\times$ married	✓	✓	✓	✓
Prewar occupation	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	102,819	146,208	159,264	196,881
R ²	0.069	0.059	0.054	0.055
First stage F -statistic	419.6	545.2	630.3	735.2
Linking rate	0.125	0.177	0.193	0.238
Dep. var. mean (nonveterans)	0.0184	0.0192	0.0188	0.0150
OLS coefficient	0.0028	0.0031	0.0030	0.0031
OLS t -statistic	2.60	3.46	3.64	4.35

Notes: These tables show TSLS estimates where the unit of observation is an individual draft registrant and veteran status is instrumented with the individual's order number, scaled by the number of registrants in his board. Panel (a) reports estimates using the ABE $x = 0$ threshold, and Panel (b) uses the more conservative $x = 2$ threshold; see text for details. For each panel, in column (2), the “prewar” tie-breaking method includes middle initial and marital status. Column (3) additionally breaks ties by comparing veteran status of potential matches in the 1930 census to veteran status from VAMI and ATS lists. Column (4) additionally uses county of residence. Standard errors are clustered by serial number and reported in parentheses. ***, **, and * indicate significance at the 1, 5, and 10 percent levels.

Table A6: Effect of Military Service on NAACP Membership – Alternative Veteran Definitions

	NAACP member			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Veteran (Baseline)	0.0282** (0.0118)			
Veteran (Census)		0.0523** (0.0221)		
Veteran (VAMI/ATS)			0.0273** (0.0114)	
Veteran (Intersection)				0.0495** (0.0207)
Draft board	✓	✓	✓	✓
Birth year and state	✓	✓	✓	✓
Exemption claim × married	✓	✓	✓	✓
Prewar occupation	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	204,923	204,923	204,923	204,923
R ²	0.038	0.026	0.039	0.037
First stage <i>F</i> -statistic	565.1	192.5	763.8	392.2
Dep. var. mean (nonveterans)	0.0160	0.0161	0.0167	0.0167
Mean veteran indicator	0.349	0.239	0.225	0.115
OLS coefficient	0.0034	0.0069	0.0024	0.0091
OLS <i>t</i> -statistic	5.02	9.19	2.95	7.49

Notes: This table shows TSLS estimates where the unit of observation is an individual and veteran status is instrumented with the individual's order number, scaled by the number of registrants in his board. We show results for four different indicator variables measuring veteran status. Column (1) shows our baseline measure, which is the union of veteran status from the 1930 census and from VAMI/ATS lists. Columns (2) and (3) show the census and VAMI/ATS measures separately, and column (4) shows the intersection of the census and VAMI/ATS measures. Standard errors are clustered by serial number and reported in parentheses. ***, **, and * indicate significance at the 1, 5, and 10 percent levels.

Table A7: Effect of Military Service on NAACP Membership – Alternative Instruments

	Baseline (1)	NAACP member		
		Order num. (2)	Not scaled (3)	Rank (4)
Veteran	0.0282** (0.0118)	0.0332*** (0.0124)	0.0292** (0.0143)	0.0287** (0.0117)
Draft board	✓	✓	✓	✓
Birth year and state	✓	✓	✓	✓
Exemption claim $\times$ married	✓	✓	✓	✓
Prewar occupation	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	204,923	186,186	204,923	204,923
R ²	0.038	0.037	0.038	0.038
First stage <i>F</i> -statistic	565.1	478.2	508.4	567.8

Notes: This table shows TSLS estimates where the unit of observation is an individual draft registrant. We show results using four different instruments for veteran status. Column (1) shows the baseline instrument, which is the individual's order number predicted from his serial number, scaled by the number of registrants in his board. In column (2), the instrument is the individual's order number as written on his draft card, scaled by the number of registrants in his board. This specification drops several thousand cards that are missing actual order numbers. In column (3), the instrument is the individual's order number predicted from his serial number (not scaled). In column (4), the instrument is the rank of the individual's order number (predicted from his serial number) among draft cards for Black men in his board, scaled by the total number of Black draft cards in his board. Standard errors are clustered by serial number and reported in parentheses. ***, **, and * indicate significance at the 1, 5, and 10 percent levels.

