"Let our ballots secure what our bullets have won:" Union Veterans and Voting for Radical Reconstruction and Black Suffrage.

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Introduction

In 1869, the United States was in the midst of its "Second Revolution", and a Radical Congress passed the 15th Amendment, extending suffrage to African American men. Between 1866 and 1872, the Congress also passed the 13th, 14th amendments, ending slavery and creating for the first time the rights and protections of national citizenship. And to secure these rights, they embarked on a massive expansion of federal powers. They voted to preserve a state of war and war powers against much of the South until 1871, which they used to force ratification of the Civil Rights Amendments; produced new federal agencies like the Freedmens Bureau that not only provided direct federal aid, but was intimately involved in creating schools and negotiating labor contracts, interfering in domains previously left to the states (Downs 2015); passed laws that enforced both the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments and the Civil Rights Act of 1866, which provided for federal oversight of elections, the appointment of marshals and election supervisors with the power to charge states or individual citizens for denying civil rights (Wang 1997); and provided for suspension of habeas corpus and the deployment of military to stop groups like the Klan from systematically depriving rights to African Americans. This revolution not only drastically altered the constitution in defining the content of citizenship and increasing federal power, but also provided the legal and institutional framework for challenging the racial hierarchy within the United States.

Yet, this revolution far from a foregone conclusion. In 1860, most Northerners were not committed to abolishing slavery nationwide and, even to those that were, extending civil and political rights to emancipated African Americans seemed ill-advised or only a distant possibility (Wang 1997; Foner 1988). Even at the height of this revolutionary agenda, Republican legislators remained accountable to their constituents. Given these facts, and recent findings on the long-term persistence of racism (Acharya, Blackwell and Sen 2016), the *de facto* reversal of much of the gains of Reconstruction (Foner 1988), and the victory of the "Lost Cause" in Civil War Memory (Blight 2001) how did a racially conservative electorate come to embrace and vote for a constitutional and racial "revolution" at all?

Historical explanations for Radical Reconstruction emphasize—unsurprisingly—the role of the Civil War. They argue that Northerners became increasingly committed to opposing slavery over the course of the war, and that the recalcitrance of Southerners at the end of the war led Republican leaders to back increasingly radical reform measures (Downs 2015; Wang 1997). While not specific to this case, social scientists have several theories for why expansions of political rights like this might occur. These theories argue that excluded groups can obtain new rights when the excluded extract them by threatening incumbent elites with mass mobilization or when incumbent elites "grant" rights because it is advantageous.

Both the historical and social scientific explanations miss an important part of this case: Republican leaders in Congress faced a large, racist, electorate that, less than a decade previously, was unwilling to end slavery, let alone consider expanding civil and political rights to African Americans.

I expand on both historical and theoretical explanations by providing a mechanism by which popular support for this "revolution" was obtained. In short, I argue that Union Army veterans played a vital role in providing the requisite support for Radical Reconstruction. Because of the large size of the Union Army relative to the male population and the restriction of suffrage to white male citizens, Union Army veterans were a large share of the Northern electorate. Through their wartime experiences, they developed new, more inclusive racial attitudes and came to understand that the value of the war (and of their sacrifice) was in restoring Union *and* eradicating slavery. When, in 1865 and 1866, a meaningful end to slavery and defeat of secessionists was threatened by the return of former Confederates to power in the South, the promulgation of "Black Codes", and widespread violence against freed people and their Northern allies, veterans were particularly keen to back the measures necessary to preserve the victory for which they had fought so hard and lost so much.

I develop this argument through a combination of quantitative and historical evidence. First, I use novel individual-level data on Union Army soldiers to identify enlistment rates by county, and estimate the relationship between enlistment rates and support for Repub-

licans and Black Suffrage referenda after the war. To address the possibility of reverse causality—pro-Republican and pro-Suffrage men selected into the Army—I estimate the effects of enlistment using both a difference-in-difference estimator and regressions in which inverse probability weights create balance on pre-war trends in support for Republicans and demographics. Using both approaches, I find that higher enlistment produced markedly stronger support for Republicans in the immediate post-war period. Interestingly, these results also suggest that the effects of veterans on Republican voteshare lasted for several decades after the war; a testament to the linkage forged between veterans and the party. I also find that higher enlistment rates increased support for African American suffrage in a Constitutional referendum in Iowa in 1868.

To address concerns about drawing invalid ecological inferences from the aggregate data I analyze, I provide historical evidence of the active involvement of Union veterans in campaigning for Republicans and defending Radical Reconstruction measures between 1866 and 1868. I also draw on Civil War and Reconstruction-era historiography to provide evidence for the mechanisms driving veterans to back these policies: their change in racial attitudes, the centrality of ending slavery and creating a new freedom to their understanding of the war, and the existential threat they saw in a resurgent South.

Theory

There are several arguments for why suffrage and other political rights are extended to previously excluded groups. These arguments fall into three broad categories. *Mass mobilization:* A perennial explanation for the extension of political rights is that elite face an existential threat from below. Mass mobilization by the excluded, whether violent or non-violent, can pose an existential threat to the incumbent elite. In the face of such a threat, extending political rights—while a major concession of power—can forestall more thoroughgoing regime change (Acemoglu and Robinson 2000; Collier 1999; Przeworski 2009;

Chenoweth and Stephan 2012).

"Granting" of rights When political elites face competition with other elites — whether over economic interests or otherwise — one group may seek to bring in new allies by extending political rights to exclude groups (Ansell and Samuels 2015; Lizzeri and Persico 2004; Llavador and Oxoby 2005; Schattschneider 1960). Or political elites might grant new rights to excluded groups when there is little threat to doing so (Boix 2003). *Necessity:* Elites might grant new rights when excluded groups become necessary to the survival of the state. Mass mobilization for war creates need for states to credibly commit to reward or repay soldiers for wartime sacrifice (Ferejohn and Rosenbluth 2017). Since this commitment is not always credible, the extension of suffrage allows states to commit to post-war income redistribution (Ticchi and Vindigni 2008; Scheve and Stasavage 2012).

While the vast majority of these theories seek to explain male suffrage as a transition from autocracy to democracy, there is good reason to doubt whether they translate easily to cases where rights previously circumscribed by gender or race are extended. Teele (Forthcoming) suggests that political competition and mobilization were both needed for female suffrage. Competition produced incentives for parties to extend the franchise to win new voters and mobilization by women signaled the availability of a potential female vote.

