"FREE THE LAND!": EXPLORING THE SPATIAL AND POLITICAL LEGACIES OF
THE REPUBLIC OF NEW AFRIKA IN DETROIT AND JACKSON

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ABSTRACT

Willie Jamaal Wright: "Free the Land!": Exploring the Spatial and Political Legacies of the
Republic of New Afrika in Detroit and Jackson
(Under the direction of Altha Cravey & Alvaro Reyes)

The Provisional Government of the Republic of New Afrika is a Black
revolutionary nationalist provisional government formed in Detroit, Michigan, in the wake
of the city's 1967 rebellion. Its goal is to establish a nation-state for New Afrikans in five
states (LA, MS, AL, GA, SC) among the former Black Belt. Scholars such as Christian
Davenport suggest—using the RNA as an exemplar—that "repression kills social
movement organizations." Grounded in Black geographies and a Black spatial imaginary
this presentation will argue that such portrayals erase the ways in which black political
formations persist in a world of tremendous anti-black violence. My findings indicate that
the RNA lives, and that due to instances of police oppression and the natural maturation of
political thought and praxis, its initial objectives morphed into new spatial and political
forms. This research study is based on 12 months of multi-site fieldwork conducted in
Detroit, Michigan and Jackson, Mississippi, semi-structured interviews, participant
observation and archival methods.

FOR MY PEOPLE

For my people everywhere singing their slave songs
repeatedly: their dirges and their ditties and their blues
and jubilees, praying their prayers nightly to an
unknown god, bending their knees humbly to an
unseen power;

For my people lending their strength to the years, to the
gone years and the now years and the maybe years,
washing ironing cooking scrubbing sewing mending
hoeing plowing digging planting pruning patching
dragging along never gaining never reaping never
knowing and never understanding;

For my playmates in the clay and dust and sand of Alabama
backyards playing baptizing and preaching and doctor
and jail and soldier and school and mama and cooking
and playhouse and concert and store and hair and
Miss Choomby and company;

For the cramped bewildered years we went to school to learn
to know the reasons why and the answers to and the
people who and the places where and the days when, in
memory of the bitter hours when we discovered we
were black and poor and small and different and nobody
cared and nobody wondered and nobody understood;

For the boys and girls who grew in spite of these things to
be man and woman, to laugh and dance and sing and
play and drink their wine and religion and success, to
marry their playmates and bear children and then die
of consumption and anemia and lynching;

For my people thronging 47th Street in Chicago and Lenox
Avenue in New York and Rampart Street in New
Orleans, lost disinherited dispossessed and happy
people filling the cabarets and taverns and other
people's pockets and needing bread and shoes and milk and
land and money and something—something all our own;

For my people walking blindly spreading joy, losing time
being lazy, sleeping when hungry, shouting when
burdened, drinking when hopeless, tied, and shackled
and tangled among ourselves by the unseen creatures
who tower over us omnisciently and laugh;

For my people blundering and groping and floundering in
the dark of churches and schools and clubs
and societies, associations and councils and committees and
conventions, distressed and disturbed and deceived and
devoured by money-hungry glory-craving leeches,
preyed on by facile force of state and fad and novelty, by
false prophet and holy believer;

For my people standing staring trying to fashion a better way
from confusion, from hypocrisy and misunderstanding,
trying to fashion a world that will hold all the people,
all the faces, all the Adams and Eves and their countless generations;

Let a new earth rise. Let another world be born. Let a
bloody peace be written in the sky. Let a second
generation full of courage issue forth; let a people
loving freedom come to growth. Let a beauty full of
healing and a strength of final clenching be the pulsing
in our spirits and our blood. Let the martial songs
be written, let the dirges disappear. Let a race of [wo]men now
rise and take control.

— Margaret Walker

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It is difficult to development a sufficient acknowledgement of the individuals and institutions that have been instrumental to one's life. I must first give thanks for my family, who from the beginning, despite fits and starts, have supported and believed in me, in path, and my contributions. To my mother, who continues to hold down the family, even when facing illness, I am grateful for your, your love, and the strength you modeled for a young man in the making struggling through pre-teen angst. It is because of you, your return to collegiate life, that I even know that graduate school existed. To my father, the stubborn Black man from the sugarcane fields of Franklin, Louisiana who has recently grown to openly tell me "I love you, pop," You were my first model of masculinity and what a man could do for himself and his family. I thrive to take you lessons and build upon them for the betterment of future generations of Black men. To my siblings, at time we seem like a motley crew of blood kin, characters born of the same womb, raised in the same home but of unique constitutions.

Many mentors have gotten me to this station in life: Marjorie Burford was one of my first employers, a bright spirit who always encouraged me to elevate my thinking. While at the University of Louisville (UofL) Drs. Clarence Talley, Dr. Theresa Rajack-Talley, Dr. J. Blaine Hudson, Dr. Professor Jan Rynweld Carew, and Dr. Joy Carew modeled a timeless, expansive, brand of scholarship steeped in Pan-Africanism ideals. Through them, I was encouraged to seek out the contributions made by African peoples throughout the world, even those that constituted new worlds all together. Though some of

you have transitioned since my time in at UofL, your lessons remain and unfold with each new challenge.

Relocating to North Carolina following the completion of a Masters in Pan-African Studies at UofL was a seminal transition in my life. Early on, I lived in Eastern North Carolina where I met Gary Grant and Naeema Muhammad, two lifelong warriors for social justice. Through them I became acquainted with the life-changing work of the Black Farmers & Agriculturalists Association (BFFA) and the North Carolina Environmental Justice Network (NCEJN) and how Black farmers, generations following the formal end of Jim Crow are institutionally disenfranchised and how poor people of color, particularly in rural areas are subjected to all manner of environmental degradation.

North Carolina is also where my academic interests grew. Joining the Department of Geography at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in the fall of 2010, I became a member of a tight-knit cohort of ten bright-eyed first year students. Together, we all became beleaguered Masters and doctoral level graduate students. The presence of Eloisa Berman-Arévalo, Aron Sandell, Scott Sellwood, Amy Braun, Maia Call, and Jim Kuras made a disorienting year more tolerable. I was also fortunate to have been supported and validated by geography students like Yousuf Al-Bulushi, Mike Dimpfl, Pavithra Vasudevan, Stevie Larson, Adam Bledsoe, Nathan Swanson, and Tim Stallman. These brilliant minds and people will make indelible impacts in scholarship and society. I am happy to call you all friends and colleagues. To further generations of graduate students coming up the ranks UNC Geography (Mike "Birdman" Hawkins, Fransciso Laso, Angélica María Gómez and others), you have a large legacy to live up to. I know you are up to the challenge. I must acknowledge the cohort of Brothers with whom I made it

through graduate school with my mind and my Blackness in tact. I salute to Drs. Brian Foster, Orisanmi Burton, and Robert Reece. We brothers for life!

I offer thanks to the many professors and academic institutions on campus that provided intellectual, logistical, and financial support throughout my heralding years. To the Institute for Minority Excellence (IME), the Institute for African American Research (IAAR), and the Sonja Haynes Stone Center for Black Culture and History, your unwavering support carries students of color through different times and spaces on a campus not meant to carry the weight of their bodies, histories, and ideas. Continue to be space of respite and inspiration for Black excellence.

And last to my dissertation committee, thank you for allowing me to pursue a topic, though at times out of your wheelhouse, is inherently geographic and necessary for the growth of our discipline. Without your guidance, critique, and support this project could not have been.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADNIP   African National Independence Partition Party

BPP   Black Panther Party

CCNWJ   Cooperative Community of New West Jackson

CPUSA   Communist Party-USA

KKK   Ku Klux Klan

MXGM   Malcolm X Grassroots Movement

NAACP   National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

NAPO   New Afrikan People's Organization

NAIM   New Afrikan Independence Movement

NOI   Nation of Islam

PGRNA   Provisional Government of the Republic of New Afrika

RAM   Revolutionary Action Movement

RNA   Republic of New Afrika

SWP   Socialist Workers Party

CHAPTER 1

Geographies of Race and Black Geographies

Introduction and Significance of Study

This work is a study of the spatial and political legacies of the Provisional

Government of the Republic of New Afrika (PGRNA), a Black revolutionary nationalist

government formed in the later years of the Black Power Movement. To date, a study that

places equal importance on Detroit, Michigan and Jackson, Mississippi and which looks to

future manifestations and ramifications of the PGRNA in either city is lacking. Such an

inquiry has the potential to not only show how the PGRNA sought to spatialize its

nationalistic aspirations. It can illustrate how New Afrikans continue to expose, enact, and

spatialize the PGRNA's political aims and spatial claims in either city. Though interest

grows concerning the political history of the PGRNA, much of that attention and

scholarship has been historical (Ahmad, 2007; Berger, 2009, 2010; Umoja, 2013) and

cultural (Onaci, 2015) in nature. For instance, Muhammad Ahmad (2007) references the

PGRNA as one of a number of Black radical movements groups organizing for Black

liberation during the mid-20th century. Edward Onaci (2012, 2015) has taken up the

naming choices and lifestyle practices of New Afrikan citizens, viewing the renaming of

New Afrikans as a crucial step in their break from American civil society and towards

Black self-determination.

Though these works provide ample primary and secondary source material for future studies, only Berger (2009) considers the spatial ramifications of the PGRNA's territorial demands. He argues that American politics in the 1980s succumb to a turn to the right, embodied in the presidency of Ronald Reagan, during the 1970s, there were numerous attempts by Leftist and political formations to continue to the radical politics of inaugurated in the 1960s. According to (Berger, 2010), the 1970s was an era of "limits but equally as one of extremes" (p. 7). One way radical politics emerged during this decade were in the territorial claims of the PGRNA and those within the American Indian Movement (AIM). Both initiatives sought to challenge and replace the territorial integrity of the United States government and its dominion over New Afrikans and First Nation peoples.

Geographies of Race and Radicalism

Within the field of geography there has been but one study of the PGRNA.[1] However, little geographic interest has been given to studying the human geographies of the PGRNA (Karolczyk, 2013, 2014). Karolczyk's (2014) research addresses the spatial production and the "Black transnational revolutionary nationalism" within the New Afrikan Independence Movement (NAIM) (p. 124). Regarding the NAIM's transnational links, he states, "the NAIM's internationalism led it to develop transnational political and cultural dimensions that identified with and borrowed from independence struggles in oppressed regions throughout the world" (Karolczyk, 2014, p. 125). Though a key contribution to our understanding of the PGRNA's spatial claims, Karolczyk (2014) only

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[1] Aside from Paul Karolczyk's doctoral study, and that of my own study, Denisse Andrade, doctoral candidate in the Department of Earth and Environmental Science at the City University of New York (CUNY), is the only other geographer concerned with the spatialities of the PGRNA.

looks to the past and omits a serious study of how the PGRNA's particular brand of Black

nationalism and how their spatial and political claims persist in the present.[2]

Akinyele Umoja (2005) defines Black Nationalists as "those persons of African

descent in North America who seek a separate identity from American national identity

and desire to regain some form of separate existence as a free and distinct people" (p. 530).

He states, that at its core, attempts at Black Nationalism are "a search for home" (Umoja,

2005, p. 530). In other words, this "Black Nationalism"—in its many forms—is a political,

ideological, cultural, and spatial attempt to make a place within (and beyond) the socio-

cultural and politico-economic confines of the United States of America. Thus, Black

Nationalism is not, nor has it ever been, an ideology or praxis confined to the nation-state.

It is but a spatial and political model for Black self-determination.

In *The Golden Age of Black Nationalism, 1850-1925*, William Julius Moses (1978)

argues that, historically, Black Nationalism has been characterized by a sundry of

"emigration schemes," and that the shape in which these formations have taken were

influenced by the historical period in which they emerged (p. 9). From this perspective,

one must understand that if Black Nationalism is an ever-alterable process impacted by

distinct socio-political periods, then the study of Black Nationalists and Black Nationalists

project must also develop. This is the position Umoja (2005) takes in his assertion that the

Black Power period of nationalism is an ever unfolding field of study: "New organizational

studies…as well as local studies are needed, from a variety of perspectives, to interpret this

period of nationalism adequately for future generations," he says (p. 541). Black

Nationalists have long since expressed anti-geopolitical imaginaries. In fact, visions of a

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[2] Furthermore, I wonder what additional avenues of understanding might have emerged had (Karolczyk, 2013, 2014) attempted to learn of the PGRNA via a Black geographic theoretical and methodological approach.

Black nation in the United States have taken many forms—as internal colonies (Brown, 1969; Carmichael & Hamilton, 1969) and as control of cities (Boggs, 1966) and urban communities (Baraka, 2002; Newton, 2002).

In this study, I approach the RNA with an understanding presented by Muhammad Ahmad (2007), founding member of the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM) and Professor of African American Studies at Temple University. In *We Will Return in the Whirlwind: Black Radical Organizations, 1960-1975*, (Ahmad, 2007) argues that during the 20th century, the Black Freedom Struggle in America was a "dialectal movement relationship between the southern and northern [Black] movements" (p. xviii).

James Tyner (2007) believes "geographers have paid scant attention to the political geographies of black radical intellectuals and, specifically, the Black Power Movement" (p. 229). This, despite the expansion in critical geographic thought since the 1960s, particularly geographers' increased interest in the spatialities of Black communities (Birdsall, 1971; Rose, 1964, 1965, 1969, 1970). Bill Bunge (2011) took strides in this direction with his study of Black geographies in the majority Black neighborhood of Fitzgerald following the 1967 Detroit rebellion. Using a participatory methodology, and the insights of residents of Fitzgerald, Bunge co-produced a written and pictorial geography of this community and the city of Detroit. No doubt, his work was a turning point in the study of Black geographies.

Recently, researchers have begun to unearth the geographies of Black radical movements. James Tyner's (2006) *Geography of Malcolm X* and his research on Black urban revolutions (Tyner, 2007) exemplifies this well-spring of scholastic interests. Priscilla McCutcheon's (2011, 2013) research engages the Nation of Islam's (NOI)—a

religious sect composed of Blacks in America—agricultural place-making practices on Muhammad Farms in rural Georgia as part of its Black Nationalist ideals. She suggests that based in a cultural and political ideology rooted around the importance of landownership and self-sufficiency, the NOI's farm represents a rural "landscape of liberation" (McCutcheon, 2013, p. 66). Through its mission to feed 40 million people, McCutcheon argues the NOI works to re-orient Black peoples' relation to farming with the hopes that they will return to the land.

Of these groups of researchers concerned with illuminating the historical and spatial significance of the PGRNA and the NAIM, all have a tendency towards bifurcation, towards splitting their interests in the RNA time and space. Most have developed their studies in a way that places emphasis on Detroit (Ahmad, 2007; Karolczyk, 2013; Onaci, 2015) or Jackson (Umoja, 2014). And, overwhelmingly, these studies have centered on the PGRNA's influence during the 1960s and 1970s (Ahmad, 2007; Davenport, 2005, 2006, 2014; Davenport & Loyle, 2012; Karolczyk, 2014; Onaci, 2012, 2015; Umoja, 2013).

Three theoretical frameworks provide the conceptual foundation of this study: The first section considers Black geographies. This theoretically and methodologically rich framework, developed in Katherine McKittrick and Clyde Woods's *Black Geographies and the Politics of* Place, suggests that due to chattel slavery and its aftermaths, Black communities in Americas have been spatially displaced and marginalized. Thus, they existed within the underside of white civil society (McKittrick and Woods, 2007). Lacking a relationship to space and land discovery, landownership, and appropriation, Black communities have learned to conceive of, create, and live within space in ways goes unnoticed by the dominant spatial imaginary. From within these forgotten spaces, what

Clyde Woods (2002) deemed "racially defined zones of destruction" (p. 63), Black communities throughout the Diaspora—though much of the work thus far focuses on geographies and place-making in North America (United States and Canada)—recreate a distinct Black sense of place that emerges from within, and in resistance to the dehumanizing project of enslavement and its present-day articulations (McKittrick, 2011).[3] Rather than simply employ this conceptual framework, this study challenges by thinking through how Black spatial imaginaries persist and change across socio-political and historical contexts. Second, this study charts and employs what the author calls a *Black geographies methodology* that informs how the researcher engaged the archives and participants. This different, unmoored approach to research in and out of the archives, is an attempt to apply Christina Sharpe's (2016) propositions regarding research on African descendants post-enslavement. She believes, as does Katherine McKittrick (Hudson & McKittrick, 2014), that in order to uncover the answers we seek about slavery and its aftermath, our work must become unmoored, that it must break from disciplinary standards. Says Sharpe (2016), "we must become undisciplined, for the work we do requires new modes and methods of research and teaching; new ways of entering and leaving the archives of slavery" (p. 13).

