

***“Those About To Die Salute You”:
Sacrifice, The War In Iraq And The Crisis Of The American Imperial
Society.***

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“Now, if these men do not die well, it will be a black matter for the king that led them to it.”

- William Shakespeare, Henry V, Act IV, Scene 1.

Introduction:

In October of 2007, an American soldier returning from the War in Iraq denounced “the disparity between the lives of the few who are fighting and being killed, and the many who have been asked for nothing more than to continue shopping.¹” “The city parties on” he wrote in the *New York Times*, “America has changed the channel.”

This chapter attempts to evaluate how the impact of the War in Iraq has been felt by Americans far beyond the battlefield, opening old scars on memory, challenging collective identity narratives and widening the fissures across American society. I explore these questions by looking at the debate taking place over the meaning and legitimacy of American *military sacrifice* in three major American newspapers and two magazines, from September 11 2001, to the beginning of March 2008. These are the *New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today*, *Newsweek* and *The Nation*.

I reject an analysis that reduces this debate exclusively to the logic of competition *within* the journalistic field. Though such an analysis is part of the equation², I argue instead that the concept of “imperial society” (Charle 2001, 2004, 2005) provides the necessary frame to understand not only the general struggles and power relations between dominant and dominated groups, but also the collective identity constructs within

¹ NYT Oct. 20, 2007.

² Such a narrow study lay outside of the general *problématique* of this book.

American society, and the symbolic aims pursued by the United States' foreign policy. I argue that recurrent crises of the imperial society model have structured the debate on the War in Iraq and the distribution of political arguments available to supporters and opponents of the conflict. In the first section, I begin by outlining the concept of "imperial society" and key elements of the cultural sociology of Pierre Bourdieu (1979 and 1994). I argue that the American imperial society first acts as an empire in an *external* sense by engaging in a contest for symbolic preeminence against other societies in the field of global politics, and second, in a domestic or *internal* sense, by ruling over minority groups who are cast to the margins of citizenship.

The second section outlines the *political and symbolic economies of citizenship and military sacrifice* in the United States. These concepts help us explore four questions. First, who fights and who dies in American wars? Second, on what grounds is the distribution of military sacrifice within society rationalized? Third, what dilemmas does this reflect or create for American society? Fourth, how have they changed since the Second World War? I argue that the objectives of America's symbolic competition against the Nazi and Soviet imperial societies came into full conflict with its exclusive regime of republican citizenship and provoked a *crisis* of the American imperial model of society. This crisis catalyzed the ascendancy of a neo-liberal political economy of military sacrifice in the United States that took its definite shape in the all-volunteer army after 1973. I also provide an account of how military recruitment policies after this period can account for why race has been almost invisible in the debate over military sacrifice in Iraq.

The third section is broken down into two further parts. The first attempts to sketch out how America's identity as an imperial society and its quest for symbolic preeminence intimately structure the debates over the legitimacy of American sacrifice in Iraq. The second further explores how lingering tensions between republican and liberal conceptions of citizenship continue to set the tone of the debate over the distribution of sacrifice in Iraq and thus mirror more profound social and symbolic fissures within the United States. In conclusion, I ask whether the newspaper debate over the war in Iraq points to a new or continued crisis of the American imperial model of society.

2. The American imperial society and the imperial regime of citizenship.

Imperial competition

This study builds on historian Christophe Charle's (2001, also 2004 and 2005) model of the "imperial society" adapted from his comparative social and cultural history of the French, German, and British empires of the early 20th century. Unlike traditional empires (Russia, Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire), imperial societies claim a monopoly on symbolic capital in world affairs in the name of "manifest destiny" (Charle 2005). Contrary to "ordinary nations" the imperial society claims "to be a universal cultural model with the vocation to draw into its orbit less autonomous nations and peoples" (Charle 2005: 125, author's translation). For the United States, this involves posturing America as a reluctant giant commissioned by History to defend freedom across the globe (Aron 1973; Kaspi 1986; Stephanson 1995; Pieterse 2004; Kaplan 2004 and 2003 on the "cultural aspects of US imperialism and exceptionalism). So, in addition to the other objectives of its foreign policy, the imperial society is also fiercely engaged

with other societies in a contest for symbolic preeminence. This is what I understand hereafter by the imperial society's *external* logic of domination.

Like Christophe Charle's own scholarship, this study draws extensively on Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of social space (*espace social*), field (*champ*) and *habitus*. The *social space* draws out a "map" upon which the position of all social actors can be represented in relation to one another, thus enabling us to draw a portrait of the relations between dominant and dominated groups in the most general sense (Bourdieu 1979: 189, author's translation). The "global volume of capital" or wealth individuals, social classes, class fractions and groups possess, as well as their relative shares of more specific cultural, social, political and symbolic "assets," determine their positions in social space (Bourdieu 1979: 128, author's translation). The *field* represents narrower relations of dominance within more specific terrains of struggle upon which social actors, groups, classes and class fractions act and compete to augment or reproduce shares of influence or capital specific to the field in question (Bourdieu 1979 and 1994). Though fields are as diverse as the facets of social and professional life itself (such as the journalistic field), this study is mainly interested in the *political field*, the *field of citizenship*, the *field of memory*, and the *field of power*, and their corollaries in *global social space* (an international version of the first concept).

Symbolic capital approximates legitimacy or notoriety; however, like paper money it only holds weight if the value is accredited by others (Bourdieu 1994). The state, other powerful entities, and dominant class fractions holding vast shares of symbolic capital predominate in the field of power³ (Bourdieu 1994). Symbolic capital

³. Central banks hold the power to determine interest rates (when lending to other banks, for instance), increase or decrease liquidity and thus exert control over the global volume of economic capital across

naturalizes the exercise of power, by attesting to the fact that those who wield it possess the socially sanctioned competences required to rule. (Bourdieu 1979: 286).

Lastly, *Habitus* defines an individual our group's vantage point on social space, the diverse fields of struggles within it and the strategies they employ to meet the challenges of their unique position (Bourdieu 1979 and 1994). *Habitus* thus also accounts for the consistency of habit, tastes, fashion sense, mind frames, social goals and strategies found among peoples of similar backgrounds. Importantly, *habitus*, like identity, is constituted through *differentiation* with other classes of *habitus*. As such, *habitus* is not an *objective* view on the field; it is always a *point of view* emanating from somewhere on the field, surveying its surroundings. It is thus only a partial representation of social space and the struggles within it, and as a creature of *habit*, it may become out of touch or maladapted to the changing realities of the social landscape (Bourdieu 1979).

“*National habitus*⁴”, on the other hand, designates a “unity of lifestyle”⁵ proper to citizens or members of a common nation-state. This means at once the shared ideals of a society such as faith in “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness,” and the relatively similar vantage point it gives them on the world, or global social space. Far from a conceptual attempt to reify or naturalize national divides, national *habitus* tries to account for their social construction. At the same time, it explains the creation of stereotypes on other cultures more distant in *habitus*, as backwards, savage or uncivilized for instance.