Limitations

While these arguments are helpful in making some sense of Radical Reconstruction, they ultimately fail to explain the extent of the reforms and their political viability. For instance, one of the most common explanations, mass mobilization, can not explain Radical Reconstruction. While there is clear historical evidence that African Americans took on the work of self-emancipation, forcing the hand of the Union Army, Lincoln, and the Republicans party into taking clearer positions against slavery (Foner 1988; Hahn 2003) and that African Americans desired and called for political and civic equality, they did not engage in mass mobilization that threatened the state. In the aftermath of the war, African Americans were

freed but in a precarious position, subject to reprisals from Southern whites and dependent on the protection and assistance offered by the Federal government (Downs 2015). Rather than challenging the federal government, African Americans solicited its protection.

On the other hand, some of these arguments seem to offer important insights into how the extension of civil and political rights to African Americans was possible. Theories that attribute suffrage expansions to competition or rivalry between elites illuminate the conditions of possibility for Radical Reconstruction. Whites in the North and South faced deep partisan divisions that resulted in and were intensified by the Civil War. Whether these divisions are understood as moral and political or as economic (following the long tradition of interpreting the Civil War as a result of economic conflict between Northern industry and Southern commodity producers, (see, e.g. Moore 1967)), the extreme rancor between Republicans and Southern whites drove Republican politicians to seek political support from new constituencies in the South. In many cases, they were fairly explicit about their desire to cultivate African Americans as a voting base that would allow them to be competitive in the South and keep control over both the Presidency and the legislature, even after the South re-entered the Union (Wang 1997).

Similarly, Radical Reconstruction might be understood through theories that suggest suffrage extensions take place when they are less risky. In the 1860s and 1870s African American populations in Northern states were very small. Because of this, only the South and border states would see any substantial political changes due to the enfranchisement of African American men. For legislators from Northern constituencies, risks of suffrage may have been tolerable because they geographically insulated from the consequences. Moreover, there was little uncertainty that African Americans would vote for Republicans.

And suffrage may have been granted as a way to compensate African American veterans for their service during the war. Around two hundred thousand African American men served in the Union Army and Navy during the war, fighting in many important engagements (Cornish 1965). Moreover, these enlistments occurred late in the war when the federal

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government increasingly turned to the stick of the draft and the carrot of the bounty to induce Northern whites to enlist. This vital service at a moment of crisis may have persuaded Northern politicians of the necessity of suffrage. During debates about the 15th Amendment, the service of African American soldiers was used as a justification for granting suffrage (Wang 1997; Dykstra 1993; Field 1982).

Yet, these explanations, too, are lacking. It does not appear that the war effort hinged on the extension of broader civil and political rights. In contrast to other examples of war mobilization requiring suffrage extensions, African Americans in the Civil War were not pressed into service through a draft. Many had eagerly awaited their opportunity to join the fight against slavery, and some escaped plantations, traveled long distances, and risked their lives to reach Union lines and enlist (Hahn 2003). While it was clear at that time that the war must end slavery, soldiers could only hope that equal citizenship might follow. Yet during the war, the Union did little to bolster that hope: black soldiers were paid less, received substantially worse rations, and were stationed in disease-ridden areas, leading to widespread death due to disease (Manning 2007). Given the enthusiasm to enlist and poor treatment during the war, it is hard to construe the post-war legislation as a way to induce wartime compliance.

Competition between Northern and Southern whites may not have been sufficient. While there were divergent economic interests between the two sides in the war, Northern Republicans also had widespread economic disagreements. Rather than the need to protect shared economic interests leading Republicans to enfranchise blacks, agreement over race and Reconstruction allowed Republicans to paper over deep disagreements on economic policy that only reached a head during the Panic of 1873 (Wang 1997; Downs 2015). In this perspective, the central division between Northern and Southern white was over race and slavery and using competition over these issues as an explanation for expanding the suffrage seems to beg the question.

While Reconstruction Amendments and the enforcement legislation primarily affected the

South, this does not imply that legislators faced no risk in backing these laws. Unlike the transitions from autocracy with highly limited franchise imagined by most of these theories (Teele being the exception), the Northern United States already had full suffrage for white males. Consequently, political leaders had to not only consider how the newly enfranchised might vote and whether they needed these votes (as in Teeles account) but also how the current electorate would react. In fact, extending political rights to African Americans was extremely risky not because of how African Americans would vote, but rather because of how whites would respond.

Not only was racism deeply embedded in American society, but it was the party platform of Democrats. During the war, many Democrats pointed to the Emancipation Proclamation as evidence that Republicans sought to prosecute a costly war only for the benefit of "n*****rs" (Dykstra 1993; Field 1982). Long before Republican efforts to grant rights to African Americans, Democrats sought to mobilize voters by accusing Republicans of plotting to do precisely that. At the end of the war, many Democrats opposed giving rights to African Americans, not only because they thought them inferior, but also because they feared Radical Reconstruction as a form of lifting up "the negro" at the expense of the "white man". And to the extent that African Americans and their rights (along with all other citizens) were given federal protections, Democrats argued that the civil rights amendments curtailed the rights of whites to locally determine who could have suffrage and the protections of citizenship (Wang 1997).

For their part, Republicans were wary of exactly these accusations. During the war, Republicans denied that they would seek such a revolutionary change. When Democrats sought to make black suffrage an issue in state elections, Republicans attempted to change the theme of the campaign and refuse to take public stands on the issue. When they debated the extent of the rights embedded in the 14th and 15th Amendments and the subsequent enforcement acts, Republicans explicitly voiced concerns about backlash from the Northern public (Wang 1997; Dykstra 1993; Field 1982). It was far from clear that the

radical legislative agenda they ultimately undertook was possible given the risk of alienating the electorate.

That the white, male electorate of the 1860s would accept new rights for African Americans is unexpected. Nevertheless, Congressional Republicans were able to pass sweeping civil rights legislation, wrestle decision-making over military occupation and war powers from the President, and assert extensive federal powers over states and citizens with the express purpose of defending new civil rights for African Americans. [1] In the election of 1866, widely seen as a referendum on Presidential versus Congressional Reconstruction policies, Radical Republicans won a major victory (Riddleberger 1979), and quickly expanded upon the 14th Amendment, passing a series of wide ranging legislation up until days before the seating of a new Congress in 1869 (Wang 1997). Available arguments about suffrage extensions provide little answer to the question: how was this possible?