Second, this study draws from and dialogues with work in critical, anti, feminist/subaltern geopolitics. Critical geopolitics is a method of viewing and critiquing imperial geopolitical imaginaries and governance (Ó Tuathail, 1996; 1998). This critique of the state based upon the thought and practices of its functionaries (i.e. political scientists

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[3] In *Plantation Futures* McKittrick (2013) suggest that the plantation is a spatialized constitutive event of dehumanization for Blacks in the United States. She furthers, a plantation logic of violence and exploitation exist in the present in the form of prisons, environmental degradation, and anti-Black violence, to name a few. She suggest that scholar return to the plantation as a site for exploring and reforming the future and the conceptual and lived borders of what it means to be human.

and politicians) influences work on anti-geopolitics and my interrogation of the PGRNA's critiques against the United States and its impact on the formation of their own geopolitical imaginary and practice. Feminist geographers have brought critical geopolitics to the scale of the body to question how which non-state actors concede to, challenge, and re-make, the territorial boundaries of nation-states (Dowler & Sharp, 2001; Koopman, 2011). I draw on this literature to think the through ways, in which the enlistment of New Afrikan men and women in service of the formation of New Communities in the South, namely in Mississippi, were one example of how the PGRNA challenged the United States' territorial integrity and borders, while creating its own. This study, unlike others, seeks to introduce critical geopolitics to scholarship and activism on the Black Freedom Struggle.

Furthermore, this research challenges scholars of feminist geopolitics to think through the efficacy of using feminist geopolitics (a contemporary framework) to understanding the territorial claims made by actors during the mid-20th century. Moreover, this research draws on a feminist framework to analyze the geopolitical connections and claims of a male New Afrikan subject. Though feminist geopolitics is not aligned with a specific gendered body (Coddington, 2015), this study is an invitation to consider the benefits and limits of de-gendering, or specifically so, feminist geopolitics.

Last, I draw from research on the outcomes of social movements to assess the spatial and political outcomes of the PGRNA's "Black historical experience" in Detroit, Michigan and Jackson, Mississippi (Robinson, 1983, p. 170). Though social movements research is abundant in the fields of sociology and political science, little attention is given to the outcomes of organizations or individuals affiliated with the Black radical wing of the Black Freedom Struggle in America. This study assesses the varied outcomes (e.g. policy,

organizational longevity, political office) of a Black radical political formation by

incorporating insights from works on the Black Radical Tradition to those within more

mainstream studies of social movement outcomes.

CHAPTER 2

A Black Geographies Methodology

This study is informed by research on Black geographies and guided by a Black

spatial imaginary. Black alternative ways of viewing, engaging, writing, graphing, and

producing space is the result of what George Lipsitz (2007, 2011) calls a Black spatial

imaginary, which he associates with certain communal and collective relations to space

and development. In "The Racialization of Space and the Spatialization of Race," he

describes the conditions under which a Black spatial imaginary that places emphasis on use

value may come to be:

> Relegated to neighborhoods where zoning, policing, and investment practices make
> it impossible for them to control the exchange value of their property, and unable to
> move away from other members of their group because of discrimination, ghetto
> and barrio residents turn segregation into congregation (Lipsitz, 2007, p. 14).

A result of this, and other forms of racial-spatial containment, Black communities learn to

"augment the *use value* of their neighborhoods by relying on each other" (Lipsitz, 2007, p.

14, ephasis added).

What George Lipsitz has coined a Black spatial imaginary, I argue, is the product

of what bell hooks (1992) sees as a critical "black look," a form of looking at the world

awry (p. 4). The ways of spatializing the world from a Black look are not homogenous, nor

are they confined to embodied difference. Says Lipsitz (2007), "Blackness here, like

whiteness, is not reduced to an embodied identity" (p. 14). Thus, one may deduce that

there exist within white communities, that is to say, within white America, the potential to

adopt a Blackened conscious. This is alluded to in Christina Sharpe's (2016) *In the Wake*:

On Blackness and Being. However, she states, in order to do so, white America would

have to "stay in the wake" of the slave ship, to be informed by the experiences and

conditions of Blackness in America (Sharpe, 2016, p. 5). From this positionality—which

historical accounts of Black revolutions seem to posit such a possibility (Chandler, 2003;

Getachew, 2016; F. Wilderson III, 2008)—one may develop a spatial imaginary which

places emphasis on ways space can have significance beyond its rate of exchange value.

For instance, how might focusing on the use value of a communal space over its perceived

exchange value alter municipal develop strategies?

Conversely, he suggests there is a white spatial imaginary in America, one born of

histories of accumulation based on racist and capitalist logics of value. A white spatial

imaginary "views space primarily as a locus for the generation of *exchange value*. Houses

are investments that appreciate in value over time," as opposed to say, art spaces (Lipsitz,

2007, p. 15).[4] Peter Moskowitz (2017) speaks similarly in his treatise, *How to Kill a City*.

After outlining how it is that suburbs were designed as new sites of accumulation, he

argues these isolated spaces constrain white people's subjectivities and their spatial

imaginaries. In his call for a tenants movements in the United States, Moskowitz (2017)

states "the suburbanization of the United States pushed whites into privatize, anti-

communal form of living, encouraged more traditional gender roles (women as

housewives, men as breadwinners), and reified racial boundaries" (p. 155). This

manufactured spatial association is transhistorical, inflecting the descendents of white

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[4] I am thinking of the way those who spearheaded Black arts initiatives like Project Row Houses (PRH), Dorchester Project, and the Heidelberg Project used their particular Black spatial imaginaries to make use of dilapidated homes that had long stood vacant and undervalued (from a capitalist state of value) in dejected Black neighborhoods.

homeowners who fled Detroit, Michigan in the 1950s and 1960s. Such that the gentrifiers of Detroit, a number of whom were raised in its bedroom communities, bring within them "an internalized suburban logic" of individuality and segregation (Moskowitz, 2017, p. 180).

The adoption of a Black spatial imaginary is central to this study. In the making of this research, I was not simply influenced by the spatial imaginaries and legacies of New Afrikan citizens, I—to the best of my ability—imbibed and embodied their particular spatial imaginaries. Doing so aided my ability to observe, acknowledge, and address the spatial legacies of the RNA in Detroit and Jackson. Moving forward, I address literature on Black geographies as a particular theoretic and analog that looks beyond the spatial marginalization of Black communities, to the myriad ways they envision and invent social spatial in communes. Black geographies scholarship directs us to see how in even the most destitute of Black there exist spatial imaginaries and practices that produce a place of being and vestiges of home.

The trans-Atlantic slave trade produced and marked African descendants as aspatial (Fanon, 2007; Schmitt, 2006). Black spaces, if noticeable at all, were seen as deviant from Western notions of space based on the accumulation and categorization of land and labor(ers) (Locke, 2004; Schmitt, 2006). From within this context of spatial marginalization, a unique Black relationship to space, land, and liberation came to the fore. This was particularly so in the Deep South, where, in spite of an assumption that all Black agrarians needed to know was "how to get from his shack to a plow," Black communities continued to produce and spatialize life within conditions of social death (Wright, 1941, p. 64).

Black geographies are imaginary, intellectual, and material responses to the spatial

segregation, containment, and extinction of Black communities produced by a hierarchal

system of racial and gendered domination throughout the African Diaspora, North

America, in particular (McKittrick & Woods, 2007). As such, a Black geographies

approach requires that one first acknowledge the enduring presence of Black communities

and Black spatial imaginaries—that is, that one exhibits the optic necessary to

acknowledge their existence. This notion of "optics" is key because, as stated by Priscilla

McCutcheon (2013), when one conducts research on/in Black geographies, one, inherently,

studies "spaces where black voices and black bodies have been hidden and silenced" (p.

69).

An important purveyor of Black geographic thought that has influenced present day

conceptualizations of subaltern spatiality is Frantz Fanon. His works on de-colonization, in

particular, his thoughts on the separate socio-spatial worlds of the settler and colonized,

established solid foundation upon which to study the spatialities of (anti)Blackness. In

Fanon's (2007) *The Wretched of the Earth*, he suggests the colonizer and the colonized

inhabit two worlds in one space. One world fosters and validates life, whereas, the other

facilitates, and perhaps requires, death. He writes:

> The settlers' town is a strongly built town, all made of stone and steel. It is a
> brightly lit town; the streets are covered with asphalt, and the garbage cans swallow
> all the leavings, unseen, unknown and hardly thought about. The settler's feet are
> never visible, except perhaps in the sea; but there you're never close enough to see
> them. His feet are protected by strong shoes although the streets of his town are
> clean and even, with no holes or stones. The settler's town is a well-fed town, an
> easygoing town; its belly is always full of good things. The settlers' town is a town
> of white people, of foreigners (Fanon, 2007, p. 3).

Fanon (2007) doubles down, when referencing the town inhabited by the colonized and

how it demonstrates and inhibits their non-being:

> The town belonging to the colonized people, or at least the native town, the Negro village, the medina, the reservation, is a place of ill fame, peopled by men of evil repute. They are born there, it matters little where or how; they die there, it matters not where, nor how. It is a world without spaciousness; men live there on top of each other, and their huts are built one on top of the other. The native town is a hungry town, starved of bread, of meat, of shoes, of coal, of light. The native town is a crouching village, a town on its knees, a town wallowing in the mire (p. 4).

In order to bring about a new social and spatial order, both towns, and their inhabitants (i.e. the colonizers and the colonized) must be obliterated. Though some may see this suggestion as apocalyptic, Alvaro Reyes's (2012) analysis of Frantz Fanon's explanation of Manicheanism, argues the opposite. He states that not only does Fanon describes the existence of two, separate worlds under settler colonialism, but that Fanon "create[s] a rupture from the entirety of this situation that will allow the Wretched to destroy both the colonizer *and*, figuratively, themselves as colonized" (Reyes, 2012, p. 13, emphasis in original).

Fanon's analyses have influenced scholars of Black being and spatiality, instigating ruptures within and beyond the field of geography. This is evident in Fred Moten's (2013) attempts to think beyond the exigencies of the afterlives of slavery and "leave the hold behind," seeing political potential within Black arts and performance (p. 744). There are similar threads in Angela Davis's (1972) and Hortense Spillers's (1987) belief that the corridor to a transformative Black politic lies through the work and flesh of Black women.

Research in Black geographies acknowledges how Black communities re-create life within spaces of domination (Woods, 1998), often times, in ways that transcend given understandings of spatial production and human relations to space–be they graphic (Morrison, 1992), spoken (McKittrick, 2006), imaginative (Kelley, 2002), or sonic (Woods, 1998). According to Katherine McKittrick (2006), such approaches, particularly

the literary imaginary of Black women, may lead to more "humanly workable geographic possibilities" (p. 147).

Though varied approaches to understanding the conditions of Blackness in the Americas and presenting alternative ethics and politics by which Black communities may thrive, rather than view these analyses as oppositional, I rather, thinking alongside Fred Moten (2013), as contributions of scholars who are all, if only theoretically, "just friends, trading fours" (p. 742). By that, I prefer to think through the commonalities of these paradigms and what they teach us about white supremacy, capitalism, enclosure and death, rather than dwell on how they differ. Doing the former, in my opinion, is a more productive way of producing a new, more just society.

My research address such literary imaginations via an engagement with articles and texts published by citizens of the RNA. Pieces written by Dr. Imari Obadele and Chokwe Lumumba explain the New Afrikan condition and history, all the while, geo-graphing the place of New Afrikans upon what is commonly thought of as an American landscape. Building upon fertile ground broken by these scholars, I engage the spatial imaginaries and practices of the PGRNA and its attempts to materialize its governance and communities across space and time.

Research Design and Approach

In this chapter I discuss my use of a multi-sited ethnography, its contributions to geographic inquiry, as well as some pitfalls to this approach. Furthermore, I make note of contradictions within my research. These commentaries are followed by a summary of the multiple methods employed during my fieldwork—archival research, participant

observation, and semi-structured interviews. Each method was deployed strategically to complement, in a manner designed to corroborate and contextualize participants' responses.

A meeting with Muhammad Ahmad, founding member of the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM) and a former professor of African American Studies at Temple University, inspired the methodological approach of this study. Professor Ahmad and I met in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in the summer of 2014. During our meeting, which lasted hours, we discussed my budding research on the PGRNA, his New Afrikan citizenry, and, importantly, how during the Black Power Movement, camaraderie between political organizations extended beyond regional, national, and international boundaries.

He explains these multi-spatial connections, further, in *We Will Return in the Whirlwind: Black Radical Organizations, 1960-1975*. Therein, Ahmad (2007) argues Black radical movements in America, in the North and South, developed in concert with one another, as a North/South dialectic. As my investigation into the history of the RNA deepened, I decided to apply Ahmad's evaluation to my research of the spatial and (geo)political legacies of the RNA in Detroit, Michigan and Jackson, Mississippi. Professor Ahmad's experientially based assessment of the multi-sited relationship among organizations within the Black Freedom Struggle is the crux of my research design. However, he and I are not alone in acknowledging such multi-spatial political partnerships.

A number of histories of the Black Freedom Struggle in the South give credence to Professor Ahmad's assertions. Hasan Jeffries' (2010) *Bloody Lowndes: Civil Rights and Black Power in Alabama's Black Belt,* suggests Black communities in the North supported members of the Lowndes County freedom movements with clothing, food, munitions, and

other supplies. In separate biographical accounts of Robert F. Williams, Tim Tyson (1999, 1998) states that political and mutual aid relationships between the Williams' and activists in New York, most notably, Queen Mother Audley Moore (a New Afrikan citizen and founding member of the New Afrikan Republic) and Malcolm X, were essential to his political development and his ability to escape entrapment by the FBI. The Williams' recall similarly, in a published account of their heralding (geo)political history (Robert and Mabel Williams Resource Guide, 2005).

More recently, Akinyele Umoja (2013) directed readers' attention to the forms of armed resistance practiced by freedom fighters in Mississippi, a number of whom were native to Detroit, Michigan and other locations beyond the South.[5] However illuminating, these historical accounts, like many accounts of the Black Freedom Struggle, they are fixed in the past and do not provide a clear picture of how groups carry on (via policy, practice, organization/communal structure) in the present. Therefore, they do not employ methods (e.g. longitudinal fieldwork and participant observation) commonplace in the social sciences. Through an North/South dialectic approach, one that incorporates participant observation and semi-structured interviews, and movements/the movement of actors across space and time, my research addresses the methodological limitations of historical accounts and concerns (see Chapter 5) within sociological debates on the outcomes of social movements—for instance, do social movements die? How does one "measure" the outcomes of social movements?

Multi-Sited Ethnography

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[5] In chapter 9 of *We Will Shoot Back*, Umoja (2013) details the resistance strategies of New Afrikan citizens.

Multi-sited ethnography emerged in the field of anthropology during the 1980s. At the time, it represented a methodological rupture to the way in which ethnography was accepted and conducted (Marcus, 2011). This practice was a departure from (and extension of) the Malinowskian form of ethnography. Formed during the 20th century, this traditional method of inquiry included examples such as an ethnographer "investigating cultural meaning in a remote rural village, both looking and dressing differently than the natives studied" (Ekström, 2006, p. 498). It was believed these long-term, single sited studies would result in "thick" descriptions of cultural practices and human relations—a hallmark of anthropological analyses.

Once an "emergent methodological trend in anthropological research" (Marcus, 1995, p. 95), multi-sited ethnography has become a standard within the field (Freidberg, 2001; Hannerz, 2003; Holland, et al., 2007). George Marcus (1995) describes multi-sited ethnography as a "mobile ethnography" that allows researchers to account for meanings across "diffuse time-space" (p. 96). These multilocal studies have been overwhelmingly multinational, as scholars have interested themselves on issues like the interconnections and dissociations between international organizational, rather than intra-national similarities and differences (Hannerz, 2003). Peter Redfield's (2013) recent work on the inter-continental bureaucracy of Doctors without Borders exemplifies the international orientation of much multi-site scholarship. Extending the notion of multi-sited studies to research on globalization, Ulf Hannerz (1996) argues for a translocal/network approach and analysis that looks for connections between research sites. I apply this conceptualization in the way I approach and analyze the spatial and political outcomes of the RNA in Detroit, Michigan and Jackson, Mississippi, but also in my assessment of the

connections that exist between these majority Black and economically underserved cities. Understanding the similarities will help explain why it is the RNA emerged in Detroit, why a number of its citizens migrated to Jackson, and how its presence endures in both locales.[6]

Though growing in acceptance among, for some anthropologists, multi-sited ethnography represents an uneasy "paradigm shift" within the field (Ekström, 2006, p. 499). As George Marcus (2011) notes in his reflection on the development of multi-sited ethnography, there is a mix of doubt and hope regarding the growth of this methodology, what he calls an "anxiety structure" (p. 1). Rather than succumb to fears of diluting anthropology's methodological specificity, Marcus (2011) encourages colleagues to find inspiration in the generative forms of conducting and writing ethnographies a multi-sited study might spur.

