AN IDEOLOGICAL GULF: BARRIERS THAT HINDER BLACK OFFICER
PARTICIPATION IN COMBAT ARMS BRANCHES
OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army
Command and General Staff College in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE
General Studies

by

TRIVIUS G. CALDWELL, MAJOR, U.S. ARMY
B.A., Tuskegee University, Tuskegee, AL, 2006
M.A., Auburn University, Auburn, AL, 2016

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
2019

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

1. REPORT DATE *(DD-MM-YYYY)*	2. REPORT TYPE	3. DATES COVERED *(From - To)*
14-06-2019	Master's Thesis	AUG 2018 – JUN 2019

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE	5a. CONTRACT NUMBER
An Ideological Gulf: Barriers that Hinder Black Officer Participation in Combat Arms Branches of the United States Army	5b. GRANT NUMBER
	5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER
6. AUTHOR(S)	5d. PROJECT NUMBER
Trivius Gerard Caldwell	5e. TASK NUMBER
	5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER

7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)	8. PERFORMING ORG REPORT NUMBER
U.S. Army Command and General Staff College ATTN: ATZL-SWD-GD Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2301	

9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)	10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)
	11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)

12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Approved for Public Release; Distribution is Unlimited

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

14. ABSTRACT

The United States Army is arguably just as socialistic as it is a meritocracy. Social and cultural factors such race, gender, and ethnicities are largely irrelevant and, at times, replaced by artifacts that contribute to the sustainment of the meritocracy as an ideology. Although the Army functions as a progressive and hierarchical system of merit, the aforementioned sociocultural variables are cloaked beneath a common uniform and insignia. The problem writ large is twofold: one, there are social implications that correspond with the wearing of a military uniform and its insignia; and two, the history of black people in America, with respect to race relations, is instrumental in the racial disparity of black officers in the combat arms branches of the Army. The researcher's goal is to answer the question: do ideological barriers prevent black officers from volunteering to serve in the combat arms branches of the Army? If so, what are they and what should senior Army leaders do to address this issue?

15. SUBJECT TERMS
Social Stratification, Social Epistemic Rhetoric, Black, Trope, Cynefin Framework, Object-Oriented Rhetoric

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT	**b. ABSTRACT**	**c. THIS PAGE**			Trivius Caldwell
			(U)	113	**19b. PHONE NUMBER** *(include area code)*
(U)	(U)	(U)			334-319-6262

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

Name of Candidate: Trivius G. Caldwell

Thesis Title: An Ideological Gulf: Barriers that Hinder Black Officer Participation in Combat Arms Branches of the United States Army

Approved by:

_____, Thesis Committee Chair
Jack D. Kem, Ph.D.

_____, Member
Dwayne K. Wagner, M.A.

_____, Member
Colonel Suzanne C. Nielsen, Ph.D.

Accepted this 14th day of June 2019 by:

_____, Director, Graduate Degree Programs
Robert F. Baumann, Ph.D.

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ABSTRACT

AN IDEOLOGICAL GULF: BARRIERS THAT HINDER BLACK OFFICER
PARTICIPATION IN COMBAT ARMS BRANCHES OF THE UNITED STATES
ARMY, by Trivius Caldwell, 113 pages.

The United States Army is arguably just as socialistic as it is a meritocracy. Social and
cultural factors such race, gender, and ethnicities are largely irrelevant and, at times,
replaced by artifacts that contribute to the sustainment of the meritocracy as an ideology.
Although the Army functions as a progressive and hierarchical system of merit, the
aforementioned sociocultural variables are cloaked beneath a common uniform and
insignia. The problem writ large is twofold: one, there are social implications that
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volunteering to serve in the combat arms branches of the Army? If so, what are they and
what should senior Army leaders do to address this issue?

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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ACRONYMS

ADRP   Army Doctrine Reference Publication

HBCU   Historically Black College and University

PK   Philosopher King

ROTC   Reserve Officer Training Corps

USAWC   United States Army War College

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TABLES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Every man's condition is a solution in hieroglyphic to those inquiries he would put. He acts it as life, before he apprehends it as truth. In like manner, nature is already, in its forms and tendencies, describing its own design. Let us interrogate the great apparition that shines so peacefully around us. Let us inquire, to what end is nature?

—Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Nature*

He wears a mask and his face grows to fit it.

—George Orwell, "Shooting an Elephant"

Background

The United States Army enjoys a collective professional identity rooted in morality and ethical behavior. Reliant upon merit, the Army is perhaps one of the most equitable institutions in the world. Underlying the utopian idea of equality is the idea that military is a microcosm of its society, as such, the Army seeks to mirror the demographic of the nation through the maintenance of a volunteer Army. Upon closer investigation, the branches of the armed services can be considered sub cultures of affinity with respect to demographics. The contemporary disparity of black officers in the combat arms branches of the Army is an example of institutional neglect regarding the troublesome implications of American history. An ideology of merit masks any claims to the impacts of minorities in a majority space.

A diverse Army is ideal and the representation of the country's demographic writ large is paramount; however, a deeper understanding of the foundation of the American society might facilitate understanding toward contemporary disparities and inform a reformation of recruiting strategies, mentorship efforts, professional military education

curriculum, and deliberate strategies in Army accession toward the goal of increasing

black officer participation in the combat arms branches of the Army. The Army relies on

the integration of a collective and diverse body of Soldiers who are willing to sacrifice on

behalf of the common defense of the nation. The entangled social fabric of American

society must be unraveled and reimagined prior to grasping any understanding of the

current state of disparity in black officer participation in combat arms branches of the

Army. Social complexity is perhaps more of a societal issue than an Army issue, and

claims of residual effects of white supremacy are not out of bounds when examining

Army demographics. To elaborate, white supremacist ideology does not apply to

individual infraction, but rather to a system where power is contained within social,

political, and economic variables of the Army as an institution.

Whiteness, as a concept, suggests the legitimization of social and cultural norms

as status quo. An example is the recognition of Black History month, or Women's

History month, as a need to qualify a focus on aspects of American history, the very

practice suggests that those celebrated citizens' achievement lie outside the norm of

American history. The status quo here being that white history is the norm, anything else

needs particular events and recognition. Robin Diangelo, (2018, 30), explains white

supremacy as commensurate with other political systems, such as capitalism, socialism,

and fascism, she explains, "The failure to acknowledge white supremacy protects it from

examination and holds it in place."

Table 1.   Active Duty Army Demographics by Race/Ethnicity

ACTIVE-DUTY ARMY

Active-Duty Army by Race/Ethnicity

	Officer	Warrant	Enlisted	Total
White	71%	64%	52%	56%
Black	11%	17%	23%	21%
Hispanic	7%	11%	17%	15%
Asian	7%	4%	6%	6%
Other	3%	4%	2%	2%
TOTAL	77,710	14,349	379,868	471,927
% TOTAL	16%	3%	81%	100%

Source: Headquarters, Department of the Army, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1, Strength and Analysis and Forecasting Division, "Army Demographics: FY17 Army Profile," 2017 http://www.armyg1.army.mil/hr/docs/demographics/ FY17_Army_Profile.pdf.

In 2017, black officers comprise 11 percent (8,548 officers) of the entire active force, while white officers represent 71 percent (55,174 officers). Of the 8548 black officers, 26 percent join the combat arms branches, compared to 44 percent of white officers. It is noteworthy that white officers substantially out number black officers, so naturally there will be a disparity. At first glance, these statistics don't seem immediately concerning, but upon closer analysis, the disparity is troubling. Extrapolating from human resource data as depicted in table 1, white officers comprise 79.5 percent of the combat arms branches while black officers make up 7.28 percent; the 72.22 percent differential is glaring. In order words, roughly 24,420 of 30,525 combat arms officers are white, 2,136 are black—an 11:1 ratio; however, the total active army officer population, by race, is commensurate with 2015 US Census data of the country writ large. The data actually indicates a more troubling disparity between officer candidates with bachelor's degrees

and those without—roughly, a 60 percent differential. Nonetheless, the population

estimate, as shown in table 1 indicates a parallel representation of demographics in the

active officer population to that of the demographics of the country. Ultimately, the

number of black officers in the combat arms branches is proportionate to the number of

white officers when considering the total population in the United States. The question is

whether the disparity of black officers in the combat arms branches is an Army problem

or a societal one?

Table 2.   2015 U.S. Census Population Estimates

U.S. POPULATION STATISTICS
Comparison of U.S. Active-Duty Army and U.S. Population*

	Population Estimate* of 18-24 yr old HSG**	FY16 Army Enlisted Accessions	Population Estimate* of 18-39 yr old HSG**	FY16 Army Enlisted	Population Estimate* of 25-54 yr old w/BA Degree	FY16 Army Officers
White	52%	53%	52%	53%	70%	72%
Black	18%	23%	18%	24%	9%	11%
Hispanic	25%	17%	25%	16%	9%	7%
Asian	3%	6%	3%	4%	10%	6%
Other	3%	1%	2%	3%	1%	3%

* Source: U.S. Census, 2015 Population Estimates
** High School Graduate

Source: Headquarters, Department of the Army, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1, Strength and Analysis and Forecasting Division, "Army Demographics: FY16 Army Profile," 2016 http://www.armyg1.army.mil/hr/docs/demographics/ FY17_Army_Profile.pdf.

The statistics above are only instrumental to the exigence of this study, the deeper

impacts of the disparity, as shown in tables 1 and 2, affects efforts to grow diverse senior

officers. An examination of the branches of senior leaders will depict this.

There are a myriad of studies that explain the cause(s) for such disparity, such as cultural misunderstanding between white and black officers, a lack of cross-race mentorship, nepotism, and force branching in the accessions process. Still, there is an underlying current that perpetuates the focus of black officers to serve in support branches like transportation, logistics, and etc. The aesthetic nature of the disparity is seen in Armor and Infantry formations across the Army; black officers in these ranks stick out. Senior officers have pondered the issue and have notably prompted institutional studies to further explain the phenomenon.
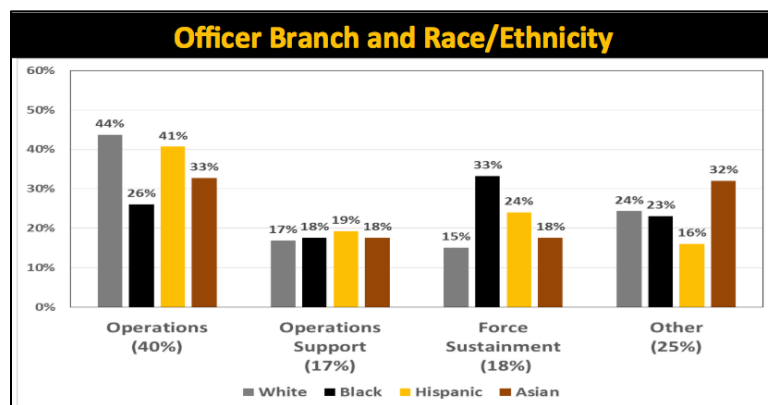
Figure 1.   2017 Officer Branch and Race/Ethnicity

Source: Headquarters, Department of the Army, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1, Strength and Analysis and Forecasting Division, "Army Demographics: FY17 Army Profile," 2017 http://www.armyg1.army.mil/hr/docs/demographics/ FY17_Army_Profile.pdf.

In 2012, the 38th Chief of Staff of the Army (CSA), (Ret.) Raymond Odierno expressed his frustration with the lack of diverse representation in the officer corps, particularly regarding several combat arms branches of the Army. Although the lack of

diversity in the combat arms has precedence, few officers can articulate the reasons for the disparity. During a meeting with members of the ROCKS, Inc. (an officer mentorship organization), Odierno exclaimed, "It doesn't matter what race you are, an officer is an officer is an officer, and what we need to know is why we're not meeting what we believe are proper numbers for our diverse Army." (Leipold 2012). Clearly frustrated with the observation, Odierno later urged his peer senior Army leaders to create an action plan to study and operationalize recruiting and messaging to the black community in hopes of increasing the talent pool in the combat arms. Odierno's inquiry offers a glimpse into a large ideological rift—the cognitive barriers that contribute to the lack of black officer representation in the combat arms.

This study seeks no clear answers, but rather it offers a nuanced explanation to facilitate understanding and urgency to a larger cognitive and long-standing problem. To study issues of racial disparity is to grapple with complicated theoretical frameworks that are so obviously connected to America's tumultuous history that those frameworks may uncover a revelation regarding the collective culpability of contemporary active duty leaders. Perhaps the dissonance on behalf of black officer candidates in serving in combat-related branches of the Army explain the similarity of research, findings, and recommendations dating back decades to the notable Remo Butler study in 1996.

In a 2009 Army War College Study concerning the topic of underrepresentation in combat-related branches of the Army, COL Randolph Clifford White Jr. (White 2009, 2), suggests that further research effort is a waste of time. White cites the following papers to illustrate the multiple attempts in addressing the disproportionate rate of black officers to their white counterparts in combat arms branches of service:

1. "Promotions among the ranks - a focus on Black military officers," Lt. Col Barbara Sutton (USAF), Air War College Class of 1995, (April 1995).

2. "Why Black Officers fail in the U.S. Army," BG (ret) Remo Butler, USAWC Class of 1996 (15 April 1995).

3. "Influences in the Making of Black Strategic Leaders," COL (ret) James E. Gordon, USWAC Class of 1996, (5 April 1996).

4. "Mentoring Women and Minority officers in the US Military," Major Darrell E. Adams (USAF), Air Command and Staff College, (March 1997).

5. "United States Army Officer Professional Development - Black Officers' Perspectives." Craig Johnson, USAWC Class of 1997 (7 April 1997).

6. "African American Officers' Role in the Future Army," COL Carrie Kendrick, Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, (May 1998).

7. "Black Officer Under-representation in Combat Arms Branches," LTC Emmett Burke, School of Advanced Military Studies Monograph (2 June 2000)

8. "The Lack of Ethnic Diversity in the Infantry: Why Are There So Few Black Infantry Officers in the U.S. Army," LTC Ronald P Clark, School of Advanced Military Studies Monograph (2 June 2003).

9. "Strategic Options for Managing Diversity in the U.S. Army," LTC Anthony Reyes, Military Fellow Research Report Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies (June 2006)

10. "Addressing the challenge of Black Officer underrepresentation in the senior ranks of the U.S. Army," LTC Anthony Reyes, Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, (July/August 2006).

11. "Investigating the existing gap between Army culture and Black American Culture," LTC Lentfort Mitchell, USWAC Class of 2008, (15 March 2008). (White 2009, 3).

White's catalogue of inquiry not only demonstrates multiple efforts to understand the disparity, it also illustrates a consistent effort to offer recommendations to increase the black officer population in the combat arms, such an effort seems moot given the consistent metric of black officer representation.

Many of the conclusions and recommendations of the aforementioned studies are strikingly similar. The findings and recommendations all emphasize cadet mentorship as vital. Accessions reform, strategic communications as it relates to recruiting, and cross-race mentorship are all areas that need improvement. The majority of work on this topic relies on historical genealogy as the pretense for the emergence of the obvious demographic disparity. Given the historical survey, researchers are able to grapple with the complicated and troublesome root of the problem—United States history. Although many researchers outline the accomplishments of black soldiers and black Army units throughout history, none of them acknowledge the ideological implications of the troublesome history of the United States.

Some scholars suggest that the implication of American history, with respect to American slavery, may explain the dissonance that people of color feel toward nationalism. There is little doubt that particular understandings of what it means to be American influence the propensity of officers to serve in positions wherein heighten danger exists, such as the Armor and Infantry branches of service. The research in this study will extend upon prior work and will add to the existing scholarship of that which

cannot be easily explained—ideological influence relating to public service. The research calls for a deeper understanding of the implications of American history with respect to the civil military gap and motives to serve for black officer candidates. The overarching theme of this study lies in the examination of socially constructed racial bias in relation to American slavery as a foundational mechanism that thwarts the creation of an inclusive and diverse fighting force.

Military Racial Chasm

Consider for a moment that the following observation might be true, that America was founded on principles of white supremacy. Metaphorically, if America were an edifice, then its cornerstone is chattel slavery. This comparison carries the tough realization that white supremacy still looms and the resulting implications serve as the exigence for this study. Contemporarily, and considering the metaphor, the occupants (citizens) of that edifice need to address the cracked and worn cornerstone, otherwise the house may fall. It is far easier for the tenants to paint over the cornerstone and conceal the damage, as such, denial characterizes American citizenry. Before any renovations are made, the tenants must acknowledge the structural damage, failure to do so threatens the structural integrity of the edifice.

There are two distinct perceptions about race in America and both are characterized through and promulgated by aesthetic, ethnic, and cultural factors. First, in civil societies, the prevalence of racial activity characterizes life experience for some. In other words, identities are inextricably linked to social interaction and cultural norms are defined by skin color, and by extension, race. Second, and dichotomous in military culture as a meritocracy, the transcendence of race through proxy ensures upward

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mobility devoid of the accusation of overt discrimination. The military offers a

homogenous haven to explore and leverage diversity; however, the ghosts of American

history hunt the psyche of both black and white service members in uniform.