Argument

My argument starts from a simple premise: war is transformative. Mayhew (2005) points to several instances in which fundamental transformations in American politics were driven by war. Ferejohn and Rosenbluth (2017) and Ticchi and Vindigni (2008) argue that wartime mobilization produced democratization and that war forces states to commit to democratizing. Scheve and Stasavage (2012) also show that mass mobilization leads to more redistributive tax policies. Civil wars have been found to have have lasting effects on political alignments, even when wars give way to democratic politics (Dunning 2011; Wood 2008). These examples are diverse, but they point at similar mechanisms: combatants' (and non-combatants') political imagination and commitments are transformed by wartime experience.

Many other scholars have directly implicated former combatants (veterans) as agents of change. (Parker 2009) argues that black veterans of the Second World War and Korea returned with both a strengthened commitment to their rights—as a result of sacrificing

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[1]Some of the election enforcement laws were also aimed at preventing fraud in Northern elections, but the use of these laws was, at first, primarily in the South. (Wang 1997)

for their country—and experience in facing danger to make those claims. More generally, veterans acquire new skills for organization and violence that can be translated to both contentious, democratic politics, and violence in the aftermath of the war (or as a war moves from conventional to un-conventional) (Jha and Wilkinson 2012; Bellows and Miguel 2009; Blattman 2009). War also removes soldiers from routine life and places them in intense, violent new environments. This creates opportunities for attitudinal change, particularly as pertains to the reason for and value of the war (Grossman, Manekin and Miodownik 2015; Koenin 2015; Jha and Wilkinson 2017).

Building on these insights, I argue that electoral support for Radical Reconstruction depended on Union veterans. There are four key reasons for this. First, wartime experiences produced important changes in racial attitudes. While most Northerners were not abolitionists at the start of the war and did not call for wider changes on race, Union veterans quickly changed their view of slavery and through the war, obtained new understandings of racial equality. And these new attitudes were not fleeting: despite the deep roots of racism in American society, Union veterans remained committed in some important ways to a kind of racial equality for decades after the war.

Second, these new understandings of race were intimately tied to veterans' understanding of what the war meant. Against claims that they saw the war as primarily about Union, again and again, soldiers refused to separate Union from Liberty (understood as the end to slavery). They agreed with Lincolns characterization of the war as purging the stain of slavery and giving "a new birth to freedom" that redeemed America's promise.

Third, despite initial reservations about revolutionary changes, soldiers were quickly convinced, along with Republican politicians, that without drastic action, the rebels and their "traitorous" Northern allies would win in peace what the Union Army had denied them in war. This existential threat to the cause with which they identified their sacrifice moved veterans to back reforms that would secure aims of the war and meaningfully achieve an end to slavery.

Finally, Union veterans were not merely motivated to back Reconstruction policies; they were also numerous. The United States engaged in mass wartime mobilization for the first time during the Civil War. Sources estimate that nearly 2.5 million men served in the Union Army. The 1870 US Census records just shy of 5 million eligible voters (white male citizens above the age of 21) residing in states that comprised the Union.[2] Assuming that all white Union veterans were from core Northern states (the vast majority were), that white and black soldiers had similar mortality rates, and that all Northern veterans returned to the North, as much as 44 percent of eligible voters may have been veterans. These assumptions inflate the number of veterans, but even if the estimate of veterans in the North is reduced by one million, veterans would have been 23.6 percent of the electorate. If they could be organized to cast support behind a single party, they would be a formidable in electoral politics.

Union veterans were both motivated to support the revolutionary legislation pursued by Radical Republicans and numerous enough to play a decisive role in America's second revolution.

Data and Design

The central implication of my argument is that veterans should be observed to back Republicans (and particularly Radical Republicans) in elections and voted in favor of expanding African American rights in state referenda on the matter. Given the lack of individual-level voting (and the obvious lack of public opinion surveys), I test my argument using data on Civil War enlistment and election outcomes aggregated to the county level.

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[2]Excluding the border states of Missouri, Kentucky, West Virginia, Delaware, and Maryland.

Data

Veterans I measure enlistment rates using a novel database of Civil War soldiers: the Civil War Database (CWBD). Built for genealogical research, archivists created a relational database of soldiers, military units, and engagements by drawing on a wide range of sources including regimental and company muster rolls, publications by state Adjutant Generals, and unit and official Army histories. The data recorded on each soldier varies by state; for the states of Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, Massachusetts, Vermont, Maine, and Connecticut, more than 90 percent of soldiers have their residence at the time of enlistment listed.[3] In the future, it will be able to match soldiers to counties using full count census records and machine learning techniques. This would expand the number of states included in analyses but also introduce more uncertainty into the measurements. Using this data, I create a measure of the fraction of military-aged males in 1860 (males between the ages of 10 and 39 in 1860) that enlisted in the war.

Obviously, this introduces some measurement error: it only measures the fraction of pre-war military aged males that enlisted and does capture veterans as a fraction of the male population after the war. This is not a trivial problem: soldiers were more mobile than the rest of the population, and while many undoubtedly returned home, many did not (Lee 2012, 2008). However, there are two key advantages of this approach. First, it is tractable. Matching soldiers to their post-war location is a more difficult task (though, it is one that I am actively pursuing). Even with access to the complete census data and administrative records on the service of each soldier, this matching would be imperfect and noisy. Second, the pre-war measure is more amenable to research designs that I discuss below: post-war distributions of veterans kept changing and introduce a variety of possible reasons for people to select into a county that would be hard to address.

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[3]I also include the state of Indiana. I was able to make use of administrative records of the Adjutant General that recorded enlistments by county (and in many cases by township) for all periods of the war excluding the period between October 1862 and the spring of 1863. This is a period of time between major troop calls, and as a result encompasses more than 90% of all enlistments during the war.

The CWDB also makes it possible to create measures of wartime experiences. Soldiers belong to units, which have records of casualties and military engagements. Using this data, I can calculate the average days of combat seen by soldiers in a county, the casualty rates of units in which soldiers served, average days of combat in which soldiers fought alongside African Americans, and the length of time in which soldiers belonging to brigades or divisions wide African American units. When matched to digitized administrative records of the activity of regiments during the war, ultimately we will also be able to identify with precision, where soldiers were stationed. This would, for instance, make it possible to measure their exposure to slavery (and possibly different institutions of slavery)—measured at the county-level. While these measures are employed below, they may be helpful in further testing the mechanisms by which I argue wartime service transformed veterans' political commitments.