Like the anthropologists of yore, geographers—despite having ample conceptual, spatial, and temporal impetus—often situate their qualitative studies within single sites. And though, according to Ekström (2006), multi-site ethnography has found a home in a variety of disciplines, such as marketing, sociology (Nadai & Maeder, 2005), science and technology studies (Hine, 2007), and education (Rahm, 2012a; Rahm, 2012b), geographers have barely scratched the surface of this method (Wolford, 2010).

There is ample cause for geographers to adopt a multi-site approach in our research. First, human geographers—particularly those studying social movements—are concerned with the social production of space and place. Second, like our colleagues in anthropology, fieldwork is a key component of geographic research. Third, scholars within other

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[6] This study design was influenced by literature on the broad, expansive activities of the Black Power Movement and the migration patterns of New Afrikan citizens, who moved to Jackson from Detroit and parts all throughout the United States. As such it corroborates Marcus' discussion of one way multi-site research emerges in the field. Multi-site ethnographies often emerge "from the objective following of a known conventional process, or an unconventional," he says (Marcus, 2011, p. 12).

disciplines have taken to borrowing spatial terminology and geographic concepts in order

to discuss and conduct multi-sited research (Marcus, 1995, 2011; Rahm, 2012a; Rahm,

2012b). Given this bent towards interdisciplinary exchange that validates the particulars of

geographic thought, there is opportunity to do similarly when considering various

methodological approaches to geographic research. Despite the seeming paucity of interest

in multi-site research, some geographers have acknowledged the value of this

methodological approach. The edited volume, *Translocal Geographies: Spaces, Places,*

and Connections, is a collection of geographic approaches to research on transnational

migration and the experiences of migrants. The editors urge readers to look beyond

existing debates on transnationalism to view "the local as situated within a network of

spaces, places and scales where identities are negotiated and transformed" (Brickell &

Datta, 2011, p. 5). Though much of the research within this volume is not ethnographic,

and does not speak directly to the embodied movements of researchers, it offers

encouragement to geographers considering (or presently engaged in) multi-sited

scholarship.

An exemplar of an intra-national, multi-sited ethnography by a geographer is

Wendy Wolford's *This Land Is Ours Now: Social Mobilization and the Meanings of Land*

in Brazil.[7] Her work addresses the intra-organizational differences among chapters of the

Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra **(**MST)[8] in Brazil. Her purpose is to

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[7] Though having been a faculty member in the Department of Geography at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Wendy Wolford is a sociologist by training. She is currently an Associate Professor in the Department of Developmental Sociology at Cornell University.

[8] The MST is a collective of landless peasants throughput Brazil who organized to occupy and obtain land held by large landowners throughout the state of Brazil. Claiming, holding, and making productive use of land held fallow, MST chapters have been able to acquire numerous hectares of land for themselves, their families and communities.

assess MST members' perceptions of land ownership/use and the organization itself trough

ethnographic research conducted in Northern Brazil, a former locus of enslavement with a

much greater population of Afro-Brazilians than Southern Brazil, where white Brazilians

farmers—descendants of German immigrants—with a history of landownership dominate.

Through this multi-sited ethnography, Wolford illuminates findings impacted by the

country's racial and agricultural geographies. For instance, she documented regionally and

culturally specific perspectives on landownership and land-use among MST members.

Despite being members of the same national organization, MST members in the North and

South have differing views on land, agriculture, and the organization itself. It is striking to

see that her interlocutors in the Euro-Brazilian South inhabit the same political realm from

chapter members in Northern Brazil. Had Wolford ignored the benefits of a multi-sited

ethnography,[9] she would have missed these salient place-based specificities. In the

remainder of this chapter I will offer a discussion of the unexpected pitfalls and

contradictions of multi-site fieldwork followed by a narrative description of my use of the

abovementioned methodology.

Pitfalls of Multi-Sited Research

Scholars have discussed the various problems (perceived and actual) associated

with multi-site ethnographies. In one of George Marcus's reflective essays, he outlines

concerns voiced by his peers since the emergence of multi-site ethnography in the 1980s.

He surmises:

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[9] Wolford does not define her method as a multi-sited ethnography. However, it is apparent, through her movements throughout Brazil, and her use of ethnographic methods, that she, indeed, conducted a multi-sited study.

> So—primarily, dilution [of the field of anthropology], and less articulated worries about the observable everyday, about the demonstration of difference as a result, and about the diminishing of the core importance of peoples and places cultural expertise—this is the anxiety reaction formation to the idea of multi-sited ethnography, in sum (Marcus, 2011, p. 8).

I understand the professional place from which fears that ethnography will become diluted spring. Many scholars have been inspired by pioneering ethnographies of Black social life (Dubois, 1899, 1990; Liebow, 1967; Stack, 1975). And yet, I am aware (and have grappled with the reality) that this study on the legacies of the PGRNA will not be—due, in part, to my own methodological decisions and expertise—as in-depth an ethnography as perhaps an anthropologist might desire. However, I agree with and his assertion that the "metamethod" that is a multi-sited ethnography, opens space to redefine and redo ethnography, both within and without the field of anthropology (Marcus, 2009, 183).

There are other disciplinary concerns with the growing application of multi-site ethnographies. Susanne Freidberg (2001) argues that many of the constraints associated with this method are "purely practical" (p. 366). For researchers conducting international work, issues may arise regarding a need for fluency in multiple languages. There is also an issue of time. Freidberg (2001) felt she had to compact her fieldwork within a limited time frame. For many scholars, graduate students and professors, alike, the time with which one has for immersion is likely to be an issue—particularly, for those conducting research abroad.

The standard doctoral field study lasts up to one year, and most often, occurs within a single location. However, according to Marcus (2009), this (doctoral studies) is precisely the moment at which a scholar should begin (if applicable) to engage multi-sited research.

Regarding the importance of taking on this approach at this time in one's development, he

states:

> The dissertation is a strategic site in several respects. The creation and implementation of an alternative practice of fieldwork out of the Malinowskian tradition are possible where disciplinary metamethod has most effect, where ethnographers are made at this critical point in the mode of professional production (Marcus, 2009, p. 182).

Though stretching my research across two locations and time frames (August 2015

–February 2016 in Detroit, Michigan and March 2016 – August 2016 in Jackson,

Mississippi), I increased my access to place-based knowledge and archival repositories.

Conversely, I had far less time to develop professional relationships, scour archives, build

trust and interview participants in each place. In an attempt to mitigate this issue, I strove

to expedite the rate at which my professional relationships matured. One way in which I

fostered such developments was by relying upon the existing networks of friends to be

introduced to key participants.[10] As a result, I learned about each city's histories, its

present problems and political organizations at a faster pace. Another, unexpected

introduction to the city—and often ignored methodological barrier—was social and dating

life. While in Detroit, my partner helped me understand the histories, regions, and cultures

of the city through informal conversations, driving tours, and social events. This, for one,

is not uncommon. Anthropologists have paid attention to the existence and impacts of

dating in the field. And, increasingly, geographers are doing the same. Aware of the power

relations inherent between researcher and researcher, Sara Smith (2014) encourages

researchers to "to think carefully about how to approach research on intimate topics, and to

attend to the challenges of intimacy both in the field and after" (p. 2).

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[10] A good friend in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania helped establish this meeting between Professor Muhammad Ahmad and myself.

Positionality of oneself within the field may also become an issue, as researchers grapple with whether they are an ally, a researcher, or both. Last, Ghassan Hage (2005) disavows the reality and feasibility of multi-site ethnography altogether. "I simply do not think that there can be such a thing as multi-sited ethnography," she declares (Hage, 2005, p. 465). However, upon close inspection, one realizes her concerns are inflected by her age, the transnational nature of her work as well as her professional and familial responsibilities. Hage's critique of multi-sited research stems from the fact that she is an older researcher with a family whose field sites are located in countries away from her family—thus, making continued site visits difficult. How might her perspective have fared if her research were multi-sited within a domestic context?

The multi-spatial nature of my field research posed other problems. In both cities, as my research neared the six-month mark, it became apparent I would not gain full access to various archives or conduct the number of interviewers outlined in my dissertation proposal. Shortening the length of my fieldwork in Jackson presented a unique challenge. During my time in Jackson I gained an immediate introduction to citizens of the RNA, Chokwe Antar Lumumba, a viable candidate for mayor of Jackson, as well as local activists and organizers—many of whom migrated to Jackson prior to and after the 2013 election of the late Mayor Chokwe Lumumba. Many of these interlocutors are representative of Jackson's nascent progressive Black political community.

Though my connection to Jackson's progressive and activist communities developed swiftly, my connection to the city's established Black political class—which existed prior to Mayor Lumumba's entry into electoral politics—was less expedient. Not until my fifth month of research did members of this community (e.g. city council

members and city employees working under current mayor, Tony Yarber) open up to my requests for meetings and interviews. As a result of my limited time in Mississippi, and in Detroit, it became apparent I would have to conduct additional site visits and interviews.

Another potential constraint to conducting multi-sited research is the issue of finance. Multi-sited studies may require significant financing due to housing, travel, food, and other research costs (e.g. copies). Prior to my fieldwork, I was fortunate to have been awarded a Ford Foundation Predoctoral Fellow in the fall of 2013. This fellowship included three years of funding. The third, and final, year of funding occurred during my doctoral fieldwork. Thus, I was able to use these funds for research expenses (e.g. rent, fuel, food, printing, etc.) in both field sites. Though advantageous, fiscally, my funding source resulted in unforeseen—and instructive—personal contradictions.

Acknowledging Contradictions within the Research(er)

Recently, the Ford Foundation announced it would create the Black-Led Movement Fund, a fiscal entity managed by the Borealis Foundation $100 million dollars (McGirt, 2016). These funds are meant to support the work of the Movement for Black Lives (MFBL). For many, this large, seemingly no-strings-attached offering was a vote of confidence and a clear act of solidarity with the growing movement to protect and support Black life after scores of police killings of unarmed Black people and rebellions in Ferguson, Missouri and Baltimore, Maryland. However, for others, particularly those within Leftist and progressive movements—many of whom are, and have been, doing work similar to BLM—this large award, is a cause to pause and reflect. Some are suspicious as to why the Ford Foundation, an entity with a history or diluting Black radical

movements (Allen, 1982; Ferguson, 2013), is providing Black movement organizations

such a sizable coffer with which to operate. Allen (1982) declares, unequivocally, that the

Ford Foundation's past support of Black political organizations—such as the NAACP and

CORE—was for the "purpose of urban pacification" (p. 144).

As a Ford Fellow, and a scholar who has conducted research in Detroit, Michigan, I

cannot ignore the fact that the economic support and the modicum of professional prestige

and access[11] I am afforded is supplied from the largesse of a man (Henry Ford) whose

fortune was made by surveilling, exploiting, and assaulting scores of workers, particularly

Black workers (Sugrue, 1996). To its credit, the Ford Foundation has acknowledged that

its relationship with the M4BL has influenced the way it supports movements. This is

mainly because "leaders (within the M4BL) have kept donors' good intentions in check

with candid reminders of how philanthropy can hurt a movement…" (Kelly-Green &

Yasui, 2016, ¶7). However, it is clear the Ford Foundation's support of the MFBL and

other organizations, is due, in part, to what it sees as these organizations' attempts to

reform (rather than transform) aspects of American society:

> Now is the time to call for an end to state violence directed at communities of
> color. And now is the time to advocate for investment in public services—including
> but not limited to police *reform*—together with education, health, and employment
> in communities and for people that have historically had less opportunity and
> access to all those things. These are the reasons we support the Movement for
> Black Lives [Emphasis added] (Kelly-Green & Yasui, 2016, ¶….).

Following the Ford Foundations' announcement of its philanthropic gift, I shared (with the

Ford Foundation listserv) the article, "Who is Funding Black Lives Matter," written by

Ellen McGirt (2016) for *Fortune*. The brief article outlines the nature and amount of the

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[11] One of the many privileges afforded to Ford Fellows is access to the Ford listserv, through which scholars
at various professional levels share articles, insights, latest publications, job and funding opportunities.
Fellows also share think pieces written by themselves and others on pressing issues of the day.

Ford Foundation's support for the MFBL. I suggested, in my email, the article also implies this newfound partnership is raising the eyebrow of a few onlookers. To support my claim, I cited the above-mentioned publications. Only one person responded to my post, or to McGirt's argument. Of the over one thousand members of the listserv responded, the respondent did not perceive the same suspicion as I.

However unresponsive and unreserved my fellow Ford Fellows might have been implication of my relationship with the Ford Foundation was quite clear to one of my interlocutors. As he and I enjoyed soaking up the sun at the home he shares with his wife, he asked astutely, how is it I had the financial wherewithal to conduct a years' worth of field research, and in two sites, no less? I informed him of the Ford Foundation Predoctoral Fellowship I was awarded in the early stages of my graduate study, and how it has sustained me throughout my fieldwork. Following this revelation, my interlocutor looked at me squarely and asked, "And what do they want from you in return?" (Personal Communication, 2016). His inquiry suggested suspicion about the Foundation's motives for funding such a topic—one about a Black Nationalist provisional government that seeks neither police reform, nor social, cultural, or political inclusion. And he is right to be sleptical. Even today, there is concern that academic research done with/for/on communities and organizations may be used for nefariously by governments, militaries, and corporations. Hence, Sara Koopman (2016) warns in a recent essay penned for the Annals of American Association of Geographers, "Beware: Your Research Could be Weaponized" (p. 530).

I should say, the project I conducted is not the one I proposed to the Ford Foundation. My proposal suggested I would build upon my previous research on the

decline of Black farmers and Black farmland throughout the South (Grant, Wood, & Wright, 2012; Wright, 2010, 2013). However, between the time I submitted my proposal and the time I executed my research, my dissertation topic—as dissertations often do— changed. I firmly believe had I proposed a historical geography of the PGRNA, centering on the government's lasting spatial and political legacies, my chances of having been awarded a predoctoral fellowship would have significantly diminished.

Reflecting on Detroit, Michigan

Throughout seven months of research in Detroit, I experienced an unexpected and unprecedented level of access to organizations, citizens of the RNA, social gatherings, and primary data. I participated in organizational meetings, political strategy sessions, public access radio shows, rallies, dinners, and the funerals of celebrated New Afrikan citizens. Part of this access was due to the fact I share similar political orientations as those whom I sought to interview—that being a desire to alleviate the dire living conditions of Black communities throughout America. Second, supportive recommendations on my behalf from friends, family, and colleagues set the tone for my arrival in Detroit and Jackson and the duration of my stay. These recommendations resulted in new friendships, housing opportunities, key interviews, access to meetings and ceremonies, and my invitation to join a reading group comprised of Detroit residents.

In Detroit, a friend and colleague helped established my entry into a number of organizational and political communities. As an engaged researcher, this colleague has lived in Detroit for a number of years, all the while, developing relationships across the city's diffuse political, social, and cultural geographies. For instance, as a resident of the

Detroit's East, this scholar had extensive relationships with the James and Grace Lee Boggs Center to Nurture Community Leadership (Boggs Center), Freedom Freedom Farms, and Earthworks Urban Farms (Earthworks)—political and ecological spaces whose members exhibit the humanist ethic espoused by Grace Lee Boggs (Boggs, 1998). While attending events at the Boggs Center or workdays at Freedom Freedom Farms and Earthworks, it was a common encounter to strike up conversations with people of varied histories, experiences, and political affiliations. In my analysis, Grace Lee Boggs' humanist theories and praxis has made parts of Detroit's East Side a haven for people of various races, ages, abilities, gender and sexual preferences.

Through this interlocutor I was made aware of political and cultural projects on Detroit's West Side, such as D-Town Farms and Nandi's Knowledge Café. Malik Yakini, the former principal of an African-centered school, spearheads D-Town Farms. Both of these communal spaces exude a Black Nationalist politic, an Afrocentric cultural aesthetic, and a desire to contribute to the educational, nutritional, and cultural uplift of Black people in Detroit. D-Town does so via farming and workshops. Nandi's does so via cultural events and its bookstore. It is common to encounter attendees of African descent, with African names, wearing African-inspired attire. Over time, I came to understand that this cultural strain of Black Nationalism was tied to the RNA. A number of its key citizens (e.g. Imari and Gaidi Obadele and Chokwe Lumumba) lived on Detroit's West Side. Through such experiences, I began to develop a localized knowledge of the city's political geography.

