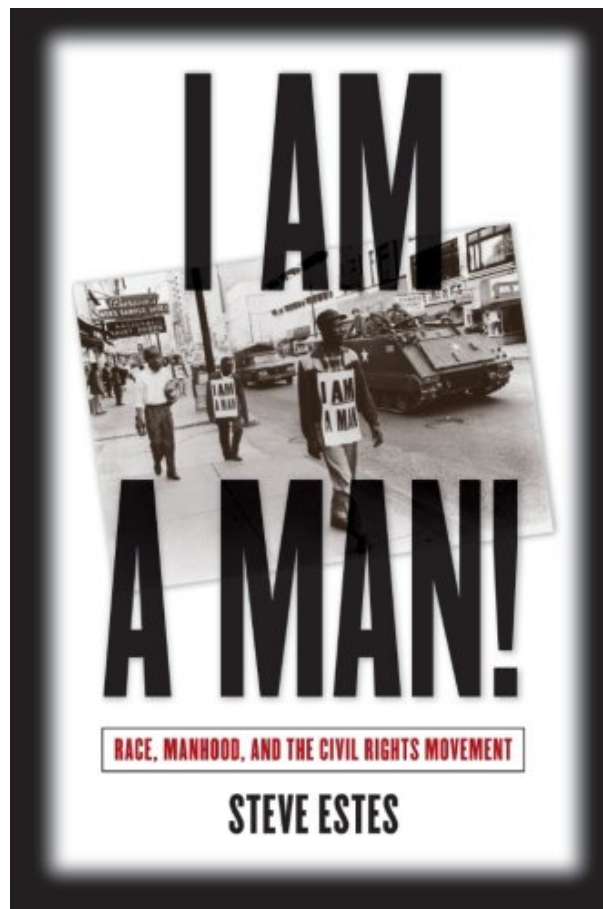
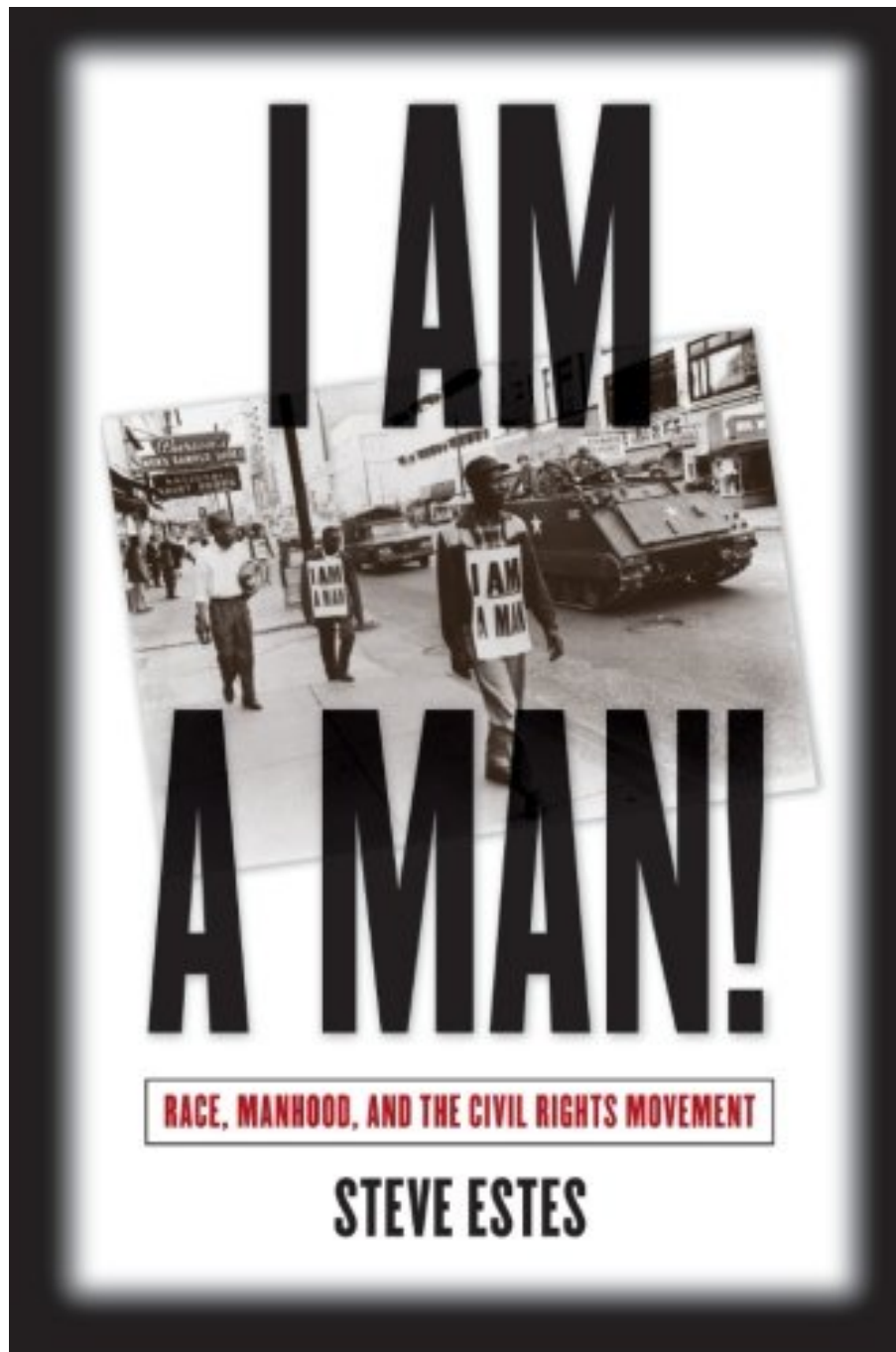