Table A8: Effect of Military Service on NAACP Membership – Alternative First Stage Functional Forms

	NAACP member				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Veteran	0.0282** (0.0118)	0.0231** (0.0111)	0.0225** (0.0109)	0.0191* (0.0107)	0.0200* (0.0104)
Birth year and state	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Draft board	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Prewar occupation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Exemption claim × married	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Piecewise linear		✓			
Cubic polynomial			✓		
Nonparametric fit				✓	
Nonparametric × exemption claim × married					✓
Observations	204,923	204,879	204,923	204,923	204,923
R ²	0.038	0.041	0.041	0.042	0.042
Dependent variable mean	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.018
First stage <i>F</i> -statistic	565.1	688.6	729.9	724.9	748.9

Notes: This table shows TSLS estimates where the unit of observation is an individual draft registrant. We show results parameterizing the first-stage relationship between veteran status and order number in five different ways. Column (1) shows the baseline instrument, which is the individual's order number predicted from his serial number, scaled by the number of registrants in his board. In column (2), we allow the slope of the first-stage relationship to vary depending on whether the order number (predicted from the serial number) is below or above the number of men from the individual's board who reported to camp. In column (3), the first stage is a cubic polynomial in the scaled order number. In column (4), we split the (scaled) order number into ten groups (i.e., 0 to 0.1, 0.1 to 0.2, etc.) and regress veteran status on these ten indicators. In column (5), we estimate the nonparametric first stage in column (4) separately for each of the four mutually exclusive groups based on marital status and exemption claim. In each case, we use predicted veteran status *as an instrument* in the two-stage least squares regression. Standard errors are clustered by serial number and reported in parentheses. ***, **, and * indicate significance at the 1, 5, and 10 percent levels.

Table A9: Veteran Survey Themes and Examples

Theme	Examples
Broader mind	“Gave me a chance to study men and I understand their motives”; “It gave me new ideas and thoughts”; “It increased my knowledge of foreign countries and its people”
Religion	“Made me a stronger Christian”; “We got a lot of religion in France”; “It made me trust God more and live closer to Him every day of my life”
Hardship	“The effect of the horrors of war will have a life-long effect”; “Worked harder than ever before in my life”; “The effect of camp left me in bad shape, suffering with rheumatism ever since”
Manhood	“It has taught me to carry myself as a man both in body and mind”; “Am more settled and thoughtful”; “Feel as if I had changed from boy to man”
Civic duty	“It seemed a duty for me to help make the world safe for democracy and the duty of every other loyal citizen”; “Before the war I wanted to serve the Government, and now I am glad I was able to do my bit”; “Better views of citizenship”
Training	“It improved me mentally and physically”; “Why it made me more brave & active & cause me to obey any command given by higher officers & to execute without thought”; “While in training in the USA, I acquired the habit of quickness and discipline”
Injustice	“Think that America is very ungrateful for her colored soldier”; “Would like to see the colored man share some of the democracy that he fought for so gallantly!”; “Things have not turned out as I expected. Conditions for my people are not any better”
Patriotism	“It made me realize the strength, unity, and high aims of the United States and has made me more patriotic than ever”; “That the USA will never be overcome”; “Made me a better truer American”
Camaraderie	“It has brought men together and has taught them that where cooperation there is strength”; “Love that existed between the men for each other, and they would go [to] the limit for each other”; “Realize my dependence on others more”

Notes: This table shows the themes that were distilled from the veteran surveys as well as representative examples of responses corresponding to each theme. A single survey response may mention multiple themes.

B Further details on linking

B.1 Linking NAACP records to the census

We retrieved and transcribed images of NAACP membership rosters from the ProQuest History Vault. These rosters take the form of standardized, (generally) typewritten lists containing member names, exact home address, NAACP branch, and year. In total, the rosters contain 233,517 observations across 227 branches from 1912 to 1942.

We first exclude rows that correspond to businesses or clubs and remove rows that likely correspond to female members. We say that a row corresponds to a woman if the name includes the title “Mrs.” or “Miss” or if the first name is one of 663 female names. These are names for which, in the 1930 full-count census, there are more than 500 Black people with that first name and more than 90 percent of them are female. This leaves 122,368 rows in the NAACP rosters that are candidates to be linked to the census.