During the Revolutionary War, free black men and slaves enlisted to fight in

exchange for freedom. A brief gloss of the political turmoil during the war in 1775

illustrates the foundation of division based on perspectives of superiority as proliferated

by the practice of chattel slavery. For example, outright fear on the part of the Southern

states to arm slaves functioned to protect involuntary servitude; conversely, a reformist

northern sentiment for increasing manpower through the enlistment of slaves proved

beneficial. Around 1775, a number of blacks were serving with New England units in the

Continental forces arrayed around Boston. Bernard Nalty (1986, 10) explains the struggle

for black soldiers to identify with their brothers in arms during the American Revolution:

> Service in the cause of the American Revolution had earned for some blacks
> freedom, individual renown, and perhaps a measure of economic security . . .
> Regardless of freedom or recent military service on the part of blacks, a majority
> of whites continued to view them with contempt and fear, considering them lazy
> but violent, semi-civilized if human at all, and given to lust and lying. Much of
> this picture stemmed from the unique conditions of the peculiar institution—
> slavery. (Nalty 1986, 10).

The seeds of military racial chasm are sown here. A stark and differentiating

motive for national service grew from those seeds and extends today through the varied

purposes for service for many black officers within the Army. There are other historical

accounts that aptly define black patriotism under duress as foundational to distinctive

interpretations of cultural norms and values. Such affliction also serves as a source of

cultural dissonance for many black people who identify with the struggle of identity

formulation given what scholars call the White Gaze. By default, the Army as a collective

entity is not absolved of responsibility, especially given the unique opportunities for service members to contribute to a community that ultimately affects change through hegemony.

Black service members have served in every U.S. conflict since the Revolutionary War. Each clash proved yet another opportunity for blacks to prove themselves and subsequently earn freedom and respect. As Americans struggled to reconcile differences in the quest to attain a distinct national identity, and in the midst of a civil war, independently homogenous and racialized groups begin to form around factors of equality and affinity. A post-Civil War political rift only perpetuates the emergence of distinct cultural mores that prove acrimonious to contemporary representation in combat arms branches. Evidence is realized through the atrocity of Jim Crow, racial discrimination, and racialized institutional policies that flourished during the 100-year period following the Emancipation Proclamation.

Conversations about race in the Army is seemingly taboo. The topic fosters extreme discomfort for many and threatens to be reduced to emotion ad hominem attacks steeped in a defense of historical ideas predicated on familial bonds and the preservation of historical accounts. Although the Armed Services rely on a cosmopolitan philosophy of inclusivity with regard to social issues, the explicit nature of Army culture functions to cloak difference as it simultaneously facilitates homogeneity to provide for the common defense. The Army is a holistic entity that enjoys particular autonomy because as an institution, the profession is disembodied and may consequently serve as a scapegoat to deflect issues of prejudice. To view the Army as a product of its members is to consider the Army as an institution of American citizens writ large. In so doing, and with the

consideration of American history, it is clear that the past, in all its complexity, contributes not only to issues of constitutional patriotism, but also to cognitive dissonance and cultural disparity among an ethnically diverse professional body. Perhaps this is the reason that the topic of race and the Civil War, not the tactics therein, is so sensitive. Leaders cannot divorce the tactics of any battle from the social and political factors that propel conflict. An acknowledgement of the history of the United States is the first step in identifying why black officers avoid combat arms branches.

The spirit of the American soldier lies in the preservation of ideas as defined in the United States Constitution; however, the details of that famed document were deliberated in a time when much of the nation's citizenry were not considered equal. The legacy of nationalistic ideas is founded in white supremacy. Remembering the house analogy, the edifice built around and atop of a damaged cornerstone threatens the integrity of the structure. To be clear, these observations do not imply that the Army is a racist institution; nothing could be further from the truth, but rather the researcher posits that the Army cannot be absolved from the acknowledgement of social implications that white supremacy influences in American citizenry, especially if the military is to be considered a microcosm of society.

The legacy of American slavery hinders efforts to envision the Army as a true reflection of its citizenry. The claim of historical relevance supplements many of the aforementioned ideas in the papers in White's catalogue. Curious observers may discover an ecology of correlated issues that must be untangled to appreciate the nuance that explains contemporary racial chasm—the effect of inadequate education and its corresponding economic result; economic issues and the consequent social status

resulting from income inequality; and lastly, a social and class disparity that contributes to emergent poor housing, as well as a corresponding evolution of survival ethics that ensure a sufficient quality of life in economically challenged neighborhoods. For many, these concerns do not disappear under the guise of the military uniform; however, individuals may seek out the uniform to escape the perils of those malignant and unfavorable conditions.

To reiterate, it is important to understand that the Army has little agency with respect to social problems of race and ethnicity; the institution is essentially the sum of its individual members, guided by a unique ethic. The impression and conduct of soldiers define the Army for many civilians; as a result, the Army is consequently referred to as if it is embodied, and as such, misclassification allows an intimate yet powerful entity to assume responsibility for conditions that the institution obviously cannot address. As a profession of arms, and given such a classification, the soldiers, civilians, and officers comprising the force are often circumscribed within it. More, members of the Armed Forces operate according to doctrine, and we subscribe to a collective understanding of particular values. Put differently, the manner in which members of the military conduct business has much to do with a collective understanding and the execution of the doctrine members subscribe to. If the military is a microcosm of society, then the people in it are susceptible to the same social variables that largely affect American civilians.

Given the history of America concerning race relations, the United States Army has served as an experimental institution for American social change. Although the Army enjoys a reputation for countering insularity, American military history is rife with acts of disenfranchisement toward service members of color. More specifically, while the

integration of United States Army in 1948 demonstrates a liberal approach toward citizenship, the treatment of segregated units such as the Tuskegee Airman illustrate the correlation of civil society and the profession of arms. Contemporarily, the potential for all Americans to realize the promise of equality is fleeting—this aptly contextualizes Odierno's concern as mentioned earlier. One need only examine American history to realize the formulation of an ideological gulf preventing the Army from truly reflecting its citizenry. Professionals can no longer afford to perceive the Army force as colorless or green. By thoughtfully considering the historical implications of our societal and cultural friction, reckoning with the implications of the past facilitates understanding as to why white service members dominate the operations branches of the military and the Armed Services.

The military, as a meritocracy, demands a sense of patriotism and unity. Service members should ascribe to an ethic devoid of aesthetic characteristics but unfortunately, service members are aware of differentiating motives to serve. The Army has a common uniform, language, and institutional requirement. Serving in the Army may offer a sanctuary devoid of the same socioeconomic and racial issues that the average American encounters; however, black service members must somehow reconcile their understanding of American history whereby state-sponsored violence, in the form of public lynching and legislative policy lay the grown work for patriotic discord.

The claim that racism is woven into the fabric of America is not new. The common refrain in the Army that its soldiers are all green, in other words race is a benign factor, is far from factual. Although the United States Army is equitable, it is no safe haven from racial chasm. Social and cultural variables such as race, gender, and ethnic

values and traditions are included within a hierarchical system of merit; consequently and seemingly unnoticeable, those values are deemed irrelevant by the people who likely never encounter the implications divisiveness.

Various Army devices (medals, ribbons, the uniform itself, etc.) function to standardize individuality as they facilitate camaraderie devoid of contributing factors of social stratification like race, gender, and ethnicity. While these devices promote and symbolize virtue, they also function to negate the individuality of the soldiers who earn them. Again, this realization is important when considering the disproportionate amount of black officers in combat related branches of the Army because in many cases, people gravitate to those with similar aesthetic characteristics. The Army is arguably socialistic and a service member's character is more distinguishable than race within the profession.

Concerning the lack of black officer representation in combat arms branches of the Army, prior research raises certain questions to identify recommendations toward a pragmatic strategy of debunking ideological myths of both black and white service members. This study relies on the examination of those ideological myths that prevent black officer candidates from assimilating into predominately white branches of military service. More importantly, this study will attempt to explain the complex nexus of multi-faceted citizen-soldiers in a racially complex and fragile society. The researcher will scrutinize the Army's leadership model to argue for the acknowledgement and consideration of particular sociohistorical variables that influence leader development and Army career progression.

Primary Research Question

The United States Army relies on aspects of the meritocracy, which values performance and therein neglects individuality and replaces social and cultural variables such as race, gender, ethnicity, and dialect with artifacts of power and prestige. Although, the Army functions as a progressive and hierarchical system of merit, the aforementioned sociocultural variables are often cloaked beneath the uniform. The issue is twofold; one, there are social implications that correspond with the wearing of a military uniform and its insignia; and two, the history of black people in America, with respect to race relations, influences black officer candidates' impulse to serve in Army branches that immediately concern itself with direct violence on behalf of the state. Such a realization is important to consider when conceptualizing the more immediate problem of the disproportionate rates of black officers in combat related branches of the Army.

Claims regarding the implication of the Army uniform and its insignia toward identity formulation prompts the following research question: Do ideological barriers hinder black officer assimilation into the combat arms branches of the U.S. Army?

Secondary Research Questions

The secondary questions to be answered in this thesis are:

1. If ideological barrier prevent black officer assimilation into combat arms branches, what are those barriers and why are they limiting?

2. Does the military uniform cloak individuality and, as a result, perpetuate an identity crisis and/or cultural dissonance?

3. Given the looming civil/military divide, is there tension as black officers function as arguably three separate but correlated entities: citizens of a polarizing United

States, professional officers in a cosmopolitan Army, and citizen-soldiers in both
the Army and the country, respectively?

The answers to these questions will assist in the development of conclusions and
recommendations in chapter five of this thesis.

Assumptions

Two predominate assumptions frame the research as it applies to the primary
research question: Do ideological barriers hinder black officer assimilation into combat
arms branches of the Army? Assumptions are ideas or concepts that the researcher
believes to be true and are necessary in order to continue with the research. The study
identifies the following assumptions:

1. Underrepresentation of black officers in the combat arms branches is a problem.

2. The underrepresentation of black officers in the combat arms branches limit black
   officer advancement to senior ranks of the Army.

Definition of Terms

Black: Persons having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa or other
areas. For the purposes of this thesis, the author uses the term black instead of African-
American as the primary "means of identification of this racial and ethnic category in
accordance with the Department of Defense standard racial and ethnic designation
categories." (Clark, 1990, 16)

Double Consciousness: The sense of always looking at oneself through the eyes
of others. W.E.B. Dubois coined this condition to explain the impacts of race relations on
the black psyche. A black person who suffers from double consciousness is subject to

victimization, based predominately on the assumptions that others make about him/her because of their race. Subsequently, that person loses agency because he/she must grapple with the challenges of coping in two worlds—one characterized by black cultural behavior, and one by a devaluing white cultural behavior. The theory of double consciousness is a concept based on race.

Imposter Syndrome: The psychological pattern in which an individual devalues themselves based on any of the following factors—race, gender, ability, attire, and etc. Those suffering from imposterism fear being discovered as a fraud and, as a result, attribute any success to luck or deception. Imposter syndrome is not predicated on race, but can be a byproduct of double consciousness.

Object-Oriented Rhetoric: This theoretical concept suggests the influence in seemingly inanimate things. It is a form of analysis that examines aspects of persuasion in objects, such as the Army uniform and insignia as signifiers of prestige, or a business suit as an indicator of professionalism. Object-oriented rhetoric will be used examine Army artifacts to determine the impact of agency given efforts to develop leader capacity.

Sanctuary: This term refers to a benign environment of refuge. In its usage, the Army as a haven implies that military professionals are homogenous and are not only protected from societal ills like racism, prejudice, and phobias, but it also suggests that service members subscribe to a value system that encourages inclusion and merit.

Social Epistemic Rhetoric: This term pertains to how people learn. Factors of geography and demographics provides insight into why and how people think. The significance of these social factors takes into account the dimensions that characterize

social groups, in this case race. The examination of the social conditions of black officers may clarify motives for serving in particular professional branches of service.

Social Stratification: The categorization of society into socioeconomic echelons; consequently, aspect of division contribute to a disparity of perspective. In the Army, social stratification refers to divergent cultural traditions of officers and enlisted personnel.

Trope: Physical or pictorial representations of stereotypes. Tropes exist as a result of socially constructed narratives. Frankly, stereotypes and implicit bias contribute to the creation of tropes. When constructed, tropes often misrepresent and underwrite the characterization of individuals without their knowledge. Considering the military, tropes actively and often link members of social groups with regard to demographics. In this instance, service members are bound to the cultural norms of the largest social group.

Limitations

The primary factor that will limit the scope of this research and analysis is time. Given the approximately eight-month research constraint, there will not be adequate time to conduct a rich query of human subjects research.

Delimitations

The researcher will impose one research boundary: the researcher will not conduct interviews but will draw upon anecdote from personal and prior researcher experience.

Significance of Study

The purpose of this study is to identify conclusions that explain institutional dissonance on behalf of black officer candidates, furthermore, to provide recommendations to reframe understanding given the disparity in black officer participation in the combat arms branches of the Army. Research may also contribute to already exhaustive inquiry and explain the ideological aspects of the aforementioned disparity. The goal of this study is to provide leaders across the Army an understanding of the significance of grappling with cultural difference and varied lifestyles, and to perhaps suggest an explanation as to why the issue exists.

Chapter Conclusion

Leadership relies on an understanding of people to maximize talent. So long as aesthetics and perspective informs decision-making, understanding the nuance that underlies assumptions about behavior is vital. This study seeks to bridge the ideological gulf that prevents groups of people from sharing in affinity and forming a collective Army ethic.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

> The greatest reward of this constant interrogation, of confrontation with the brutality of my country, is that it has freed me from ghosts and girded me against the sheer terror of disembodiment.
> —Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me*

> We are tied together in the single garment of destiny, caught in an inescapable network of mutuality. And whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. For some strange reason I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be.
> —Martin Luther King Jr., "Remaining Awake Though a Great Revolution"

Chapter Introduction

Many researchers focus on the structural barriers that facilitate the disparity of black officers in combat arms branches, the ideological barriers highlight a more significant problem. The difference between the two classifications is perceptive in nature. For structural barriers, collective and majority norms characterize the obstacles that stand in the way of equality, such as nepotism, cultural differences in attire, speech, body language, gestures, and background. Ideological barriers have much to do with those obstacles that exist in the mind—inferiority complex, identity crisis, imposter syndrome, perception issues, self-doubt, and feelings of invisibility are all ideological barriers that influence decision-making.

In 2009, the National Defense Authorization Act established the Military Leadership Diversity Commission (MLDC) to explore many of the structural barriers that exists. The MLDC report suggests the interplay of both structural and perceptual barriers that prevent black officers from joining the combat related branches of the Army. The

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report also cites the importance of variables having to do with learning, such as social, educational, and historical factors that relate to the interplay of specific ethnic identities. Many of the following critiques point to aspects of perception that deal more with sentiment rather than diverse and diasporic allegiances; in other words, ideological barriers have much to do with the cultivation of thought from diverse cultural experiences. In addition to the prior structural barriers, others include differentiating educational experiences, diverse historical understanding, wealth disparity that contribute to socio-economic plight, and a resulting dissonance toward public service for people of color exists. The research question of whether ideological barriers thwart black officer assimilation into the combat arms branches is not completely interrogated without the understanding of the cognitive dissonance that occurs as a result of differentiating motives for military service for black people.

The purpose of this literature review is to identify the patterns and trends in scholarship that explain the existing structural and cultural barriers that prevent black officers from joining the combat arms branches as mere symptoms of a more serious systemic problem—the failure to acknowledge the implications of American history.

Although many researchers acknowledge the aforementioned historical injury given slavery and segregation, few of them elaborate on the implications to the psyche of black officers, officer candidates, and white service members alike. The following is necessary to extend upon assertions made in the background chapter preceding the literature review.

First, this review will begin with a historical genealogy as depicted by previous researchers surveying the same issue. The analysis will likely construct and illustrate the

black body as a historical trope—one that is malleable to socioeconomic and political conditions and, as such, a trope that can be prejudiced given the application of certain historical events. Later, this emerging body will be analyzed and juxtaposed alongside environmental domains to identify if and why cognitive dissonance influences decision-making.

Second, the claim that ideological barriers exist prompts an examination into complex power relationships that illustrates a Hegelian master/slave dialectic. The dialectic suggests the mutual recognition of both master and slave, or leader and subordinate (the term master and slave refer to power, not actors in a slave economy); however, brief look into the politics governing slave plantation culture may be revealing in attempts to understand the psychological phenomenon with respect to the troubling racial relationships in America.

Third, the literature review will inform the secondary research questions pertaining to multiple identity constructs of the aforementioned trope or black officer candidate writ large; the review will also illustrate the military uniform as a cloaking mechanism to conceal individuality. The resulting findings may offer an explanation that will likely necessitate an introduction to object-oriented rhetoric and the emergence of incompatible cultures and competing loyalties—a civil/military gulf within the officer candidates themselves.

The question of why black officers hesitate to serve in combat branches of our Army is not new; as mentioned, many of the officers concerned with this issue are black officers serving in combat related branches themselves. The hesitation among many officers to engage in topics of race indicate discomfort and apprehension on the part of

leaders charged with the health and welfare of the same soldiers claiming to have issues of racial discord.

The Creation of a Psychological Barrier

Major General Ronald Clark offers three anecdotal reasons to justify his study of the disparity of black Infantry officers in the Army. First, Clark (1988, 4) recalls his time as West Point as being transformational; he writes during his commissioning year, "only seven of 233 Infantry officers were black." The statistic is commensurate with tables 1 and 2—an 11:1 ratio of white combat arms officers to black. Second, Clark recalls being the only black Company Commander in the 25th Infantry Division during his Company grade time; and third, he writes about his curiosity when asked, "Where are the black officers in our Army?" (Clark 1988, 4). Curiosity as to why something is out of place is not peculiar: "As long as black people are viewed as 'them,' the burden falls on blacks to do all the 'cultural' and 'moral' work necessary for healthy race relations" (West 2001, 77). Clark's research contributes to a larger body of work that attempts to make the answer to the question of difference clear. Other writers also influenced Clark, but he also may have felt the necessity to steward the Infantry branch. No doubt, aesthetic differences contribute to feelings of being out of place, yet examining difference through observations of the *other* yields understanding. The burden that Cornel West writes about above manifests itself in what W.E.B. DuBois coined as double consciousness.