[National habitus] is the product of the progressive insertion of every individual, family, peasant or urban community, or of every group in a network of external reference points defined by the elites and institutions (educational, administrative, religious, professional, etc.) that channels their common lines of

social space (and available to individuals). States also generally recognize the value of university diplomas or professional accreditations, and structures social norms through courts and education systems (Bourdieu 1994).

⁴. This concept is Christophe Charle's, 2001, not Bourdieu's.

⁵. The quoted definition is Bourdieu's (1994: 22), but relates to the 'domestic' class of *habitus*.

reaction in certain circumstances where survival outweighs daily processes of adaptation and short-term strategies” (Charle 2001: 203-204, author’s translation).

National habitus also designates how dominant elites translate their unique vantage point on global social space and the relevant resources in symbolic, economic, military, human, scientific and cultural capital upon which their society can count into foreign policy when they compete in the global fields of power, culture, economics and so on. By definition, imperial societies are preeminent in all or most of these fields⁶ and hold sway over global affairs and institutions. However, because, all imperial societies claim large amounts of capital in most fields (or a more efficient, humane, just, righteous or rational mode of organizing their respective fields and hierarchies) they find each other in direct competition for symbolic capital (Charle 2001, 2005). This imperial competition reflects the projection of each imperial society’s national habitus into the global realm in the form of a “civilizing duty” mentioned at the outset of this section (Charle 2001: 18, author’s translation). The US’ “humanitarian mission” (Charle 2005: 126, author’s translation), for instance, implies the express or even unexpressed intention of imprinting the social structures of the imperial metropole onto ‘foreign’ societies.⁷ Western managerial culture and practices, capitalist democracy, free trade, “market civilization” and individualism (Gill 2003), neo-classical economics, rational choice theory (Gill 1986), governance and transparency (Best 2003), accounting methods (De Goede 2003), actuarial ‘science’ and risk management (Amoore and De Goede 2005) but also the symbolic preeminence of their university programs and diplomas which shape the minds

⁶. “Similar enough in population size and economic strength, [France, Germany and Great-Britain] all rank among the four or five richest nations in the world [between 1900 and 1940. They] dominate the European diplomatic scene, before and after 1914, and have formed the epicentre of Western cultural innovation at least since the 17th century (Charle, 2001: 16-17, author’s translation).”

⁷. Here I draw more or less explicitly on Johann Galtung’s (1976) conception of “social imperialism.”

of ‘future leaders’ and ensure the necessary transfer of culture from metropole to periphery (Charle 2005).

The imperial society thus at once engages in economic, cultural, social, institutional, political, environmental and sometimes territorial imperialism over global social space. Though rarely taken seriously by international relations scholars, symbolic competition ultimately translates the fact that the imperial societies expressly seek or believe peoples all over the world should emulate their domestic structures. Perhaps more fundamentally, symbolic competition is also a contest for the hearts and minds of the American people themselves. A state that enables its symbolic resources to deplete to critically low levels risks the possibility of losing legitimacy in the eyes of its own citizens.

The regime of imperial citizenship.

The *imperial society* concept is not meant only to highlight the specific dynamics and interactions of the United States within the field of global politics. The ‘traditional’ logic of imperial power sketched out above is also doubled by an inward or internal logic of domination I call the *imperial regime of citizenship*. Traditionally, the debate around ‘empire’ in international relations theory has revolved around a narrow ‘territorial’ definition, as the annexation of *foreign* lands or peoples⁸. Rather, in the vein of scholars such as Raymond Aron (1973), David Campbell (1998) and Amy Kaplan (2004; 2003), I understand that the terms “foreign” and “outside” are not simply delineated by territory and geography. The “foreign” draws our attention to the cultural and political borders of

⁸. See Hardt and Negri 2004 and 2000; Tonnesson 2004; Pieterse 2004; Cox 2005; Mann 2005; Stokes 2005 for a sampler of contemporary viewpoints on the ‘empire’ debate in International Relations.

citizenship perhaps even more than it does the juridical and territorial borders of states.⁹ According to these theoretical traditions, the United States qualifies as an ‘empire’ *before we even begin* to look at its ‘foreign relations’ or its global politics.

The *imperial* form of society uniquely structures the fields, classes of habitus and struggles taking place within its shifting borders, especially in the field of citizenship. Nowhere is this more evident than in the global distribution of political, economic, cultural and symbolic capital across racial and class hierarchies in the United States, which, from a very early point, has assured Americans of European descent the position of dominance over other racial groups. These legacies of the imperial past leave profound scars on American identity, memory and politics today, especially in deeply polemical debates over the best means to integrate the minorities within American society, or in the denial that there remains a problem to be addressed.¹⁰ Even after having received *equal status* under the *law*, these second class citizens remain in dominated positions in most fields (see CPAEIR 1998).

In the following sections, I analyze the ascendancy of a neo-liberal economy of citizenship over republicanism in America (see Sandel 1998). Though not mutually exclusive, these concepts will help us frame the debates over military sacrifice which have taken place since World War II by identify how regimes of citizenship define specific political subjects, and their corollary sets of rights, obligations, duties and sketch out specific political and symbolic economies of military sacrifice.

⁹. Amy Kaplan (2004: 8) makes this point very well. The post-911 nationalist narrative of the “homeland” evokes nativist tropes in American culture: a differentiation between real Americans of European ancestry, and others who simply inhabit the territory.

¹⁰. This New York Times article showcases the fears of Civil Rights leaders that the Obama candidacy may obfuscate remaining racial inequalities in American life (NYT, Aug 25, 2008). <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/25/us/politics/25race.html>

3. Republican and liberal economies of sacrifice and the crisis of the imperial society.

The foundations and collapse of the republican economy of sacrifice.

Military sacrifice constitutes one of the fundamental political obligations,¹¹ but also one of the privileges,¹² of membership in the republican¹³ community (Moskos 2005; Krebs 2006). The citizen-soldier devotes his life to the state because its fundamental law, or constitution, and the principles on which they are founded help him to lead a life of virtue (see Strauss 1989). In the United States, this means “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” However, because Republics are founded on the civic virtue and participation of the citizens in the common government, historically, they have routinely excluded slaves, women, racial minorities, paupers, immigrants and others from equal standing in the community¹⁴, because they were deemed “by nature or condition or conviction, incapable of the virtues good citizenship requires” (Sandel 1998: 318). Similar justifications were given to exclude African Americans from fully participating in the army, especially in peacetime, or to organize them into segregated units (Krebs 2006). Feminists also point out that the citizen-soldier tradition has profound cultural ramifications for the establishment of gender roles in the United States, notably by

¹¹. The Militia Act of 1792 “fixed the principle of a universal military obligation in the statutory law of the new government, requiring the service of every able-bodied, white, male citizen, between the ages of eighteen and forty five, in his state’s militia” (Snyder 2003: 187).