Reflecting on Jackson, Mississippi

Personal and professional relationships had a positive influence on my fieldwork in Jackson, particularly on my housing arrangement. As the result of an acquaintance's strong recommendation, a family of three, all of whom are members of an organization central to my study welcomed me into their home. I lived with this family for the duration of my study. Living with this household made me privy to personal and political conversations during informal gatherings (i.e. over breakfast, family reunions, and drinks). It also – along with my participation in events – hastened my acceptance by members of Cooperation Jackson, an organization created to farm cooperatively-owned businesses in Jackson. Members of this group include longtime Jackson residents, recent transplants, supporters and members of the late Chokwe Lumumba's mayoral campaign. Through my connection with Cooperation Jackson, I learned more about Mayor Lumumba's transition from radical lawyer/New Afrikan to mayor. I also gained a firsthand account of one of the many legacies of the RNA in Jackson.

During the course of my study it also became clear that my African heritage aided my research. One participant, whom I interviewed and who provided ample audiovisual materials, informed me she did not provide such primary data to a white doctoral student who studied the RNA years prior. According to this respondent, no matter how dedicated he was to sharing the story of the RNA, she could not bring herself to share sensitive documents with him because of his whiteness.

My name also benefitted my research. I owe much of my social immersion and access to participants, meetings, and primary data – in Detroit and Jackson – to my name. It was not my surname that helped facilitated acceptance, but my middle name, "Jamaal." Prior to engaging this study I was forewarned of the potential impact of my

forename by a former professor. He told me her felt my first name, "Willie," might create some barriers within my research because it is not of African origin. Within the New Afrikan Independence Movement, an African name often serves as a marker of one's break from Western society (and one's *slave name*) and into one's New Afrikan subjecthood. Referencing a participant in his research on New Afrikan naming practices, Edward Onaci (2015) describes this break as his respondent's "symbolic departure from his former existence and his commitment to the new life 'of an African revolutionary'" (p. 67-68). Within the RNA, adopting or being bestowed an African name was a capstone, a prerequisite of one's citizenship. Over the course of my research, I came to go exclusively by my middle name, which until I began fieldwork, was used exclusively by blood relatives and those who knew of me through these kin. However, two incidents, one in Detroit and the other in Jackson, prompted my decision to expand the audience of those with whom I go by "Jamaal." Near the end of my tenure in Detroit, I called an elder member of the MXGM. It was a follow-up to our introduction days prior, from which I hoped to secure an interview. Following my greeting, I entered into my phone interview request script, with which I had become all too familiar; "Peace Brother ____. This is Willie. The brother you met at …" Before I could go any further, I was abruptly interrupted. "You ain't got no African name, brother?!," he queried harshly. It was the first time that my forename, Willie, which, up until this point, I had gone by all throughout my research in Detroit, had been challenged as inauthentic, as un-African. The second challenge occurred not long after I arrived in Jackson, as I attempted to settle into the home of my host family. One day, the head of the household called for me using my forename, "Willie." This was not her first time doing so. However, she intended for it to be her last.

Visibly shaken, she said, "We're gonna have to do something about this 'Willie' thing." Though annoyed by her aversion to my forename, I chose not to fight the process, and instead, to compromise. I was thinking about my research and doing whatever necessary to gain access to her thoughts and knowledge. "Well, my middle name is Jamaal," I said. To this day, she and most others in Jackson refer to me as "Jamaal."

In addition to going by my "African name," conducting field research in the original and adopted home of the RNA aided in the development of trusting relationships, led to my respectful scrutiny of, and me receiving scrutiny from, community members. It also created many opportunities for me to demonstrate my dedication to writing a comprehensive study of the RNA's ongoing legacy. For, as before mentioned, to date, all other studies have relied on historical and secondary data, and, at most, brief forays into Detroit, Jackson, and other locations in order to interview participants.

Developing an Appreciation for Archival Research

Prior to this study, I conducted very little archival research. Through this process, I learned archival research would require a level of discipline and preparation for which I was inexperienced. When conducting archival research, one does not know, on any given day, what a box and/or file will hold. I quickly learned visiting an archive for a few hours was an unproductive way of conducting research. As a result, I decided that on days during which I conducted archival work, I would sit in the archive from the time it opened to the time it closed. As leaving for lunch would impede my research process and take valuable time and interrupt my research, I learned to bring a lunch to the library. This structure increased my familiarity with each library, its staff, its rules, and the files I handled.

Throughout the course of my study, archival research served several purposes. For one, it provided primary data with which to corroborate or rebut the claims of respondents. Also, information gleaned from archives informed and transformed my interview schedule, prompting questions I had not previously considered. Third, by conducting archival research at the onset of my field studies, prior to conducting interviews, I was more likely to be familiar with the historical and cultural references made by respondents during interviews. The overall result of this process substantially improved the quality of my interviews and everyday conversations.

Institutional Archives

In Michigan, I gathered a vast amount of primary data from archives. In Detroit, I visited three libraries at Wayne State University (WSU). My time in the Reuther Library Archive of Labor and Urban Affairs led to the accumulation of an array of memos, letters, and documents pertaining to Detroit's deep history of labor struggles, the 1967 Detroit rebellion, along with the responses to this event by white and Black residents of the city, civil rights leaders and business magnates. Inside the Reuther Library I developed cordial relationships with archivists and learned, firsthand, of their importance to any historical project. Field archivist, Dr. Louis Jones, went out of his way to assist me in locating documents and by suggesting Detroiters with whom I should speak.

WSU's Kresge Library houses microfiche of articles from Detroit's local newspapers. These papers date back to the early 1900s. Due to time constraints, I was unable to access as many papers as I desired. However, I was able to scroll through and save many copies of the Michigan Chronicle from 1968 to 1995. The Michigan Chronicle

was a Black-owned newspaper that reported on matters stemming from and impacting

Detroit's Black communities. Early editions contained writings from Dr. Imari Obadele

(a.k.a. Richard Henry), Gaidi Obadele (a.k.a. Milton Henry), Reverend Jaramagi Abebe

Agyeman (a.k.a. Albert Cleage), and other Black political figures.

Last, within WSU's Law Library I located a copy of *Free the Land!: Reflections in*

Honor of the Significant Life, Contributions, Battles and Victories of Revolutionary Mayor

Chokwe Lumumba, Esq. This rare book, edited by Charles Ezra Ferrell, Director of the

Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, is a compilation of reflections

and poems from family members and close friends of the late Mayor of Jackson, and

Detroit native, Chokwe Lumumba.

Other university archives proved beneficial to this study. While at the University of

Michigan-Ann Arbor's Bentley Library, I accessed the personal papers of Harry Haywood

and Robin F. William. Haywood was a Black Communist and theorist whose writings

propelled the notion of the need for a Black nation-state – known as the Black Belt Thesis

– in the Black Belt South (Haywood, 1948). Williams, on the other hand, is the father of

the revolutionary sixties. As one-time president of the NAACP chapter in Monroe, North

Carolina, Williams was forced into exile following a kidnapping charge. While in self-

imposed exile in Cuba (and subsequently in the People's Republic of China) Williams was

nominated the first President of the PGRNA (Tyson, 1999). Within his papers, I acquired

international news clippings and photos detailing his role as President of the PGRNA, his

life abroad, and the geopolitical relationships he established with anti-capitalist

governments in Latin America, Asia, and Africa.

During my tenure in Jackson I hoped to visit three archives. However, I was only able to conduct research at one – Jackson State University's (JSU) Margaret Walker Center. Inside this institute are a number of collections addressing the RNA's relocation to and impact upon the people and city of Jackson. Of particular importance was the personal archive of the novelist, Margaret Walker, author of *Jubilee*. Within her journal entries were her recollections of the August 8, 1971, the day the FBI, the Mississippi State Police, and the Jackson Police Department conducted a pre-dawn raid on the RNA's homestead. Following the melee, her son, Sigismund C. Walker, was arrested as one of the RNA-11. I also accessed the personal papers of Professor Frankye Adams-Johnson, a JSU professor and former Black Panther. Her files include materials pertaining to RNA meetings and political education tools.

Table 1.1 Names and locations of institutional archives and collections

Detroit, Michigan	Institution	Collections
Reuther Archive of Labor History	Wayne State University	
Athur Neef Law Library	Wayne State University	Copy of "Free the Land: Reflections in honor of the significant life, contributions, battles, and victories of revolutionary mayor Chokwe Lumumba, Esq."
Purdy/Kresge Library	Wayne State University	Editions of the Michigan Chronicle dating back to

Ann Arbor, Michigan	Institution	Collections
Bentley Historical Library	University of Michigan–Ann Arbor	Harry Haywood papers, 1928-1985. Robert Lewis Williams papers, 1929-1970.

Jackson, Mississippi	Institution	Collections
Margaret Walker Center	Jackson State University	**Adams-Johnson, Frankye. Black Panther Party—Collection. ca. 1975-1995. Alexander, Margaret Walker—Personal Papers. 1929-1998.** Republic of New Afrika papers. Margaret Walker papers

My research is also grounded in primary data acquired directly from research participants. As my relationships with participants strengthened, some invited me to review documents and photographs they had amassed over decades of organizing. Some of these included a former colleague of Mayor Chokwe Lumumba, a former student of Dr. Imari Obadele, and New Afrikan citizens. The next section addresses my process for accessing personal archives.

Personal Archives

The personal archives (e.g. documents, photographs, and video material) of local residents provided illuminating access to the publications, images, and voices of citizens and cabinet members of the original cadre of the Provisional Government of the Republic of New Afrika (PGRNA). My sampling procedure for accessing these archives was an extension of my interview sampling procedure. I relied on convenience sampling (i.e. snowball sampling) to meet participants. Patton (2002) refers to this respondent-led process as an "approach for locating information-rich key informants or critical cases" (p. 237). By locating such information-rich informants, I increased the likelihood of encountering rich personal archives.

Once a level of trust and camaraderie was established with participants, I inquired as to whether they were in possession of documents, photographs, and/or videos pertaining to the RNA. When presented with documents, and with the permission of my respondent, I used the CamScanner application on my phone to capture an image of the document for my personal records. If the documents consisted of a few pages, I completed this process in

the presence of my interlocutor. However, if they were numerous, and if I had a strong rapport with my respondent, I would take the documents home, scan, and promptly return them to their owner.

In total, I reviewed and scanned documents and received copies of audiovisual materials from eight personal archives – two in Detroit, one in Louisville, Kentucky, three in Jackson, one in Louisiana, and one in Houston, Texas. One archive to which I am particularly grateful to have entered, is the Louisville-based collection of the late Guyanese scholar and writer, Jan Rynweld Carew. A respected pan-Africanist scholar, Professor Carew lived through numerous historical and political periods, which he chronicled in two texts – *Moscow is not my Mecca* and *Ghosts in our Blood: With Malcolm X in Africa, England, and the Caribbean* (J. R. Carew, 1964, 1994). He and his widow, Dr. Joy Carew, are my former professors. While in Louisville for a weekend, a stop in between my relocation from Detroit to Jackson, I received Dr. Carew's permission to peruse her late husband's extensive collection of documents, correspondence, and manuscripts.

Other interlocutors included a former student of Dr. Imari Obadele who studied political science with Dr. Obadele during his time as a faculty member at Prairie View A&M University. As was customary of Dr. Obadele, he penned the texts from which he taught. As a result of my longstanding personal relationship with this interlocutor, I was given permission to scan two texts: *Texas Government: A Summary* and *A Brief History of Black Struggle in America*. My ability to access a diverse set of personal documents speaks to the trust I developed with local people as well as the desire of New Afrikan citizens and local people to have the story of the RNA told from the perspective of the New Afrikans who imagined, and who are working to build, a New Afrikan republic.

Semi-structured Interviews

I conducted a total of 35 semi-structured interviews with individuals who identify as 'New Afrikans,' with activists, students, academics, and everyday residents of Detroit and Jackson. Interviews took place across multiple locations: Detroit, Jackson, Atlanta, and Houston. It was my process to enter each interview with a set of questions/issues I wanted to address based on the respondent, their history and perceived based of knowledge. However, it was also my practice to allow space for the interviewees to direct the course of our conversations, with slight re-directions from interviewer when needed. Throughout the course of my research, I discovered archival research greatly enhanced the quality of my research questions and interviews. As a result of reading through historical accounts prior to conducting interviews, I was knowledgeable of and could speak to historical accounts as they arose during conversations.

Alternative Forms of Data

Internet and Social Media

As the use of social media has exploded among the general public, researchers have begun to track its influence and use. In a study of scholars' motivation for adopting social media into their research activities, Gruzd, Staves, and Wilk (2012) state, "it is clear that while there are limits to adoption, scholars are beginning to use social media for a wide variety of purposes in their professional lives" (p. 2342). Despite scholars' growing interest in the use of social media, in particular, blogs and social networking sites, there has yet to develop a keen interest in studying and illustrating how social media is being

used – or can be used – as a tool for data collection. Throughout the course of this study, it

became obvious that social media platforms were not only forums through which local

residents kept in touch with one another and expressed views regarding local, national, and

international politics, they were instrumental to the deepening of my place-based

knowledge of the past and present histories of Detroit and Jackson.By participating on

social networking sites like Facebook, GroupMe, and various listservs,[12] I was informed of

historical events, current struggles, views regarding municipal and state governance,

municipal proceedings, upcoming events, ceremonies, deaths and commemorations,

ceremonies, deaths and funerals.

Virtual and Audiovisual Archives

　　　　Kalamazoo College's library system has documents drafted by Mayor Chokwe

Lumumba during his time as an undergraduate student. These writings speak to his

political awareness and engagement prior to his involvement with the RNA. Another

virtual archive of import is Vanderbilt University's Vanderbilt Television News Archive. I

learned of this resource from a respondent. As "the most extensive and complete archive of

television news," the Vanderbilt Television News Archive has catalogued national

broadcasts from as far back as August 5, 1968.[13] Some of these broadcasts include political

events in Detroit and Jackson that relate to my research. I have secured and analyzed these

broadcasts for my study.

　　　　From my Jackson-based host, I was able to copy numerous videos of past

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[12] The first was that of the Detroit Jacobin reading group, a weekly group of longtime and recent residents who gathered weekly to discuss readings pertaining to Detroit's radical history. Through the listserv we shared and decided on readings to discuss in the upcoming week. Some topics we discussed during group meetings were the histories of land, education, and labor in the city of Detroit. The Detroit City of Hope (DCOH) listserv was instrumental in informing me of various gatherings, rallies, and demonstrations happening in the city. To this day, I receive updates concerning functions and issues in the city.
[13] http://tvnews.vanderbilt.edu/?SID=20160808812530517 Retrieved August 9, 2016.

gatherings of the RNA and speeches by RNA officials. A separate respondent supplied me

with her personal recordings of speaking engagement by Dr. Obadele and other New

Afrikan citizens. Last, from the city of Jackson's public records, I acquired a video

recording of a 2005 city council meeting during which Dr. Obadele recalled the night of

August 8, 1971, the night when the JPD, Mississippi State Police Department, and FBI

conducted a pre-dawn raid on the RNA homestead.

Participatory Observation

In Detroit, much of my participant observations occurred at urban farms, chiefly

Freedom Freedom Farms on Detroit's east side, and the D-Town Farms, located on the

city's west side. I also conducted observations of New Era Detroit's (NED)—a local Black

power/political organization—open community meetings at local Black-owned businesses,

namely, Nandi's Knowledge Café and Bert's Marketplace. While in Jackson, I conducted

participant observations at Cooperation Jackson and the Cooperative Community of New

West Jackson (CCNWJ). I worked chiefly within the urban farms of these two

organizations venture. My work with Cooperation Jackson also included volunteering at

conferences (*New Afrikan Nation Day* and *Black Power, Black Lives, and Pan-Africanism*

Conference) and other weekly events. During this time I also became a member of the

Council for Economic Justice (CEJ), a local group composed of mostly of residents of

Jackson. The CEJ works to promote economic democracy within the city and state via

demonstrations, education sessions, and weekly meetings.

Towards the end of my stay in Jackson I also began to assist in promoting (via

Facebook, Twitter, and other mediums) *Voices from Grassroots*, a local radio show aired

on WMPR 90.1 and hosted by members of the Jackson Chapter of the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement (MXGM). By joining in and showing my dedication to these community groups, I was able to develop professional and personal bonds with longtime residents of Jackson.

A key example of the extra-research relationships I developed with participants came at the end of the fieldwork in Jackson. In the week prior to my relocation back to Chapel Hill, North Carolina where I would begin work on the analytical and writing phases of my research, I suffered a serious health incident, resulting in my hospitalization in Jackson for over a week. Without request, members of Cooperation Jackson, MXGM, and CCNWJ came to my aid, bringing home cooked food and offering to stay overnight with me inside the hospital. One member even took off work to be by my bedside. Their displays of care and sacrifice were markers of a cooperative ethic, one that transcended race, class, time, and money. Their selfless attentiveness also illustrated that, in the eyes of more than a few, I was seen, respected, and loved as more than a researcher. I was, as a white member of Cooperation Jackson remarked while at my bedside, family.