Double consciousness is a theory that suggests the inward two-ness of black people as a result of racialized oppression; it further suggests the necessity of understanding oneself through the perceptions of particularly white *others*. According to DuBois, double consciousness threatens to influence the psyche of black people causing

them to interpret things in two distinct, yet corresponding ways—one according to traditional black cultural aesthetics, and the other from the perspective of other ethnic aesthetic value. For example, Irving Smith explains the cultural differences in white and black cultures as it relates to attire. Smith cites Remo Butler to explain the differences in music and social interactions of black and white officers alike. Smith writes,

> the expected mode of dress for officers at civilian functions is khaki pants, a collared shirt, and loafers—commonly referred to as 'vintage casual' at the [United States War College] USAWC. Although he did not state it explicitly, Butler suggested that blacks do not generally dress in this manner and thus had to learn this new behavior or be ostracized. According to Butler, these differences [and others] are the result of a system of cultural mores that have to be inculcated by blacks if they are to succeed in the military. (Smith 2010, 10)

West's claim that the burden to assimilate falls on the *other* seems relevant here; the idea of dressing to assimilate does some psychological harm to the person compelled to comply and the act of mimicking the majority *other* is an explicit structural barrier.

Aspects of double consciousness also manifest itself anytime the majority population dictates the rules. Another example is found in the verbal sentiment from a black freshmen cadet (Plebe) at West Point: "Sir, I don't know who I am anymore. If I dress or talk like my black peers, I'll be stereotyped by my white peers; if I act, dress, or talk like my white peers, then I'll be called an Uncle Tom by my black peers." The identity crisis that ensues is all too familiar for the individual suffering with double consciousness. It is not difficult to make an observation about the assimilation of black officers into branches of service that are traditionally white. The absence of critical discourse in the Army about the impacts of race only preserve the existing challenge of addressing the problems surrounding any probable lack of trust and the disparity in black

officer participation as it relates to black officers and combat arms branches of the army,

the narrative must change and dialogue is critical.

Clashing Cultures

Similar to the aforementioned military racial chasm, the implications of American

slavery and the residual effects of disenfranchisement led to a disparity in perspectives

and by extension demographics in the Army officer population. Leaders often neglect the

effects of such a troubled history and they tend not be emotionally tied to guilt associated

with it, despite the prevalent sentiment that hinders constructive conversations about

difference. The goal is not to dwell on negativity, but to extract meaning from past

atrocity. The contemporary disparity that leads to divergent career paths in the Army

certainly has an origin. In a 2017 lecture at West Point, author Ta-Nehisi Coates

examines slavery as a precursor to ideological division, he states:

> We have to understand the kind of force slavery was in [our] society in 1860:
> [there were] *four million* enslaved African-Americans in this country in the
> southern states; it's a lot of people. If you went to South Carolina in 1860 the
> majority of the people there—if you took a count—the people there were
> enslaved. If you went to Mississippi in 1860, the majority of people there were
> enslaved. If you went to Louisiana; Alabama: half the people. Georgia: half the
> people are enslaved. If you went to Virginia, where the majority . . . which had
> the largest number of enslaved people . . . you'd find whole counties where
> somewhere on the order of 70, 80, 90 percent of people living in that country
> were enslaved. (Coates 2017)

These observations not only cite the existence of a deliberate slave society, but it also

insinuates a dependence on servitude predicated by the dreams of economic upward

mobility for white citizenry.

Another illustration of the evolution of emerging and dualistic cultures is

explained in examination of educational disparities in United States during

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Reconstruction. Linwood Nelson examines the Black Codes as a political act to thwart black progress toward opportunities for upward mobility. While arguing for mentorship to curb cultural ignorance, Nelson examines the socioeconomic impact of the Black Codes to substantiate the claim that black progress hinged on the structural barrier of dubious legislation (Nelson 2017, 5). Specifically, the Black Codes were southern laws, passed in 1865 and 1866 to restrict black American freedom after emancipation. Nelson makes the point that the Black Codes act limited the prosperity of black Americans in the south, prompted the necessity for the Great Migration, and also cemented the idea that black people were inferior to white people. Although Nelson uses the Census Bureau to illustrate the concentration of the black population in 2010, a comparison with an 1890 map illustrates the striking similarly in regional dependency with regard to established white agricultural institutions.
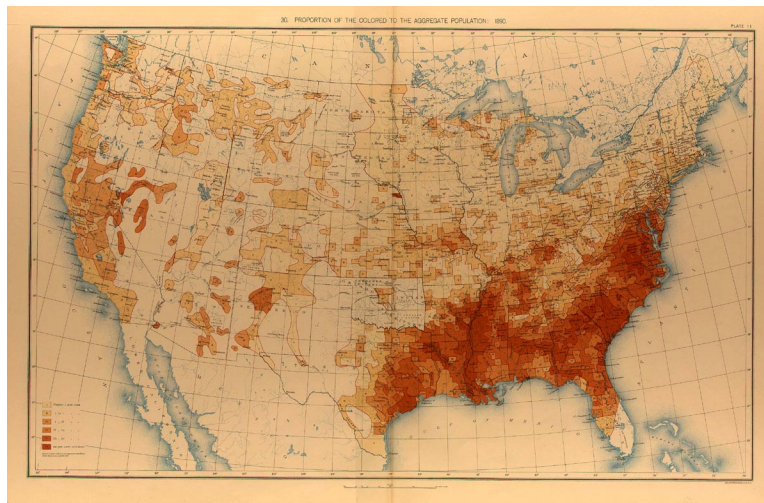
Figure 2.   1890 Black Population Map

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, "The Black Population in 1890" accessed April 19, 2019, https://www.census.gov/history/www/reference/maps/1890_population_distribution.html.
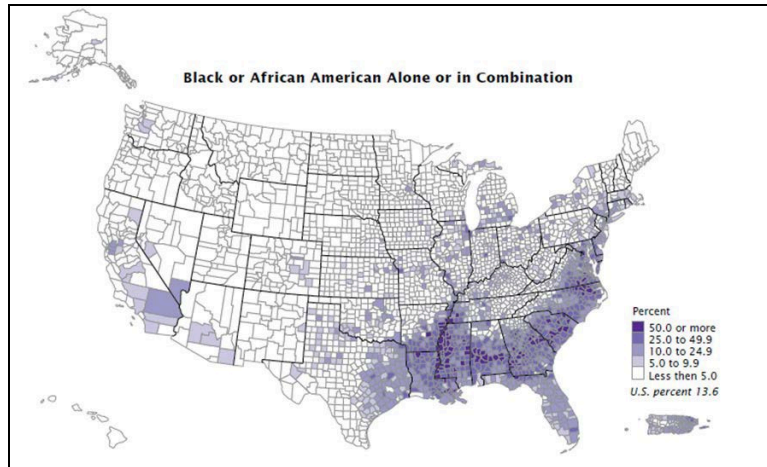
Figure 3.   2010 Black Population Map

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, "The Black Population 2010," accessed March 12, 2017, https://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-06.pdf.

These figures illustrate post war content with southern agricultural prospects. According to the figures above, the concentration of black people in the United States in 1890 mirrors that of the population in 2010. Remnants of the slave society that Coates describes is mere residue for the existing ideological disparity regarding patriotism and trust in America between white and black people.

In 1895, Booker T. Washington advocated for southern black worker rights in a speech known as the Atlanta Exposition Address. Washington suggested that since black people were most familiar with the agricultural work of the south, they should remain in there and be compensated for labor that contributed to southern industry and commerce. Since black people in the 1890s comprised one-third of the southern population, Washington believed that those individuals could take advantage of that opportunity and reap the benefits of self-sufficiency. This philosophy runs counter to the northern and newly emancipated free black people who believed that legislation ensured the freedom

that the Proclamation decrees, an example is the 1896 *Plessy vs Ferguson* ruling that dictated separate but equal as constitutional. The large concentration of the black population in the south, as depicted by the figures above, suggest the emergence of a disparity in thought as well—DuBois and Washington became leaders of distinct philosophies just as Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr. would. King advocating for respectability politics and X for separate but equal politics.

On one hand, civil disobedience through nonviolence and compliance has its advantages; on the other hand, a more activist and outspoken critique of race relations was necessary. Albeit, in the mid-19th century, black post-civil war heroism was celebrated, however, a tinge of bitterness carried ideological dissonance toward patriotism for some. DuBois would be considered an Uncle Tom for his form of respectability politics. Similar division in ideas spread to a population of blacks wanting to serve in the Army as well.

A Brief History of Black Military Service

The following survey of black military service will hopefully offer a glimpse into the evolution of a train of thought that characterizes contemporary sentiments for black officer candidates. The history of black people in America is not nurturing. As a result, there is a general distrust with the government and by extension the military. There are exhaustive studies that clearly explain American history for black soldiers as tumultuous struggles for freedom. Up until the mid-20th century, black patriotism directly correlated with aspirations of freedom, autonomy, merit, and opportunity. Stories of mutual experience, shared hardships, affinity, and valor come as the result of the indoctrination into public service whereby the *skin* of every soldier is camouflage.

Ronald Clark (1988, 16) argues that an understanding of the historical contributions of black soldiers is essential in understanding their underrepresentation in the Infantry branch. In an account of wars dating back to the Revolutionary War, Clark describes the struggle that blacks faced to fight for the right to fight. The goal of freedom for black soldiers justified their struggle; an example is the British campaign to recruit black slaves to fight in exchange for their freedom. Black soldiers also fought as militiamen in the Continental Army in the war up until December 1775, however, George Washington was opposed to blacks serving in his Army; he ultimately relented given the circumstances of battle loss and troop desertion.

Two distinct practices formed as a result of a "called upon when needed" enlistment strategy: one, for blacks, service in the conflict provided a pathway to liberty, rights, and the enhancement of opportunity; and two, the white majority called upon blacks only in time of great need and then ignored them and their contributions once peace resumed (Lanning 2016, 26). Michael Lanning (2016, 34) explains, "In fact, the number of enslaved African Americans increased by sevenfold from five hundred thousand to three and a half million from the end of the Revolutionary War until their emancipation during and after the Civil War.

In an earlier study, James Smith (2006, 6) acknowledges the social and political variables that influenced black service members in the Revolutionary War. Smith also acknowledges the need for manpower to sustain both the British and the Continental Armies. Smith explains the prevalence of the institution of slavery by describing the tensions that grew out of the preservation of industry for the north and agriculture for the south. Considering the propensity for blacks to serve in the Army, Smith (2006, 51)

asserts, "for blacks, the overwhelming sense of patriotism was inextricably linked to the battle for civil rights and equality." Black sentiment coincides with political efforts for civil rights and Armed Services integration. If patriotism for blacks is couched in liberty, then it may be possible for liberty to negate race as a social construct. Liberty then can be conceptualized as something attainable and exclusive for both white colonists and black citizens, but for diverse reasons. Despite dissimilar motives, Lanning offers a revelation:

> with so much official action and individual resentment against blacks serving in the military, the question arises as to why they stepped forward despite these adversarial attitudes to fight for the liberties of their white masters. Part of the answer is as old as warfare itself…military service—particularly in battle—has offered young men the opportunity to prove themselves, both to themselves and to those around them. Once in the ranks, each soldier fought for self-survival and for his fellow Soldier—black or white. (Lanning 2016, 30)

Contemporarily, service members enjoy the affinity that Lanning describes but what he identifies is the idea that military service and war is a necessary equalizer. Military uniforms assist in the shared endeavor of war, despite diverse motives for service.

On March 12, 1779, in a letter to the President of the Continental Congress, Alexander Hamilton advocated for securing fidelity through arms. Hamilton writes, "An essential part of the plan is to give them [blacks] their freedom with their muskets. This will . . . animate their courage, and I believe will have a good influence upon those who remain, to open the door for their emancipation" (Syrett and Cook 1961, 17). Both Clark and Smith et al. recognize the sacrifice and commitment of black soldiers to serve on behalf of themselves and other disenfranchised people. The idea that the institution of slavery perpetuates psychological trauma that persists through generations is not far-fetched, it is indeed a contemporary reality that can be understood through the examination of cultural history in 19th century America.

<u>Service in a Time of Slavery</u>

Aside from the identity-politics of the revolutionary war, plantation life proved dismal to blacks in the Antebellum South. When Lanning claims that black soldiers sought to prove themselves on the battlefield, he is responding to the desire for slaves to escape the psychological and physical trauma being practiced in the many fields on southern plantations, and also in the courts that permitted the capture and return of people of color to a state of slavery as per the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. Factors of black thought are rooted in the systematic and ideological injury that takes place on those plantations, and more so in the minds of people who depend on slavery to sustain economy. Much of the existing scholarship on the disparity of blacks serving in the combat arms branches of service omits the details of claims of historical psychological trauma.

The institution of slavery fosters an innate characteristic of inferiority for black people, which persist contemporarily. Despite the noble service of black soldiers in the Revolutionary War, a majority of white people "continued to view [blacks] with contempt and fear" (Nalty, 1986 19). Post-revolutionary war sentiment facilitated black exclusion from normal society, and the denial of freedom for some blacks only propelled ambition for an exclusively white-armed force at that time. Simultaneously, the emergence and activism of abolitionists propelled the slavery-opposition movement forward and functioned to establish a coalition of freedom fighters. Former slaves such as Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman worked tirelessly for the emancipation in a time when deviance to the status quo resulted in death. A famous exhortation attributed to

Tubman is the idea that she would have freed more slaves if only they knew they were enslaved.

When the Civil War began in 1861, the south, which considered itself the Confederate States of America, feared arming the slaves, and the United States was reluctant to recruit blacks for the reason of statecraft. Both entities in the north and the south would see slaves as a liability and only considered their involvement when manpower became a grave issue. The enlistment by necessity was akin to recruitment strategies in the Revolutionary War as well.

In 1863, following Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, the Bureau of Colored Troops began to recruit blacks to fill the ranks of the United States Colored Troops. Clark explains the initial disposition of the black soldiers as being primarily laborers. Any pride that many of these soldiers may have had upon the thought of bearing arms in military service only faltered throughout the years. Reconstruction and the Jim Crow era took the black body and subjected it, once again, to state-sponsored terrorism.

On a spring day in April of 1876, and in the presence of then President Ulysses S. Grant, Frederick Douglass delivered a thoughtful and audacious address at the historic Freemen's Memorial in Washington D.C. Douglass shocked his audience as he proclaimed his truth:

> 'It must be admitted, truth compels me to admit, even here in the presence of the monument we have erected to his [Lincoln] memory, Abraham Lincoln was not . . . either our man or our model. In his interests, in his associations, in his habits of thought, and in his prejudices, he was a white man . . . He [Lincoln] was preeminently the white man's president,'. . . 'entirely devoted to the welfare of the white man.' (Blight 2018, 6)

Lincoln's observation no doubt conveyed an urgent rebuke of political expediency. The observation that Lincoln was the white man's president underscores

aspects of continuing identity politics. Little did Douglass know, the next 100 years would be the most terrifying campaign of domestic terror ever.

The Black Body and the Jim Crow Era

The Jim Crow era was yet another terrible chapter in American history. In 1877, the Supreme Court justices ruled that unequal treatment and segregation would become became the law of the land. In a series of judicial decisions, the Supreme Court dictated clear guidelines on how to systematically and constitutionally excludes blacks from jurors in favor of white jurors. Later, the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision became the lynchpin that would ultimately codify separate by equal doctrine. What followed is a campaign of state-sponsored terror that persisted through the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Jim Crow laws, replete with a tradition of minstrelsy and blackface tropes, dominated black lives from approximately 1890 well into the twentieth century.

Much of the ideological implications of the 19th century are linked to the subsequent Great Migration, the New Negro movement, education disparities, and the psychological trauma of the many lynching's that characterized the Jim Crow Era. Professor Carol Anderson provides an example as she describes the bleak discriminatory environment given the poor conditions of schools in the Deep South. According to Anderson, (2016, 69), "The disparity in student-to-teacher ratios in the mid-1930s Atlanta . . . was staggering. For blacks, there were 82 students for every teacher, while the ratio for whites was 35 to 1." Anderson explains funding issues and classroom and school conditions that foster counterproductive learning environments. States such as Missouri, Texas, Oklahoma, Virginia, Atlanta, Alabama, Mississippi, Florida, Louisiana, South Carolina, and others all faltered under Jim Crow laws. These states produced a

generation of citizens whose fear and psychological trauma would be transplanted into the future fathers and mothers of the black officer candidates matriculating today. The common phrase from many black parents to their combat-aspirant child is: Why are you willing to fight for a country that's caused so much pain to us? These conversations exist alongside 'the talk' that black parents give to their child(ren) regarding police encounters.

During the Jim Crow Era, there were two methods of continuing military service as officers for black candidates: earn a commission from the United States Military Academy, or qualify as an enlisted soldier with two years of experience. According to the researcher Krewasky Salter (2014), the latter two options required testing at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. This era also fostered the emergence of the Historically Black College and Universities (HBCU) and also the emergence of black fraternities and sororities. The Jim Crow era perpetuated the already tenuous gulf between white and black people in America.