¹². Inversely, however, if military service constitutes a civic obligation, it is often tied to benefits enjoyed in the community and often economic advantages, such as the GI Bill in the U.S (Kaspi 1986).

¹³. See Pocock 1975; Strauss 1989; Arendt 1998; Skinner 1998 for fundamental works on the republican tradition; Hartz 1955; Rawls 1999 and Hayek 2002 for important works in the liberal tradition. See Smith 1997 and Gibson 2007 on works favouring a ‘mixed’ tradition. See Moskos 2005, 2000, 1997; Krebs 2006; Snyder 2003; Feinman 2000 and Titunik 2000 for works of different political traditions on armed service and citizenship.

¹⁴. See Sandel 1998; Smith 1997; Kerber 1997; Krebs 2006; Feinman 2000, Snyder 2003 for a fairly detailed list of these exclusions.

excluding women from combat. In 1968, the U.S. District Court, Southern District of New York in *U.S. v. St. Clair* upheld the constitutionality of the sexual division of labor, stating that “*Congress followed the teachings of history that if a nation is to survive, men must provide the first line of defense while women keep the home fires burning*” (cited in Feinman 2000: 135, italics in text). In the end, the relationship between military service and republicanism is thus based on the universal requirement of service for members of the polity, excluding those whom it casts on the margins of the political body.¹⁵

Crises of the American imperial society and the rise of neo-liberalism.

African American segregation in the armed forces ultimately collapsed as America faced war in Korea (Segal & Segal 1994). From the 1930s on, the common story goes, the rise of liberalism provided the symbolic grounds on which African Americans could voice a counter-discourse against the exclusionary regime of republican citizenship (i.e Krebs 2006 or Sandel 1998). In 1943, the US Supreme Court ruled that American citizens could no longer be forced to salute the star spangled banner. According to political theorist Michael Sandel (1998), this marked the decisive ascendancy of liberalism over American public life. Citizens had *rights* and *choices*, not only *duties* (see Krebs 2006). Significantly, Ronald Krebs (2006) argues that the Black community

¹⁵. See Snyder 2003, Titunik 2000 and Feinman 2000 on the struggles of Women and gays to integrate the army and the ties between military service, gender roles and military service.

The 1948 Integration Act granted women the right to serve as permanent members of the armed forces. The Act, however, fixed their participation at 2 % of all service members. US policymakers only lifted this cap in 1967. Since 1993, policy measures continue to exclude women from “those positions that involved with direct ground combat and in small amphibious vessels” (Titunik 2000: 243). After decades of witch hunts, President Clinton approved the controversial “Don’t ask. Don’t tell” policy in 1993 which was supposed to represent a compromise

See also Linda Kerber 1997 on the evolution of citizenship requirements in US with their specific forms of exclusion linked to class, race and gender.

See Krebs 2006, pp. 167-171, for a short but effective summary of the challenges and struggles of Japanese Americans to obtain full citizenship rights.

appealed to universal human *rights* to obtain equal opportunity in military service¹⁶. Republicanism would have rather suggested that they claim citizenship by alluding to their show of patriotism and sacrifice in the Second World War; in short, because they had fulfilled their *duty* (Krebs 2006). That strategy had failed decisively after the First World War, a fact that may effectively have favored the ascendancy of more radical Black leaders such as Marcus Garvey in the Interwar period (Krebs 2006). That African Americans now claimed citizenship based on rights rather than on having fulfilled their civic duties for the community marked a decisive break with the traditional framing of citizenship and sacrifice in the US.

Literature on citizenship and political economy evokes the rise of liberalism alternatively as a “public philosophy” (Sandel 1998) or rhetorical frame (Krebs 2006), or alludes to the arrival of “late capitalism” (Feinman 2000), or “disciplinary neo-liberalism” (Gill 2003) to account for underlying institutional changes in the US in the second half of the 20th century. Rather I argue that crises of the American imperial model of society can account for the emergence of a neo-liberal political economy of sacrifice and citizenship in the Postwar era, both as an intellectual development and as a framework for organizing social life¹⁷. A conflict between the imperial society’s logic of external competition and its internal regime of citizenship *catalyzed* the change in the symbolic conventions that regulated military sacrifice. Importantly, the Civil Rights revolution coincided and was reinforced by America’s political and ideological competition: first, against the “Nazi imperial society” (Charle 2001), then, against the Soviet Union in the Cold War. Both of these rival imperial societies bore radically

¹⁶. Liberal feminists also voiced their claims for securing women roles in the military on par with men in the language of “equal rights” (Feinman 2000).

¹⁷. I am very much inspired by Michel Foucault’s understanding of “governmentality.”

different national habituses from the US, equally set on achieving global hegemony: the first, premised on institutionalized, exterminatory racism (see Kershaw 1997 on Germany); the second, on the egalitarian ideal of a classless society founded on collective property (Arendt 1972 on the USSR). Black Civil Rights activists linked their struggle in the domestic fields of politics and citizenship to the global field of political and symbolic competition where the United States clashed with the Soviet Union. African Americans and other Civil Rights activists pointed to the hypocrisy of the persistence of segregation in the South in a country that characterized itself as a beacon of freedom in the struggle against communism. “[Civil] rights activists regularly noted that racial discrimination hampered U.S. foreign policy by impeding U.S. efforts to win the hearts and minds of “colored peoples” the world over” (Krebs 2006: 159). Boxer Muhammed Ali’s famous tirade against the Vietnam War perhaps best summed up the crisis of the Cold War imperial society: “I ain’t got no quarrel with the Vietcong; no Vietcong ever called me nigger.”¹⁸ In effect, Civil Rights activists argued that an abyss separated the American national habitus and the reality of exclusion in the political landscape in the United States. This meant that the schemes through which US leaders and citizens perceived their position in the field of global politics, framed their identity and voiced their claims were dramatically maladapted to the changing exigencies of the domestic and international fields of politics, culture and citizenship. The symbolic and political battle created tremendous pressure for America to adapt its exclusionary citizenship regime. If the United States were to remain a viable model of society, their political and social system must become coherent with the ideals with which they challenged the Nazi

¹⁸. NYT April 30, 2000,
<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9507E4DC1439F933A05757C0A9669C8B63>

dystopia, and the Soviet Union's messianic ideology. In effect, this gap between ideals and reality created powerful symbolic contradictions that the rival Soviet Union also exploited. The American imperial society's inward logic of rule collided with its logic of global political competition, and Civil Rights activists were able to exploit this crisis and push for the liberalization of America's republican regime of imperial citizenship¹⁹.