Data Analysis

I rely on a triangulation approach to data analysis based, in varying weights on the interviews, archival data, and participant observation in Detroit and Jackson. Each of these forms of data informs my understanding of the formation of the PGRNA, its maturation/geographic diffusion, and ultimately, its remobilization. To assist in coding

interview responses, I utilized Atlas-ti, qualitative data analysis software. Furthermore, as this is a participatory project, the validity of my study is not only determined by the software but by the participants with whom I spent many hours, days, and months working and living, and studying amongst in Detroit and Jackson.

Dissemination

I have plans to disseminate this research in a variety of ways. First, I plan to present findings from this research to the communities with which I received the support and information needed to conduct this study. Prior to departing from Detroit, Michigan Charles Ferrell, the Director of the Charles H. Wright Museum on African American Culture and History asked me to participate on a panel on the RNA. He is in the process of coordinating a community presentation for the 2018 calendar year. Second, I hope to present findings before an audience in Jackson, likely at the Chokwe Lumumba Center for Economic Democracy and Development. During the course of my fieldwork, the Lumumba Center hosted numerous community events in which panelists presented on topics such as the struggle of Kurdish people in Turkey and the resistances of Palestinians against assaults by the Israeli government. Second, I have plans to present findings from this research at two national conferences—the conference of the American Association of Geographers and the National Council of Black Studies conference. These conferences will provide opportunities to present before professional audiences within disciplines— Geography and Black Studies—my research engages and to learn from audience feedback.

Last, I have already begun disseminating much of the archival data I have acquired to family members and comrades of citizens of the RNA in Detroit and Jackson, along

with RNA citizens. In one instance, I provided a copy of a recording of Dr. Imari Obadele speaking before the Jackson City Council to RNA citizens who were a part of the RNA-11, a group of RNA citizens and supporters arrested and tried for murder and weapons charges following a pre-dawn raid upon an RNA homestead. I acquired this video from the city of Jackson's Department of Public Records. Well aware that my privilege—economic, educational, and social—has provided extensive access to documents, photographs and videos, I am compelled and honored to be able to offer these artifacts to current citizens, their families and comrades.

Last, the multi-sited nature of my research has made it so that I have been able to access institutional and personal archives that previous scholars were either unaware of or simply unable to access. I would like to make this information available to future scholars interested in the RNA, particularly those without the financial, professional, and political capital with which to obtain this information. I have already provided information to one scholar and am currently considering ways to broaden the scope of my impact via a digital humanities format.

CHAPTER 3

History of the Republic of New Afrika

Introduction

A history of the Provisional Government of the Republic of New Afrika (RGRNA) is incomplete without reference to the historical interpolations of race, class struggle, and spatial segregation in Detroit how they relate to the political development of two the PGRNA's founders and the development of the nation itself. In this chapter, I address the historical and multi-spatial development of the RNA in Detroit and Jackson through a working history of repression and resistance in Detroit, Michigan. I preference the history of the RNA with commentaries on the lived realities of Black workers and communities in Detroit, Michigan, prior to the formation of the PGRNA, and the migration of New Afrikan citizens to the parts throughout the Deep South, in particular.

Since its days as the "arsenal of democracy" to the present, Detroit has been a city fraught with contradiction, challenges that often emerged in the form of struggles for workers rights against the big three (Ford Motor Company, General Motors, and Chrysler Motor Company), particular Henry Ford (LeDuff, 2013; Martelle, 2012). Though lauded for introducing the assembly line to automobile production and paying laborers $5 a day, Henry Ford was also a known enemy of unions and collective bargaining, not to mention, an anti-Semite (Georgakas & Surkin, 1998). To stem the populist surge of unionized workers lobbying for higher wages and better working conditions, Henry Ford would hire

goons—his own police force—to attack workers on strike and monitor the habits of

laborers while at work and at home. Despite the communalities that existed between the

struggles of autoworkers, white factory workers[14]—in large part—remained averse to

integrating local unions.

Many of the Black laborers working in the automobile factories and foundries

migrated north seeking economic independence and social-political asylum from a region

that represented the geographer, Bobby Wilson (2000), states represented itself as

"America's Johannesburg." Though earning a living wage, more often than not, these men

were given the most menial and dangerous jobs. Their white Southern counterparts, on the

other hand, were provided more opportunities for upward mobility. Often times, in order to

secure these humble positions, Black applicants had to acquire recommendations from one

of any number of Black social institutions (e.g. churches and the Urban League) aligned

with Ford Motor Company (Martelle, 2012). Entrance into unions was also a hard fought

battle. And once admitted, Black workers were viewed and treated as second class by their

fellow workers and union representatives. As a result, Black workers formed their own,

more radical labor unions, such as the League of Revolutionary Workers (Ahmad, 1979;

Georgakas & Surkin, 1998).

The novelist, James Baldwin (1985), recalls, in one of his numerous autobiographic

accounts of growing up Black in Harlem, that, admitted into unions, white union

representatives extracted the lifeblood of Black workers—that which was left after Black

[14] This included white Detroiters who were longtime residents of the city and recent immigrants who earned their citizenship (i.e. whiteness) by excepting a racial wage of white supremacy drawn from the exploitation and brutalization of Blacks in America (Dubois, 1935; Ignatiev, 1995; Roediger, 1991).

workers had given their all on the factory floor. In a sense, they were no different than the

capitalists against whom they claimed to struggle:

> I used to carry my father's union dues downtown for him sometimes. I hated everyone in that den of thieves, especially the man who took the envelope from me, the envelope which contained my father's hard-earned money, that envelope which contained bread for his children. "Thieves," I thought, "every one of you!" And I know I was right about that, and I have not changed my mind.

Despite its northern exposure, in many ways,[15] particularly in terms of employment

and housing, Detroit was as racist as the Jim Crow South. Indeed, many white Southerners

sought employment in Detroit, bringing with them the interpersonal, institutional, and

fraternal forms of discrimination and terror honed down South. It was commonplace for

everyday white citizens of Detroit to terrorize Black neighborhoods through the actions of

clandestine white supremacists groups like the Black Legion and the forceful eviction of

Black families who dared to integrate white neighborhoods, a process that was known as

"block busting" (Boyle, 2004; Georgakas & Surkin, 1998; Martelle, 2012; Moskowitz,

2017; Sugrue, 1996).

Alongside its explosive growth as the "arsenal of democracy," during the turn of

the 20th century, Detroit underwent a spatial explosion that rendered it a key site for the

study of race and space in urban America. Thomas Sugrue's (1996), *The Origins of the*

Urban Crisis, presents Detroit as the birthplace of suburban expansion, an economic and

spatial process that was federally sponsored and managed by state and local municipal

leaders. Suburbanization was, essentially, a state-sponsored disenfranchisement of Black

communities. Funneling funding into the suburbs through racially coded subsidized

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[15] One need only to look to the history of the Klan-like clandestine society, the Black Legions, the city's race riots, and the white mobs that would convene and forcibly evict Black families audacious enough to attempt to block bust (i.e. integrate) all white neighborhoods. The most famous example of residential mob behavior in Detroit is the attempted eviction of Dr. Ossian Sweet.

lending helped convert Detroit from a model city to an urban crisis.[16] The "emergence of persistent, concentrated, racialized poverty in Rust Belt cities" like Detroit was, by no means, an accident (Sugrue, 1996, p. 4). One could successfully argue that the defense of the residential color line through red-lining, a federal process denying subsidies to residents based on the density of (un)desirable races, was as steadfast here as it was in the South. And, as it was in the South, this residential front was held through an intractable combination of racial violence and institutionalized racism.

Thus, the "remarkable growth of the postwar [capitalist] American economy," and its itinerant spatial outcrops (e.g. suburbs), were the result (in reverse) of what Neil Smith (1982) has spoken to—in regards to gentrification in urban America—as uneven development (Sugrue, 1996, p. 6). Then, as in today, processes seen by Smith (1982) as solely "part of a larger class strategy," were, in fact, entrenched in white supremacy and anti-Blackness (p. 153). The development of Detroit's suburbs—fiscally, spatially, and racially—could not have occurred without the deliberate disinvestment from and ghettoization of Detroit's Black urban core. One might argue, and I would place myself among such a chorus of scholars, that the revanchist city to which Smith (1996) has given nomenclature, has roots in an anti-Black post-war Detroit (not to mention a Jim Crow apartheid South (Woods, 1993)).[17] One particularly telling quote from Sugrue (1996), is

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[16] This distinction exists to this day. One of the clearing racialized demarcations signifying municipal difference are the boundaries separating Detroit's Jefferson Chalmers community from Grosse Pointe Park, a suburb that abuts it to the east. Over the years municipal leaders in Grosse Pointe Park, which has a variety of grocers (e.g. Trader Joes and Krogers) absent throughout much of Detroit, has gone through varying lengths to separate the two communities. In order to block Kercheval Avenue, a main thoroughfare that connects the two, the Grosse Pointe city council erected farmers market sheds (McGraw, 2014), large planters (Harmon, 2015), and even piles of snow (Felton, 2014) as a (un)natural barrier between the to two communities.

[17] No doubt this form of vengeful city existed among the plantation societies of the South, as illustrated by Clyde Woods (1998), in his thorough analysis of the reformation of post-emancipation plantation blocs in the

give credence to this assertion. He states, concerning the Detroit's racialized geography, "By the outbreak of WWII the geography of Detroit had come to be defined in terms of white and black" (p. 22). The growth of Detroit's housing market showed that suburbanization (gentrification in inverse) was an explicitly racialized process. Residents received financing and adequate housing based on the perceived value of their race. Such that one outcome of this racial-spatial process of white suburbanization and Black ghettoization is it whiteness was identified as property (i.e. value) (Freund, 2010; Harris, 1993).

The expansion of America's highway system elevated the living conditions of Detroit's white middle class, moving them further from the city's core and its Black populace. Following the imposition of the city's intra-state highway system, says Martelle (2012), "Metropolitan Detroit...began spreading like a stain" (p. 179). For Black families relegated to the city's inner core by racist restrictive covenants to the city's inner core, these urban expansions were equivalent to spatial pogroms. Back in the city, Black families were corralled into dense, decrepit, and dangerous boarding houses. As a result, predominately Black communities such as Black Bottom and Paradise Valley existed as "small orbits ancillary to most of [white] American life" (Coleman, 2014; Martelle, 2012, p. xi). A report by the Crain's Detroit, a Detroit-based news outlet illustrates how Hastings Street, once a major economic corridor for the city's Black Bottom and Paradise Valley neighborhoods was razed, its remains became to foundations of the Chrysler Highway (Coleman, 2014; Pinho, 2017).

Mississippi Delta, along with their role in the continued underdevelopment of the state and its Black geographies.

As white residents fought to keep Black families from becoming their neighbors, communities became, according to Sugrue (1996), "fiercely contested terrain" (p. 12). Challenges to residential spaces were evident in a number of instances whereby well-to-do Black families—often times fleeing increasingly overcrowded ghettos—attempted to block bust (i.e. integrate) all white neighborhoods. Dr. Ossian Sweet, a Black physician, would become the poster child of efforts to block bust and the staunch responses to such efforts by white homeowners. Dr. Sweet was well aware of the risk of attempting to move into an all white neighborhood. Well aware of the risk of violence, he enlisted some friend and colleagues to assist him and his family in the move. Along with furniture, the caravan of movers brought a small array of firearms to defend against aggressors.

A historical marker,[18] placed in front of what was formerly the Sweet residence, commemorates their struggle for the right to live a life of their choosing. However, as I was informed by Jamon Jordan, President of the Detroit chapter of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH), during his Black August driving tour of Detroit, what the plaque does not state is that due to the time spent in jail, Dr. Sweet's wife and daughter died not long after being released—as a result of illnesses acquired during their imprisonment. Furthermore, Dr. Sweet, no doubt tormented by his losses, eventually committed suicide.[19] The Sweet family's protracted struggle is but one indicator of how, in Detroit, the production of race and space was co-constitutive.

In addition, to clashes with industrial capitalists over living wages and safe, stable employment, and struggles for safe and adequate housing, Black Detroiters were in an all

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[18] See Figure 1.1

[19] Personal Communication. Jamon Jordan. Black August Tour. Detroit, Michigan, August 15, 2015.

out struggle with the Detroit Police Department (DPD). It was a general consensus among Black Detroiters that rather than protecting and serving the city's Black workers and residents, that the DPD operated more like an occupying force in Black communities on the city's east and west side. According to a report by the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, commonly known as the Kerner Commission, "there was a long history of conflict between the police department and citizens. During the labor battles of the 1930's, union members had come to view the Detroit Police Department as a strike-breaking force" (1968, p. 48). This longstanding conflictual relationship came to a boiling point one summer night on the city's west side. During the early morning hours on Sunday, July 22, 1967, as servicemen gathered at a blind pig (i.e. an after-hours club) to celebrate the return of two Vietnam veterans, the DPD's Tactical Mobile Unit raided the United Community and Civic League. Suspecting no more than a dozen revelers, DPD officers encountered more than eighty. As they were escorted out, a large crowd developed in the neighborhood. According to observers, officers got rough with the patrons, who, armed with a since of Black pride—and, no doubt, desensitized to fear due to combat—fought back. Area residents joined them in their efforts.

With the situation out of hand, officers called for back up. But by then, it was too late. This incident of police brutality had ignited a powder keg primed to blow. According to Darden and Thomas (2013), "One could reasonably argue that the black anger and frustration in the 1960s that finally erupted in 1967 stemmed in no small way from the countless expressions of white hostility directed toward blacks throughout the 1950s (p. 4). These hostilities came from the largely white DPD and white residents, who themselves represented a civil police force.

The fiery revolt would last a week and cause an inconceivable amount of damage to people and property, prompting Governor Milliken to call in the Michigan National Guard and the 103rd Airborne. In the midst of the turmoil, local and state police along with American military forces terrorized residents (The National Criminal Justice Reference Service, 1968). One incident, in particular, came to represent the police brutality meted out that week. During the turmoil of the revolt, three DPD officers stormed the Algiers Motel, under the auspices that they had encountered sniper fire from an upstairs window. Inside the motel a group of young men and women socialized. Three members of the soul group, The Dramatics, were also present (Hersey, 1968).

As officers stormed the building, they discharged their weapons and beat the inhabitants (men and women). By the end of the night, three Black men—Carl Cooper, Auburey Pollard, and Fred Temple—lay dead. In the court hearing that followed, DPD officers, Ronald August, Robert Paille, and David Senak were tried for murder. Despite witness testimony from a number of tenants inside the Algiers Motel, all three officers were exonerated (Hersey, 1968). Today, the site at which the Algiers Motel was located is an empty lot surrounded by rod-iron fencing. Though the motel no longer exist, the impact of this event lingers to this day in how the stories of this incident and the uprising, itself, are told.[20]

According to Joe Darden and Thomas (2013), "a generation of blacks and whites experienced the riot in dramatically different ways" (p. 2). In letters sent to Mayor James Cavanagh, in the aftermath of the uprising, white and Black residents shared starkly different perspectives on the start of the uprising and how the city should respond (if at all) to communities ravaged by fire and looting. In *Beautiful Wasteland: The Rise of Detroit as*

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[20] *Detroit*, a motion picture film called based on the 1967 uprising, premiers August 4, 2017.

America's Postindustrial Frontier, Rebecca Kinney (2016) argues that the perspectives of many white adults who fled Detroit in the 1950s and 1960s are that of an idyllic, race-neutral city that was destroyed by Black leadership and uncouth Black dissidents—a storyline that contributes to the current narrative regarding the city's rebirth.

For many, the eruption of Detroit, a city once considered a model[21] of economic development and social mobility, was nothing less than startling. In the aftermath of the rebellion, Otto Kerner, Governor of Illinois, chaired the Kerner Commission, a group responsible for investigating the cause of civil uprisings that rocked eight of America's cities during the summer of 1967.[22] A section of the Kerner Commission report entitled "Why Did It Happen?" list a number of factors believed to have contributed to the 1967 rebellions. Of the various factors reported the Committee stated, "white racism is essentially responsible for the explosive mixture which has been accumulating in our cities since the end of World War II" (The National Criminal Justice Reference Service, 1968, p. 91) Though overt racism from individual whites was said to foment this volatile concoction, police brutality was often the spark that ignited urban rebellions. Said the Commission, "…almost invariably, the incident that incites disorders arises from police action… "[T]o many Negroes, police have come to symbolize white power, white racism,

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[21] Detroit, Michigan was one of a number of cities selected for the Model Cities program, a project spurred by President Lyndon B. Johnson's "Great Society" and "War on Poverty" campaigns. Jerome Cavanagh, mayor of Detroit, was the only elected official to serve on President Johnson's task force. It seemed that the Detroit of 1967 was primed to be an exemplar of a city on the upswing, a far cry from the declining metropolis inherited by Mayor Cavanagh when he assumed office January 2, 1962. Therefore, it, no doubt, came as a surprise to business leaders, Washington insiders, and Mayor Cavanagh, himself, that Detroit became the seat of the nation's most costly urban rebellion; especially considering race relations was thought of by some as perhaps, the "most noteworthy accomplishment of the Cavanagh administration" (Fine, 1989, p. 18).