In 1917, when it became evident that war in Europe was near, opportunities for black service members became a concern. This time, the requirement for black officers to lead would be discussed. Headquartered in the basement of Howard University, Emmett J. Scott established the Central Committee of Negro College Men (CCNCM). The CCNCM solicited support and appealed to congressmen for officer training for black candidates. In a printed card that requested the establishment of an officer's reserve training camp for Negroes, Scott pinned the message:

> Our country faces the greatest crisis in its history; the Negro, as ever, loyal and patriotic, is anxious to do his full share in the defense and support of his country in its fight for democracy. The Negro welcomes the opportunity of contributing his full quota to the Federal army now being organized. He feels strongly that these Negro troops should be officered by their own men. (Salter 2014, 59)

Subsequently, Lieutenant General Charles Young was nominated to lead and over 300 senators endorsed the request. What followed was the establishment of an officer-training camp at Tuskegee—a Jim Crowism in that against all protests of integration, a segregated military camp enabled black officer candidates who could train to fight gallantly in combat. The contemporary HBCU still offers black students similar affinity and opportunity to nurture common cultural traits given the implications of socioeconomic conditions and educational disparities.

A Black Officer Candidate as a Historical Trope

The trauma suffered on the part of black people in America during slavery, Jim Crow, and racial segregation is real. Considering that they are beneficiaries of socioeconomic plight, many black people in America sustain a form of post-traumatic stress. The generalization posits the black officer candidate as a historical trope who grapples with identify formulation in ways that white officers do not. The following Cynefin framework describes environments where the gulf between military volunteers and their parent society are in flux.

The Cynefin Framework

The Cynefin framework was developed to assist in the understanding and visualization of how systems operate within given domains; it offers a unique way of examining how variables interact to affect decision-making and situational understanding. The Cynefin framework suggests that a person's external environment describes a continuum from an unordered state of being to that of ordered (Dettmer 2011, 10). That continuum is further divided into general contexts, or domains and is depicted

in figure 4. There are five domains that comprise the framework—complex, complicated, chaotic, simple, and disorder. The boundaries of the domains are fuzzy because it is quite easy to transition from an unordered to ordered state and back again.
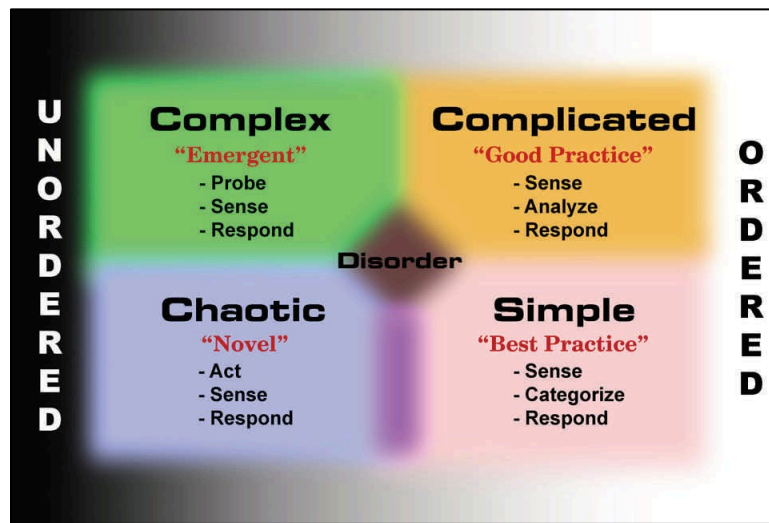
Figure 4.   The Cynefin Framework

Source: H. William Dettmer, "Systems Thinking and the Cynefin Framework: A Strategic Approach to Managing Complex Systems," Goal Systems International, 2011 accessed 01 January 2019, http://www.goalsys.com/books/documents/Systems-Thinking-and-the-Cynefin-Framework-Final.3.pdf, figure 4.

The transition zones of the framework are the focal point of this study. Using the Cynefin framework, the researcher posits the categorization of social conditions that aptly define ideological barriers, which disrupts social assimilation into the Army for officers of color. Each domain is correspondent with physical dispositions in American society. If we apply the Cynefin framework to the black body as a historical trope, then it is easy to examine the domain(s) that influence decision-making as it relates to volunteering to serve in diverse spaces within the Army where combat is likely.

Another unique aspect about the framework is its value as a sense-making model. The framework easily allows researchers to assess and describe racial schemas, and the civil discord that emerges as a result of boundaries. The ultimate goal is to move from an unordered state to one of order and simplicity. Considering racial tension and disparity, transitions can be difficult. In chapter four, these domains will be analyzed alongside historical and hierarchical formations to access which domain is likely to harbor the black psyche and by extension the black body.

For the purpose of this study, it is helpful to understand each domain as a specific and independent operating environment. According to Dave Snowden et al., the framework allows decision makers to access the variables that influence their perception. Albeit, other factors such as education and geography play a significant role in identity formulation and decision making, it is the goal of this study to offer a method of sense making to understand disparities in representation within the conditions bearing on black officer candidates contemplating military branches of service.

<u>Chapter Conclusion</u>

The site of things unexplained is muddled in the troublesome history of America. These phenomena exist within our military and threaten to sustain the divisiveness and disparity found in cultural demographics. Much of the cultural and racial tension that undermines discomfort with diverse spaces exists in the legacy of the aforementioned history. There is nothing novel about the events that characterize America's past, however, the neglect and avoidance given the implications of the past is troubling. "This leads to another equally important ideal, one that Americans implicitly accept but to which they make no conscious claim. Americans believe in the reality of 'race' as a

defined, indubitable feature of the natural world. Racism—the need to ascribe bone-deep features to people and then humiliate, reduce, and destroy them—inevitably follows from this inalterable condition…race is the child of racism, not the father" (Coates, 2015 7). Coates' declaration of racial construct characterize deeply rooted trauma in the American psyche, that which reveals itself in subtle but damaging ways. Ideological barriers that prevent black officers from willingly joining combat arms branches in the Army do exist, and can be attributed to the aforementioned history, contemporary social stratification, and the disparity between cultural values vice the military values that define the Army ethic.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

> When the . . . man steps behind the mask of the trickster, his freedom is circumscribed by the fear that he is not simply miming a personification of his disorder and chaos but that he will be trapped somewhere in the mystery of hell."
> —Ralph Ellison, "Change the Joke and Slip the Yoke"

> first we'll investigate what justice is like in the cities. Then, we'll also go on to consider it in individuals, considering the likeness of the bigger in the idea of the littler?
> Plato, *The Republic*

Chapter Introduction

The researcher will use multiple methods to elaborate on the response to the primary research question: do ideological barriers hinder black officer participation into the combat arms branches of the U.S. Army? The secondary research questions necessitate an examination of those barriers and their formation given the results of historical genealogy and the prior research in the literature review. The methodology includes a synopsis of the literature review, multiple methods of rhetorical analysis, and an explanation of the Cynefin framework to contextualize the multifaceted environment that black officer candidates experience as they transition from a civilian space to the Army as a meritocracy. The Cynefin framework will serve as an evaluation framework to access the officer candidate's disposition and the formulation of ideological barriers that address the primary research question. Answering the primary research question will enable the responses to the secondary research questions:

1. What are those ideological barriers and why are they limiting?

2. Does the military uniform cloak individuality and, as a result, perpetuate an identity crisis and/or cultural dissonance?

3. Given the looming civil/military divide, is there tension as black officers function as arguably three separate but correlated entities: citizens of a polarizing United States, professional officers in a cosmopolitan Army, and citizen-soldiers in both the Army and the country, respectively?

This research begins with qualitative analysis of experiences based on environments of race and cultural discord. The goal of this study is to contextualize American history with respect to race relations and apply those conditions on subjects of color. The construction of the black body as a historical trope will facilitate an objective model for analysis when applying the Cynefin framework. More, the researcher posits the black psyche as a construction of the factors of American history and therein prompts the consideration of race as a social phenomenon, as such; the construction of race erases ethnicity and replaces culture with color, hence substantiating the claim that race is socially constructed. The claim that ideological barriers are foundational in the disparity of black officers in the combat arms branches of Armed Services will be clear at the conclusion of this analysis.

First, the literature review offers a historical and sociological genealogy that illustrates the formulation of ideological factors for black officer candidates. Next, secondary research questions will be examined in a step-by-step method to provide structure during the analysis. In the step-by-step process, rhetorical analysis and an anecdotal case study will enable an understanding of the domains that harbor the black body (officer candidate) as a historical trope. Then, the Cynefin framework, as an

empirical evaluation framework, will be developed to aggregate findings as a result of the aforementioned rhetorical analysis. Finally, based on the results of an aggregate assessment of the evaluation framework, a conclusion will be drawn to answer the secondary research questions and provide recommendations to remedy the findings of the study.

The Complex Domain

The complex domain describes America with respect to social stratification. Within the framework, the complex domain is where adaptative systems evolve. In other words, in an environment where interdependent actors flourish, there is a high degree of adaptive capacity. For example, emerging political movements adapt to and build upon social factors that the media might influence. Singular and isolated events morphs into larger movements given a simple retweet. Scholars refer to this as rhetorical velocity—the rapid adaptation of variables that threaten to alter the original intent of a product or statement. In a complex domain, agents create learning organizations that develop overtime and adjust to achieve a desired end state.

The Army utilizes operational variables to understand environments to ultimately facilitate action and decision-making—those variables are categorized as physical, military, economic, social, information, infrastructure, physical environments, and time considerations. These factors are often applied to environments of conflict and/or areas that require military action; however, the variables are also appropriate areas to grasp an understanding of America as a society of diverse and interacting actors. The complex domain in the Cynefin framework, in this case, may characterize America as a country whose citizens suffer from the implications of history. In chapter four, the researcher will

describe the complex domain according to the operational variables as mentioned above. This analysis will enable a common understanding of contemporary factors that might influence a black officer candidate's decision to volunteer for service in the combat arms branches.

The Complicated Domain

Within the Cynefin framework, the complicated domain describes the space that all service members occupy. Specifically for service members of color, the boundaries that define the space are cognitive and require the adaptation of cultural signifiers such as attire, body language, dialect, and overall demeanor. The complicated domain is a place where variability and uncertainty exists. According Dave Snowden et.al., the complicated domain is the known unknown realm where specialists and novice meet; it is the domain of the experts (Snowden 2003). Systems of thought in this domain are characterized as silos in that they require specialized knowledge to negotiate. When Snowden and Boone discuss systems within the Cynefin framework, they refer to sense and decision-making in environments of ambiguity. My goal is to use the complicated domain as a way to address the transition of spaces that black military officers have to negotiate.

To further illustrate the factors that weigh on the black psyche in the complicated domain, the black body as a historical trope will be subject to an analysis of transitioning space between the Army as a meritocracy, a deviation of the Platonic Timocracy later explained, and civil society as a democracy—that which characterizes a civil military gap. For example, when soldiers remove their uniform, an artifact that often performs the role of cloaking individuality, they ultimately transition ideological spaces that correspond with real physical interactions. The uniform performs the role of a race proxy.

Further analysis will reveal a psychological shift in the minds of the service member who may be conscious of adhering to the social norms associated with the uniform. The complicated nature of the black officer candidate in the complicated domain illustrates the propensity of adhering to a form of entrained thinking—a conditional response that traps decision makers in the practice, policies, techniques, and rationales that have been successful in the collective upward mobility of any institution. The ideological pull on specific cultural values may thwart full assimilation into an institutional population and may also facilitate an identity crisis for those that must assimilate. Examining the complicated domain will illustrate an inclination toward tribalism and the challenge that a secondary question prompts: Is there tension as black officers who function as arguably three separate but correlated entities: citizens of a disaccorded United States, professional officers in a heterotopian Army, and citizen-soldiers in both the Army and the country, respectively?

The Chaotic Domain

The chaotic domain describes a clash in cultures where symbolic and real violence occurs, it is highly uncertain and can be described as the landscape of the unknown unknowns. In a chaotic domain, decisions are made with little to no reflection, and as the name implies, the domain is largely characterized by actions that perpetuate crisis. Snowden and Boone cite the events of 9/11 and other natural disasters as example. Chaos, in this case, is the site of physical and mental altercation: physical violence on one hand, and symbolic violence (micro-aggression) on the other.

A multi-modal rhetorical analysis of the 1974 film *Mandingo* (Fleisher 1975) will help to explain certain ideological barriers that emerged from the institution of slavery.

Multimodal analysis takes into consideration all modes of persuasion in particular scenes of that film. Film is ripe with modes of persuasion that often go unknown to viewers, albeit the viewer is subconsciously influenced by aspects of film—this includes the music, tones, body language of actors, scene backgrounds, and artifacts and objects within the film themselves. As passive observers, these things go unnoticed; however, subconsciously, they are important to covey the complete message that facilitates a film's agency. A rhetorical analysis of whiteness and blackness as binary byproducts of slavery as an institution will illuminate contemporary ties to racial discord. *Mandingo* is important not only due to its accessibility, but also because it depicts a realistic account of chattel slavery that can be realized as a passive observer. Film also allows observers an opportunity to understand situations from various perspectives. In this case, the chaos defining a clash of cultures for white and black people likely stems from sociological theories that explain contemporary dissonance for black officers. Double consciousness, the implications of a master/slave dialectic (as it relates to power), and colorism are all prevalent factors that influence decision making for black officer candidates. The examination of these, and other ideological barriers, will describe a domain that is akin to disorder (Fleisher 1975).

The Simple Domain

The simple domain describes a stable context for decision-making, and is the domain that motivates decision makers. The Army is an apt example of a simple domain in that the Army offers a universal hierarchy based on merit. In a simple domain, variability is narrow, and people know what to expect; generally speaking, expectations are managed and cause and effect is predictable. The Army is a simple job to many; rank,

position, and procedure guide action in the military. The Army uniform itself facilitates tribalism, while rank and awards classify service members into a functioning hierarchy. In the simple domain, the common perception is that all service members are green.

The challenge in analyzing this domain is its inherent credential culture. Many professionals take refuge beneath the artifacts of their profession. In chapter four, the researcher will draw upon two methods of analysis to describe the cultivation of ideological barriers that thwart decision making: object-oriented rhetorical analysis of the uniform as a race proxy, and an analytical case study of anecdotal experience while teaching new cadets (Plebes) at the United States Military Academy at West Point (USMA). As skin color and gender function a race proxies, the implicit bias, suppositions about cultural norms, and stereotypes influence perception and behavior about people of like qualities. Institutions seeking to counter insularity and champion diversity must develop schemas to guard against a natural tendency to classify people based solely on aesthetics. An object-oriented rhetorical analysis of the artifacts of the Army (uniform, ribbons, and rank) is necessary to illustrate the deliberate attempt to cloak individuality and construct homogenous social groups that strive for collective prosperity and national defense—the effective management of violence on behalf of the nation's interests. The layering that often occurs in identity construction sustains the hierarchical and physical erasure of the self. The concept of masking and assimilation is important to understand if the profession of arms requires its service members to adhere to a particular ethos.

In addition to the race proxy that the uniform contributes to, the intersection of class with respect to military rank, prestige, and honor vis-à-vis the military uniform, and social capital as illustrated by military awards and decorations, all contribute to the

formation of a distinct social atmosphere, one vastly different than that which characterizes civilian spaces. Object-oriented rhetorical analysis illustrates the agency that exists in inanimate objects.

The rhetorical analysis will also complicate the seemingly simple classification of the Army and illustrate the barriers that exist in achieving interpersonal tact and affinity. The anecdotal case study will illustrate methods of introducing certain topics of discomfort in professional discourse to increase understanding and facilitate empathy.

The Disorder Domain

The fifth domain, disorder, abuts all others. The disorder domain lies at the center of the other four domains and its location indicates the possibility to slip into disorder at any point. The disorder domain is the site of identity crisis, imposter syndrome, and feelings of inadequacy. Individuals within the domain require immediate attention. The disorder domain is not an ideal place, however, it is a common site of many decision makers given their introduction into new physical or cognitive systems.

Research Methodology

The Cynefin framework offers an understanding for the necessity to relocate the black body (decision maker) in one or more of the domains. Given the results of analyzing the context of the decision maker, with respect to volunteering to join the combat arms, recommendations and conclusions will be drawn in an effort to relocate the decision maker and/or facilitate understanding toward the identity politics that will ultimately transcend ideological barriers. The following is a step-by step approach for research in this thesis:

Step 1: The first step in this research design is to review the results of the literature review. The review will accomplish two things: one, readers should understand the historical variables that bear on the problem of disparity within combat arms branches of the Army; and two, the literature review and historical genealogy will describe how historical factors affect black officer candidate decision-making. The answer to the primary research question will be answered in this step.

Step 2: The second step will develop the Cynefin framework as an evaluation framework to access the site of the officer candidate as a decision maker. The analysis will include a detailed explanation of each of the five domains and their corresponding nuance.

Step 3: The third step in the research design is to examine operational variables of the United States and identify if the criteria that defines the complex domain apply.

Step 4: The fourth step is to explain the factors of transitioning systems of thought given a Platonic understanding of society as man and woman writ large. Subsequently, the researcher will posit this factor as a system of thought in the complicated domain.

Step 5: The fifth step is to rhetorically analyze the film *Mandingo* as a multimodal product to ascertain the ideological factors associated with historical events in the literature review. The classification of the chaotic domain is the result of this analysis.

Step 6: The sixth step is to explore an anecdotal case study of teaching at USMA as an example of factors in Step 4, and also to posit the Army as a simple domain. In this step, an object-oriented rhetorical analysis of the Army uniform and its insignia will facilitate understanding of the Army as a meritocracy and as such, seemingly transcendent of social stratification.

Step 7: The seventh step will reexamine the black body as a historical trope whose very presence complicates what it means to be an American. The disorder domain emerges here as a facilitator of identity crisis.