Elections I focus on three kinds of elections: Presidential, Congressional, and suffrage referenda. Presidential and Congressional elections determined who exercised the legislative and executive powers to create and enforce new civil and political rights. I also examine more direct support for black suffrage in state constitutional referenda. While these occurred in many states, only a few states held them both before and after the war (Iowa, Wisconsin, and New York), making it possible to use differences in differences. Currently, only data on Iowa are usable.[4] Iowa's referenda—in 1857 and 1868—both singly addressed the issue of removing the word "white" as a qualification for suffrage in the state constitution.

I collapse county-level data from *United States Historical Election Returns, 1824-1968 (ICPSR 0001)* to 1860 boundaries, using areal interpolation. Using this data, I examine elections from 1854 (the first year in which Republicans contested elections as a party) and the early 20th century.

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[4]I cannot currently match veterans to counties in New York state, and the data on the Wisconsin referenda has not been digitized (thought it is in my possession).

Research Design

I identify the effect of wartime enlistment on votes for Republicans using two different approaches. First, I use a difference-in-difference strategy. Unlike conventional differences-in-differences estimators, there were no counties with zero enlistment. Instead, I model the change in Republican voteshare from pre- to post-war as a function of the "intensity" of treatment—the enlistment rate. This can be seen in equation 1.

$$RepublicanVoteshare_{ie} = \alpha_i + \alpha_e + \beta EnlistmentRate_i * CivilWar_e + \epsilon_i + \epsilon_t \qquad (1)$$

In this equation, subscript i denotes a county, and e denotes a particular state election.[5] $CivilWar_e$ is a dummy variable that is 1 if the election occurs in 1861 or later and 0 otherwise. $EnlistmentRate_i$ is the fraction of military-aged males in a county in 1860 that served in the Civil War (between 0 and 1). To account for the first difference (within counties), I include county-level fixed effects (α_i). And to force the second difference, I include state-election fixed effects (α_e). I opt for state-election fixed effects, because counties within states are likely to share common shocks in campaigns for the same office(s) in a given year.[6] Because $EnlistmentRate_i$ is constant within counties and $CivilWar_e$ is constant within state-elections, only the interaction between the two remains in the model and is captured by the parameter β. Finally, errors are clustered by both county and year.

This approach can plausibly reveal the causal effects of the presence of veterans, under two assumptions. The first is that the effects of veterans are additive. The second, and more heroic, assumption is that the trends in Republican voteshare counties with different levels of "treatment" were parallel in the absence of treatment. In the "Interpretation" section below, I provide evidence that supports this second assumption.

Finally, I employ two versions of this differences-in-differences strategy. In the first, I

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[5]For example, one state-election would be the Massachusetts Congressional election of 1860.
[6]As a robustness check, I also simply choose year fixed effects.

estimate equation 1 using elections between 1854 and 1880, the first Presidential election after the conventional date of the "end" of Reconstruction. However, this involves making arbitrary choices about when the "treated" period ends. Thus, I also estimate equation 2, which allows for the effect of enlistment to vary for each election-year, for all elections between 1854 and 1920. Beyond eliminating the need for the arbitrary decision of when "treatment" ended, this has the added benefit of estimating when the effects of veterans was strongest and how long those effects lasted, as well as offering a test of the parallel trends assumption.

$$RepublicanVoteshare_{ie} = \alpha_i + \alpha_e + \sum_{y=1854}^{1920} \beta_y EnlistmentRate_i * Year_y + \epsilon_i + \epsilon_t \quad (2)$$

It could be the case that the parallel trends assumption does not hold. Thus, I also explicitly balance on pre-war trends in Republican voteshare. To do this, I use Covariate Balancing Propensity Scores (CBPS) to produce inverse probability weights (IPW) (Fong, Hazlett and Imai 2017). Through this procedure, weights are chosen non-parametrically to minimize the correlation between enlistment rates and pre-war elections. This follows a similar intuition as entropy balancing and synthetic controls, except that it can be applied to a continuous treatment. In this case, there is no reason to use panel data. Instead, I estimate equation 3 on a county cross-section separately for each election between 1854 and 1920. Here, i is a county, s is a state, and e is a state-election. Again, because states are likely share common shocks during as particular election, I include state fixed effects.

$$RepublicanVoteshare_{ie} = \alpha_s + \beta EnlistmentRate_i + \epsilon_i \quad (3)$$

Results

First, I report the results of the difference-in-difference that uses equation 1. These appear in Table 1. Column (1) shows the main result: the shift in favor of Republicans was greater

after the Civil War started in places with more enlistment. The effect size suggests that a ten percentage point increase in enlistment would yield a 3.3 percentage point increase in Republican voteshare. Moreover, this effect is fairly precisely estimated and is highly significant. One limitation with this analysis is that I include all races, including those in which Republicans did not field a candidate (they simply have 0 voteshare). I repeat the analysis, alternately excluding all elections with no Republican candidates or including a dummy for that scenario. The results are largely unchanged.

These results are largely replicated, even when using the IPW design. While the coefficients are smaller, Figure 2 clearly shows that in the years following the Civil War, counties with more veterans saw greater Republican victories in Congressional elections.[7] As this approach depends on explicitly balancing on pre-war trends in Republican voteshare, it provides a reassuring complement to the difference-in-difference which depends on a parallel trends assumption.

Iowa Suffrage Referenda

Support for Republicans in elections does not necessarily imply that veterans backed the specific policies that expanded rights for African Americans (even though most other Reconstruction policies were built around that). To test more directly support for expanding suffrage, I restrict my focus to Iowa. Here, with only two suffrage referenda (one antebellum in 1857 and one after in 1868), the analysis simplifies to two models: difference-in-difference and lagged dependent variable. The LDV is reported in column 1 of Table 2. The sign is positive and substantively large in magnitude, though it is not significant. The differenced estimate is larger and significant. While this is hardly conclusive, it jibes with the finding on the effects of enlistment rates on Republican voteshare, and suggests that this partisan support extended to support for suffrage.

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[7]County-level Republican performance in Congressional and Presidential elections were too highly correlated to include both in the balancing algorithm.

Interpretation

Selection Effects

One central question surrounding the interpretation of these results is whether enlistment during the Civil War was driven by support for the Republican prior to the war. If true, then the effects I observe post-war may be due to pro-Republican men selecting into service. Other scholars have presented evidence that enlistment rates were higher in places where Republican performed better before the war (Costa and Kahn 2008). But the estimates they obtain are incorrect. These authors estimate the number of enlistees in a place as a function of pre-war Republican voteshare using count models which control for population. This does not correctly obtain the rate of enlistment. Whether using count models which estimate a rate of enlistment by using population as the exposure—number of military age males— or least squares with the fraction of military age males that enlisted, pre-war Republican voteshare predicts *lower* enlistment rates. Insofar as pre-war political commitments shaped enlistment, it appears to be in the opposite direction of the effects that I find above.