[22] The cities in question were Tampa, Cincinnati, Atlanta, Newark, Northern New Jersey, Plainfield, New Brunswick, and Detroit.

and white oppression. And the fact is that many police do reflect and express these white

attitudes" (The National Criminal Justice Reference Service, 1968, p. 93).

Following the 1967 Detroit uprising, tense relations continued between the DPD

and Black Detroiters. This relationship was further exacerbated with the formation of a

special operations unit known as Stop the Robberies, Enjoy Safe Streets (STRESS). It did

so by luring individuals and arresting alleged offenders while in the midst of a crime.

STRESS officers were often stationed in Black communities, those considered areas of

high crime. Within Detroit's Black communities STRESS was known for police brutality,

for beatings, and even, killing area residents. STRESS was dismantled in 1973, following

the election of Mayor Coleman A. Young, Detroit's first Black mayor (Young, 1994).

In a now famous press conference, Mayor Young put the city's criminals (those in

the community and those in law enforcement on notice:

> We must build a new people-oriented Police Department, and then you and they
> can help us to drive the criminals from the streets. I issue a forward warning now to
> all dope pushers, to all ripoff artists, to all muggers: It's time to leave Detroit; hit
> Eight Mile Road. And I don't give a damn if they are black or white, of if they wear
> Superfly suits or blue uniforms with silver badges: Hit the road.

Mayor Young, in his inaugural address was acknowledging and attacking the city's

criminal enterprise, those within the government and without. He was also suggesting that

these elements leave the city limits, to "hit Eight Mile Road."

In the final chapter of Joe Darden and Richard Thomas's (2013) *Detroit: Race

Riots, Racial Conflicts, and Efforts to Bridge the Racial Divide*, the authors recommend a

"spatial mobility strategy"[23] to mitigate Black Detroiters difficult living situations. The

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[23] This strategy is problematic and myopic in scope. Both Sugrue (1996) and Freund (2010) have shown that
the growth of suburban America, particularly in Detroit, was a direct reaction to the growth in Black
populations, their desire to live among whites in order to access the economic, educational, and spatial
freedoms present in their communities. Hence, any relocation strategy that suggests Black Detroiters move to

authors suggest Black Detroiters migrate from Detroit's crime-ridden and heavily

disinvested inner ring to the bedroom communities along its periphery—towns to which

industries and white residents fled, in part, to get away from Black workers growing short

on patience and deep in political consciousness. Other individuals were also in support of a

"spatial mobility strategy," yet, not in the way espoused by Darden and Thomas (2013). In

response to a municipal context of racial-spatial marginalization, the PGRNA developed

and the New Afrikan republic as a place of political and spatial self-determination for

Blacks (i.e. New Afrikans) in America.[24]

The Birth of a New Afrikan Nation

The PGRNA formed not quite a year following the Detroit rebellion of 1967.

Though influenced by this time of turmoil, one must not underscore the impact that

Malcolm X had on Gaidi and Imari Obadele's political development, and the rebirth of

Black Nationalism in the 1960s as a whole. Black nationalism, not to be confused with the

static, Western geopolitical notion of nationalism tied to nation states and bounded

territory, has undergone numerous iterations from the moment enslaved Africans set foot

on the shores of the Americas (Robinson, 1997). An umbrella term for Black strivings for

self-determination, Black Nationalism included maroon communities, Marcus Garvey's

"Back-to-Africa" campaign, and in its earliest iteration, the Black Panther Party's demands

for Black Power and intercommunalism.

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suburbs is, at best, folly, and at worst, ignorant of the fact that Black Detroiters, in the words of Grace Lee Boggs (1998), have always struggled to "rebuild, redefine, and re-spirit Detroit from the ground up" (p. xi).

[24] To be clear, New Afrikans societies would not be segregated. Dr. Imari Obadele was clear that the New Afrikan republic and New Communities were for all inhabitants, regardless of race and class. He did, however, specify that citizens and residents of New Afrikan and New Communities would have to abide by the laws of the republic and by the New Afrikan Code of Umoja.

Malcolm X brought a Black Nationalist geopolitical imaginary and analysis to the Black masses of the United States by linking the struggle for freedom and equality in the United States to the Black Diaspora. It was his position that Blacks in America would never experience freedom without the liberation of colonized African nations.[25] The influence of Malcolm X is articulated in an edition of the periodical, *Right On!*. A caption reads, "Malcolm X's monumental contribution to Black America, began when he gave Black people correct direction by instilling the seeds of Revolutionary Nationalism in the minds of the people. Brother Malcolm X made Black people aware of unity, self-defense, and their common destiny."[26]

Gaidi and Imari Obadele, like others of their time, were ardent followers of Malcolm X. Gaidi, an attorney by trade, accompanied Malcolm X during his Hajj to mecca, serving as a legal advisor, a reporter, and a confident. The extent to which the Obadele brothers were inspired by Malcolm's rhetoric, discipline, and dedication to Black self-determination are evident in the fact that three of his most famous speeches[27] were presented in Detroit, Michigan—coordinated by the Obadele brothers and the political organization, Group on Advanced Leadership (GOAL) (Berger, 2009). According to Jamon Jordan, Malcolm X's "Message to the Grassroots" speech was almost never recorded. As the story goes, prior to the start of the speech, Imari Obadele went to Motown

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[25] A change in the naming of Blacks in America from "so-called Negroes" coincided with Malcolm's critical Black geopolitics. This form of self-identification influenced a number of his Black Power era followers: There is the PGRNA's designation of Blacks as *New Afrikans* and traitors as *Negroes*, H. Rap Brown's (1969) distinction between bad *Niggers* and tomming *Negroes*, and Amiri Baraka's (1963) reflection on Blacks in America as *blues people*.

[26] On Revolutionary Nationalism. *Right On!*, AF043 Frankye Adams-Johnson Series IX, Periodicals, Box 2, p. 13.

[27] These include "Message to the Grassroots," "The Ballot of the Bullet," and "The Last Message."

Records and asked Barry Gordy[28] to borrow recording equipment. Gordy's generosity led to the recording of the now infamous "Message to the Grassroots" speech (Personal Communication, Detroit, 2015).

Malcolm X's assassination in New York's Audubon Ballroom was a blow to the Black Freedom Struggle. However, in such a short period, his personal evolution from Detroit Red, to Malcolm X, and finally, to El Hajj Malik El Shabazz, left an indelible mark on Black radicals who would come of age in the wake of his death. In the wake of the assassination of Malcolm X, Imari and Gaidi changed the name of their student organization from GOAL to the Malcolm X Society and became more determined to put his instructions into praxis.

The Obadele brothers convened a Black Governmental Conference, held jointly at Wayne State University and the Fifty Grand Hotel. In attendance were noted Black scholars, artists, and revolutionaries from throughout the United States, to include Maulana Karenga, Amiri Baraka, Queen Mother Audley Moore, Nana Oserjiman Adefumi, a representative from the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP), Lawrence Guyot and others.[29] By the end of the gathering the over 500 attendees had come to a consensus. Blacks people in America were a nation, and as such, were deserving of sovereignty and a national territory. The PGRNA was now a reality, a nation by and for New Afrikans.

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[28] It is not unlikely that Barry Gordy providing GOAL with this equipment. What most fans of Motown do not know is that it was one of a number of labels founded by Barry Gordy. In fact, Motown Records was actually the result of a merging to two labels owned by Barry Gordy—Tamla and Motown. In addition to founding rock and roll and country music labels, he also started Gordy, a label for which he would record the sounds of the civil rights movement. In 1963, Barry Gordy used this label—a subsidiary of Motown Records—to release *The Great March to Freedom*, a recording of Martin Luther King Jr.'s 1963 Detroit Freedom March. (Personal Communication, Motown Museum Group Tour, September 2015).

[29] I was informed of Nana Adefumi and Lawrence Guyot's attendance through correspondence with Dr. Akinyele Umoja.

Prior to this meeting, the Obadele brothers were instrumental in organizing and educating Detroit's Black residents as columnists for the *Michigan Chronicle*, Detroit's Black newspaper. The *Michigan Chronicle* addressed citywide, national, and international news impacting Blacks in the Diaspora. The paper did not shy from political topics, many of which would have been considered un-American. For instance, when newly formed Asian, South Asian, and African nations met at the Bandung Conference in Bandung, Indonesia, April 18-25, 1955, the *Michigan Chronicle* sent a correspondent to the report "the real story of the Asian-African conference."[30] Transcending both geopolitical and gender boundaries, the *Michigan Chronicle* dispatched Ethyl Payne, a well-respected journalist, who had interviewed Presidents Dwight D. Eisenhower and Harry S. Truman. Concerning her role in the East, the *Michigan Chronicle* stated, "Miss Payne will also analyze and interpret the meaning of the conference and the rising power of the colored world" (Michigan Chronicle, 1995, p.1).[31] Imari Obadele was a frequent contributor to the *Michigan Chronicle*. Writing, then, as Richard Henry, Imari penned columns on housing and school segregation.[32] Via columns in the *Michigan Chronicle*, the Henry brothers spoke to the immediate needs of Black Detroiters. Therefore, when the Obadele brothers convened the Black Governmental Conference, residents of Detroit responded in kind.

According to Dan Aldridge, a local activist who served as Chairman of the Black United Front (BUF) following the Detroit rebellion, he, himself, was almost the first

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[30] Payne, E. "Ethyl Payne Hints Africa to Support Red China Minister". *Michigan Chronicle*. Vol. 20, No. 6, April 23, 1955. Wayne State University, Kresge Library. Michigan Chronicle Collection 1955.

[31] "Ethyl Payne to Cover Asian-African Meet for Chronicle". *Michigan Chronicle*. Vol. 19, No. 5, April 16, 1955. Wayne State University, Kresge Library. Michigan Chronicle Collection 1955. p. 1.

[32] Henry, R. "Irregular procedures found in "traditional Negro" areas: Is school zoning pattern bias". *Michigan Chronicle*. Vol. 20, No. 6, April 23, 1955. Wayne State University, Kresge Library. Michigan Chronicle Collection 1955. p. 1.

president of the PGRNA. According to Aldridge, the delegation attempted to nominate him as President. Once he refused to accept the position, Robert F. Williams was suggested and voted in as the first President of the PGRNA.[33] At the time, Williams was living in self-imposed exile in the China, following years in Cuba. He would learn via communiqué of his election as the first President of the PGRNA. In an undated letter[34] written on *The Crusader* letterhead, Williams identifies his role as President, the impetus for the formation of the PGRNA, along with the demands of the provisional government:

> I am President of a coalition of [a] human rights organization in America called the Republic of New Africa. I am also the Chairman-in-exile of the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM), which is a militant underground ghetto organization who seek self-determination and independence from oppressive racist and imperialist America. We maintain after almost 400 years of the most savage and barbaric oppression under white racist tyranny in the USA the cruel facts reveal serious cause for a complete break and separation. We take note of the fact not only of our own long suffering and oppression under American savagery, but also her plunder of the worlds people a crime and shame from which we want to disassociate ourselves.[35]

Following the establishment of the PGRNA, cabinet members began materializing the New Afrikan nation. One of the first acts was to create a New Afrikan security force, known as the Black Legionnaires. The Black Legionnaires,[36] trained in military science and tactics of guerilla warfare by General Mweusi Chui,[37] provided protection for New

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[33] Williams had previously been named President of an African-American Provisional Government established by Queen Mother Moore and Nana Oserjiman Adefumi's African National Independence Partition Party (ADNIP) in 1964.

[34] The letter was written sometime between the founding of the Republic of New Afrika in 1968 and Robert F. Williams's return to the United States in 1969. Upon his return, Williams renounced the position of President, citing the rampant infiltration of the RNA as a key reason.

[35] Untitled Letter. Box 1, Correspondence. Williams, Robert Franklin, 1925—Correspondence Undated (4). Bentley Historical Library.

[36] See Figure 2.1

[37] On June 17, 2016, Fulani Sunni Ali, daughter of Mweusi Chui, former General of the Black Legionnaires, daughter transitioned to the realm of the ancestors. On [Date] family, friends, and comrades met at the

Afrikan dignitaries and citizens. With Black Legionnaires at their rear, Imari and Gaidi Obadele, along with Queen Mother Audley Moore, held a press conference at the Black-owned Fifty Grand Motel, to announce the inauguration of the Republic of New Afrika (RNA).[38]

The PGRNA had a number of goals. According to Chokwe Lumumba, its most pressing concerns were to inform Blacks in America of the existence of the PGRNA, a government created by and for New Afrikans[39] in the southern United States. Second, the PGRNA would petition the United States government for the payment of reparations to New Afrikan citizens[40] (Lumumba, 1981). According to the PGRNA, reparations were due to New Afrikans because of the horrors endured during the slave trade,[41] enslavement, and various other forms of discrimination following Emancipation and *de jure* racism (Obadele, 1975). Financial remuneration to the sum of $500 billion dollars would be paid to individual New Afrikans and New Afrikan families. These funds, admissible under the thirteenth amendment of the United States constitution, would also support the establishment of New Communities throughout New Afrika—Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina[42] (Lumumba, 1987; Obadele, 1975).

Shrine of the Black Madonna in Atlanta, Georgia to memorialize her. Fulani was a gifted singer who sang back up for Nina Simone a Miriam Makeba. Revolutionaries, scholars, and entertainers from all throughout the globe paid their respects to the fallen New Afrikan warrior, mother, and wife. The rapper, Ludacris, who is managed by Fulani's son, Chaka Zulu, was in attendance. Grammy Award winning recording artist, India Arie, wrote a song in honor of Fulani.

[38] Figure 3.1

[39] New Afrikans are the descendants of enslaved Africans held in bondage in the United States and/or any of its occupied territories.

[40] Citizens are those who pledge allegiance to the RNA as their true and rightful government/nation/territory.
[41] The PGRNA believed the combination of the transatlantic slave trade and enslavement resulted in an African holocaust.

[42] See Figure 3.1, map of RNA territory.

A year after it was formed the RNA would experience it first skirmish with law enforcement agencies. The incident took place March 31, 1969, exactly one year following the founding of the nation. Because the events of that night occurred at the New Bethel Baptist Church, home to Reverend C.L. Franklin (father of Aretha Franklin, the famed gospel singer), they have come to be known as the New Bethel Incident.

The New Bethel Incident

The PGRNA gained immediate attention, due to their bold demands, their military and African-inspired garb, and eventually, due to altercations with the Detroit Police Department (DPD). On November 18, 1968, eight month after Black Governmental Conference that spurred the PGRNA, Gaidi Obadele appeared on the conservative pundit, William Buckley's, *Firing Line*. In his introduction, Buckley referred to Obadele as the leader of the RNA, "a group of dissident American Negroes who desire to carve out a new country within what we now know as the United States."[43] Flanked by two Black Legionnaires (while Imari looked on from the audience), Gaidi Obadele went on a relentless tirade about the inability of Black and white people to live in harmony and the need for complete political and spatial separation, "we cannot possibly find freedom, within the system. Separation is essential for us, absolutely essential if we are to find independence and freedom." Essentially, Obadele states that only New Afrikans can secure the freedom for Black people in America, a freedom that will only come through

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[43] Firing Line with William F. Buckley Jr.: The Republic of New Africa Episode 126, Recorded on November 18, 1968, Hoover Institution Archives. Stanford University.

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separation from the America's institutions (what Buckley called while referencing an previous interview with Eldridge Cleaver) "strategic pessimism."[44]

Four months later, the RNA would, again, be catapulted across the world on television screens. On March 31, 1969, New Afrikans gathered at New Bethel Baptist Church to commemorate Nation Day, the annual celebration of the founding of the RNA. An estimated 150 men, women, and children packed the pews of New Bethel Baptist Church. Outside the church, two Black Legionnaires stood guard and were approached by two DPD officers—Patrolmen Richard Worobec and Michael Czapski. Accounts vary, but what is known is that not long after the initial confrontation, a gun battle ensued and, in its aftermath, Patrolman Michael Czapski lay dead. Patrolman Richard Worobec fled in a bullet-riddled patrol car and called for backup. Shortly thereafter, nearly 50 officers arrived and showered the church with bullets before storming the entrance and arrested everyone inside—women and children, included. The shooting, the arrests, and the legal decisions that followed, would create a firestorm of confusion and racial animosity.