In Europe, as well as in America²⁰, inter-imperial competition also significantly shaped the outlines of the Cold War intellectual and cultural fields. Intellectuals of the Mont Pelerin Society²¹ and later the Chicago School amassed intellectual and political capital by advancing theories that explicitly linked freedom to economic deregulation (see Foucault 2004). Postwar Ordoliberal²² and neo-liberal thought explicitly defined themselves *against* those aberrant regimes they named "totalitarian" (Foucault 2004). Friedrich Hayek (2002), for one, wrote that both Soviet and Nazi totalitarianism shared common roots in socialism and the planned war economies. As Foucault (2004) explains, these postwar theorists believed that states followed an internal drive to expand until they would swallow "civil society" as a whole. The welfare state would grow into a totalitarian cancer. Thus only a thin red line separated « social security » from the « concentration camps » (Foucault 2004: 193). So at the heart of postwar liberalism lay a fundamental *critique* of the *rival* imperial society's national habitus.

¹⁹. However, inter-imperial competition with the Soviet Union also perverted the efforts of Blacks' and other Civil Rights activists at provoking societal change in the U.S. Too radical a program of reform, change or revolution opened the way for their opponents to charge them with subversion, anti-Americanism, and label them as Communists (Krebs 2006).

²⁰. The literature which looks at the 'shift' to neo-liberalism as a global phenomenon from the 1970s on is extremely vast: see Cox 1990; Gill 1986, 1989; Helleiner 1995; Ruggie 1982; Keohane and Nye 1989 for a sampler of points of view across the spectrum.

²¹. See *The Mont Pelerin Society*, <http://www.montpelerin.org/home.cfm>, retrieved Oct. 22, 2008.

²². *ORDO* is the name of the German journal in which the doctrinal components of German "neo-liberal governmentality" (Foucault 2004: 191-220) were sketched out.

Michel Foucault argues that the American neo-liberal theorists of the Chicago school dramatically extended the use of the economic analogy of supply and demand to social issues which had hitherto been left outside of the realm of commoditization (Foucault 2004; Lemke 2001). Neoclassical economics argued governments and markets fundamentally clashed and called for a striking reduction of what it termed arbitrary state influence in society (i.e. Willes 1981). Neo-liberalism increasingly encouraged individuals to envisage their own life choices in entrepreneurial terms, as “costs and benefits” analysis (Lemke 2001: 201). This also meant that their shoulders alone would bear the weight of these decisions (Lemke 2001).

As a global vision of how society should operate,²³ neo-liberalism had dramatic implications for the symbolic ordering of the relationship between citizens, states and their respective rights and obligations to each other. Not least of all, the symbolic grounds on which military sacrifice would now be distributed among the political body and how it must be legitimated. Conscription was abolished in 1973, and the all-volunteer army replaced the ‘citizen’ army of old. From this moment on, military service became a career choice. The US armed forces would compete with other economic actors, businesses and firms to secure the labor force needed to fill its ranks (Moskos 2005 and 2000). Military sacrifice was no longer a compulsory, patriotic duty. The soldier became an entrepreneur and sold his labor force on the open market like other workers. In this liberal sense, the distribution of sacrifice in American society must simply reflect the *supply and demand* for sacrifice and will conform to the specialization of labor inherent in any capitalist society.

²³. I think explicitly of Foucault’s “governmentality,” see Foucault 2004.

Vietnam and the all-volunteer force.

The liberalization of the regime of military sacrifice posed new and unforeseen problems for African Americans and for the regime of imperial citizenship. It is well known that civilian leaders during the Vietnam War reorganized the selective service pool around a liberal economy of sacrifice that disproportionately targeted the lower classes and thus African Americans (Lewis 2007; Segal & Segal 2004; Baskir & Strauss 1978). Remember that the republican political economy of sacrifice had led to Blacks being largely *underrepresented* when not altogether excluded from the US army. But liberalization of the political economies of sacrifice and citizenship now meant that the draft would target soldiers by *socioeconomic* rather than *racial* characteristics (at least explicitly). This now led to African Americans being *overrepresented* in the Vietnam era army insofar as lower socioeconomic status and poverty followed strong racial lines (Segal and Segal 2004; also Gifford 2005 for a more general sociology of this relationship). In 1965 and 1966, Blacks were disproportionately killed in Vietnam, at a ratio of two to one compared to the numbers which could be mobilized (Gifford 2005: 204). Popular outcry was dramatic. The Pentagon reacted swiftly to curb the racialization of military sacrifice by relegating Blacks into positions where they would not be as vulnerable to enemy fire. This policy had the effect of cutting African American casualties down to “about 12 percent,” a proportion that better reflected “their share of the total U.S. population” (Segal & Segal 2004 : 19).²⁴

²⁴. Charles Moskos and John Sibley Butler (1997) deny the charge that Blacks were disproportionately killed in Vietnam or *significantly so* in any American war since the end of the conflict in Indochina. However, their analysis does not account for racial casualty variations across the duration of the war as do Gifford, and Segal and Segal.

Yet the institution of the all-volunteer force in 1973 has reinforced many of the inequalities of racial and socioeconomic status it was to correct (Moskos 2005; Feinman 2000).²⁵ First, the horizon of possibilities and thus the specific habituses of dominant and dominated groups in American society largely determined whether they would consider service in the armed forces²⁶. Most affluent citizens could avoid military service. For one, neither political obligation nor legal requirement constrained them to fight (Moskos 2005). And their respective pools of cultural, economic and social capital opened a wider horizon of life choices and professional strategies than dominated groups who could not count on the same assets. As African Americans continued to face racial discrimination and bleak job prospects in civilian life, they enlisted in the all-volunteer army in disproportionately high numbers because their comparative real-life work and educational opportunities seemed much lower (Segal & Verdugo 1994; Segal & Segal 2004; Gifford 2005). Fearing a new round of popular outcry, between 1980 and 1990, the Pentagon “*deliberately*” adopted recruitment policies that turned African Americans away from combat units and placed them into support roles (Segal & Segal 2004, 21-22). As a consequence, “the concentration of black soldiers in both [the 82nd and 101st airborne] divisions, and in their constituent combat elements, dropped dramatically during this period. This pattern was repeated throughout the army” (Segal & Verdugo 1994: 628).

²⁵. Also the dramatic fall over the decades following the Vietnam War in members of the House of Representatives who are veterans would tend to reinforce this hypothesis (see Morgan 2001 : 6).

²⁶. As Segal and Segal (2004 : 23) explain: “Hispanics are more likely than blacks to be in combat specialties, and less likely than blacks to be in administrative or supply occupations ... Hispanic officers in the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps are more likely than either white or black officers to be at the lowest officer grades.” Also see Gifford 2005.