Step 8: The eighth and final step will offer a unique perspective of black officer candidates, as influenced by one or more of the aforementioned domains. Recommendations and conclusions will follow in this step.

Threats to Validity and Biases

Prior to the gathering of research for this study, the researcher made certain assumptions. Those assumptions and the researchers bias threaten the research. Threats to validity and biases have much to do with the ethnicity and occupation of the researcher. Additionally, empirical study relies on an evaluation framework that is subjective; the researcher will mitigate this by substantiating criteria that defines each domain. Keeping these threats to validity and biases in mind will allow the researcher to mitigate the negative effects on the study, the conclusions, and recommendations.

Chapter Conclusion

The goal of the research methodology is to establish a starting point to analyze the ideological factors that influence the decision making for black officer candidates who are skeptical of joining the combat arms branches of the Army. The answers to the research questions will appear in the following chapter and, consequently, readers will have a clear understanding of the many factors that may influence the decision for black officers to serve in a combat-related branches of service.

CHAPTER 4

NALYSIS

> If the mind is to emerge unscathed from this relentless struggle with the unforeseen, two qualities are indispensable: first, an intellect that, even in the darkest hour, retains some glimmerings of the inner light which leads to truth; and second, the courage to follow this faint light wherever it may lead.
> —Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*

Chapter Introduction

The analysis chapter elaborates on the answer to the primary research question, do ideological barriers hinder black officer participation into the combat arms branches of the U.S. Army? The answers to the secondary questions will be explained in the following analysis of the black officer candidate as a historical trope in a malleable social environment of difference. The step-wise approach as described in chapter three will bring clarity to the sociological factors that many black officer candidates encounter.

Results of the Literature Review

The historical plunder that defines race relations in America falls in some way on both black and white bodies. The literature review surveyed the observations and analysis of researchers who conclude that: one, structural barriers, such as legislation, cultural differences such as attire, nepotism, and policies informed by cultural mores that are traditionally white might hinder black progress and, two, by extension, success hinges upon black officers reaching the rank of general officer, many of which have experience serving in the combat arms branches. The implications of race relations dating back to the Revolutionary War are prevalent factors that contribute to the formation of ideological

barriers. Misperception, education and class disparities, and cultural differences triggers double consciousness, inferiority complexes, and imposter syndrome for many black people who assimilate into majority white spaces; these all characterize the contemporary ideological barriers that prevent black officer assimilation into combat related branches of service. The contemporary black body, if layered with the aforementioned ideological condition and as a product of race-related historical narrative, fosters a heavy load. Perception, double consciousness, and differentiating motives for serving, all predicated by the implications of history, are fundamental ideological barriers that prevent black officers to willingly joining combat related branches of service.

First, the perception phenomenon is a matter of epistemology. Factors of geography, politics, gender, economics, accessibility to technology, and education all influence how one perceives the world. The echo chambers that people find themselves in ultimately threaten to fix them into a particular way of thinking. America is a young country; as example, only 51 years ago, the Fair Housing Act passed to remedy years of racial and religious discrimination with respect to homeowner lending. Notably, the Fair Housing Act occurred in the backdrop of race riots and racial discord as a result of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. This event is only one-two generations ago for many contemporary black officer candidates. The common refrain in many black homes to an aspiring combat arms officer: "Why would you want to sign up to go to war for a country that has done so much to hinder black people?" is not new; a train of thought persists through the lived experiences of historically disenfranchised people.

Needless to say, contemporary Americans have little to do with historical and racial events; however, most all Americans experience the results of that malignant time

and are responsible for their actions given the knowledge of American history. The literature review relies on anecdotal experience from Major General Ronald Clark. Clark's observations regarding race relations mirror the researchers experiences, Caldwell writes:

> I became quite comfortable with the people around me at my alma mater, Tuskegee. My fellow students all looked like me, and my affinity group consisted of people who shared many of the same experiences that I had. At Tuskegee, my peers and I held common interests, talked in particular dialects, listened to the same genres of music, and even shared similar adolescent stories. I quickly realized that this "safe space" was terminal as my commission into the Army as an Infantry officer required me to engage with a new group of people who looked nothing like me and surely had very different experiences.
>
> When I arrived at Infantry school at Fort Benning, Georgia in the summer of 2006, I discovered that there were only 7 or 8 black officers among my group of approximately 300. This ratio was to become my new normal. Despite my experience at Tuskegee, I was eager to meet the many diverse people in my new space, and in hindsight, I am very grateful to have met the outstanding people I encountered there. I quickly learned the value of diversity . . . my Tuskegee experience cemented a truth that still plagues me—the fact that race matters. (Caldwell 2018, 56)

The double consciousness theory posits the influence of perception as influencer of behavior. Seemingly, misperception is a critical ideological barrier that must be considered when attempting to understand contemporary racial discord.

Second, the literature review glosses the critical theory at play in decision making for black officer candidates as well as minority professionals in a majority workplace—double consciousness. While appropriate workplace identity should be the norm in professional spaces, minorities often feel burdened by working to counter certain common cultural stereotypes associated with their race—this limited their agency. For example, black officers might work longer hours to counter the stereotype that black people are lazy, or black officers might arrive to functions earlier than most to counter the

stereotype of what is troublesomely known as colored people's time. Double consciousness, as defined in the literature review, influences people to seek comfort in their particular safe space. One's identity is threatened should they be forced out of spaces of comfort. People of color who find themselves for the first time in a majority space may be overwhelmed by cultural dissonance and may encounter double consciousness and a subsequent identity crisis.

Lastly, differentiating motives for service in combat arms branches for black officers has much to do with upward mobility rather than that of professional pride. The literature review discusses motives for black service members during the Revolutionary War as essential for the acquisition of freedom. Black combat units wanted an opportunity to illustrate their capability to be value added citizens. Units such as the 54th Massachusetts Regiment, the Buffalo Soldiers, the Tuskegee Airmen, the 555th Parachute Infantry Battalion, and the All-Black Ranger Regiment (2nd Ranger Infantry Company), also known as the Buffalo Rangers, were all segregated yet prideful units. They fought for freedom; they fought so that their descendants might not have too. Once these black soldiers realize that they don't need to fight for the right to fight, they simply don't.

The results of the literature review essentially answers the first research question—there are ideological barriers that prevent black officer assimilation into combat arms branches of the Army. Those barriers are epistemological in nature and are characterized as varied perspectives with respect to affinity. Thus, double consciousness nurtures inferiority complexes and identity crisis. In the following sections, the researcher seeks to describe the domains that comprise the Cynefin framework in concern with a

characterization of each domain as a space that harbors the black body as a historical

trope; among them are the complex, complicated, chaotic, simple, and disorder domains.

The following analysis offers an explanation as to the factors that influence black officer

decision-making in selecting branches. These domains will allow an examination of the

operating environment that many black officer candidates negotiate in matters of social

decision-making.

<u>The Cynefin Framework</u>

As described in chapter three, Cynefin (pronounced kun-ev'in)—a welsh word,

translates to habitat. Each domain is the site of diverse agents with diverse experiences

and perceptions. Although problem solvers and leaders utilize this framework to identify

tools, approaches, and methods to re-characterize environments from unordered to

ordered domains, the framework serves as a sociological heuristic to identify areas that

harbor varied but valuable aspects of knowledge, experience, biases, and perceptions.

The military depends on economy of force when solving wicked and ill-structured

problems; however, the individuality and creativity of all service members characterize

an effective fighting force.

Dave Snowden argues that the framework "links communities into shared

histories in a way that paradoxically both limits the perception of those communities

while enabling an instinctive and intuitive ability to adapt to conditions of profound

uncertainty" (Snowden, 2003 24-25). The shared histories of the actors occupying each

domain must be reconciled. From this perspective, it is possible understand diversity at a

macro-level. For example, any minority in a majority space feels difference. As

previously mentioned in chapter one, an 11:1 ratio of white to black officers in the

combat arms branches is evident to black officers, this disparity is not always the case for white officers—they simple don't have to think about difference because from an aesthetic sense, everyone looks like them. A Navy officer in a room of Army officers understands that language and organizational cultural barriers exist, the alter their delivery to accommodate that gulf.

The foundations of Army leader character include empathy and, as such, are necessary for a strong and ready force. According to the Army Doctrinal Reference Publication (ADRP) 6-22, *Army Leadership*, "empathy does not necessarily mean sympathy for another, but identification that leads to a deeper understanding. Empathy allows the leader to anticipate what others are experiencing and to try to envision how decisions or actions affect them" (HQDA 2012b, 3-3). The four open spaces of knowledge that characterize the Cynefin framework all have validity within different contexts—they are domains, however, they don't fully encompass all possibilities. They do describe the conditions for the actors who contribute to the following dispositions of the domain: the complex domain as a malleable environment with agency; the complicated domain as an environment where competing loyalties to culture exists; the chaotic domain as an environment of unknowns; the simple domain wherein the right answer is easy to identify; and lastly, disorder—the site of identity crisis.

The operating environment for black officer candidates is often a combination of aspects from all environments. The varied history that Snowden refers to includes the implications of the history of American race relations for black officer candidates. Several factors of historical significance include the structural barriers of nepotism, cultural schisms, and a lack of cross-race mentorship. Those factors foster the ideological

barriers of double consciousness, competing loyalties relating to cultural norms, inferiority complex, and a need for cultural affinity. By identifying the site of the black officer candidate as a historical trope, that which is psychologically affected by American history through the narratives and epistemic accounts of kin, leaders may understand the tools, approaches, and methods to employ to facilitate shared understanding, economy of force, and a strong and ready professional Army. The analysis of each domain as an influential factor in the decision making of black officer candidates is crucial to understanding the ideological barriers that contribute to the dissonance of joining combat arms branches of the Army.

<div align="center">America as a Complex Domain</div>

The polarity that describes American culture is rooted in ideas of liberty and pursuits of happiness. American citizens have long enjoyed autonomy in the many ways they interpret such goals; however, pursuits of happiness are often bounded in social categories. Returning to the idea that the Army is a microcosm of society, it is possible to examine sociological variables that contribute to adaptive behavior in contemporary American society. The Army relies on the analysis of operational variables to frame certain problem sets in foreign operational environments. Given the problem of the disparity of black officers in the combat arms, the analysis of the contributing social factors of American society is necessary.

The researcher's hypothesis is that America is a complex domain given the aforementioned history and social stratification relating to race, gender, sexual orientation, and differentiating political aims such as feminism, civil rights, LGBTQ rights, and etc. The following analysis aims to broadly define complexity according to

Snowden's Cynefin framework. The analysis also illustrates the propensity for decision makers to adapt to ideological echo chambers that thwart any possibility for individual thought. Lastly, the analysis explores implications such as imposter syndrome and other ideological barriers that influence decision-making as a result of coping with complexity. An understanding of the interrelated variables of American society is necessary to explain the dissonance on the part of black officer candidates concerning combat arms assimilation, yet also assailing white officer confusion as to why the disparity exist in the first place.

<div align="center">Complexity</div>

According to Snowden, complex systems comprise many interacting agents. They are agents that possess individual identities and as such rely on the mutual recognition of others for meaning making. An obvious example lies in the variety of ways any message is received and communicated. The complex domain is characterized by the malleability of original intent. Snowden (2003) explains the difference between the complicated and complex domain by offering the following example: "When a rumor of reorganization surfaces [in an organization]: the complex human system starts to mutate and change in unknowable ways; new patterns form in anticipation of the event" In the complicated domain, components and factors are *known,* whereas in the complex domain, those social factors are *unknown.* The introspective officer candidate who grapples with identity is extremely vulnerable to these new patterns of thought, especially given mentorship as a way to professionally develop subordinates. There are several conditions that must apply to define a domain as complex: one, agents in the domain must possess the ability to change in unknowable ways; two, variables such as legislation, social norms, and policy

in the complex domain must be subject to change alongside the adaptive and interdependent actors who inhabit such spaces; and three, interactions in the complex domain are ever-changing and unpredictable. In other words, the system cannot be simplified and cause and effect cannot be separated (Juarrero 1999). The analysis of several operational variables—political, military, economic, and social alongside the examination of American society provides a closer description of the complexity that defines American society.

Political

The contemporary divide in ideology can be best examined in the polarizing political landscapes that form daily interaction. The military's apolitical stance is of concern here, especially when considering differentiating motives for service and the contemporary layering of socioeconomic and political agenda. In a democracy, groups struggle for power and political legitimacy. ADRP 5-0, *The Operations Process,* describes the political variable as "the distribution of responsibility and power at all levels of governance—formally constituted authorities, as well as informal or covert political powers" (HQDA 2012a, 1-7). The distribution of power must be executed alongside fair representation and the balance of power at a micro-level, such as community governance. When researchers deconstruct the layers of governance, power often lies at the epicenter. The reason the political variable is deemed complex is largely because human agents dispense politics in concert with deeply rooted and diverse moral beliefs. Constituents in America are not only concerned with governance for morality sake, but rather governance for the preservation capitalism and quality of life. Ideological difference is a necessary condition for the execution of governance and politics that

counter insularity. The tension in divergent viewpoints perpetuate the creation and flourishing of diverse social narratives, as such, agents in a complex domain ensure the adaptive capacity of problem existing therein.

There are researchers who aptly ask the question: Why do we hate each other? While extreme, the inquiry stems from a lack of consensus on many sides given the varied issues in the political arena. Partisanship is largely constructed by divergent ideologies. Academics refer to this as diverse epistemological makeups—the compilation of experiences overtime that shape how people perceive the world around them. Political variables in America foster division in the many ways that those issues are discussed. Issues such as abortion, education, gay marriage, gun control, and social security are inextricably linked to a person's ability to advocate for candidates who closely align with their views. Because America is so diverse, general consensus on aspects of many issues is hard to reach; additionally, political candidates who advocate for/against particular issues are themselves members of communities and are subject to varying perspectives and expectations from their constituents. Given the aforementioned, the classification of the political variable as complex is not unreasonable.

Although American politics exist to allow members of a society to achieve collective goals that otherwise could not be achieve on an individual basis, the necessary condition for such an arrangement is the fair representation of all involved. If "we allow the interaction of identities to create coherence and meaning" in a complex domain, then we must investigate the factors that contribute to identity with respect to sponsoring specific political agendas (Snowden 2003, 25). Economics, race, ethnicity, geography, sexual orientation, and occupation are all factors that contribute to an evolving American

value system. When coupled with other factors, such as the implications given the participation of the political process by historically disenfranchised groups of people, politics become a knot of interspersed, yet closely related elements that perpetuate division. The prevalent melding of social media, public scrutiny, branding, and wealth contributes to a tenuous and complex domain.

Even more interesting, and as an example, in a Pew Research Center poll taking in 2011, 56 percent of Americans responded that the Civil War is still relevant in political life. Nearly four-in-ten Americans (39 percent) responded that it has historical value (Pew Research Center 2011). The poll occurred before the Dylan Roof shooting of the nine churchgoers in Charleston, SC., it occurred before calls for the confederate flag to be removed from statehouses across the south, and it occurred well before neo-Nazis and white supremacist launched a violent protest on the campus of the University of Virginia. Additionally, the Pew Center reports that there is no consensus on the cause of the civil war, the war's effect on politics in America, and whether or not states should abolish the confederate flag. Returning to the comments by Frederick Douglass about Abraham Lincoln, the political foundation of America is predicated on white supremacy. Ta-Nehisi Coates' comment regarding Lincoln echoes similar sentiments:

> When Abraham Lincoln declared, in 1863, that the battle of Gettysburg must ensure 'that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth,' he was not merely being aspirational. At the onset of the Civil War, the United States of America had one of the highest rates of suffrage in the world. The question is not whether Lincoln truly meant 'government of the people' but what our country has, throughout its history, taken the political term people to actually mean. In 1863 it did not mean your mother or your grandmother, and it did not mean you and me." (Coates 2015, 6)

The point to be made here is the consideration of who gets to be counted as a citizen. Gerrymandering, voter suppression, and redlining are all efforts to deny citizens

representation. Officer candidates who consider volunteering to serve as subordinate to the political process must be aware of the slippery slope of language and the physical implications on the body as a result of such speech. Furthermore, such rhetoric contributes to divergent views with respect to American patriotism.

Pictures communicate a thousand words; perhaps these images of Congress below offer a glimpse into the polarization of America politics after the 2018-midterm elections.

Figure 5.   2019 Democratic House Members

Source: Photograph by Chip Somodevilla.

Figure 6.   2019 Republican House Members

Source: Photograph by Win McNamee.