The DPD had "taken prisoner" some 142 New Afrikans and held them in the DPD garage for hours without access to friends, family, or legal representation—a clear violation of their constitutional rights (Crockett Jr., 1969, p. 360). Following their arrest, Reverend C.L. Franklin and State Representative James Del Rio roused the Wayne County Recorder's Court judge, George Crockett Jr., from his slumber in the early hours of April 1, 1969. By 5am that morning Judge Crockett Jr. was at the DPD headquarters making preparations to release detainees. Judge Crockett's concern was not only for the 142 men, women, and children who had been held for hours without phone calls or legal

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[44] Firing Line with William F. Buckley Jr.: The Republic of New Africa Episode 126, Recorded on November 18, 1968, Hoover Institution Archives. Stanford University.

representation. He was also concerned for the city at large. For, a little over a year prior, Detroit had erupted in flames due, largely, to the DPD's brutal tactics. The city had yet to recover from the Detroit rebellion, both in terms of infrastructure and race relations. Therefore, Judge Crockett acted promptly in order to defuse a potentially volatile situation (Crockett Jr., 1969).

Disturbed by the fact that the DPD had not allowed detainees to phone lawyers and that they did not have a list of names of those arrested, in an unprecedented act of judicial discretion, Judge Crockett, Jr. "issued a writ of *habeas corpus* in his own name, turned the police headquarters into a courtroom and began sending people home" (Saunders, 1969, p. 115). To the dismay of officers, lawmakers, and white Detroiters, Judge Crockett, Jr. released 130 detainees by 1pm, all those who were not implicated in the shooting outside New Bethel Baptist Church (Crockett Jr., 1969).

In a reflection published following the incident, Judge Crockett cited racism within the DPD as the catalyst for the storm trooper like tactics of the officers and his application of jurisprudence in the aftermath of the New Bethel Incident:

> Under other circumstances, the events of that day, tragic as they were, would probably have found their way in and out of the headlines, melded into the crime statistics, and become woven into the already tattered patchwork of a disunited city. But racism more than logic, more than reason, more even than the law determined the course of events surrounding the New Bethel incident (Crockett Jr., 1969, p. 360).

Judge Crockett, Jr. went on to say that the racism plaguing Detroit was institutional and had infested not only the police department, but also the entire legal system. Race and class determined how blind Lady Justice would be in the court of law; not one's moral compass or a professional sense of duty on behalf of white officers, prosecutors, and judges. Furthermore, he understood that a code of complacency existed between cops, prosecutors,

and judges, which resulted in the justification of officers' brutal acts against detainees.

Going against this code drew the ire of whites within and without of the law:

> In the New Bethel Incident I broke the habit. I saw that the constitutional right of all those people had been violated, so I did what I was supposed to do. I applied basic law and the police and the press got upset about it. They got upset because Judge Crockett wouldn't go along with the old habit of *accommodating* the police and the prosecutor's office. Criminal court judges have done that far too long. But they got upset because a black judge had protected the rights of black people. That whole case had racial overtones. Sure, a policeman had been killed and another one had been wounded and good police work probably would have turned up the prime suspects. But can anyone imagine the police invading an all-white church and rounding up everybody in sight and bussing them to a wholesale lockup in a police garage? Can anyone imagine a group of white people being held incommunicado for six or seven hours, and white women and children being locked up all night when there wasn't the slightest evidence that they'd been involved in any crime? But you see these were 142 black people and the police have been doing all these things to black people all the time, and judges have been letting them get away with it (Saunders, 1969, p. 116-118).

Judge Crockett Jr.'s decision would invite public and professional persecution. Though an expert constitutional lawyer, his credentials were immediately called into question by the DPD, the Detroit Police Officers Association (DPOA), and the Wayne County Prosecutor, William L. Cahalan. Many white residents of Detroit, and residents of the bedroom communities surrounding the city, questioned his skill and his authority to hold court and release potential suspects. His actions were perceived as undue leniency for a group viewed as Black militant separatists. Though widely respected and revered by his peers as a constitutional lawyer of the highest order, Governor William Milliken and the Michigan State Senate called for the Michigan Judicial Tenure Commission to conduct an investigation to determine whether Judge Crockett, Jr. was fit for his job. After months of inquiry, public scrutiny, and testimonies on his behalf, Judge Crockett, Jr. was exonerated of any wrongdoing.

George Crockett, Jr. had no relationship with the RNA. He did, however, have a legal history of protecting peoples' constitutional rights. Part of that history includes the protection of American communists during the McCarthy era and the hearings held before the Committee of Un-American Activities. For his strident defense of his clients before a biased judge, Crockett, Jr. was placed in contempt of court and sentenced to 40 days in a Kentucky jail. Because of his dedication to the constitution, regardless of the political affiliations and racial makeup of his clients or defendants, the *Detroit News* labeled him a "handyman of the radical Left" (Saunders, 1969, p. 115). While Judge Crockett, Jr. was lambasted in the court of public opinion, Chaka Fuller, Rafael Vieja, and Alfred 2X Hibbets went on trial for the murder of Officer Czapski. Due to legal defense provided by renowned attorney, Kenneth Cockrel, Sr., all three men were found not guilty of murder.

A year after the New Bethel Incident, a faction of the PGRNA and its citizenry, led by Imari Obadele and a young Chokwe Lumumba, made a fateful move south. Gaidi stayed behind. Some say there was an ideological/tactical conflict between the brothers regarding whether it was the right time to move south. This is the position taken by Muhammad Ahmad, who felt attempting to claim territory in the South, with arms in tow, was folly (Personal Communication, 2014).[45] It has also been said that Gaidi, an attorney and family man, stayed behind to tend to his legal and familial responsibilities (Personal Communication, 2016). Nevertheless, the migration of New Afrikan citizens to the South to claim territory in Mississippi would be but an extension of that initial step.

In the following section, I present a discussion of the migration of citizens—from parts as far as Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Camden, New Jersey, and New Orleans, Louisiana

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[45] In fact, this sentiment was expressed in interviews with Muhammad Ahmad and David Aldridge. Though both were citizens and supporters of the RNA, neither believed it was a good idea to move New Afrikans to move south—especially with arms——in an attempt to consecrate New Afrika.

(Umoja, 2013)—to Hinds County, Mississippi in search of land and liberty was an extension of the new nation's political philosophy of self-determination through territorial nationalism.

From the Arsenal of Democracy to the Kush District

> "virtually all of the elements that we associate with "Black Power" were already present in the small towns and rural communities of the South where 'the civil rights movement' was born." – Tim Tyson, (1998) "Robert F. Williams," Black Power," and the roots of the African American freedom struggle"

Imari Obadele, the younger of the two Obadele brothers, felt it time to move south and break ground on the new nation. Gaidi, with a family and law firm to manage, remained in Detroit, Michigan. In March of 1971, a delegation of New Afrikans, consisting of "two hundred and fifty New Afrikan security forcemen," caravanned to Mississippi to claim its territory (Lumumba, 1981, p. 73). Mikea Kambui, a member of the Jackson chapter of the Malcolm X Grassroots Movements (MXGM) stated—by way of a conversation he had with the late Mayor Chokwe Lumumba—that there was a standoff on the highway as the caravan approached the rural town of Bolton, Mississippi. To the dismay of local whites, and perhaps some New Afrikans, the caravan was allowed to pass.

Though a significant victory, the RNA was met with a trilogy of hostility—federal government (FBI), state (Attorney General A.F. Summer), and local forces (to include the Ku Klux Klan (KKK). On March 28, 1971, a collective of New Afrikans gathered in Bolton, Mississippi, on the land of a local Black Farmer, Lofton Mason. According to RNA officials, the government was in the process of purchasing the land from Mason when he reneged on a purchasing agreement (Chokwe Lumumba, 1981). Citizens of the

RNA felt Mason defaulted due to pressure from the Mississippi Attorney General A.F.
Summer, Hinds County District Attorney Jack Travis[46] and the KKK. Threats from the
Klan were substantiated when a sign[47] was placed on Mason's land declaring, "Won't be
no meeting here Sunday, niggers" (Close Up Magazine, 1971).[48] Unmoved, the
consecration of El-Malik[49] (which consisted of military drills and a marriage ceremony),
went as planned, though under the watchful eye of local law enforcement and news
reporters.

The RNA-11

Following the dispute over ownership of El-Malik, and an injunction barring the
RNA from returning the land, the PGRNA held a people's court against Lofton Mason,
wherein Chokwe Lumumba, at the time a law student at Wayne State University,
represented the RNA. According Obadele (1974), "they induced Mr. Mason to abrogate
our land deals, issued a state injunction against our returning the land… and heightened
their campaign of press vilification" (p. 32-33). Ultimately, the RNA lost their challenge
for control of the land and settled in Jackson, Mississippi. The PGRNA set up in two
homes in the West Jackson area. In June of 1971 the PGRNA established the Presidential
Residence at 1320 Lynch Street and Governmental Headquarters at 1138 Lewis Street.[50]

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[46] See Figure 4.1

[47] See Figure 5.1

[48] "Yes Separation — no integration" (1971). *Close Up*. Republic of New Afrika Folder. Margaret Walker Center. Jackson State University.

[49] The land was named, by general consensus, in honor of the late Malcolm X.

[50] See Figure 6.1

Likely acting on Attorney General A.F. Summer's threat to remove the RNA from

Hinds County, the Jackson Police Department (JPD), along with the agents of the FBI set

forth to carry out a raid on the New Afrikan Presidential Residence and the Government

House. The FBI and JPD were acting on a warrant for a fugitive of justice from Michigan

by the name of Sylee (a.ka. Jerry Steiner). Records show the FBI were aware of his

whereabouts and allowed him to come to Jackson with RNA citizens from Milwaukee,

who were traveling to south to attend a People's Center Council (PCC) meeting on July 17,

1971. Sylee's presence became the pretext to raid the RNA headquarters. Furthermore, the

FBI had an informant inside the RNA, "Thomas 'Snoopy' Spells. Thus, on August 17,

1971, local and federal officials performed a predawn raid, an act Judge Fred Banks, Jr., an

attorney for one of the New Afrikans suggested[51] was highly unusual (Obadele, 1974).

When the dust settled, a JPD officer, W.L. Skinner, [52] lay dead from a single

gunshot wound. An officer with the Hinds County Sheriff's office and an FBI agent were

also wounded. Seven New Afrikans were arrested at the Lewis Street residence and four

from the Lynch Street location (President Imari Obadele, Information Minister Aisha

Salim (25), Minister of Defense for Jackson, Tawwab Nkrumah (27), and Spade da Mau

Mau (25) (a.k.a. Segismond Walker). Though the four residing at the Lynch Street

residence were not involved in the shootout, they were charged on gun and murder

charges, nonetheless (Obadele, 1974). The arrest resulted in the trial of the RNA-11.[53]

In an interview with two of the remaining RNA-11, I was informed that when the

police exacted the raid, the women were guided into a dug out inside a closet. Despite

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[51] Personal Communication with Judge Fred Banks, Jr., Jackson, Mississippi. August 8, 2016.

[52] Following his death, the city of Jackson renamed the Jackson Police Academy after Officer W.L. Skinner.

[53] See Figure 7.1

having been fired upon by over 300 rounds of ammunition, all seven of the occupants of

the home on Lewis Street survived the onslaught unscathed (Lumumba, 1981). The four

remaining New Afrikans—to include Imari Obadele—at the Lynch Street home were

arrested without incident. According to Mikea Kambui, a member of the Jackson chapter

of the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement (MXGM), the intent of this predawn raid was to

assassinate Imari Obadele, just as the Chicago Police Department did in 1969 to Fred

Hampton, former Chairman of the Chicago chapter of the Black Panther Party.

Hekima believes the state enforcers thought, perhaps, that due to the fact that there

was a confluence of PGRNA leaders in Jackson, it was the best time to conduct a raid:

> I think there were a number of people who were officials in Jackson at the same
> time. So, in my opinion, they thought that this was the best time to spring their
> operation. And we only spent one night, right? So we came down, communed with
> the brothers and sisters, went to sleep and a pre-dawn raid appeared the next
> morning (Personal Communication, 2016).

Credit for the survival of the seven occupants of the house on Lewis Street has been given

to the fact that residents, shortly after establishing the homestead, created a small dugout in

a closet. The tunnel was supposed to end one block north, on Central Street. However,

residents had gotten as far as forming a hole deep enough to secure a few bodies—a bit of

preparation that proved invaluable. Tamu Ana, one of the remaining members of the RNA-

11, spoke to how she and other women were guided to this bunker by one of the youngest

citizens in the household. When asked to recall that fateful morning, Tamu stated the

following:

> Total chaos. First of all, they only, they say that they gave us 75 seconds to wake
> up, get dressed and get out. People [were] running around trying to get some
> clothes on and then the bullets and [tear gas] canisters start coming in. And the
> house filled with fumes - tear gas - and of course the brothers exchanged gunfire. I
> wasn't in the house that long because I was - in my memory - my most emotional
> memory, was a young brother Jomo who was 15, 16 at the time, but quite our

junior, got myself and the other sister that was in the house, got us out. Grabbed us, pulled us down into a tunnel that had been prepared. Got us down there and protected us from the bullets by covering us with his body (Personal Communication, 2016).

Tamu shares that when the police arrived at the Government House, those inside were asleep and that the authorities began their barrage of bullets before any of the citizens could get dressed. Per their training, the New Afrikan men returned fire, unsure of whom it is they were defending themselves against. The botched onslaught would result in the arrest of 11 New Afrikans, including Imari Obadele, for gun and murder charges.

Though vilified by local and state officials, and charged with the murder of a law enforcement officer, many residents of Jackson—that is, its Black residents—were in support of the RNA. Margaret Walker,[54] author of *Jubilee*, and the poem, *For My People*, discussed the aftermath of the incident in her personal journal. Of particular concern was the mental health and legal status of her son, Sigismund Walker (a.k.a. Spade de Mau Mau), who had taken up with the cadre of New Afrikans:

> Sigis came back by plane from New Orleans, ate a little food, changed his clothes and despite my pleading with him to stay home and go to bed and get a good night's rest [he] went over to the RNA Headquarters on Lynch Street.[55]

Later that evening, Walker received a dreadful phone call regarding the predawn raids occurring at the RNA homesteads on Lewis and Lynch Streets:

> Around 7o'clock the telephone ringing woke me up and Doris Derby wanted to know if Sigis was at home. When I told her no she said, Oh my god, which upset me – I asked if there was trouble over there and she said yes, the police had surrounded the house on Lewis Street and were shooting in there with high powered rifles and had been doing so for about 45 minutes. It turns out Sigis was

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[54] Walker worked for nearly three decades as a professor of English at Jackson State University.

[55] Margaret Walker Collection. Margaret Walker Center. Jackson State University. AF012, Series II, Box 14 1967-1971. August 28, 1971.

not there but he was arrested anyway on Lynch Street in the Brown House and taken to jail where he has been ever since.[56]

Despite concerns for her son's safety, Walker did not let the violent blitzkrieg upon the RNA homestead, nor the vilification of its citizenry, influence her views of the group of revolutionaries. After conducting research into the PGRNA, their goals and objectives, she came to her own conclusion. In fact, she became, in a way, a supporter of the RNA, critiquing the "white Mississippi officials…who are desperately anxious to destroy the RNA as an organization and run them out of Mississippi."[57]

Following the raid, RNA loyalists and leaders were tried on murder and weapons charges. A number of them served lengthy prison terms. For their part in the encounter, Hekima and Tama were imprisoned. Tama served ten months in the Hinds County jail, wherein she continued to organize and educate as a political prisoner. Her husband, Hekima, convicted on gun and murder charges, served a much lengthier term in Parchman Penitentiary. Hekima served a number of years and was only released due to a mistake made by the state of Mississippi when it transferred him to a federal prison in Georgia. RNA President, Imari Obadele, served five years in Parchman Prison, advocating all the while, for clemency for himself and his fellow political prisoners (Obadele, 1978). This turbulent period of hyper surveillance, infiltration, and assaults that scholars suggests led to the downfall (Berger, 2009, 2010; Umoja, 2013), and even death (Davenport, 2014), of the RNA. In subsequent chapters, I dispute claims that the RNA met its demise by way of internal divisions and the United States government's revanchist assaults on the New

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[56] Margaret Walker Collection. Margaret Walker Center. Jackson State University. AF012, Series II, Box 14 1967-1971. August 28, 1971.

[57] Margaret Walker Collection. Margaret Walker Center. Jackson State University. AF012, Series II, Box 14 1967-1971. August 28, 1971.

Afrikan nation. In the proceeding chapter, I conduct a discourse analysis of Dr. Obadele's

writings and news reports of the embodied movements of Robert and Mabel Williams to

demonstrate the critical geopolitical claims and feminist practices used to establish and

justify the PGRNA's claims to southern territory and a place–as a sovereign nation—

within the United Nations.

