“We Are Men:”
Self-Determination Defense and Black Masculinity

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Intersectional Approach

● Provides one with another lens to understand history
● Angie Marie Hancock: 3 Types of Scholarship
  o Unitary
  o Multiple
  o Intersectional
Defining American Masculinity

- Michael Kimmel: Power, Control, Autonomy
- Violence at the center
- “Traditional” roles of men
  - protecting home
  - protecting community
Contestations of Masculinity

● Physical
  o Frederick Douglass
  o Issue of Interracial Rape
  o Lynching and Violence

● Institutional Efforts
  o Jack Johnson
  o Mann Act of 1910
“Self-Determination Defense”

● Particular type of militarism
  o NOT revolutionary
  o Employing physical means if necessary to ensure the safety of their communities and themselves
  o Idea of protection also central to defining manhood
Origins of “Self-Determination Defense”

● World War II: Double V Campaign
● Hypocrisy of “Four Freedoms”
● Black Soldiers
  o experience
  o leadership
● Collective Action at Home
  o Robert F. Williams
Costs of Nonviolence

- Destructive to Black male masculinity
  - Denied ability to protect community, families, and oneself
  - Physical surrender of power (defining feature of masculinity)
Deacons for Defense

- Quintessential organization that employed “Self-Determination Defense”
- Conscious of connection between self-defense and masculinity
- Forging a new identity
“Myth of Nonviolence”

- Lance Hill
  - By end of 1962 SNCC, CORE, and SCLC had failed at securing major reform
  - Contends that after Birmingham Riots in May of 1963, all nonviolent protests carried a threat of physical retaliation by Blacks
- Idea of separation of nonviolence and self-defense
  - self-defense: also had ability of moral suasion
Significance

● Project helps to form a more complete intersectional approach on American society

● Larger Narrative:
  o Recognition of relationship between power and masculinity → Self-Determination Defense → reclamation of manhood → recognition of humanity
“Without a struggle, there can be no progress.”

-Frederick Douglass