The disparity in diversity here is clear and further suggests ideological allegiance to issues that certain racial groups collectively agree on. This bears significantly on the adaptive nature of agents in a complex domain. The political domain is complex because it relies on differentiating and adaptive perspectives that create environments for lawmakers to legislate. Black officer candidates may question the implications of the political landscape given diverse understandings of political values; this surely influences black officer decision-making.
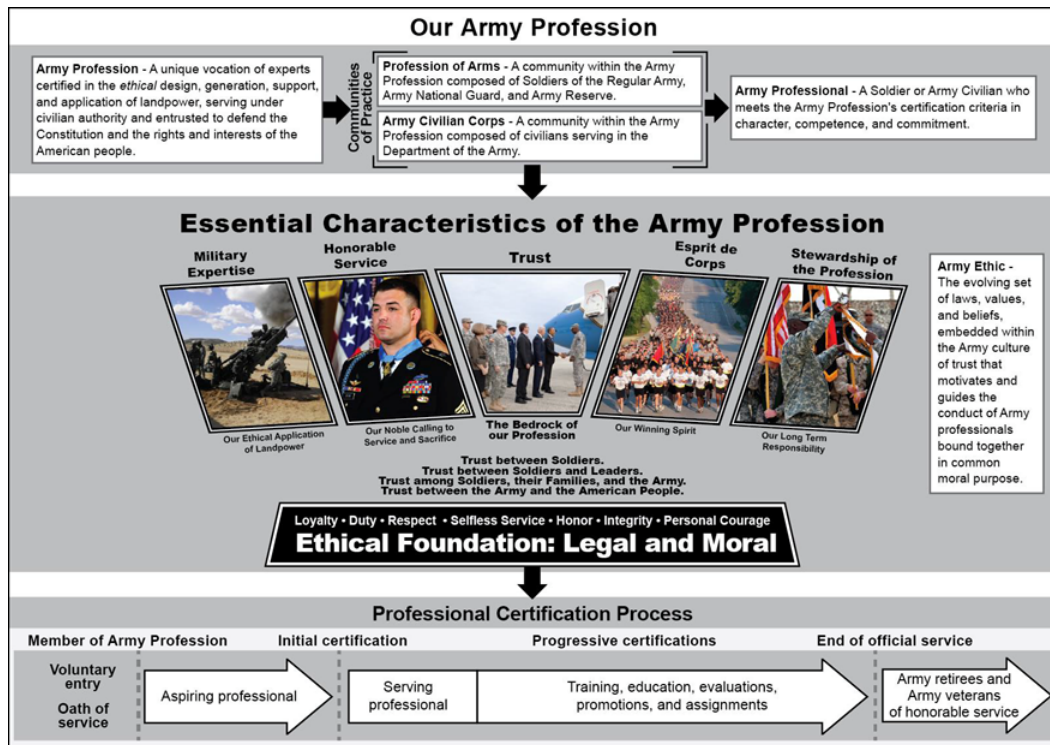
Figure 7.   Our Army Profession, ADRP 1-The Army

Source: Headquarters, Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication 1, *The Army Profession* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2015), vi.

Military

The United States military enjoys a unique level of autonomy given its institutional and cultural makeup. Members of the Armed Services are almost sequestered from civil society in that service members adhere to an ethic unique to collective endeavor (see figure 7). The Army, as a meritocracy, enjoys three artifacts that distinguish the profession of arms from most private or civilian institution: a common uniform, a common language, and tribalism predicated on esprit de corps. The purpose of analyzing the military as an operational variable, in this case, is to determine whether

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black officer candidates are affected by distinct cultural norms that define the military space.

Serving one's country is indeed an honorable and noble act; however, volunteers must make certain concessions to fully assimilate into a profession of arms that prides itself on maintaining a profession ethic. The Army values are a good example of tenets that unify the military body. The values—loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage—require collective understanding. When officer candidates initially join the military, they all experience some form of basic training to help inculcate these values. The uniform, language, and tribes of teams—squads, platoons, and companies—assist in this transformation by providing the service member an enclave in which to grow. Ideally, maturation will facilitate a common understanding of the Army values and how they contribute to the Army's ethic: "the evolving set of laws, values, and beliefs, embedded within the Army culture of trust that motivates and guides the conduct of Army professionals bound together in common moral purpose" (HQDA 2015, 1-2). The more interesting aspects of social transformation are the two distinct cultures that derive from vastly different cultural norms, which define the military and the civilian space, respectively.

The civil military gap exists because of a disparity in values, lifestyle, and responsibility. One domain (civil or military) is no different than the other, but it is important to understand the psychological affect that transitioning those spaces has on citizens turn soldiers. For many years, service members experience a unique tribalism that transcends social stratification and provides, in some cases, fair treatment and the possibility of upward mobility. The rank structure, merit awards, and collective espirt de

corps function to order and guide the profession of arms. Trust is the prime intangible attribute that underpins efforts toward fulfilling the responsibilities of the nation, and the nation depends upon trust between soldiers and their leaders to ensure the security and defense of the Nation.

The Army strives to inculcate a shared identity of professionalism through morals and ethics:

> The Army Ethic includes the moral principles that guide our decisions and actions as we fulfill our purpose: to support and defend the Constitution and our way of life. Living the Army Ethic is the basis for our mutual trust with each other and the American people. Today our ethic is expressed in laws, values, and shared beliefs within American and Army cultures. The Army Ethic motivates our commitment as Soldiers and Army Civilians who are bound together to accomplish the Army mission as expressed in our historic and prophetic motto: This We'll Defend.
>
> Living the Army Ethic inspires our shared identity as trusted Army professionals with distinctive roles as honorable servants, Army experts, and stewards of the profession. To honor these obligations we adopt, live by, and uphold the moral principles of the Army Ethic. Beginning with our solemn oath of service as defenders of the Nation, we voluntarily incur the extraordinary moral obligation to be trusted Army professionals. (HQDA 2015, 2-6)

If adhered to, this philosophy helps to guard against division while cultivating tribes of collective endeavor. An Army professional is deemed colorless and as such immune to prejudice based on ethnicity and race. The Army Ethic does not, however, account for factors of civilian experience. The clash that exists between the Army's ethic and that of civil society is problematic, yet one that many soldiers and officers grapple with as they transition these spaces daily.

The military as an operational variable is noble. The Army seeks to unify a professional body toward the goal of perfecting the Union. Simple in nature, but complicated in execution, endeavors to unify requires service members to dispense with

thoughts of individuality and rely on collective aspirations and trust, despite race, gender, creed, and ethnicity. Selfless service and trust in the collective prosperity of the nation are prerequisites for servant leadership. Considering the disparity of black officer candidates in combat arms branches is the question of trust: do black officer candidates trust in the Army as a professional body? Such inquiry suggests that the Army and Nation depend upon each other for the preservation of morality, ethics, and representation. The idea that Army must look like the Nation is essential.

<center>Economic</center>

When Snowden refers to the multiple and adaptive agents that comprise the complicated domain, he is in part referring to the differentiating worldviews that arise from socioeconomic conditions. Poor people see the world vastly different from rich people. Class and other associated social conditions undermine the Army ethic because prevalent considerations for poor people are goals associated with upward mobility and autonomy. Private ownership in a capitalistic society is often 'dog eat dog;' in other words, two classes emerge: the haves and the have-nots. The division here is self-serving and antithetical to an Army ethic of collectiveness. Economic interest is directly linked to political and social motives; therefore, the corporate stakeholder has a voice in the political process. This variable calls for the examination of economic stability as it relates to culture—one could argue that biased pluralism threatens to sustain the classes of the haves and have-nots. Education, demographics, geography, and interest all play a role in the economic prosperity of the nation and the ambitions of officer candidates.

Given the history of economics alongside prosperity for black people, obtaining a trade has been the most secure way to ensure upward mobility. There are not many

institutions outside the military that value closing with and destroying the enemy by fire and maneuver. Therefore the revelation of statistics that suggest a predominant desire to serve in the sustainment branches is not surprising. Again, according to table 1, as of 2017, black officers make up the largest population of the force sustainment branches with 33 percent; a close second are hispanic officers at 24 percent. Minorities comprise over 50 percent of the branch functional area. The Force Sustainment branches comprise 18 percent of the total force. In short, theories of biased pluralism threaten the existence of the military industrial complex and also attract citizens who feel compelled to easily transition from military service with a skill. If this is true, even in the minds of ordinary citizens, then recruiting efforts to sustain an operational and capable fight force is threatened.

<div align="center">Social</div>

The most valuable aspect of the American Army lies in the equal representation of soldiers and officers alike. The researcher's argument depends on the understanding of differentiating interpretations of patriotism to posit an ideological gulf between many white people and people of color. As mentioned in the brief historical genealogy, divergent perspectives about the motives American service, and service to America, can be seen in many of the interviews that LTC Detrick Briscoe conducted for his research pertain to a similar topic. Briscoe focuses on social aspects of appealing to the black community to dispel myths about military service, specifically service in the combat arms.

The obvious hurdle in the development of homogenous groups is the matter of affinity. Again, people tend to gravitate toward peers who share like characteristics.

Attire, dialect, and social norms like phrases, handshakes, and otherwise, are as distinct as the people who employ them. Perhaps the best way to foster a collective identity is in the standardization of social norms. Since America is a populated with so many diverse people, efforts to bridge gaps become difficult. Social institutions are established on those homogenous social factors in a given area. In America, this is easy to identify given the categorization of people and their geographic background. Aside from race and gender, mannerisms forecast geographical landscapes like subcultures, and by extension, those mannerisms function to cloister people into like spaces. Contemporary social stratification has much to do with the conflating politics that define social groups. The proliferation of social media only complicates this phenomenon by offering multiple domains that harbor diverse personas. The complexity of America as a social enigma is only simplified by creating institutions that foster collective thought while preserving individuality.

Officer candidates, especially black, must be aware of the operational variables that threaten rational deliberation toward the selection of their duty location and branch of service. Such a choice must not rely solely on a lack of exposure, but on key factors of career developmental counseling.

<center>Negotiating Two Worlds and the Complicated Domain:
Officer Candidates at West Point</center>

The variability and uncertainty that characterize the complicated domain is best experienced in institutions that require rapid assimilation. The researcher's observations while teaching at the USMA offer a unique opportunity to examine the cognizance of a psychological shift in thought required to cope and thrive in a meritocracy like the United

States Army. Considering the melding of civil and military spaces, two very distinct landscapes, it is helpful to frame this case study by explaining a profound but helpful theory.

Long ago, Plato penned his thoughts of the ideal society and justice in *The Republic*. The book is primarily about understanding justice and the ideal ways to govern a state. Employing his teacher Socrates as a proxy, Plato distinguishes between three types of social classes in the ideal society: the philosopher-kings (PK), the guardian class, and the working class. Plato explains that these three entities correspond to society and are thus microcosms of the ideal state—he suggests that society is man writ large. Plato also insinuates that these classes of people define three aspects of the individual soul. Each class represents components integral to all.

The philosopher-king possesses wisdom. These are the people born to rule and ideally, there are not enticed by riches or power. Philosopher kings have a genuine love for the society, the defense of society, and knowledge. Plato describes the philosopher king as a "rememberer, a good learner, magnificent, charming, and a friend and kinsman of truth justice, courage, and moderation" (Plato 1968, 167). The philosopher king is thus the ruler of the society and ideally selfless. James Mattis, former Secretary of Defense, and Colin Powell, former Secretary of State, are great examples of what Plato would consider PKs.

The guardian class represents those people in society who are best fit to defend. Plato (1968, 53) writes, "Then the man who's going to be a fine and good guardian of the city for us will in his nature be philosophic, spirited, swift, and strong." Contemporarily, the guardians of our society are the members of the Armed Services and law

enforcement. They are the spirited class; "noble puppies: 'gentle to their own and cruel to enemies'" (Plato 1968, 52). The guardian class comprises what Plato describes as a Timocracy, a form of governance based on courage, duty, honor, and country.

The working class is necessary for the society to function. These are the teachers, cobblers, dentists, doctors, and etcetera. In this class, moderation and justice are the predominant factors. The working class cannot be enticed by wealth to perform their job, they do so on behalf of the collective citizenry.

Plato attempts to identify the three parts of the human soul. The theory is that the PK, guardian, and worker class correspond to wisdom, spirit, and appetite as competing moral centers.

The important aspect of the tripartite soul theory lies in the transition of spaces in our society. When an officer candidate, much like Plebes at West Point, transition from civil society to a form of Platonic Timocracy (a society govern by honor) at the military academy, they undergo a vast cognitive and identity crisis. Suddenly, new cadets, as well as new lieutenants, must reconcile their value system and cultural beliefs with an understanding and inculcation of the Army's ethic. Identity crisis comes as result of donning a uniform that cloaks aesthetic individually, subsequently requiring the adaptation of a new language and new customs.

Given West Point's role as both an academic institution as well as a military training facility, the institution occupies a unique position along the civil/military spectrum. Officer candidates in ROTC and/or at any of the nation's service academies have dual roles; they exist in two separate but coexisting worlds: one that defines itself though tenets of professionalism, and another that straddles the line between accreditation

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and education. Students existing as both cadet and pupil must identify how to co-exist between two distinct social groups: apprentice guardians, and apprentice workers.

Officer candidates that attend institutions of higher learning grapple with the many correlated social issues of the day. Issues such as police brutality, gender and identity politics, socio-economic and political partisanship, the posturing for internships, and social and cultural capital on campus all coalesce to construct a maze of conflict/resolution for students. The role of the cadet further complicates disposition, because now, a unique and differentiating value system applies.

USMA is well known for its academic and physical rigor. Throughout history, that institution, among others, has developed guardians turned philosopher kings. USMA, which is the oldest of the five federal service academies, has precedents and procedures that help it to resist fragility and self-interest. Specifically, the liberal arts experience at West Point requires students (cadets) to seek out cognitive challenges, confront their implicit biases, and search for nuance in the understanding of leadership, morality, and selfless service. Devoted to the United States Army as a profession of arms, the military faculty and cadets can be considered allies in intellectual maturation. Much of the faculty and all of the cadets reside on a military base, and are practically sequestered from the stratification existing outside its walls. Taking homogeneity into account, the inhabitants of USMA encounter the same displacement that service members who reside on military posts experience. In short, cadets at West Point don't ever have to leave the confines of the base, just like the many service members who currently reside on base; however, the West Point community is unified by duty, honor, and country. The academy's homogeneous culture thwarts many of the contributing factors of division. Conditions are

different at ROTC detachments where cadets there are exposed to the same socio-political variables as their peers who do not participate in ROTC. The cadets in ROTC are not subject to the same homogeneity that USMA cadets enjoy.

Similarities can be found in numerous HBCUs where the color of the students' skin performs the same function of the military uniform. At HBCUs, black students are provided a safe-haven to be unapologetically black—dialect, cultural norms such as attire, and mannerisms are understood. The same factors that define the military—language, uniform, and tribalism—exist in institutions where aesthetics are predominately similar among attendees.

In both spaces, USMA and ROTC, the students'/cadets' shared loyalty to their institution fosters collective progression. At USMA, the military uniform reduces the impulse to classify people based solely on deeply rooted ideological schemas. Simply fostering an environment of aesthetic similarity mitigates division based solely on race and gender. Safetyism is important in the consideration of black officers willing to join the combat arms branches.

Through the employment of rank and insignia, the cadet uniform functions as a sort of second skin to repel sociological trauma. The uniform contributes to a hierarchy that organizes behavior while simultaneously cloaking individuality and transforming students into cadets. If queried, many uniformed servants will tell you that they don't see race, they are misled. Colorblindness is easy when everyone looks the same.

Intersectionality is a theory that promotes tribalism on college campuses and I'd argue at West Point as well; it is a term widely found in campus activism and one that examines how power relationships are intertwined and mutually constructing. The

problem here is divergent interpretations of intersectionality that leads to assumptions about race, class, gender, and oppression. The uniform acts as an equalizer to counter an us vs. them mentality. When everyone looks the same, people are likely to be more accepting of divergent worldviews; however, officer candidates must be aware when they slip into groupthink and appropriate the superego of the collective identity of the institution.

The uniform as a tool, replete with rank and insignia, also communicates credibility and power. In many ways, a classroom full of uniformed students is impervious to social ills of society. A way to foster a cadet's critical consciousness of these ills is to expose them to diverse cultures and ideas through stories, shared hardships, and experience. The careful selection and instruction of thoughtful texts, case studies, and commentary, facilitate the critical negotiation of perspectives that cadets will likely never experience, but that may be held by people they lead. ROTC, Academy classrooms, and the professional military education venues should serve as arenas for considering and discussing strongly contested ideas and issues.

An example is teaching black literature in the meritocracy like West Point as a way to confront intersectionality and, if done effectively, counter insularity. Cadets are able to identify their knowledge gaps and biases, intervene in the perpetuation of dubious ideology toward malignant ends, and interrogate their peers to understand the value of different perspectives, all without compromising the Army ethic.

In the spring semester of 2018, given the delicate atmosphere surrounding the events in Charlottesville, Virginia, I assigned my literature classes the provocative memoir by author Ta-Nehisi Coates. The book, *Between the World and Me*, illustrates a

unique perspective of nationalism while challenging conventional perspectives regarding American history and patriotism (Coates 2017).

Cadets considered Coates's worldview. To do so, the class analyzed the music referenced in Coates's book, tackled the colloquialisms mentioned, and, when Coates visited West Point to discuss the West Point honor code alongside aspects of mythologized Civil War history, chattel slavery being the germ of that discussion, the cadets were uncomfortable but receptive given the tension. When thinking about empathy, the ability to understand diverse perspectives, leaders must be open to learning about themselves just as much as they hopefully learn from subordinates.

Social factors like identity and language require thoughtfulness to understand the many emotional and ethical struggles that coincide with military experience. Strategies of productive discomfort allow cadets to nurture their bias toward the goal of providing quality leadership to those future soldiers who may very well live many of the experiences they read about in history books.

West Point is unlike most colleges and universities largely because of its ability to foster collective identity through an Army ethic and artifacts of the Army like uniforms and insignia. Officer candidates residing in the civilian world have the unique challenge of reconciling space and values to adhere to the Army ethic.