The 1930 census contains the most complete information about whether an individual was a WWI veteran, so we first attempt to link the rosters directly to this census. However, since many of our NAACP rosters are from years close to 1940, we also attempt to link the NAACP rosters to the 1940 census, and then use a 1930 to 1940 crosswalk from the Census Linking Project (Abramitzky et al., 2020) to map these links back to the 1930 census.

In the census, candidates to be linked to the NAACP rosters are Black men living in the city or metropolitan area corresponding to a city for which we have NAACP rosters. This is 1,665,428 people in the 1930 census and 1,903,688 people in the 1940 census.

We follow a modified version of the ABE procedure to link the NAACP rosters to the census. We first standardize first names using a list of nicknames and common misspellings. We then block on city, first initial, and last initial. A pair of records is a candidate link if (1) the Jaro-Winkler distances between the first names and last names are both less than 0.2, or the first name as recorded in the NAACP roster is only an initial and the Jaro-Winkler distance between last names is less than 0.2; and (2) the year of the NAACP roster minus the birth year of the individual in the census implies that the individual would have been over 21 years old, the age restriction for joining the organization.^{B1}

For each record, if there is at least one potential link within the *city* as recorded in the census (as opposed to the *metropolitan area*), then we drop all candidate links outside the city. Then, we have seven different link types:

1. There is only one candidate census link remaining.
2. There are one or more candidate census links remaining, and the sum of the Jaro-Winkler distance in first name and last name for the *second-best* link is at least 0.2 greater than this sum for the best link.
3. There is a unique census link after restricting the middle initials to be the same.
4. There is a unique census link after restricting the first and last names to be *exactly* the same.
5. There is a unique census link after restricting the first and last names and middle initials to be *exactly* the same.

^{B1}In 1936, the age restriction was increased to 26 years old. However, individuals as young as 14 could join “junior” branches (Bynum, 2009).

Table B1: NAACP to Census Linking Rates by Method

Link type	1930		1940		Combined	
	Num.	Prop.	Num.	Prop.	Num.	Prop.
1	25,992	0.212	26,842	0.219	28,023	0.229
2	28,487	0.233	29,271	0.239	30,740	0.251
3	17,695	0.145	15,077	0.123	19,017	0.155
4	18,970	0.155	18,729	0.153	20,591	0.168
5	14,660	0.120	12,413	0.101	15,731	0.129
6	28,721	0.235	27,335	0.223	30,845	0.252
7	22,399	0.183	20,082	0.164	23,823	0.195
Any	63,938	0.523	62,227	0.509	69,478	0.568
Unique	32,100	0.262	31,036	0.254	34,906	0.285

Notes: This table describes the result of linking NAACP records to the 1930 and 1940 full-count censuses. See the text for a description of link types. “Num.” denotes the total number of NAACP records linked using each method, and “prop.” denotes the proportion of candidate NAACP records that were successfully linked using each method. “Any” denotes the number of NAACP records linked via any method, and “unique” denotes the number of unique individuals in the census linked to an NAACP record.

6. There is a unique census link after restricting the names of the streets in the NAACP rosters and in the census to have a Jaro-Winkler distance of less than 0.1.
7. There is a unique census link after restricting the names of the streets in the NAACP rosters and in the census to have a Jaro-Winkler distance of less than 0.1 and restricting the address numbers to be exactly the same.

We link 63,938 NAACP records to the 1930 census and 62,227 to the 1940 census. Using the Census Linking Project to map the 1940 links to the 1930 census, combined, we link 69,478 rows to the 1930 census either directly or through the 1940 census.^{B2} Since the NAACP records contain many duplicate rows for the same individual, this corresponds to 34,906 unique people in the 1930 census whom we identify as NAACP members. Table B1 shows linking rates by method and Table B2 shows linking rates by city.

B.2 Linking ATS lists to draft cards

The Army Transport Service (ATS) lists contain records of all people departing from and arriving at U.S. ports on Army ships during World War I. They include the residence address of the individual, and while they do not include information about race, they do include information about the military unit than an individual belonged to. As the military was racially segregated at this time, we search for links only among individuals who served in Black units. This leaves 253,362 rows in the ships lists that are candidates to be linked to a draft card.