With both the difference-in-difference and IPW estimates, it is possible to examine whether selection effects remain even after implementing each design. With difference-in-difference estimates, Figure 1 shows the effect of enlistment rates for each election year between 1854 and 1920. It is clear that there is no significant relationship between war-time enlistment and pre-war election results. This suggests there were no selection effects and also validates the parallel trends assumption underlying the identification using difference-in-difference. Figure 2 shows the effects of war-time enlistment on pre-war elections, using regression with IPW. Again, there is no clear relationship between enlistment and pre-war voting after re-weighting.

Moreover, there is not much evidence in the historiography that soldiers selected into enlistment for emancipation or expanding African American rights. Manning (2007) and McPherson (1997) find that soldiers joining the war placed a priority on Union and only

later came to embrace emancipation as a goal of the war. Additionally, early in the war, both parties were unsure of how soldiers would vote. In the 1862 election, both Republican and Democratic state governments denied soldiers who were at the front voting rights since they were unsure of how they would vote (Winther 1944; Dearing 1952).

Ecological Inference

Another major problem with interpreting these results is the risk of ecological fallacy. It is only possible to examine aggregate correlations in voting patterns and enlistment rates. While the fact that populations of eligible voters and military-age males overlap substantially during this period, it is difficult to conclude whether veterans in fact voted Republican (or for suffrage in state referenda). For instance, it could be that veterans became disillusioned with Republicans and, due to the high rates of fatality and higher rates of mobility for veterans after the war, places with more enlistment had fewer Democrat-leaning veterans. It is impossible to definitively address this question with extant data. Instead, I argue that the historical record on veterans and their involvement in politics provides strong evidence in favor of the interpretation I advance: that veterans became committed supporters of Republicans and their Reconstruction agenda.

First, there is strong evidence that by the election of 1864, soldiers were strong supporters of Republicans and emancipation. Despite claims by some Army officers (including the former head of the Army of the Potomac and Lincolns opponent, George McClellan) assessments that emancipation had demoralized the Army and turned soldiers against Lincoln and the Republicans, there is little evidence to support this (Dearing 1952). First, Manning (2007) finds that support for abolition appeared quickly among soldiers—predating the Emancipation Proclamation—and that soldiers were explicit in their diaries and letters home about supporting Lincoln. This is borne out in the election returns: soldiers voting in the field returned a massive victory of Lincoln and Republicans, and anecdotally, troops home on

furlough to vote ran up vote-totals for Republicans at home (Winther 1944). [8] At the end of the war, soldiers strongly sided with Republicans on the issue of prosecuting the war (against Peace Democrats that sought negotiation) and on emancipation, despite Democratic efforts to build opposition to a war for ending slavery (McPherson 1997).

Second, soldiers did not rally to "Soldiers parties" that ran on a platform of veterans benefits and white supremacy. In the immediate aftermath of the war, both parties were unsure of how veterans stood on issues of abolition and civil rights for African Americans. Both Democrats and Republicans thought that service in the South and first-hand contact with freed people had intensified racism among veterans.[9] In many states, Democrats sought to take advantage of this by sharing slates of candidates with Soldiers parties, but they failed to win much support (Dykstra 1993; Field 1982; Dearing 1952).

Instead, many veterans joined a host of new veterans groups that appeared in 1865 and 1866. The largest of these included the Boys in Blue, the Soldiers and Sailors National Union League (SSNUL), and—most famous—the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR). While many other veterans organizations were created for particular regiments or for soldiers of a particular state and took a variety of political positions, the largest groups with the greatest national membership all took on strong positions that backed Radical Republican policies in the South and the Civil Rights amendments (Dearing 1952).

The larger veterans organizations took on a very active role in the elections of 1866. The GAR, Boys in Blue, and SSNUL all organized locally for Republicans, holding parades and mass meetings, attending conventions, and maintaining campaign clubs. Many founders and leading members of the GAR saw backing Radical Republicans as a vital role of the organization (Beath 1889; McConnell 1992; Dearing 1952). The thorough-going collaboration of Grand Army posts with Republicans gave the organization a sharply political reputation.

During the 1866 campaign, Democrats also tried to organized veterans. This effort

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[8]While this is anecdotal, it would be possible to investigate empirically. Records of which units were furloughed to vote are available, and it is possible to match the men in those units to their home counties.

[9]Certainly the strong opposition to black suffrage among Wisconsin soldiers still in the field in late 1865 lent credence to this position.

culminated in a rally in Cleveland in September of 1866. This small convention of about 3,000 backed President Johnson and Presidential Reconstruction, and also accepted letters of praise from former Confederates, like Nathan Bedford Forrest (at that very time active with the Ku Klux Klan). These allegiances opened Democratic veterans to accusations of consorting with rebels and traitors. A little over a week later, Republican veterans held a much larger convention in Pittsburgh, estimated to have 25,000 attendees. The Pittsburgh convention, with national attention, denounced Johnson and collaboration with traitors, and backed both Republicans and ratification of the 14th Amendment (Dearing 1952; Cashdollar 1965). James Blaine—then a Republican in the House active to crafting civil rights legislation— later said of the Pittsburgh convention: "Of the four conventions held, this ... was far the most influential upon public opinion ... ", the delegates'—which had included members of veterans organizations and former officers from all over the country—"consolidated almost en masse the soldier vote of the country in support of the Republican party" (Blaine 1884). Ultimately, Blaine attributed the ratification of the 14th Amendment to the success of this convention.

Bolstered by their decisive electoral success—particularly with veterans—in 1866, Republicans began laying the groundwork for coordinating veterans organizations across the country as a campaign organization they called the "Boys in Blue"[10] (Dearing 1952). At the same time, however, GAR leaders feared that a partisan reputation would harm the organization and attempted to make organization politically neutral. Many leaders opposed this—including the GAR commander in Indiana, Oliver Wilson, who cited the political project of the war as part of the vitality of the organization (McConnell 1992). But even after the organization toned down it's political rhetoric, John Logan (national commander of the GAR and House Republican) was explicit in private communications: "The organization of the GAR has been and is being run in the interest of the Republican party" (quoted in

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[10]Which is distinct from earlier organizations called Boys in Blue, which was a veterans group based in New England and later was folded into the GAR.