Returning to the Platonic idea of the tripartite soul, the PKs, guardians, and worker classes are agents of governments characterized by wisdom, spirit, and appetite. The PK (wisdom) comprises the Aristocracy, the guardians (spirit, honor) comprise the Timocracy, and the worker class (appetite) comprises the Democracy. If society is man writ large, then the individual soldier must reconcile the three parts of his/her soul and

may struggle to balance reason, appetite, and honor while doing so. Balance is even more complicated when the military is perceived as a timocratic space where the Army ethic circumscribes behavior. For many service members, the transitioning of multiple worlds exists when they put on and remove their uniform. The uniform fosters collective identity and makes assimilation into the Timocracy easier. Out of the uniform, service members conform to the social trends and norms that exist in the Democracy. This transition is psychologically draining and results in identity crisis and cognitive dissonance. The civil/military gap can be explained through this framework.

For the black officer candidate, the historical narrative of plunder and disenfranchisement resides in the collective black body. The social narrative with respect to the country is better, but the hangover from more than a century of inequality certainly has bearing. The deliberate sequester of the guardian class is necessary to foster a collective and professional identity. Facilitators of the Army's professional military education must be aware of the cognitive challenges that hinder the formation of that collective identity.

Given the ethnic and racial disparity within the Infantry and Armor branches, minority officers must be open to exploring diverse cultural aesthetics such as music, attire, dialect, they should not, however be coerced to accept them. Their assimilation doesn't mean that their individuality must be sacrificed in the formation of the collective identity; what it does suggest is that barriers of double consciousness, imposter syndrome, and identity crisis threaten performance in those branches. The balancing of the tripartite soul must be approach from the perspective that we are affected by the behavior in the civilian space as well as the military.

Mandingo and the Chaotic Domain

Chaos according to Snowden is defined as a state of turbulence. The chaotic

domain is the physical manifestation of atrophy and uncertainty. Decisions are difficult to

make in a chaotic domain simply because patterns of understanding and comprehending

are unintelligible. The black body in the chaotic domain can be considered the site of age-

old trauma and simultaneous prosperity. Black officer candidates in this cognitive domain

suffer from imposter syndrome, identity crisis, double consciousness, and doubt as well.

Many of them may be uncomfortable in situations where they are the noticeable minority;

their confidence is concealed beneath the many presumptions they assume are being

made about them. It is important to understand that issues of confidence have everything

to do with the self-aware person in the moment. The chaotic domain of black thought

necessitates a visit to the chaos that emerged in American history. To confront the bleak

history and social interactions there allows for an understanding of trends and

contemporary behavior that might inform a black officer candidate's decision to

volunteer to serve in the combat arms branches of the United States Army.

The following discussion about slavery is essential in the examination of the black

body as a historical trope. Toni Morrison eloquently explains the confluence of slavery

and the necessary aesthetic (black body) to perpetuate division, she writes about dishonor

associated with the slavebody and argues that the contempt associated with the blackbody

is a result of Enlightenment ideas of transcendent whiteness. Toni Morrison (2019, 76)

also elaborates on this when she writes, "In this racism the slavebody disappears but the

blackbody remains and is morphed into a synonym for poor people, a synonym for

criminalism and a flash point for public policy." Institutional racism and the omni-present

depiction of police brutality, blackface, and other troubling flashpoints only complicate an already sensitive relationship between black and white people in America.

The multi-faceted experience of slavery on southern plantations is instrument in the establishment patriotic dissonance; it is also an experience that informs cultural behavior on the bodies of people of color. Commonly referred to as an ontological pre-condition, the reframing of the black body as a historical trope is essential in understanding the complicated relationship with America and people of color. Additionally, the damage done to both master and slave reside in the social relationships of Americans contemporarily—this has much to do with power. One would be hard pressed to identify Army professionals willing to engage openly in a conversation about race and American slavery. The cosmopolitan sentiment overshadows discourse, which may explain contemporary disparity in thoughts of patriotism, equality, and national service.

There are no studies that draw upon the issue of the lack of black officers in the Infantry from the perspective of film analysis as a multimodal source. Multimodal rhetorical analysis is the pensive observation of film and other media to determine how social narratives are formed. For the purposes of the following analysis, consider the following example. Think about the last movie you saw. Despite the genre of the film, you probably did not think too hard about the movie. You didn't notice the mistakes, you didn't think about the meta-narrative of the film, and yet, in hindsight, something about that film made you think differently; it may have caused you to think of something that otherwise would not be a consideration. To engage in multimodal analysis is to think deeply about that object. Film is a powerful unifier of feeling and when analyzed, the

film yields immense understanding. Given the discomfort of verbally confronting American slavery in the Army, certain realities can be re-imagined through the examination of pictorial representations of the antebellum South. To date, the most apt representation of United States chattel slavery is the 1975 film *Mandingo.*

The 1975 screen adaptation is taken from the Kyle Onstott 1957 novel, of the same title. The film challenges notions and perceptions of slavery through a less-romanticized depiction of plantation life. Unlike other film such as *Gone with the Wind*, *Mandingo* is a disgustingly rich portrayal of slavery as it depicts the horror of the establishment of masochistic relationships as a means of preserving power. The film, vice the novel, is symbolic as it facilitates sensory or semiotic engagement with viewers. The film offers a variety of images and sounds to depict a complicated tension between good and evil. The motion picture also yields ideological implications with respect to contemporary race relations and a taxonomy that perpetuates contemporary racial divide. Film, as a multimodal artifact, and as an appropriate medium to navigate racial, gender, and social stratification, serves the rhetorical end of engaging cognitive pathways while constructing knowledge toward the end of understanding the formulation of the black body as a historical trope (Fleisher 1975).

Examining the film using the Hegelian master/slave dialectic will allow for a near-exhaustive analysis of power relationships and the affordances of the mutual recognition necessary to sustain such a relationship. The social implications of a shifting power relationship will explain the need for the development and practice of strategies toward an end of inclusion. The master/slave dialect is a framework to examine power. Next, the aforementioned strategies will be explained to identify the significance of

unimpeded ideology. If we ascertain film as an apparatus of epistemological construct, then it is necessary to interrogate the various forms of representation within it as a means of hypothesizing subsequent social action, including future force structures in the Army as a microcosm of society rife with social problems.

Since the pre-Civil War Deep South serves as the setting for *Mandingo*, viewers must consider the normativity of slavery as a driver of stability at the time. Plantation life, in this instance, becomes a conflicting merger of two distinct publics—the slave community and the white masters who own and operate the plantation. The polarization of race relations today exists on the bases of cultural neglect and ignorance of the fact that mutual exchange is necessary to sustain a slave society.

The multimodal aspect of relationships in the film stems from the confluence of language and action toward an integrated whole. Communicative acts bore out of the union of these events yield moments of clarity for audiences as they attempt to make sense out of what they perceive. For example, the opening scene of the movie presents the Falconhurst plantation as a dirty, dingy, and largely undesirable place. It is antithetical of normally perceived labor fields, and not as romantically depicted as, say, *Gone With the Wind.* A similar mythology regarding slavery and the Civil War contributes to different understandings of loyalty between white and black people.

To review the plot of the film *Mandingo*, the film's main character, Hammond, is instructed by his father Maxwell to find a wife to produce an heir to run the plantation. When he finds out that his new wife and cousin Blanche is not a virgin, and as such unfit to produce an ideal heir, he seeks sexual pleasure with Ellen, a slave he purchases. The relationship between Ellen and Hammond becomes consensual and they proceed to form

a taboo sexual relationship. As Blanche observes the relationship between Hammond and Ellen blossom, Blanche becomes increasingly vengeful. Blanche, a white master, feels slighted by Hammond's new relationship and beats Ellen to gain revenge on Hammond; in the process she causes Ellen to miscarry Hammond's child. Blanche desperately seeks the recognition of Hammond as a fitting wife; however, she cannot understand Hammond's desire for the slave Ellen. Blanche subsequently creates an erotic triangle by raping the plantation Mandingo Mede, in order to obtain revenge on Hammond. The plan backfires and Blanche gets pregnant by Mede, giving birth to a mixed-race child. As a result, Maxwell spitefully poisons and kills both Blanche and the newborn child; Hammond stabs Mede and pushes him into a boiling cauldron, and a slave revolt begins, resulting in the death of Maxwell. By the film's climax, we experience a re-appropriation of power on the plantation and a glimpse of freedom for the slaves through the revolt, although we know that this moment of freedom is fleeting giving the practice of slavery as an institution. We can attribute the re-appropriation of power to Ellen as a sexualized other (Fleisher 1975).

To consider slavery as a sexual economy is to posit the black female slave as a capital asset. Through this paradigm, it is possible to illustrate some implicit ideological myths born out of this aspect of the film. Prevalent among many, are the familiar tropes of Jezebel and Mammy—both figures contribute to the aforementioned bias among men to assert patriarchal dominance. If we think of these tropes as functions in a dialectical relationship, the convergence of the two (Jezebel and Mammy) yields the *superwomen* or the Sapphire. Deborah White (1999) describes the superwomen as an empowered Black women, able to re-appropriate power and thwart institutional gender discrimination;

however, she is continually trapped within prejudice rhetoric and sometimes labeled as an angry Black woman.

Ellen represents the ideological myth of the superwomen. As White (1999, 27) explains, black women are perceived as "infantile, irresponsible, submissive, and promiscuous." Any effort to escape this myth is futile. Men may escape the myth by being associated with masculine, aggressive, and dominant attributes; however, if a woman transcends the myth, she becomes a "superwomen" or a Sapphire (White 1999, 28). This creates envy from both white and black women; for men she becomes sexual prey to conquer, a trophy, and a victim of patriarchal efforts to thwart her autonomy. In Antebellum America, the image of the black women, especially the "superwomen," is governed by her libido—she is personified sexually as a Jezebel, a term which still permeates in contemporary slang (White 1999, 29).

Ideological myths that may contribute to the emergence of Jezebel, as a trope, stem in part from the misinterpretation of African cultural traditions. Europeans commonly mistook "semi-nudity for lewdness" or tribal dance as the performance of orgy (White 1999, 30). Europeans attributed African polygamy to uncontrollable lust and, as such, black women were considered sexual animals. Arguably, connecting promiscuity to reproduction justifies sexual exploitation through the reproduction of labor for many white masters. Jezebel is described as alluring, lewd, and seductive; she is overly sexualized and, at times, deemed a whore in many circles. A Eurocentric ideology contributes to the social narrative of black women in pre-colonial times and it rears its ugly head in contemporary educational and professional spaces where many women feel threatened in the class/board room.

Additionally, on the plantation, segregating house slaves from field hands may have fostered social distinctions within the enslaved community—both acts significantly affect black families even persisting into freedom and today. Already fragmented, enslaved families consisted of surrogate mothers and siblings to raise offspring. Privileged to the house, some slaves would subconsciously assume their master's sentiment toward slavery and become increasingly content, even advocating for the preservation of the institution.

The film juxtaposes a character in the film, Lucretia Borgia, as a Mammy figure alongside the Jezebel trope. Mammies typically runs the plantation house and are perceived as asexual caregivers to white children; the slaves seek her knowledge, as she is older than most and has the trust of her masters, especially the wives. This particular ideological myth depends on the trope of Jezebel as an inverse image to serve as its own binary: "Mammy was of special importance to Southern perceptions, for she reflected two traditions perceived as positive by Southerners"—the ideal slave and the ideal black women, a humble servant (White 1999, 61). To embody the trope of Mammy, Jezebel, and Superwomen or Sapphire is to suffer masochistic victimization, especially in the contemporary institution. These myths carry with them a troubled history of dehumanization and subordination. The trauma inflicted from these sustained ideological myths stem from slave propaganda like those found in 1736 editions of the South Carolina Gazette newspaper, to the placement of 21st century Aunt Jemima pancake boxes in supermarkets; furthermore, they play out in professional spaces where the female voice is dismissed and largely replaced by attention to body language through gesture and attire (White 1999, 30).

Viewers of the exploitative *Mandingo* are exposed to the racial dynamic that consumes the contemporary conversation regarding gender and race in America. The existence of figurative tropes—Jezebel, Mammy, and Sapphire— indicates slavery's influence, just as the categorization of books by race point to a systemic conduit to covert racism and gender discrimination. In short, film, as a multimodal artifact and as an appropriate medium to navigate racial, gender, and social stratification, serve the rhetorical end of engaging semiotic pathways, literally creating synapses toward an end of creating knowledge. Films like *Get* Out, *12 Years a Slave, Lincoln,* and many others perform the work of describing the complexity of social distinctions and historical account. The idea that certain media necessitates the implementation of counter-hegemonic strategies that work to intervene in power relationships is clear. With this in mind, the residual effects of chattel slavery are noticeable when we consider the performativity of race and gender in debates surrounding equality and race relations. By analyzing chattel slavery as a sexual economy, we can identify corresponding behavior that circumscribes minority groups, by extension, the construction of bias as it relates to assimilating into environments where legacies of that history can be assumed to be present.

Films like *Mandingo* yield an immense and rich critique of why we struggle with gender and race frustration. The film is also a repulsive glimpse into the power of institutional thinking—the idea that the popular idea is also the correct one. Contemporary race relations in the black community can be understood through the acknowledgement of history as a foundational ideological seed.

<center>The US Army as a Simple Domain</center>

The vigorous organizational culture that defines most Armor and Infantry units is vital to the success and maturation of warfighters. Throughout the history of warfare, militaries employ certain narratives to sustain and cultivate a warrior ethos. The narrative includes rough-looking men and women with intimidating gear and guns on posters; it includes the music during military commercials that signify strength and triumph; the narrative includes professional looking, albeit, tough noble puppies in recruitment ads and pamphlets. Perhaps the most interesting observation about the appeal regarding a profession of arms is the use artifacts and practices to sustain organization subcultures, like the Infantry Corps and the Armor branch. A prime reason why there is such a noticeable disparity given black officers in the Infantry and Armor branches is that many of the artifacts and practices are foreign to many black officer candidates.

Both Remo Butler (1996) and Irving Smith III (2010) cite differentiating cultures between white and black people as contributing factors for the disparity. Aside from dress, music, and social interactions (mannerisms and dialect), the stories told about patriotism to black youth do not come in the form of Boy Scout meetings or GI Joes. Black American stories are couched in the resilient acts of people who were made to display tireless humility in the face of oppression. And so the military uses artifacts in an effort to standardize cultures—thus cultivating a professional Army where everyone is green. Again, the military uniform serves as a sort of second skin and serves as a race and ethnic proxy.

In the Army, certain artifacts such as the uniform, insignia, and rank facilitate good order and discipline. The Army is a simple domain in the sense that there is a

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complete understanding of the causes and effect of institutional conduct. In the Army, career progression is predictable and the collective identity of the profession of arms helps to situation soldiers and officers into clearly defined roles. Social services such as healthcare, life insurance, and basic recreational needs are available and largely are beneficial. Variability in the simple domain is narrow and agents (service members) operating within the domain often understand as right from wrong. Officer candidates, especially considering the combat arms branches, may find that once they assimilate into the branch culture, decisions are easier to make. The complicated nature of volunteering to serve in the combat arms branches have less to do with variables in the branch and more to do with perceptions of the branch as a form of discomfort for black people. People tend to be in spaces where those around them look like them; it is human nature and is not the case in the combat arms branches for black people.

Although the Army is a relatively simple domain, the institution relies on those aforementioned variables to maintain expectation management. An examination of the agency that comprise the military uniform, insignia, and rank may further explain how the combat arms branches enjoy a narrative of elitism. Most senior officers in the Army have some experience serving in the combat arms; what may not be readily apparent are the many tools and credentials that exist to propel those officers to positions of higher authority. Tools like the Ranger tab and combat patches, specific unit patches, and specialty badges—in this case, insignia is only one of three layers of artifacts that comprise the organizational culture for a unit.

Object-oriented rhetorical analysis examines the many ways that seemingly inanimate objects influence conditions in reality. For example, your bedroom nightstand

may not immediately seem important to you, but when you consider the ways your

nightly routine is shaped around the location of the nightstand, you might give more

thought into how you arrange furniture. The latent agency in objects often conditions

behavior to ultimately contribute to decision-making. Being aware of this phenomenon

lends unique perspective toward the interaction of people, objects, and inhibited spaces.

Since the Army prides itself on recognizing merit, the simple nature of the domain exists

in the idea that merit doesn't discriminate; however, when cultural differences define

merit in some areas, the organization has a problem.

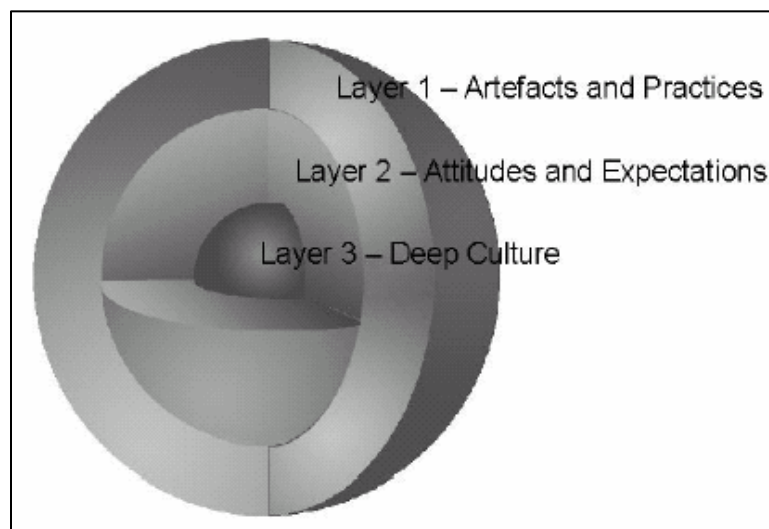Figure 8.   QinetiQ Model of Organizational Culture

Source: Angela Febbraro, Brian McKee, and Sharon Riedel, eds., *Multinational Military Operations and Intercultural Factors* (RTO Technical Report, TR-HFM-120. North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Research and Technology Organization, November 2018, accessed 21 May 2019, https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/d67a/090784c6224fb8a3b230b 628448e4b67ef0d.pdf, 1-6.