We attempt to link the two datasets using various combinations of name, address, county, and state. When the set of linking variables does not include middle name or initial, we drop any links

^{B2}If an NAACP record is linked to two different individuals in the 1930 and 1940 censuses, we prioritize the direct link to the 1930 census.

Table B2: NAACP to Census Linking Rates by City

City	Num. rows	Row linking rate	Num. unique links	Unique linking rate
Overall	122,368	0.568	34,906	0.285
Detroit	14,269	0.534	4,371	0.306
Washington	13,833	0.608	3,806	0.275
Chicago	9,320	0.618	3,344	0.359
Baltimore	7,997	0.587	2,214	0.277
New York	6,982	0.571	1,731	0.248
St. Louis	6,945	0.582	1,857	0.267
Cleveland	6,543	0.567	1,803	0.276
Philadelphia	5,825	0.636	1,845	0.317
Atlanta	5,222	0.518	1,048	0.201
New Orleans	4,646	0.545	1,418	0.305
Louisville	4,561	0.592	1,281	0.281
Cincinnati	3,783	0.556	872	0.231
Houston	3,737	0.524	1,323	0.354
Birmingham	3,470	0.582	1,141	0.329
Indianapolis	3,156	0.599	1,061	0.336
Denver	2,503	0.515	523	0.209
Des Moines	1,770	0.462	343	0.194
Akron	1,637	0.477	437	0.267
San Francisco	1,433	0.588	380	0.265
Duluth	1,391	0.217	87	0.063
Gary	1,316	0.582	541	0.411
Northern CA	1,263	0.604	409	0.324
Charleston	1,150	0.643	340	0.296
Mobile	1,123	0.601	357	0.318
Baton Rouge	1,107	0.507	215	0.194
San Diego	845	0.541	196	0.232
Buffalo	734	0.595	260	0.354
Monroe	728	0.558	159	0.218
Columbia	657	0.665	233	0.355
Little Rock	596	0.574	212	0.356

Notes: This table describes the results of linking NAACP records to the 1930 full-count census. It displays the overall linking rate and branch-specific information for the 30 branches with the most records. “Num. rows” denotes the total number of NAACP records in each city, “row linking rate” denotes the proportion of those rows that were successfully linked to a census record, “num. unique links” denotes the number of individuals in the census identified among NAACP records from that city, and “unique linking rate” denotes the number of unique individuals in the census divided by the total number of rows.

where the middle initial is non-missing in both datasets and conflicts. We require that each ATS record be linked to no more than one card. However, we do not require that each card have only one unique link to the ATS lists, since individuals could appear on the ATS lists multiple times (i.e., on departure from and return to the U.S.).

Overall, we successfully link 109,622, or 43.3% of eligible records from the ATS lists to 100,911 draft cards.

B.3 Linking draft cards to VAMI

The Veterans Administration Master Index (VAMI) contains records for veterans who served in World War I and who made (or whose descendants made) pension or benefits claims from the Veterans Administration between 1917 and 1940. It does not include the race of the veteran; however, it does have their exact date of birth and residence place. We first use exact name and date of birth to merge the VAMI data with the Berkeley Unified Numident Mortality Database, which has race information, but with very poor coverage for these birth cohorts. We match 127,099 individuals, which we use to drop 25,640 non-Black individuals, leaving 3,202,013 VAMI candidates for linking to a draft card.

We attempt to link the two datasets using various combinations of name, birth date, county, and state. When the set of linking variables does not include exact birth date, we enforce that candidate links must have a difference in birth year of no more than 2 years. We do *not* require that a card be uniquely linked to a VAMI record, since we use the existence of *any* link as a source of information about whether an individual was a veteran. However, in practice, 98.6% of linked cards are linked to a unique VAMI record.

Overall, we successfully link 120,412, or 13.0% of cards to VAMI. Note that we would not expect to link anyone who completed a draft card but did not join the military.