Dearing 1952).[11] Moreover, Dearing finds that many local leaders of the GAR were open that local chapters of the Boys in Blue were simply local GAR posts under a new name, and veterans enthusiastically took responsibility for Grants success.

As in 1866, the 1868 election also saw attempts by Democrats to organize their own veterans clubs: typically called the "White Boys in Blue." And if the name did not sufficiently indicate their position on the matters of race and Reconstruction, their slogans and placards reading "NO N****R VOTING" made it clear (Dearing 1952). Given that these groups, too, backed an agenda of veterans benefits, it is plausible that they could have peeled veterans unsure of or opposed to extending suffrage and pursuing Reconstruction away from Republicans. But while in some areas the White Boys in Blue were successful, they ultimately were a much smaller and weaker organization. During the campaign, the Boys in Blue and the White Boys in Blue had many minor clashes, but afterward, the White Boys in Blue disappeared, while the GAR lasted for decades to come (McConnell 1992; Gannon 2011).

The history of Union veterans' involvement in politics from the end of the war until the election of Grant shows that large numbers were active in backing Radical Republicans. This makes it plausible to interpret the results presented above as evidence of veterans voting for Republicans and suffrage.

Mechanisms

Why did veterans come to support Radical Reconstruction and the revolutionary changes to (legal) racial equality that it entailed?

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[11]It is worth noting, too, that following the turn to political neutrality and the success of the elections of 1868, the GAR atrophied quickly. While there are multiple reasons for this, leaders at the time and historians agree that one reason was that the political threat posed by recalcitrant Southerners and Democrats had been defeated (Dearing 1952; McConnell 1992; Beath 1889).

New Attitudes

Like most of the antebellum Northern population, soldiers in the Union Army did not enter the war with the aim of ending slavery. Instead, most emphasized "preserving the Union" and qualified that they were not abolitionists (McPherson 1997; Manning 2007). Drawing on readings form hundreds of diaries and correspondence of Union soldiers, Chandra Manning argues that much earlier than civilians, soldiers quickly were convinced that abolition was necessary for practical and moral reasons. Practically, they came to see that slavery was at the root of the war and that ending slavery would hasten the end of the war and prevent the reappearance of future conflict. Unlike most Northerners, soldiers fighting in the South had direct experiences with slavery. While their moral judgments were based on varied arguments, it was their experiences that convinced soldiers of slavery's immorality.[12]

Soldiers also acquired new perspectives on race in their interactions with African American men and women. When Union troops were in the South, slaves or freed people frequently alerted Union troops to Confederate troop movements and ambushes; revealed the location of arms and food caches meant for the Confederate military; and escaped to help doing logistical work for the Union Army. At the same time, Union soldiers also knew that the men and women who helped them risked their lives: they also came upon the mutilated bodies of people who had been killed and tortured for providing aid (Hunt 2010; Gannon 2011). These experiences led many soldiers to abandon prejudices and develop more respect for African Americans.

Later in the war, white Union soldiers knew of or fought alongside African American regiments. Though some were initially opposed to the creation of the United States Colored Troop regiments, this quickly changed (Manning 2007). Many came to respect the bravery and tenacity of African American men fighting for their freedom. White soldiers that fought

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[12]Soldiers thought that slavery eroded the virtues and civic institutions necessary for republican government; was unjustifiable in its brutality and violence; subverted appropriate gender roles as women and men worked in fields together; resulted in rape of slaves by slave owners, which was also infidelity in marriage and miscegenation; undermined the marriages and families of African Americans through sales; and produced circumstances by which parents and siblings owned and sold their children and siblings.

alongside black units also came to believe that if African Americans could fight and die with them on the battlefield, they could also be equal as citizens (Hunt 2010; Gannon 2011).

Unfortunately, evidence for whether these new views on race persisted is harder to obtain. Many diaries and correspondences terminated with end of the war. But, because of organizational records, it is possible to look at how veterans in the GAR viewed and treated African Americans in the following decades. The GAR was the largest, longest lasting, and most important Union veterans organization. Every Republican President from Grant to McKinley was a member, and, at its height in the 1890s, it had as many as 500,000 members (McConnell 1992).[13] Unlike almost all other social organizations in the 19th century, the GAR was integrated—not only did it admit men regardless of race but individual posts were integrated as well. When posts denied admission to black veterans, they frequently faced censure from other posts. And during Memorial Day ceremonies, white and black veterans paraded and attended sermons together at both black and white churches (Gannon 2011). At the very least, this shows that veterans supported equality for black veterans decades after the war.[14]

Meaning of the War

Soldiers not only experienced a change in attitudes toward African Americans, they also came to understand that their victory in the war was both preserving Union and ending slavery, and that these two victories were equal in their importance (McConnell 1992; Manning 2007; Hunt 2010; Gannon 2011; Janney 2013).

During the war, in part due to the unanticipated length and brutality, soldiers came to see the war as God's punishment to the nation for the sin of permitting slavery. In this perspective, the was Union divided as punishment for slavery and the Union could not

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[13]And 500,000 is simply the minimum estimate for the total total number of veterans who joined the GAR at any point. It does not count the many men who joined and ultimately left the organization due to an inability to pay dues or other reasons.

[14]Still, in 19th century America, there were limits to the white GAR members' notion of equality: other than in black posts, African American veterans only held symbolic offices and never held the highest state or national offices (McConnell 1992; Gannon 2011).

be reattained without ending the institution. Manning argues that before Lincoln made this connection, soldiers had come to view the conflict as fundamentally one for Union and Liberty. The invocation of "Liberty" was explicitly about bringing a meaningful end to slavery. This conception of the war was deeply tied to Protestant beliefs about America as a "city on a hill." Only by removing slavery could America fulfill its promise; only by removing slavery could the promise of the Declaration of Independence be redeemed. Interestingly, this moral story of how slavery came to be central to the war was told by whites. Black soldiers told a more complex story in which their assistance was vitally strategic to win the war and that this made racial change necessary and right (Manning 2007; Gannon 2011).

GAR and other veterans organizations worked to ensure that textbooks endorsed their narrative of the war and strongly opposed attempts to incorporate a neutral or Lost Cause narratives in both textbooks and monuments. They engaged in a rivalry with adherents of the Lost Cause by creating monuments to the war in order to preserve the Union and Liberty interpretation. Even those veterans who were willing to consider "reconciliation" with their former enemies made it clear that they nevertheless saw the cause of their aged rivals as fundamentally wrong (McConnell 1992; Gannon 2011; Janney 2013).