The three layers depicted in figure 8 depict the explicit and controllable aspects of culture, and the more complicated implicit aspects of culture. This figure implies that orchestrators and participants alike can manipulate culture. For the uninitiated, the officer candidate may view the outside of the sphere as enticing. Once the black officer volunteers to serve in the combat arms, and if that same officer is unshaken due to the disparity in race all around, then assimilation may begin and attitudes and expectations (Layer 2) begin to form around that officer despite race or ethnicity. This is the layer that attracts candidates.

Layer two: Attitudes and expectations cause the black officer to feel that the culture of the organization is just right. This layer "represent those truths held by the organization" and can be adapted over time (Febbraro, McKee, and Riedel 2008, 1-6). Attitudes and Expectations take time to cultivate and time to learn. The idea of an Army as a simple domain relies on the successful implementation of common sense.

Layer three: deep culture, deals with where the attitudes and expectations come from. If the Army is viewed as monolithically conservative and white, then again, there is a problem with recruiting. The problem doesn't just stem from differentiating perspectives, but a traditionally divergent cultural aesthetic that is rooted in differentiating cultural mores. Military culture specifically is predominately inclusive given that the uniform serves as the prime unifier. Zellman, Heilbrun, Schmidt, and Builder (1993, 369) neatly summarize the core elements of military culture as "conservative, rooted in history and tradition, based on group loyalty and conformity and oriented toward obedience to superiors." The history that Zellman et al insinuates is perhaps linked to factors of power. In short, the Army depends on artifacts. The QinetiQ

model of organizational culture is thus recursive. That is, the agents comprising the culture submit to layer three, deep culture, and then become active participants in the marketing of their artifact; and so it goes. The Army is a simple domain if the agents within it share an egalitarian ethic toward collective and professional culture.

<div align="center">Identity and the Disorder Domain</div>

The disorder domain lies at the intersection of others—complex, complicated, chaotic, and simple. To exist in the disorder domain is to be lost. The confluence of ideological barriers weighs heavily on the body and mind in the disorder domain and as a result identity crisis and imposter syndrome emerges. Snowden discusses the disorder domain as a space where decisions must be compartmentalized in all other domains. Another way to view this space is that which is intimidating, uncomfortable, and paralyzing.

The black body, as a historical trope, is a generalizing theme throughout this study. The researcher makes the assumption that the institution of slavery, coupled with the Jim Crow era, and thus, differentiating motives for service help to establish a tumultuous gulf between citizen and soldier. In the disorder domain, this idea is prevalent and weighs heavily in the subconscious of the black officer candidate. The researcher offers an anecdote to explain how disorder might threaten black officers in the combat arms branches:

> Throughout my undergraduate experience in the early 2000s at the historically-black Tuskegee University, where I majored in English and participated actively in ROTC (Reserve Officers' Training Corps), I had been certain of one thing: I would definitely see combat once I graduated, and I did . . . In the midst of war, social and racial derivatives are shed. Interestingly enough, atrocity fosters an environment of empathy and collectiveness, but more than this, I remember being tremendously scared. I had been trained not to show this fear, but I felt that my

particular distress resulted from the fact that I was confused, and I realized that I might be suffering an identity crisis. My realms of existence: soldier, leader, student, scholar, and minority all came into conflict.

Prior to my experience in war, I had become quite comfortable with the people around me at my alma mater, Tuskegee. My fellow students all looked like me, and my affinity group consisted of people who shared many of the same experiences that I had. At Tuskegee, my peers and I held common interests, talked in particular dialects, listened to the same genres of music, and even shared similar adolescent stories. I quickly realized that this 'safe space' was terminal as my commission into the Army as an Infantry officer required me to engage with a new group of people who looked nothing like me and surely had very different experiences.

My Tuskegee experience cemented a truth that still plagues me—the fact that race matters. Today (2017), I am a black Infantry officer teaching English at the United States Military Academy at West Point. My love of literature and leadership led me to this place. West Point has always been a beacon of both for me, and as I walk its hallowed grounds, I am reminded that black officers serving here are, and have always been, scarce. The black student population is equally as scarce. This cultural experience is nothing new for me, though. Throughout my Army experience, I have usually been the only black officer in the room. Of the 64 Plebe (freshmen) cadets in my inaugural composition classes, 2 were black, a typical representation of diversity within the Military Academy. The same lack of diversity is reflected in the low number of black officers in combat-related branches of the Army as well.

I must admit that I've never been deeply bothered by this kind of racial disparity until I attended the predominantly-white Auburn University as a graduate student. I became conscious of the fact that I was the only black man in my entire cohort in the English department at Auburn, and the only one in all of my classes. This observation lingers in my mind as I think back on the cautious answers I tended to give to the many questions regarding race that were apparently asked of me because I am black. But the issue was more than my feeling marginalized or serving as the token black voice." (Caldwell 2017, 56)

Perhaps disorder is nothing to be afraid of; confusion is inherent in problem solving and the human dimension only exacerbates it.

Chapter Conclusion

If war is a human endeavor, then it is incumbent upon the warfighter to understand the enemy/adversary, themselves, and the citizens of their parent country. The

Cynefin domains influence black officer candidates when considering service in the proximity of war on behalf of the Nation. Ideological barriers are largely deemed irrelevant in the defense of meritocracy as an ideology. Prevalent ideological barriers that contribute to the lack of black combat arms officers include double consciousness, identity crisis, lack of affinity within combat arms branches, the lack of cultural understanding, and education disparities. Theses findings are a pending result from a survey of American history, a mean of statistical data that depict the disparity in race within the combat arms population dating back in excess of 10 years, and also the sociological factor of human nature as it relates to affinity and the power of oral narratives.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Everything we hear is an opinion, not a fact. Everything we see is a
perspective, not the truth.

—Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*

Conclusion

The lack of black officers in the combat arms is not solely an Army issue. When selecting branches, differentiating socioeconomic, political, and cultural variables are prevalent factors instrumental in the decision cycle of black officer candidates. This study relies on the idea that in order to assimilate into an ideology of merit, such as the military, service members must adopt an Army ethic; an ethic that may not clearly align with value systems based on cultural norms given gender, ethnicity, and race enclaves.

The frustrations surrounding contemporary discussions about difference is likely due to the tendency to neglect the nuance of diversity as socially complex and race as a socially constructed phenomenon. White supremacy underlies race relations in America, and by extension, white supremacy extends to the many institutions that contribute to American ideas. To be clear, white supremacy does not suggest racism, but rather the many apparatuses and institutions that comprise American ideas predicated upon the preservation of power. Supremacy is arguably subverting within an ideology of meritocracy. America's roots are buried in a foundation rich in white supremacy, and divisive and subtle microaggressions manifest themselves in the actions of people who serve as proxies to perpetuate that power dynamic, even though they object to it. No matter how deliberate the effort toward professionalizing an institution may be, so long as

the institution represents a body of people, that institution will mirror the social values of the people as a body politic. The ideological barriers that prevent black officers from joining the combat arms are a result of America's tumultuous history. Double consciousness, competing loyalties to serve, and the resulting identity crisis may influence many black officer candidates who contemplate about volunteering to serve in spaces where they are the minority. The Army's leadership must consider these barriers as problems and work to deconstruct them.

Double Consciousness

One in twelve officers in the combat arms are black. The impact of always being under the gaze of the majority surely weighs heavily on black officers in this environment. Unbeknownst to white peers, black officers in these spaces are hyperaware of seemingly irrelevant social actions. For example, many black officers act in a way so as to not perpetuate stereotypes while simultaneously crafting their individuality in ways that are nonthreatening. Leaders must be willing to extend professional discussion beyond the artificial; leaders must not be afraid to explore difference; leaders must not assume that soldiers are all green; and leaders must counsel their subordinates.

In turn, black officers must not judge themselves solely on the perception of their peers, neither white nor black. The natural tendency to surround oneself with people of the same race can be damaging to organizational growth. Although at times intuitive, people must be conscious and courageous enough to explore peers of a different race, ethnicity, and gender. Every officer must make efforts to explore the lifeworld of their peers. Black officers must tactfully communicate opinions and issues regarding difference and suggest ways to embrace diversity while countering insularity. The

responsibility does not fall solely on the black officer. White officers must have the courage to ask the tough questions. The United States Army prides itself on maximizing the uniqueness and creativity of its diverse force; therefore, senior leaders must create solutions to reduce the disparity of white and black officers.

Furthermore, white officers must educate themselves on issues of whiteness and not shy away from the tough historical account of American history. Lay aside any thought of culpability and understand the ways that American history situates whiteness as the status quo, and consequently how white people may unknowingly perpetuate a form of supremacy. In other words, white officers bear the responsibility to understand how they might perpetuate power bestowed on them through such dubious history. Both white and black officers must also seek ways to diversity the force and guard against bias in situations where people do not understand diverse cultural practices. Race matters, and claims to invisibility due to merit only renovates echo chambers where white and black officers cloister; the result is ideological segregation and the consequent disparity in demographics. Double consciousness is overcome through the cultivation of personal, not professional relationships.

<center>Competing Loyalties to Serve</center>

Recommendations that influence black officer candidates to serve in the combat arms are linked to ideological apparatuses such as schools, churches, media, literature, and affinity groups, such as the Boy and Girl scouts, the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC), and the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA). Army leaders must deliberately target echo chambers such as schools in areas where homogeneity is based on race. HBCUs are a good example of echo chambers wherein officer candidates

may be susceptible to groupthink. Army senior leaders must encourage successful black officers in the combat arms to consider broaden themselves in areas where junior leaders look like them. Affinity is a strong consideration regarding mentorship with respect to black officers joining the combat arms. Some will argue that diverse perspectives are needed to ensure a diverse force, but officer candidates who find themselves intimidated by diverse spaces must first cultivate confidence in themselves, and trust in the institution, before they can branch out and lead those foreign to them. HBCUs offer a form of nurture that builds that type of confidence.

Other competing loyalties, such as a lack of trust in American institutions and political movements, the fear of losing relevance (selling out) with black cultural norms, and divergent value systems due to diverse worldviews still thwart black participation in the combat arms branches of service. The refrain that America has not been kind to black people still prevails, many black people need a reason take up arms to defend her. The tumultuous Vietnam era and the race problems that characterized that time are critical to this claim. Tension, coupled with educational disparity and social difference, hinder recruiting efforts. Recruiting, especially media portrayals of people of color in uniform, and candid discussions about difference must continue to enhance organizational culture.

<div align="center">Identity Crisis</div>

The ideological barrier that is perhaps the most difficult to ascertain and influence is the identity crisis that occurs when minorities enters into a majority space. Imposter syndrome and inferiority complexes likely occur during these events. Stress is common when encountering foreign environments where the prevalent feature of one's identity is race. The looming identity crisis that some black officers feel stems largely from the

effects of double consciousness as a cognitive reaction to difference. The previous anecdote about the black cadet at West Point feeling suspended between three separate worlds—the expectations of a cadet, the expectations of a black person, and the expectations of autonomous citizen serves as an example. The same is true during periods of assimilation for black junior officers. Minorities in a majority space must adapt. It doesn't mean that special treatment should apply for minorities, but the necessity for affinity is elevated in moments where cultural difference characterize interaction.

The Army is not excused from the many issues that plaque civil society. In fact, the issue of disparity among black officers in the combat arms is perhaps not the Army's problem at all, however, once officers enter the profession of arms, their assimilation, and loyalty depends on the shifting of their perspective to that of a collective effort toward inculcating an Army ethic.

<u>Recommendations</u>

Although the demographical statistics indicate that the ratio of white officers to black officers in the combat arms branches are commensurate with the census data of the country writ large, the aesthetic difference of the minority in a majority space means that black officers feel their difference in a way that white officers do not. The three primary recommendations for senior Army leaders follow:

1. Army leaders should promote a humanities-based Professional Reading List and consider incorporating it in current PME curricula.

2. Consider billeting high performing black combat arms officers as Professors of Military Science in HBCU detachments to increase black participation into the combat arms branches.

3. Sustain marketing strategies that emphasize black officer participation in the combat arms branches.

Professional Reading List

Edification is a pillar of professional military education. There are many reading lists that promote a foreign policy and leadership perspectives through military history, however, there are no reading lists that focus on the social issues that foreground the problems of this study. Senior leaders should endorse the recommended list of readings located in Appendix A and include certain concepts from these, and other texts in emerging leadership doctrine.

The list is not exhaustive, but will provides a starting point to understand diverse perspectives of actions that coincide with a rich and troublesome history. Formalizing a humanities focus alongside the implementation of the Army Ethic as outlined in ADRP 6-22 will establish a foundation where constructive discourse is possible. Black officer candidates will be likely to share crucible moments in their army maturation as it relates to affinity and apprehensions related to difference.

Assign Black Professors of Military Science to HBCU ROTC Detachments

African American officers need to continually be assigned to serve as Professors of Military Science (PMS) at HBCUs. Since the majority of black officers graduate from these institutions, high performing black officers should be selected to broaden himself or herself and nurture future combat arms leaders. Historically, HBCUs were established with the intent of educating the black population at a time when African Americans were denied access to predominately white institutions of learning. People of color still benefit

from the unique social environment that sustains affinity and a sense of comfort and confidence as young black students reflect on their growth. For black officer candidates, many of whom grow up in environments devoid of a significant white population, the researcher argues that the advantages of being nurtured by other successful black officers provides a roadmap toward success, especially in combat arms branches of service. Officer candidates should be able to see someone who looks like them as they perform in a majority environment and thrive.

The mandate of deliberate mentorship programs will also specifically encourage black officer candidates to join the combat arms branches of the Army. Teaching young black officers how to maintain their own cultural values while developing an understanding of their identity as they operating in a space that presumes to be colorless is important. This recommendation does not posit the inability of white officers to succeed as mentors for black cadets, however, given the complexity of affinity as it pertains to the human dimension, the question of who would be best to develop officer candidates of color if the goal is to increase black combat arms officers is relevant.

Additionally, the development of mentorship programs that offer cadets opportunities to broaden themselves above and beyond their current ability to do so should be considered. Continue to leverage the ROCKs, Inc. organization to achieve this. Cadet Command offers a menu of Professional Military Education to develop future leaders, cadets who take advantage of these opportunities are often successful as they assimilate and internalize the Army's ethic. On another issue, officers selected for Cadet Command jobs should not be placed at a disadvantage for taking the assignment; they

must remain competitive with their peers. This is an area of study that needs more attention.

Recruitment

The ability to visually communicate the importance of a diverse force is not an easy feat. Contemporary marketing schemes involve music and media to reach prospects that are likely intrigued by opportunities in the technological fields of industry. How does the army recruit in such a way as to encourage applicants to choose public service over private industry? Recruiters and service members must consider themselves as ambassadors of the profession, as such; they must understand the varied influencers that bear on their decision-making. The reading list contributes to recruitment strategies that seek to first understand motives for service, and second to manage talent appropriately. Black officer candidates must see themselves in the force and officers should seek out black cadets to recruit; leveraging affinity is not dubious.

Recommendations for Future Research

The most obvious omission in this study is human subject research. Future researchers should conduct an ethnographic study to identify pragmatic findings. Although those findings may depend on generalizations that ultimately describe what may be deemed as hypothesis, the survey of black officer candidates may reveal other implications of societal and historical events in America. Another recommendation for future research are the conduct of interviews with successful black senior Army leaders to explore other ideological barriers that exist, as well as other varied influences that are

instrument in their success or failure. Research and interviews could further illustrate the prevalence of demographic disparity.

Other future research recommendations include the development of a humanities-based curriculum within the Army's professional military education system. The analysis of the impacts and desire for a structured and mediated curriculum will impact the development and recruiting strategies of Army leaders. A humanities reading list will also augment aspects of introspection and an understanding of the Army Ethic as outlines in ADRP 6-22.

Furthermore, given the catalog of data and research on this topic, future researchers can extend the inquiry to juxtapose other ethnic disparities and locate factors due to variables that are common to those explained in this study, such as socioeconomics, cultural factors, and bias.

<u>Parting Thoughts</u>

The goal of this study is to offer the context and language to understand the implications the unexplained. The generalizations here are sociological in nature, which is to say that they are observational, but readers of this study may identify with some of the claims that suggest that people are malleable and will see the world based on their knowledge of it. Perhaps the explanation affords senior leaders and peers alike a moment to reflect on their power to influence our Army while also understanding the importance of the perspective our service members and diversity.

APPENDIX A

Professional Reading List

Between the World and Me by Ta-Nehisi Coates

White Fragility by Robin Diangelo

Battle Cry of Freedom by James M. McPherson

The Case for Reparations by Ta-Nehisi Coates

The American Cause by Russell Kirk

The United States Constitution

The White Racial Frame: Centuries of Racial Framing and Counter-Framing by Joe R.
Feagin

The Souls of Black Folks by W.E.B. Dubois

Invisible Man by Ralph Ellison

My American Journey by Colin Powell

Negros Civil War by James McPherson

The New Jim Crow by Michelle Alexander

Nigger by Randall Kennedy

White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide by Carol Anderson

Black Frontiersman: The Memoirs of Henry O. Flipper by Henry O Flipper

Leadership: Essential Writings by our Greatest Thinkers edited by Elizabeth Samet

The Republic by Plato

Black Boy by Richard Wright

Buffalo Soldiers in Italy: Black Americans in World War II by Hondon B. Hargrove

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