I AM A MAN!: RACE, MANHOOD, AND THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT BY STEVE ESTES



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I AM A MAN!: RACE, MANHOOD, AND THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT BY STEVE ESTES PDF

The civil rights movement was first and foremost a struggle for racial equality, but questions of gender lay deeply embedded within this struggle. Steve Estes explores key groups, leaders, and events in the movement to understand how activists used race and manhood to articulate their visions of what American society should be.

Estes demonstrates that, at crucial turning points in the movement, both segregationists and civil rights activists harnessed masculinist rhetoric, tapping into implicit assumptions about race, gender, and sexuality. Estes begins with an analysis of the role of black men in World War II and then examines the segregationists, who demonized black male sexuality and galvanized white men behind the ideal of southern honor. He then explores the militant new models of manhood espoused by civil rights activists such as Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr., and groups such as the Nation of Islam, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, and the Black Panther Party.

Reliance on masculinist organizing strategies had both positive and negative consequences, Estes concludes. Tracing these strategies from the integration of the U.S. military in the 1940s through the Million Man March in the 1990s, he shows that masculinism rallied men to action but left unchallenged many of the patriarchal assumptions that underlay American society.

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Black masculinity is a political force

By Robin Orłowski

Borrowing from a research model pioneered by feminist scholars,

Steve Estes examines the history of African American men in a racialized-gendered context to argue that black men's masculinity was at stake throughout these struggles.

The assistant professor of history at Sonoma State College produces an interesting and readable account of state politics. Examining the politics of representing black men's bodies, he argues that appearance can and does effectively influence civil rights.

From the days of slavery to the civil rights movement, black men being too assertive in the public sphere was a breach of the 'social order' established by racist white society.

Even people who were allegedly on their side (white abolitionists) depicted black men as 'begging' for their freedom, inferring dependence and weakness--decidedly 'unmasculine' traits.

Alternately, black men's sexuality was portrayed as a threat to the established order. A black man who had any degree of contact with a white woman in any context risked being perceived as the 'rapist' an ultra-masculine stereotype. Ironically, the white individuals and their organized hate groups claimed to only be protecting white women with the subsequent lynching being through 'white masculinity's' obligation to 'protect' the women of 'our community'.

Because it was safer for black men during those times, they consequently adopted a position of subservience to the 'larger world'. Black women took an active lead in the earliest civil rights movements out of practicality.

Whether they had all of the theories our society now has access to, the Black Panthers also articulated a critique of black masculinity and political legitimacy. Sharply contrasting against the buffoonish 'Jim Crow' their ideal black man was an articulate, proactive, soldier fighting on behalf of himself, his community, and his people.

Estes is passionate about his work and makes a generally convincing case for his thesis. I am curious that his manuscript did not include a more extensive examination of the Black Panther's articulated desire to build (then-unprecedented) alliances with homosexuals and women. There's some information about each group in this book, but nothing about this earliest coalition building attempt and nothing how that action had challenged heterosexism within the Black Panthers, or the after effects for black masculinity as a political force.

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Social justice and human rights

By Kindle Customer

I am a Man – is that a question rather than a statement that we need to pose today, right now? How does a black man get full recognition, acknowledgement, respect, and full protection of the rights and laws in this country if he has to demand to be treated like a man? White men do not need to ask that question, it comes naturally for them.

Estes shows the history that still applies today of the many episodes in our history where black men were and

are treated like anything less than a man. People may think that this book beats up and/or shames White America, but it does not. *I am Man!* is an opportunity to learn the pure hell black men have had to go through in this country in order gain a sense of respect about being a man.

President Obama is called a liar, is that how you treat a man? Oscar Grant III is shot and killed by a Bay Area Rapid Transit cop in Oakland in 2010, is that how you treat a man? Trayvon Martin is shot and killed by George Zimmerman as boy before becoming a man, is that how we treat human life in this country? As Estes points out in closing, we should not as a nation be on a “quixotic quest for manhood, but on the more promising and inclusive struggles for social justice and human rights.”

In today’s America we must be about social justice, human rights and inclusion for all members of our society regardless of race, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation. We cannot prosper as a nation until that is achieved.

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

A Great Read

By Beverly Dorsey

I loved this book. It is thorough, well organized, and thoughtfully researched. The author is passionate but technical. He had a vision, pursued that vision, and accomplished what he set out to do.

See all 5 customer reviews...

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