The veterans' understanding of the war can perhaps be best summarized by a speech by William McKinley, then a congressman, to a GAR convention in 1890:

> All we have ever asked is that the settlements of the war—grand settlements, made between Grant and Lee at Appomattox, and which were afterwards embodied in the Constitution of the United States —shall stand as the irretrievable judgment of history and the imperishable decree of a Nation of freemen.

The Memory of what the war was about and the meaning of the victory was deeply important to veterans until their deaths. It gave value to their suffering and gave them a sense of honor and dignity. And the war's meaning was unequivocally tied to the creation of a new freedom that encompassed all of the new freedoms of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments, not just the mere freedom from slavery.

"Let our ballots secure what our bullets have won"

Given that their wartime experience gave them new understandings of race and a conviction that expanding freedom was a central achievement of the war and their part in it, veterans were more threatened that most citizens by the possibility of "losing" the peace. This moved them to back sweeping reforms that moved far beyond emancipation, to equal citizenship, suffrage, and federal enforcement of these rights.

In 1865 and 1866, Presidential Reconstruction permitted former Confederates and secessionists to return to power in the South. These Southern governments enacted "Black Codes" that produced a new legal architecture of *de facto* slavery built around the criminal law. At the same time, white Southerners engaged in widespread violence against both freed people and Northerners attempting to help them (perhaps most notably in riots in Memphis and New Orleans) (Riddleberger 1979). For many in the North, there loomed a real possibility that Southern Slave Power in alliance with Northern Democrats might win the peace by undoing the purpose of the war.

These threats lead Republicans to continually invoke the war: reminding voters of why it was fought, its immense cost in lives, and who had been the enemy—and that Northern Democrats had called for peace and negotiation. While the early historiography of this period often portrayed this rhetoric of "waving the bloody shirt" as a cynical campaign ploy, this is deeply ungenerous. Despite the limits to Republican commitments to true racial equality—by today's standards they were still deeply racist—they were deeply opposed to slavery and were invested in redeeming the promise of the victory that had achieved in war. The threat posed by a resurgent South and Democracy was existential (Downs 2015; Wang 1997; Foner 1988).

Republicans made very particular appeals to veterans. Dearing recounts numerous cases in which Republican candidates and former military commander alerted veterans to the threats posed by their former enemies and called upon them to vote as if they were still an army on the field of battle. On one hand, veterans organizations portrayed opponents of

Reconstruction as coterminous with the enemy during the war. In a statement from GAR officers regarding the 1868 election, they warned veterans:

> Opposed to you are arrayed the late Confederate army of the South, and their more treacherous allies, the Copperheads of the North. ... But yesterday they were using the bullet to overthrow the government, to-day they are using the ballot to control it

Nathaniel Chipman, an officer in the National GAR offices reminded members of the organization that they were the bulwark against former Confederates seeking to seize "all the fruits of a glorious victory... To avert such a calamity is now part of the work before you, comrades."

And at the same time, Republicans and veterans' groups portrayed voting for Republicans as an extension of fighting in the war. The GAR publication *Great Republic* wrote: "Another victory at the ballot box .. as decisive and more emphatic than that won on the tented field must be achieved in '68." The veterans' newspaper *Soldiers' Friend* wrote: "you may ratify by your ballots the principles which you have manifested by your bullets." And the official campaign song of the Boys in Blue included the refrain:

> We will vote as we battled in many a fight For God and the Union, for Freedom and Right Let our ballots secure what our bullets have won Grant and Colfax will see that the work is well done

> We whipped them before, we can whip them again We'll wipe treason out as we wiped slavery's stain; For traitors and slaves we've no place in our land as true, loyal men to our colors we stand.

These appeals clearly link voting for Republicans and Radical Reconstruction to fending off efforts by the recent enemy to undo the aims of the war shared by veterans.

And many veterans appear to have agreed that the resurgence of the South was an existential threat. Between the 1866 and 1868 elections, tensions escalated between Andrew

Johnson and the Republican Congress and reached a crisis when Johnson attempted to remove Stanton (an ally of Radicals) as Secretary of War. The crisis started when Johnson first ordered Stanton to be removed, and then when Stanton refused, attempted to have him forcibly removed from his office. General John Logan, then a high ranking officer within the GAR and Republican member of the House, organized local GAR cadres to provide armed protection to Stanton and Congressional Republicans (Dearing 1952).[15]

In the days to come, Congressional Republicans and national GAR leaders received numerous letters from state GAR leader and Governors of several states[16] promising the mobilization of thousands of men to back what would effectively be a coup against Johnson (though they framed this as fending off impending counter-revolution). While the numbers of men promised in these letters may have been exaggerated, they do suggest that local leaders believed veterans were active supporters of Radical Reconstruction. Governor Fairchild of Wisconsin was more specific when he wrote to Logan stating that his office was overrun with veterans looking for some way to take a stand on this issue. GAR posts throughout Illinois wired their commander indicating their readiness to mobilize (Dearing 1952).

Ultimately, none of this violent mobilization came to pass, as Congress effectively sidelined Johnson until the end of his term (Downs 2015). However, it would be naive to think that state Governors and GAR leaders were simply being hyperbolic. At the time of their writing, Federal troops continued to occupy Southern states, and were fighting, in some places, a violent insurgency that targeted both Federal troops and freed people.[17] At the very least, it appears that veterans, veterans' organizations, and their leaders appeared willing to engage in violence to secure Radical Reconstruction.

Finally, once Republicans came to embrace suffrage and its enforcement, they argued

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[15]Logan wrote to Chipman (head of the GAR in Washington, DC): "I hope you will quietly and secretly organize all our boys so that they can assemble at a signal that you may agree upon to report ... ready to protect the Congress ... This must be done quietly." They placed men with arms and ammunition in position around the Capitol to keep watch.

[16]Wisconsin, Missouri, Illinois, Iowa, Pennsylvania, and New York.

[17]And during the fighting in Kansas that presaged the Civil War, the Governor of Iowa permitted federal arms depots to be looted to arm anti-slavery militias and well known militia-leaders to escape capture (Dykstra 1993).

that it was necessary to ensure a permanent victory. Without the rights of citizenship and suffrage, African Americans would be unable to secure their freedom from slavery. And without African American voters in the South, Republicans would be unable to prevent the resurgence of Southern Democrats that would seek to undo the victory the Union had won in the war (Wang 1997; Dykstra 1993; Field 1982). These same concerns also drove veterans into backing Republicans during elections. And given the history of Redemption and the emergence of the Jim Crow South and weakening federal enforcement, these fears were well placed.