These affirmative action policies on military sacrifice account for much lower African American casualties in the Post-Vietnam army, and in Iraq²⁷ specifically, than their weight in active forces would suggest. They equally account for why the American media has been largely silent on the sacrifice of racial minorities in the Iraq War. Though they make up just under 13% of the civilian work force over 17 years old, African Americans represent 20% of active duty forces (Gifford 2005). However, as I wrote earlier, the conjunction of Pentagon policies and the specific habituses of African Americans have led them into support positions in the military branches, and can account for the gap between Black representation in the armed forces and their lower mortality rate in Iraq.

In the next section, I examine what fissures the neo-liberal economy of citizenship has created in American society and how the war has exacerbated them. I do this by looking at the debates over *military sacrifice* taking place in America's top three national newspapers and two magazines from September 11, 2001 to March 2008.

²⁷. Military sociologist Brian Gifford (2005) finds that overall, minority groups fighting in Iraq have not significantly incurred casualties disproportionate to their weight of the population. However, he does find that Hispanic casualties increase dramatically in combat-intensive phases of the war, such as the battle of Baghdad and the siege of Fallujah in the spring of 2004. This is because Hispanics are over-represented in combat-intense arms of the army. Hispanic deaths (at 15.9 % total deaths) in particular surpass by 5 % their representation in the Army and the Marine Corps combat arms (at 10.7 %). This gap dramatically widens if we compare Hispanic mortalities to their overall proportion in the Active Duty forces, were they represent 8,6 % of all service members (Gifford 2005: 214). According to Gifford: "The casualty rate among Hispanics during the war is 49 percent higher than their representation in the ground combat forces would suggest ($p = .002$), and 85 percent higher than Hispanics on active duty ($p = .044$). As expected, Hispanic war casualties fall below their portion of the US population (though this may reflect circumstances that effectively render many young, non-English-speaking Hispanics ineligible for military service)" (Gifford 2005: 215). Hector Amaya (2007: 17-18), however, argues that Hispanics are *overrepresented* in the all-volunteer force, that is when the number of Latino soldiers is considered in proportion to the actual number of Hispanics *eligible* for service. By comparison, however, the mortality rate amongst black soldiers falls short of their weight in the army overall, itself almost double of their actual weight in the population. During less combat intensive phases of the war, more characteristic of the Occupation, all racial group suffered casualties proportionate to their weight in the overall US population and tended to balance out (Gifford 2005).

4. Newspapers and the War in Iraq:

National habitus and the symbolic economy of military sacrifice in Iraq:

On the eve of the Battle of Agincourt, Shakespeare's King Henry the Fifth exclaimed: "Now if these men do not die well, it will be a black matter for the king that led them to it." In this final section I examine what it means to *die well* for America, that is the symbolic rationales which legitimize military sacrifice, and the toll the War in Iraq has taken on them. The imperial society's national habitus²⁸, and the unique vantage point it offers on the field of global politics, defined the strategic vision, ends and means the administration pursued in invading Iraq. It also outlined the general symbolic principles which underpinned them. I am interested in the latter and argue that we must take the symbolic implications of the conflict seriously.²⁹ I follow Raymond Aron (1973: 313, author's translation) in suggesting that when analyzing the debate over the legitimacy of sacrifice in Iraq, the "physical security" of the "imperial republic" is never understood distinctly from the "creation of an environment favorable to the flourishing of national values": in short, "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."³⁰ The symbolic rationales given to defend the war effort, and thus the sacrifice asked of the soldiers and their families, are effective insofar as they *resonate* with this national habitus: a common horizon of "social reference points" with which the American people can identify, in no small part because of the "simplified social representations" diffused by the mass media (Charle 2001: 201). Just as importantly, the national habitus is reaffirmed by excluding

²⁸. This entire section builds on and attempts transpose Christophe Charle's analysis of the social dynamics of the First World War. I of course make no suggestion that the conflict in Iraq is comparable in importance or consequence.

²⁹. Discussion of the administration's 'actual motives' for invading Iraq is far beyond the scope of this work, see the two final chapters in Lewis 2007 for an excellent analysis of the Second Gulf War, and the contending strategic and tactical visions of military commanders and civilian leaders.

³⁰. See for instance WSJ Aug 20, 2004.

practices and modes of thinking which are different from its own and forgetting discrepancies in American society and history which contradict collective myths³¹. Thus beyond the mere material security of their persons, partisans of the war feel they are also fighting to defend a symbolic, cultural and material order – a way of life in other words - to which they have become habituated in the form of deeply rooted, affective and visceral “investments” (see Connolly 2005, 2002; Deleuze and Foucault 1972 on *affects*). Put short, we must first understand what the United States are fighting *for* to understand how American journalists and readers judge if the sacrifice is *worth it*.

Proponents and opponents of the War both frame their arguments in deeply principled notions of what it means *to be* American and what it is *not*. This explains why political struggles quickly spillover into the fields of identity and memory. Journalists, pundits, and readers struggle to appropriate the romantic imagery of American sacrifice in the Second World War to further their political ends (i.e. WSJ May 6, 2005). D-Day and the Pacific Theater quickly become compasses by which Americans can ascertain their performance in the Iraqi conflict. Skeptics of the invasion of Iraq regret WWII as a moral enterprise unblemished by the doubts, considerations and second-guesses over the legitimacy of later wars, including Iraq. In contrast, a perceptive supporter of the war³² contests that Americans of the ‘Greatest Generation’ could count on any more “stark moral clarity” of purpose when entering in the Second World War than the US can today in Iraq. Importantly, both of these narratives take the Second World War as a common

³¹. This point on identity and difference is now banal, see Campbell 1998.

³². Interestingly, though, he reaffirms that WWII marks the central reference point for memory as D-Day “will never be surpassed in courage” (WSJ, June 7, 2004).

“place of memory,”³³ a turning point when America decisively defeated the Nazi dystopia; in both cases, it is constructed as a set reference for ‘just wars’ to come, ones in which the ends justify the loss of American lives beyond the shadow of a doubt. The Nazi dictatorship first becomes the supreme emblem of everything that is un-American, everything that is intolerable. In this rhetorical move, the social consensus on American identity operates through the “rejection of the stereotype” (Charle 2001: 203) of the German Enemy’s collective habitus: militaristic and racist nationalism, aggressive war aims, and violation of human rights on a scale barely conceivable. Supporters of the War in Iraq transpose the categories of aggressors, victims and liberators from a consensual site of memory – the Second World War - to the present conflict in order to suggest both generations face similar moral dilemmas. Saddam Hussein is likened to Hitler and the Iraqis to the French with Americans reprising their former role (i.e. WSJ May 16, 2004). In this sense, the legitimacy of sacrifice in Iraq is evaluated based on its concordance with the American national habitus, to commonly shared notions of identity and the common places of memory which sustain them.