B.4 Linking draft cards to the census

To link the draft cards to the 1930 census, we first restrict the sample of cards to those from individuals born between 1880 and 1900; belong to boards for which we are able to obtain the total number of registrants and can identify the typical position of the order and serial number; and have non-missing serial number, birth year, and birth state. This leaves 825,571 cards. Candidates to be linked to a card from the 1930 census are the 1,621,374 Black men born between 1880 and 1900, inclusive.

Following ABE, we block on birth state, first initial, and last initial, and drop pairs with a birth year difference of more than five years. We restrict candidate links to pairs where the Jaro-Winkler distance between last names is less than 0.15 and either (1) the Jaro-Winkler distance between first names is less than 0.15, (2) either of the first names is an initial, or (3) the standardized first names (accounting for nicknames and common misspellings) match exactly.

Our baseline linking method is the standard ABE procedure, i.e., we drop any pairs with a birth year difference more than x years greater than the minimum birth year difference, and keep only links where each card is linked to exactly one census record and each census record is linked to exactly one card. We use the two thresholds suggested by ABE, $x = 0$ and $x = 2$, corresponding to less conservative and more conservative procedures. We drop any links with birth years more than two years apart. This constitutes the “standard” ABE procedure and results in a linking rate of 24.8% for the $x = 0$ threshold and 12.5% for $x = 2$.

Table B3: Cards to Census Linking Rates by Method

Link type	$x = 0$		$x = 2$	
	Num.	Prop.	Num.	Prop.
Standard	204,923	0.248	102,819	0.125
Middle initial tie-breaker	210,701	0.255	117,392	0.142
Marital status tie-breaker	239,402	0.290	134,565	0.163
Middle initial + marital	242,981	0.294	146,208	0.177
Veteran status tie-breaker	227,962	0.276	126,688	0.153
County tie-breaker	224,623	0.272	159,629	0.193
All tie-breakers	260,821	0.316	196,881	0.238

Notes: This table describes the results of linking draft registration cards to the 1930 full-count census. The number of linked cards for the various tie-breaking methods include links made according to the standard method. See the text for a description of link types. “Num.” denotes the total number of cards linked using each method, and “prop.” denotes the proportion of candidate cards that were successfully linked using each method.

In robustness analyses presented in Table A5, we also modify the ABE procedure by constructing tie-breaking rules as follows:

- *Middle initial:* A card is linked to exactly one census row where the card and census row both have non-missing middle initials that agree, and the census row is likewise uniquely linked to that card.
- *Marital status:* A card is linked to exactly one census row where the card and census row both indicate that the person was either married or unmarried before 1917, and the census row is likewise uniquely linked to that card. For the cards, marital status is measured contemporaneously; for the 1930 census, we use birth year combined with age of first marriage to determine whether the individual was married before 1917.
- *Veteran status:* A card is linked to exactly one census row where the card and census row both indicate that the person is either a veteran or non-veteran, and the census row is likewise uniquely linked to that card. Information on veteran status for the cards is derived from whether the card is linked to the ATS lists or to VAMI, and information on veteran status for the census is derived directly from the census data.
- *County:* A card is linked to exactly one census row where the card and census row are both from the same county, and the census row is likewise uniquely linked to that card. The county in the cards refers to the individual’s residence in 1917, and the county in the census refers to the individual’s residence in 1930.

Table B3 shows the linking rates using these methods.

B.5 Linking AANB/AABD to draft cards

We combine two compendia of Black community leaders – the African American National Biography (AANB) and the ProQuest African American Biographical Database (AABD) – and attempt to link individuals in these databases to draft cards. The candidate AANB/AABD records to be

linked, if they have non-missing birth year information, must have have birth years between 1880 and 1900. They additionally must have either non-missing birth state or birth year. This leaves 5,072 candidate AANB/AABD records for linking; 94.0% have non-missing birth state and 65.1% have non-missing birth year.

We attempt to link the two datasets using various combinations of name, birth date, and birth state. When the set of linking variables does not include birth year, but the variable is non-missing, we enforce that candidate links must have a difference in birth year of no more than three years. We additionally require that middle initials and birth state, when non-missing, do not conflict. Finally, we require that for each linking method, links are unique: one card can be linked with at most one AANB/AABD record and vice versa. Overall, we successfully link 1,415, or 27.9% of AANB/AABD entries to a draft card.