Conclusion

How was it possible for legislators accountable to a racially conservative electorate come to produce the revolutionary legislative agenda of Radical Reconstruction that emancipated, extended civil and political rights to, and protected African Americans? I've argued that Congressional Republicans were able to back this agenda due in large part due to Union veterans. Veterans had, in the course of the war, acquired strong reasons to back the Reconstruction agenda and also formed a large share of the Northern Electorate.

This is, of course, only part of the story. Once these laws were passed, how were they enforced? Where were African Americans able to enjoy the rights promised to them, and how? The translation of these *de jure* protections into reality in the South was a fraught and difficult enterprise. While this is a different story, it seems both occupying troops and African American veterans in the South may have played an important role in actualizing the rights promised by Northern Republicans (Hahn 2003; Downs 2015).

Additionally, what happened to this coalition of veterans? In the coming decades, Northerners' commitment to protecting African American rights eroded, and Blight (2001) suggests that a thorough capitulation to the "Lost Cause" took hold. While the reasons for this are numerous, what was the role of veterans? On one hand, Northern veterans participated in

"Blue and Gray" reunions and the GAR paid little attention to the emerging institutions of Jim Crow and the spread of lynching—despite warnings and pleas from black GAR posts in the South (McConnell 1992; Gannon 2011). But on the other, the GAR continued to insist on spreading and defending its understanding of the war as one of achieving Union and Liberty—what Gannon calls "the Won Cause." Even if veterans were no longer a political force that meaningfully allied with African Americans, they were a bulwark against ascendant Confederates in the battle over America's cultural memory.

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Table 1: Effects of Enlistment on Republican Voteshare—Difference in Difference

|	*Dependent variable:*		
	Republican Voteshare		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Enlist % X Post-war	0.336***	0.274***	0.248***
	(0.095)	(0.059)	(0.052)
GOP no content	included	dropped	dummy
Observations	8,580	8,006	8,580

Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Data from Congressional and Presidential elections across 390 counties. Standard errors clustered by county and election year. All models include state-election fixed effects.

Table 2: Effects of Enlistment on Support for Suffrage (Iowa)

|	Suffrage 1868 Voteshare (%)	Δ Suffrage Voteshare
	(1)	(2)
Suffrage 1857 (%)	0.674***	
	(0.109)	
Veterans (%)	0.242	0.303*
	(0.138)	(0.141)
Constant	0.401***	0.342***
	(0.047)	(0.045)
Lagged DV	yes	no
Differenced	no	yes
N	80	80

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

Figure 1: Effect of veterans on Republican Vote-share in federal elections for each year between 1854 and 1920
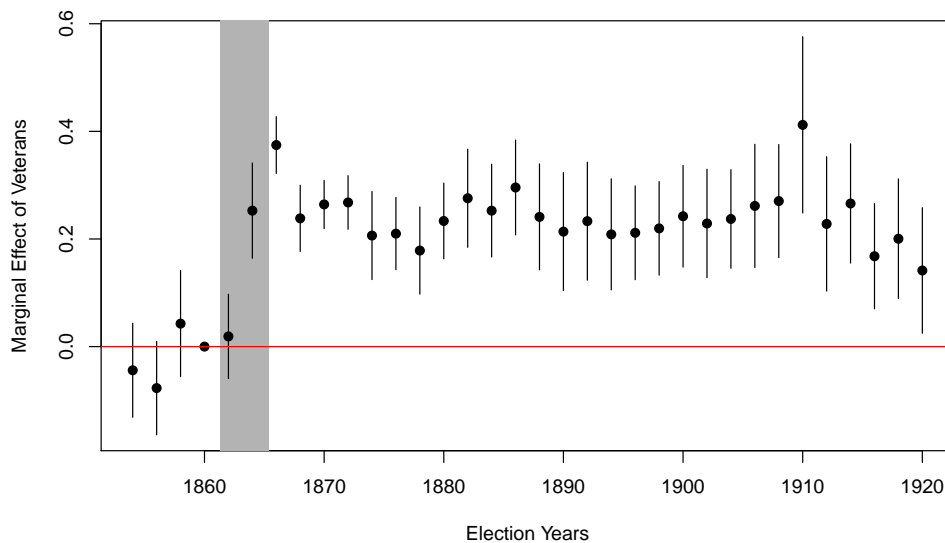
This figure plots the year-specific effect of veterans on Republican vote-share for each Presidential and Congressional election with 1860 as the reference year. The model includes county and state-election fixed effects. Bars indicate 95 percent confidence intervals. Standard errors are clustered by county and year.

Figure 2: Effect of veterans on Republican Vote-share in federal elections for each year between 1854 and 1920 (IPW)
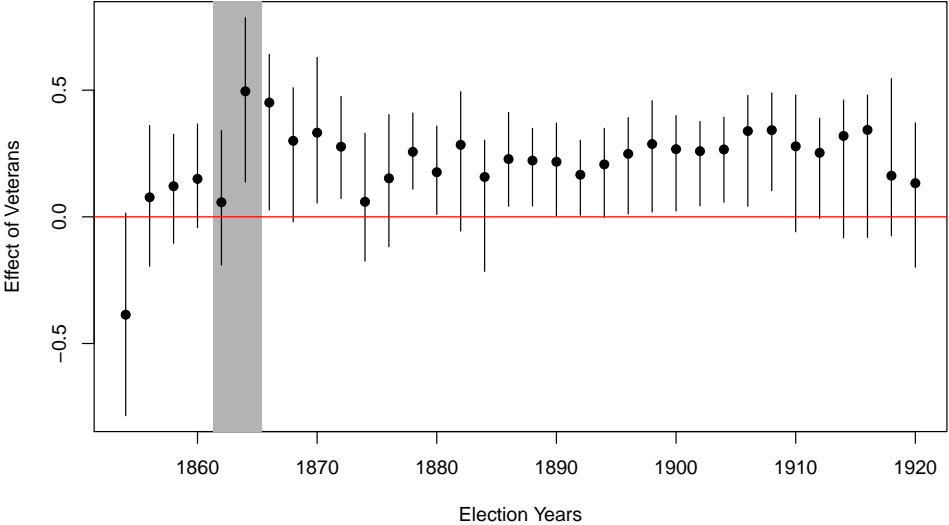
This figure plots the effect of veterans on Republican vote-share for each Congressional election using IPW to balance on pre-war election outcomes. Bars indicate 95 percent confidence intervals.