Writers also evoke Western gender sensibilities to demonize the enemy. For instance, a 2002 *Newsweek* article, though it falls short of explicitly supporting the American invasion of Afghanistan, paints a sordid portrait of gender relations within Islamic fundamentalism. Journalists Dickey and Kovach implicitly oppose the American national habitus of sacrifice to the rationales which underpin the sacrifice of fundamentalists. Martyrdom will bring members of Al Qaeda “72 virgins in the afterlife,” (*Newsweek*, Jan. 14, 2002). The journalists then briefly discuss the place of polygamy in

³³. I draw on the French historian Pierre Nora’s concept of the “places of memory” or *lieux de mémoire* (1984).

Muslim culture before ultimately denouncing “fundamentalist” men’s abuse of the “sister-believers” they claim to “protect” (Newsweek, Jan. 14, 2002). This imagery is sure to offend both liberal feminist and Christian conceptions of gender relations, founded respectively on human rights, monogamy, and the “supposed reverence” of Women in traditional Western conceptions of gender relations (see Feinman 2000 : 115-116 on this last point). The superiority of the American national habitus’ more civilized gender relations is thus starkly contrasted to the savage misogyny of radical Islam, conveniently forgetting the “heterosexist” (Butler 2006) tropes deeply bound in American life and “martial citizenship” (Feinman 2000).

But the writers who appeal to the innate virtues of Americans to defend the legitimacy of the War in Iraq provide the most striking examples of the national habitus as an expression of imperial societies’ “superlative superiority complex” (Charle 2001: 18, author’s translation). Americans are the ‘good guys,’ irrespective of context or the policy of their government. One *Wall Street Journal* reporter believes that like the French, one day Iraqis will fondly remember the sacrifice of American soldiers who gave their lives for their freedom. They will remember because of the “impression left by the *character* of our troops – by their nature and generosity, by their kindness. By their tradition of these things.” Rhetorically she asks: “We should ponder, some day when this is over, what it is we do to grow such men, and women, what exactly goes into the making of them”? Americans, she believes, are bred from a particular stock which *inherently* provides them with the humanitarian virtues she lauds. The torture scandals at Abu Ghraib become an exception to the rule: “The humiliation of prisoners there was news because it was American troops acting in a way that was out of the order of things,

and apart from tradition. It was weird” (WSJ, Aug. 25, 2007). The torture here appears so alien, so unthinkable to the journalist precisely because this *un-American* behavior should be expected of the enemy’s national habitus, not of American soldiers fighting and dying in the name of freedom and human rights.

The superiority complex that permeates the above article is shamelessly mirrored in another statement:

For every reason, from the humanitarian to the geopolitical to the military, Iraq is a war that America must win in the hegemonic, even colonial sense. It is a test to our civilization’s commitment to the good against the alluring notion of menace-as-power that has gripped so much of the Muslim world (WSJ, Dec. 8, 2006).³⁴

Here, the writer essentially argues that the superior ‘humanity’ of the imperial society’s form of social organization *entitles* it to intervene abroad. Thus even American imperialism, when openly advocated, is premised on humane grounds³⁵, unlike the inherent *aggression and self-interest* of other nations. The US *cannot* be on the wrong side. This is not a political question, but one of *essence*: because the fundamental law of the US constitution and the ends of its political organization are inherently desirable and universal in the potential of their application. Unsurprisingly these arguments evoke the long standing cultural tropes in American life about Manifest Destiny, messianic republicanism and providential ideology (see Stephanson 1995; Kaplan 2004).

Interestingly, supporters of the war appeal to aims far removed from the purely ‘material’ or ‘rational’ realm of existence. But far from pushing us to dismiss these

³⁴. Though this is certainly one of the most radical affirmations of the imperial society’s national habitus, at this same time I believe that it more vocally and systematically articulates the themes that underlie many of the other contributions. In this sense it is also indicative of the more mainstream rhetoric. Shelby Steele, the author of the contribution, himself believes that political correctness is undermining serious appreciation and debate over the issues.

³⁵. See the Iraqi ambassador to US’ comments on the War in Iraq (WSJ Apr 10, 2007); also WSJ May 2, 2006: “Only American victory in Iraq defeats the idea of Islamic extremism. But in today’s atmosphere of Western contrition, it is impolitic to say so.”

statements as ‘false-consciousness,’ the arguments produced in the fields of politics, journalism and memory suggest how personal the attachments of individuals and groups are to the world they know, much like faith. In short they showcase the immense force and hold the symbolic and cultural dimensions of communal life play in legitimating war and sacrifice. As Connolly explains, “[a]rgument alone seldom *suffices* to lodge or dislodge faith. Better, it is hard to see what argument alone would look like, since it is interwoven with affect and does its work in conjunction with a series of images, feelings, memories and desires that it touches” (Connolly 2005 : 46).

As Americans are fighting to defend a space of social referents as affective investments they have become especially susceptible to experiences of war that run counter to or contradict the collective identity consensus defined by the elites (such as casualties and torture scandals) or conducts and behavior, whether on the part of the government or US troops on the ground, typically associated to the Enemy’s collective habitus. Beyond Abu Ghraib, these have taken the form of the murder and rape of civilians, or other forms of ‘civilian casualties’. Significantly, opponents of the conflict argue that “Vietnam *is* the story” of Iraq (Nation Oct. 4, 2004), rather than the campaigns in Normandy, Africa and Sicily. The ‘traumatic’ burden of Vietnam on American culture and collective identity (Turner 2001) is mobilized to unsettle the historical amnesia supporters of the war have attempted to instill in the national habitus. Opponents of the war are constructing Iraq into a crisis of the American imperial society by invoking the memory of the crisis faced by the preceding generation – as a war whose aims and prosecution fundamentally clash with the national habitus.

The debates in America's major newspapers clearly show that writers and readers assess the legitimacy of sacrifice in the War in Iraq based on how it resonates with widely shared notions of American identity and common places of memory. This indicates that no study of the conflict can ignore the symbolic economy in which the war is bound and interpreted. As symbolic contradictions³⁶ multiply between the war aims and the reality of the war waged on the ground, between the initial perspective of success and the uncertain outcome of combat, these factors erode at the confidence of the civilian population in the symbolic capital held by the "elites" (Charle 2001: 206). This loss of the confidence placed in civilian and military leaders (i.e. Newsweek Jan 22, 2007 and Aug 15, 2005) further undermines the dominated groups' sense of sharing in common experiences, bonds and interests with the dominant groups, who were not asked the same sacrifices or are not equally feeling the burden of the war. Thus the unifying force of national habitus as a collective strategy begins to erode, and more local habituses or group solidarities reemerge in turn to orient political outlook and actions. This is evident in the debate over the inequality of the military sacrifice asked of citizens which also shows lingering tensions between republican and neo-liberal conceptions of citizenship.

Economies of sacrifice and social fissures.

A 2006 Christmas editorial in *USA Today* exclaimed: "In Iraq, the troops are surrounded by hardship and a frenzy of violence. Back home, the frenzy is one of excess: shoppers battling for parking spaces in malls, snapping up everything from flat-panel TVs to the latest video games" (USA Today, Dec. 22, 2006). On Memorial Day 2007, a *USA Today* editorialist added his voice to other journalists asking for civilians to share a

³⁶. Again, I build on Christophe Charle's analysis of the social dynamics of war (2001).

greater part of the burden of war: “The lives of soldiers fighting in Iraq – or headed there, or just returned – have become tapestries of sacrifice not easily fathomed by Americans preoccupied this weekend with barbecues and holiday sales (USA Today, May 25, 2007).

As active duty soldiers must resign themselves to serving multiple combat tours in Iraq, journalists, editorialists and readers argue that the conflict in Iraq has given birth to two Americas³⁷. Congressman Charles Rangel, Democrat of New York, writes that the Reserve Forces and National Guards are being mobilized to the extent that it now resembles a “backdoor draft” (NYT Dec.8, 2005; WSJ, Oct.11, 2004)³⁸. By January of 2008, the disproportionate toll that the war was exerting on small and rural American communities with little opportunity (see Bishop and O’Hare 2006) was finding its way into the pages of *USA Today*. In small towns like Lee, Maine, numbering one thousand, the loss of even one, let alone two, young men brought great distress on the locals (USA Today, Jan. 25, 2008). Interestingly, the number of Black recruits was dropping dramatically, as well as African Americans’ overall support of the War.³⁹

News writers and readers argue that American cities are comparatively spared the price of blood because they offer greater prospects for employment. They are filled with colleges and students, bankers, and children of the country’s more affluent classes, who feel little real repercussions from the war.⁴⁰ Thus the reality of the urban-rural divide of sacrifice is also one of class divisions across geographic space. The *Nation* and

³⁷. See also the WSJ Jun 3, 2004 and NYT, August 28, 2003.

³⁸. Charles Moskos (2005) argues that the extent to which Reserves and National Guardsmen are used in Iraq is unprecedented in American history.

³⁹. African american’s are reported to oppose the war not only in majorities upward of 70% but at almost double the numbers of White Americans (NYT, Oct. 26, 2005). By the late summer of 2007, the Times notes that black enlistment has dropped dramatically, from 20% “among active-duty recruits” in 2001 to 13 percent in 2006 (NYT, Aug. 22, 2007).

⁴⁰. USA Today, May 25, 2007.

Newsweek accuse “Chickenhawks”⁴¹ like Dick Cheney of asking for sacrifice though they once sang the ‘draft-dodger rag’⁴². While the war squanders America’s resources,⁴³ Bush, Cheney and the gang have given large tax cuts that profit other members of their country clubs.⁴⁴ That all Americans did not need to sacrifice then raises the question of whether the war is worth fighting at all. *New York Times* editorialist Bob Herbert drives this point home:

[Winning the war in Iraq] would require implementing a draft. It’s easy to make the case for war when the fighting will be done by other people’s children ... If most Americans are unwilling to send their children to fight in Iraq, it must mean that most Americans do not feel that winning the war is absolutely essential (NYT, May 29, 2006).

Supporters of the war also ask for the reintroduction of the draft. Of course, the draft that one “inactive” marine corporal writing a column in *Newsweek* has in mind is nothing like the

Vietnam style draft, where men like the current vice president could get five deferments ... No, I am talking about a fair and universal, World War II-style draft, with the brothers and sons of future and former presidents answering the call (and unfortunately, dying, as a Roosevelt and a Kennedy once did) on the front line (Newsweek, Sep. 10, 2007).

Some supporters of the conflict denounce opponents of the war’s unwillingness to ‘tough it out.’ The most extreme partisans of American interventionism exclaim that “affluence,” liberals, democrats and postmodernism have made America soft to the point that the general population no longer has the courage to consent to the price of blood⁴⁵.

However, the apparent bipartisan support for reintroducing the draft can lead one to draw a misleading portrait of how different actors position themselves in the field of debate over the War in Iraq. On the one hand, repeated calls for the institution of

⁴¹. The Nation, June 7, 2004; see also Letters to the Editor in the WSJ May 5, 2007 for a similar argument.

⁴². The title of a song by American folk-singer Phil Ochs.

⁴³. NYT, July 6, 2007; Jun. 17, 2002;

⁴⁴. NYT, Mar. 9, 2007; Sep.9, 2003.

⁴⁵. WSJ, Dec. 8, 2006 and May 2, 2006; USA Today Jan. 29, 2007.

conscription enable opponents of the conflict to sap support for the war by threatening the serenity of Americans who live in a “golden bubble” (The Nation, June 7, 2004), all the while appealing to patriotic themes. But on the other hand, some supporters of the war, as we have seen, call for conscription because they envisage it as the only ‘real’ strategy for America to win. For this reason, *The Nation* exclaims that calling for the draft in order to generate opposition to the war amounts to playing with fire (The Nation, June 7, 2004).

At the other end of the spectrum, supporters of the war in the *Wall Street Journal* defend a “voluntary” conception of sacrifice in line with a liberal ethic of individual action.⁴⁶

It seems there are some in the crowd who bemoan loudly that Americans are not sacrificing equitably in this war effort. My understanding of the concept of “sacrifice” implies a voluntary giving of oneself ... Perhaps the administration can provide a list of worthy organizations and some inspiring words of encouragement to Americans to give a sacrificial monetary gift to show their support (WSJ, May 21, 2007).

Beyond monetary donations and involvement in the “war of ideas,” *The Wall Street Journal* notes the involvement of NGO’s such as “the “Semper Fi fund, the Archdiocese (Catholic) of the military and the more well known USO[. They] are just a few of many privately funded groups helping the military serve the health, spiritual and entertainment needs of our soldiers and their families.” (WSJ, May 21, 2007). An earlier article recounts a multitude of similar individual initiatives, ordinary citizens and business leaders who have spearheaded the construction of a military hospital like the Center for the Intrepid, adjacent the Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas. The Center was built with 50 million dollars donated by some 600 000 Americans, and now provides leading-edge rehabilitation treatment and care for mutilated soldiers. An

⁴⁶. NYT, Dec. 26, 2004; Feb. 16, 2003; Jun. 17, 2002.

additional 8.3 million dollars in donations saw the completion of the Fisher House residences. These homes now accommodate the families of wounded service members convalescing at the Brooke Center. Articles laud other individuals who have opted in establishing programs and networks providing sports, recreation and emotional support for soldiers and their families (WSJ, Feb 10, 2007).

The point here is that articles in the *Journal*, *USA Today* and *Newsweek* stress the *individual choices* made by service members to enrol in the armed forces⁴⁷ and the advantages of a combat force composed of loyal, professional soldiers. So debate over the war spills over into or rather exposes the larger struggles taking place across the fields of social classes, culture and citizenship. Likewise, the continuation of the debate between republican and liberal conceptions of citizenship illustrates how the prolongation of the war and debate over its merits erodes the unifying force of the national habitus. Nowhere is this more evident than in debates over the politicization of grief - that is debates over the merits of the soldiers' sacrifice, and thus whether one can 'support the troops' all the while opposing the war?

During the Vietnam War, Americans were very conscious of the inequalities inherent in the selective service pool, and they made powerful arguments against the war (Baskir & Strauss 1978). But in a liberal economy of sacrifice, the disproportionate sacrifice of any segment of society cannot as easily be construed into a pattern of programmed discrimination. This is true insofar as service in the armed forces is now *voluntary* rather than *compulsory*. For grieving parents and relatives of dead service members the question has profound ramifications on how they are to make sense of their loss. Some combat veterans of Iraq and members of their families resent being construed

⁴⁷. See for instance New York Times, Aug. 28, 2005 ; Newsweek, Aug. 15, 2005.

as “victims” of an unjust system. They reaffirm their commitments as “*volunteer*” *soldiers*, “privileged to serve,” dedicated to carrying out the “just cause” (USA Today, letters, Jan. 29, 2007).⁴⁸ Many families who have lost loved ones in Iraq feel they would *betray* the memory of their sons or daughters if they were to condemn the war: “How do you decry that which someone has chosen to do with his life? How does a mother dishonor the sacrifice of her own son”? (WSJ Aug. 18, 2005).⁴⁹ A school guidance counsellor from a small town that has lost two young men to the carnage in Iraq believes discussion over the legitimacy of the war is difficult “because [the] families [of fallen soldiers] want them to be heroes” (USA Today, Jan. 25, 2008). Or as *The Nation* puts it more bluntly: “People naturally are reluctant to conclude that their country did the wrong thing, that young people died for a pointless cause” (Nation, Oct. 4, 2004). Thus under neo-liberalism, criticizing the war can be more easily construed into an argument against the soldiers *personally* when military service is a *choice* rather than a compulsory *duty*. And making this equation is what many supporters of the war have done to silence critics (see letters in USA Today, Dec. 17, 2004).

5. Conclusion and opening:

The debates in newspapers over sacrifice in the War in Iraq reveal the persistence, or growing number, of class, racial and symbolic fissures within American society. Even in the wake of political and legal desegregation, racism and socioeconomic inequalities in the American imperial society continue to marginalize African Americans so that they must enlist in numbers much higher than their weight in the civilian population. This is a

⁴⁸. *Ibid.*

⁴⁹. For instance Newsweek Aug 15, 2005.

politically charged situation in light of the imperial society's past crises. Fears of a new Vietnam-era style outcry are sufficiently strong to motivate affirmative-action policies on racial sacrifice within the army. Interestingly, these policies essentially contradict the prevalent form of neo-liberal culture, which cautions against state intervention in "markets," and in this case the market for sacrifice.

It has been argued that the all-volunteer Army could *not* meet its recruitment goals were it not for the vast pool of black enlistees upon which it can draw (Segal & Verdugo 1994; Segal & Segal 2005). This illustrates that while the Pentagon seeks to curb the inequality in military sacrifice to avert the point of crisis when fighting its foreign wars, *paradoxically*, the all-volunteer force is structurally dependent on the very racial inequalities that *push* potential soldiers into its ranks. This indicates that the imperial model of society remains well in place even though Blacks are no longer employed as 'canon fodder,' as they were in the early Vietnam War. However, recent military sociology has raised the alarming prospect that this role is now devolving to Hispanics (Gifford 2005) who are largely overrepresented in combat arms of the army and marines (Amaya 2007; Segal & Segal 2004).

The neo-liberal economy of sacrifice has also significantly narrowed the proportion of citizens directly involved in the war, reducing the likelihood that the strain of sacrifice will push the American population to the brink of revolt as it did a generation earlier. In effect, the majority of the population feels no direct consequences of the war, and thus has no personal stake in victory or defeat. At worst they will eventually awake from a 'nightmare.' As the late military sociologist Charles Moskos, a fervent partisan of the draft, keenly noted in 2005:

The mass mobilization of the reserves and the National Guard has created neither widespread public support nor opposition to the war. This is because the troops who have borne the burden of the Iraq War have been disproportionately drawn from small-town America and the inner cities, *not* from those social groups who shape national policy (Moskos 2005: 669).

Over time, the narrowing of the pool of combatants to select groups of citizens appears to have increased their sense of isolation as well as that of their families and friends, as shown above. Though patriots they may be, soldiers and their social circles take note that little sacrifice has been asked of other citizens. This appears especially painful to them as they must return to Iraq for multiple tours increasing the likelihood that fate will eventually deal them a ‘bad hand.’ Despite its claims to being the land of opportunity, a new war has painfully reminded the American imperial society that it remains founded on two classes of citizenship: those who shop, and those who fight ... and die (NYT Oct. 20, 2007).

The experiences of Vietnam and Iraq both show that America’s desire to shape global politics is taxing. Not only lives lost and grieving families, it may eventually deplete the imperial society’s symbolic resources: the stability, for instance, of America’s collective identity constructs, narratives and self-understanding as an “exceptional nation” and universalist model. Sacrifice, I wrote earlier, is intimately linked to the citizen’s love of the state and the ideals on which it is founded. Wars will be deemed just and unjust insofar as they espouse the spirit of these ideals. To die *well* means that sacrifice will be conform to the ideals of the Republic. For America, this means faith in freedom, equality of opportunity and social mobility. But have the social processes that raise the armies fighting the War in Iraq begun to reflect back at America her distorted mirror-image as an imperial society ... as Vietnam once did? And five years into the war of Iraqi liberation, have Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo and debates over waterboarding

reflected back at the imperial society the dark mirror image of American exceptionalism, as My Lai and segregation had done previously?

These distorted mirror images of the Republic's ideals, reflected back at America by the Wars in Vietnam and Iraq, lay at the heart of the crisis of the imperial society. The reality of the Occupation reveals where the national habitus has betrayed its promises to the world, just as inequalities in the mobilization process reveal where the American dream has belied itself. Each of these logics exacerbates the other. Though this symbolic crisis may not be tangible, debates in American newspapers reveal that it is nonetheless quite real; an empirical reality. It is hard to predict the ultimate outcome of the War in Iraq and its long term repercussions on American society. Yet, the newspapers indicate that opponents of the war can make these contradictions into powerful tools to sap the White House's ability to make the American population accept the conflict in Iraq as a War of liberation. Ultimately, these symbolic contradictions can disrupt the presidency's ability to make the American people consent to further sacrifice.

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