CHAPTER 4

New Afrikan Anti-Geopolitics

For purposes of collective action, people and organizations come together to form territorial associations that seek to manage the space and places under their aegis and thereby give their place in the world a distinctive character. They do so according to their own distinctive cultural histories and beliefs, as well as according to their own material needs, wants and desires"

— David Harvey (2010, p. 193) *Social Justice and the City*

Introduction

This section addresses literature on anti-geopolitics and offers analyses of how Black Nationalism, particularly that of the PGRNA represents a strain of anti-geopolitics previously unacknowledged. First, I offer a discussion of Black Nationalism and its various political and spatial variants. This review is followed by an address of Paul Routledge's notion of anti-geopolitics, its strengths and weaknesses. I will then provide examples and analyses of the PGRNA's anti-geopolitics via a discourse analysis of the writings of Dr. Imari Obadele, co-founder and former President of the PGRNA.

Discursive Challenges to Hegemonic Statecraft

The term 'geopolitics' is traced to the writing of Rudolf Kjellén who coined it in 1899. Though applied as a political and spatial monolith, geopolitics is not a given. Geopolitics is the product of the intellectual labor of scholars/politicians, which is then put into policies, and practice by functionaries of the state, often times in the form of warfare. In the introduction to a special edition on critical geopolitics O'Tuathail and Dalby (1994)

definite geopolitics as "a domain traditionally marked by the naturalization of geography, state-centric reasoning, and the privileging of Western, masculinized, seeing subject as the authoritative, transcendent reader, and practitioner, of international politics (p. 513). To conduct critical geopolitics entails challenging the normative and hegemonic writing (i.e. geo-graphing) of the world:

> To construct critical political geographies is to argue that we must not limit our attention to our study of the geography of politics within pregiven, taken-for-granted, commonsense spaces, but to investigate the politics of the geographical specification of politics (Dalby, 1991, p. 274).

Gearóid Ó Tuathail is credited with establishing the intellectual tradition known as critical geopolitics in the late 1980s as an intellectual critique of orthodox geopolitics (Dalby, 2008). Since this time he has published extensively on the subject (O' Tuathail, 1994, 1996, 1999; O'Tuathail & Dalby, 1994). His criticisms of the global politics of Western states emerged during "the thawing of the Cold War," a period marked by the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 (Weber, 1994, p. 557). O' Tuathail's critical geopolitics have addressed England's 16th century usurpation of Ireland and ethnic cleansing in Bosnia (Tuathail, Dalby, & Routledge, 1998).[58] This canon of critical geopolitics draws from Michel Foucault's (1980) work on power and the state as a "power-knowledge relationship" (Dodds, 1994; Ó Tuathail, 1996, p. 10). Because geopolitics is traced back to the writing of individuals like Halford MacKinder and Friedrich Ratzel and presents itself today in the speeches, rhetoric, and policies of Western nations, critical geopolitics "directly tackle[s] geopolitical language," through discourse analyses (Dalby, 2008, p. 416). Hence, in its early formations, critical geopolitics existed largely as a trilogy of

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[58] Throughout *Critical Geopolitics* and the co-edited, *The Critical Geopolitics Reader*, Ó Tuathail (1996, 1998) discusses and critiques geopolitics as the use of knowledge-power by nation-states to wage unjust, self-serving wars of conquest and repression. The propaganda and military engagement exhibited during the Cold War, Vietnam War, and the Iraq Wars are examples of this knowledge-power relationship.

"discourse, difference, and dissent" (Dalby, 1991, p. 261). At its core, critical geopolitics attempts to reconceive how geopolitics is thought and practiced. Such is the case with Scott Kirsch's essay on United States' insular territories in Southeast Asia (Kirsch, 2014). He argues that the emergence of the Philippines, Guam, and Puerto Rico as territories of the United States—each as an "insular territory"—impacted the United States geopolitical policies and projections of extra-territorial power.

Though much of the work on critical geopolitics is concerned with traditional state actors, analyses of policy, and the top-down approach to statecraft, there is growing interest in how territorial integrity/boundaries are challenged and how geopolitics is produced from below. In the following section, I discuss the maturation of critical geopolitics from sheer analysis to praxis and the emergence of a feminist geopolitics. Regarding traditional geopolitics omission of localities and local actors, he states, "singularly represented local actors were not readily allowed the possibility of internal diversity, autonomous actions and parochial interests" (O' Tuathail, 2010, p. 256). However, the same can—and has been (Dowler & Sharp, 2001; Hyndman, 2001; Koopman, 2011; Massaro & Williams, 2013)—said about critical geopolitics. In the next section I discuss introduce the notion of anti-geopolitics as a move away from analyses of traditional state actors, a move towards those critiquing the state made into critical geopolitics by feminist scholars.

Anti-Geopolitics

This section places the geopolitical demands and demonstrations of the Republic of New Afrika in conversation with literature on anti and subaltern geopolitics. Instead of

conducting critiques of national policies and practices of state governments, anti-geopolitics looks to the works and writings of, in the words of Sara Koopman (2011), "the people on the map who are pushing back" (p. 275). Paul Routledge (1998) develops the concept in the second edition of *The Geopolitics Read*er. There, he states anti-geopolitics is the expression of a dissenting groups' desire to separate from the state, or the "assertion of permanent independence from the state *whoever is in power*" (Routledge, 1998, p. 245). More often than not, these challenges emerge from within the territorial borders of the state in question. However, this does not mean such oppositional forces are localized, for due to processes of globalization, movements have become international. Furthermore, he categorizing anti-geopolitics practices based on temporal/political periods. Routledge suggests anti-geopolitics often emerges as *material* (economic and military) and *representational* — as "two interrelated forms of counter-hegemonic struggle (p. 245).

Though sparse, geographic studies that center the critical and feminist geopolitics of Black radicals exist. James Tyner's (2006) makes an important contribution to this canon in The Geography of Malcolm X wherein he analyses the speeches of Malcolm X in an effort to demonstrate the martyred leader's unique Black spatial and (geo)political imaginary. Alex Lubin's recent book (2014) argues that Malcolm X's travels to Africa, Mecca, and the Middle East following his break from the Nation of Islam (NOI) produced an "Afro-Arab political imaginary" that transcended America's imperial geopolitical borders.[59] Lubin (2014) also includes a chapter on the Black Panther Party's (BPP) relationship with the Palestine Liberation Organization, further illustrating a anti-geopolitical cross-pollination between liberation groups here and abroad. Last, there is also

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[59] Gaidi Obadele, New Afrikan and co-founder of the PGRNA, accompanied Malcolm X throughout Egypt as a reporter and as his legal counsel (Berger, 2009).

Jan Carew's (1994) firsthand recollections of Malcolm X's visit to the London School of Economics. According to Carew, Malcolm X represented an embodied challenge to racism and imperialism, a corporeal corridor linking Blacks in the United States to oppressed people in England, the Caribbean, Africa, and the Middle East. Together, these authors found geopolitical purchase in a Malcolm X and his travels across the globe. Such movements, which challenge alliances and transgress borders, are central to my study of the PGRNA's geopolitics.

My work on the PGRNA draws on Paul Routledge's understanding of anti-geopolitics, but also complicates the idea of anti-geopolitics. In the edited volume of *The Geopolitics Reader*, (Routledge, 1998) concerns himself with the geopolitical analyses, writings, and overall resistance strategies of anti-colonial scholars and activists (e.g. Frantz Fanon, M.K. Gandhi, and Edward Said). Though acting from various regional geographies and temporal contexts, Routledge (1998) aggregates their challenges, describing them as "counterhegemonic struggles in that they articulate resistance to the coercive force of the state" (p. 245). Unfortunately, he obscures anti-geopolitical analyses that existed within the United States via individuals and organizations. For instance, how might he categorize an organization—such as the PGRNA—that seeks to separate from an oppressive state, critiques it in writing, and yet replicates classic geopolitical structures? Or, for example, if dissenters desired to use state power for the purposes of independence, would it still be considered an anti-geopolitical formation? Building upon Paul Routledge and others, scholars have begun to draw out what they call a subaltern geopolitics, a critique of the state followed by the construction of a state by and for subaltern subjects.

In what follows, I offer analyses of the PGRNA's anti-geopolitics via a discourse analysis of the writing of Dr. Imari Obadele, co-founder and one time President of the PGRNA. I argue that the PGRNA's anti-geopolitics was an extension of Malcolm X's influence. Building from Paul Routledge's work on anti-geopolitics, I highlight, through the works of Dr. Obadele and other New Afrikan citizens, how the PGRNA challenged colonial and imperial geopolitical imaginations and practices via *representational* and *material* challenges to the geopolitical hegemony of the United States. Furthermore, I argue that in crafting its geopolitical identity in opposition to colonial and imperialism, the PGRNA developed a subaltern geopolitics. In her introduction to the subject, Joanne Sharp (2011) she describes subaltern geopolitics as that produced by people "marginalized by dominant geopolitics" (p. 271). Subaltern speaks to people and notions of power born of the postcolonial movement. Within this work and people pose alternative imaginations regarding the formation of political geographies, ones "that offer creative alternatives to the dominant geopolitical scripts" (Sharp, 2011, p. 271). Put another way, the subaltern geopolitics visualize and materialize new geopolitical relations, even if composed within given political structures.

The Making of the PGRNA's Anti-Geopolitics

> I'm not in a society that practices brotherhood. I'm in a society that might preach it on Sunday, but they don't practice it on no day -- on any day. And so, since I could see that America itself is a society where there is no brotherhood and that this society is controlled primarily by racists and segregationists -- and it is -- who are in Washington, D.C., in positions of power. And from Washington, D.C., they exercise the same forms of brutal oppression against dark-skinned people in South and North Vietnam, or in the Congo, or in Cuba, or in any other place on this earth where they're trying to exploit and oppress. This is a society whose government doesn't hesitate to inflict the most brutal form of punishment and oppression upon dark-skinned people all over the world.

> — Malcolm X "Last Message"

Malcolm X, as a comrade and mentor of the Obadele understanding, all too well, the importance of internationalizing the struggle for freedom in the United States. As his protégé, Imari Obadele incorporated an international, anti-colonial/anti-imperial analysis to his rationale for the PGRNA and his critiques of the United States government. As the chief political analyst and documentarian of the PGRNA, Imari Obadele's significance to the maturation of the PGRNA and its nationalist aims cannot be overstated. As a co-founder of the New Afrikan Republic, Imari Obadele nearly singlehandedly established the ideological, cultural, and geopolitical rationale for the formation of the PGRNA as an anti-racist, anti-capitalist nation. Having received his PhD in African American Studies from Temple University, Imari Obadele used his scholarly publications to define the political philosophy and demands of the RNA and to defend it from rhetorical and physical attacks made upon it by the United States government and various law enforcement agencies. In conversations had with his former students, it was said that Obadele used his texts—such as *A Brief History of Black Struggle in America* and *Texas Government: A Summary*—to teach courses on Political Science at Prairie View A&M University.

Though a governing body of cabinet members, for all intents as purposes, Imari Obadele was the RNA's most visible and vocal representative. Imari Obadele used various approaches to establish, define, and defend the PGRNA in the face of the United States government, the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) COINTELPRO, state and local law enforcement agencies, and white vigilantes. His primary tactic included what Paul Routledge (1998) would deem a representational anti-geopolitics. In *The Geopolitical Reader*, Routledge suggest geopolitics occurs at two registers, *material* and *representation*.

The latter consist of challenges to the narratives and geopolitical will "imposed by political elites upon the world and its different people" in the service of the elites' geopolitical interests (Routledge, 1998, p. 245). Imari Obadele challenged the geopolitical will of the United States and other western nations via his rhetorical flourish, the development of governance structures (e.g. cabinet posts) and protocols (e.g. voting), the formation of geopolitical allies with anti-capitalists nations, and by putting forth legal arguments based on international law. Through various mediums, he presented the PGRNA as a governing body representing New Afrikan subjects' right to a self-governance and territorial sovereignty. Furthermore, he also challenged a ubiquitous belief concerning the territorial sovereignty, integrity and dominion of the United States and its right to govern and adjudicate New Afrikans.

New Afrikans challenged the political sovereignty and spatial integrity of the United States by forming its own nation, comprised of five states—Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina. It was believed these regions, due to their high Black population, and abundance of space and natural resources, could be a home to Blacks people scattered throughout North America, particularly those living in conditions of squalor in the rapidly overpopulated ghettoes of the urban North (Clark, 1967).

The PGRNA's representational rationale began with the belief that the United States of America was not the true government of Blacks in America. New Afrikans believe, and Imari Obadele argued, that following Black's self-manumission from enslavement, via what W.E.B. Dubois (1898) coined a "general strike," formerly enslaved men, women, and children were not given the choice as to whether they wanted to become citizens of the United States or whether they desired separate political and spatial

representation. Because of this, one of the objectives of the PGRNA was to establish a

plebiscite, a vote by the masses. Chokwe Lumumba (1981b), one time Vice President and

Minister of Justice of the PGRNA, wrote that in addition to reparations in the form of $500

billion the immediate aim of the PGRNA was to hold a plebiscite, through which Blacks in

America would determine their political future. Through this political mechanism New

Afrikans in America would be given a choice as to whether they would join the RNA or

remain under the governorship of the territorial and political governance of the United

States. Regarding the necessity of a plebiscite (Obadele, 1973) wrote:

> It should be clear that the basic thrust of the RNA in the Black-majority counties of
> Mississippi is to hold an election — a plebiscite — in which the people choose
> between being U.S. citizens and being citizens of New Africa. If the majority of all
> the people in the Kush District vote to be New Africans (p. 70).

Voting was essential to the PGRNA's national governing structure. New Afrikans voted

for President, Vice-President and various cabinet members.[60] New Afrikan politics exist at

multiple registers. On the one hand, Blacks were encouraged to vote in New Afrikan

elections. However, on the other, New Afrikan political strategists understood the central

importance of participating in the American political infrastructure. Hence, it was seen as

politically expedite to vote—particularly, within the 18 counties comprising the Kush

District—for positions such as mayor and sheriff. The mayoral position was viewed as

politically expedient because of the economic resources at a mayor's disposal. Due to the

role Sheriff's Departments play in policing counties the latter would be key to defending

the growing political power within the Kush District.[61] Though the PGRNA became the

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[60] See Figure 5.1, flyer promoting New Afrikan elections.

[61] During my fieldwork in Jackson, Mississippi (located in Hinds County) I learned from members of the
MXGM that the role of Sheriff is also important because before the FBI engages in any operations in a
county, it is a matter of protocol that it first contact the county's local Sheriff's Department. Thus, New

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model for Black territorial nationalism in the United States, South, The Provisional

Government of the African American Captive Nation, which formed in 1962, preceded

them in these claims.[62] In a summary of its policies, the African Descendants Nationalist

Independence Partition Party (ADNIP) stated:

> the creation of an African [sic] descendant's peoples republic, is the only intelligent solution to the racial problem between the European (white) and African descendants (blacks) in the U.S.A. To make the South a copy of the North by integration will settle nothing…There is enough land in America for each of the races to live as independent nations. The African Descendants are a Majority in the South, so that must become our independent country.[63]

In all likelihood, the PGRNA—among whose cabinet members included Queen

Mother Audley Moore,[64] former Executive Secretary of the ADNIP—were directly and

indirectly influenced by the ADNIP. Nevertheless, when the Obadele brothers convened

the Black Governance Conference in the spring of 1968, they believed a Black nation-state

to be the logical extension of Malcolm X's Black nationalism and his inchoate designs[65]

for Black self-determination in America. The importance of Malcolm X's thinking to the

formation of the PGRNA, his many visits to Detroit, Betty Shabazz's position as the

PGRNA's second Vice President, and Gaidi Obadele's role as Malcolm X's lawyer,

provide serious contention to James Tyner's (2006) bold assertion that "no organization

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Afrikans believed having an ally within this position would lead to advanced notice of any FBI involvement within the Kush District.

[62] See Figure 6.1, Member of AD NIP PARTY illustrated map of national territory.

[63] "Summary of AD NIP PARTY policies as of date". Robert F. Williams Collections. Box 12 Political Organizations. Bentley Historical Library. University of Michigan—Ann Arbor.

[64] Queen Mother Audley Moore was also the Founder-President of the Association of Ethiopian Women, Inc.

[65] By "designs," I mean the two organizations formed by Malcolm X following his departure from the NOI—those being Muslim Mosque, Inc. (MMI) and the Organization for African American Unity (OAAU).

reflected the geopolitical thought and legacy of Malcolm X more than the Black Panther Party" (p. 140).

As "Malcolmites," dedicated followers of Malcolm X, Imari and Gaidi remained committed—particularly, in his absence—to the uplift of New Afrikans in America. Imari Obadele, spoke to the central importance of Malcolm X through recollections of their meetings, one of which occurred at the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. Just weeks before his assassination at Harlem's Audubon Ballroom, Malcolm X spoke to a sizable crowd on Detroit's West Side. He had been invited by Gaidi Obadele and Brother Ajay, owners of the Afro-American Broadcasting Company (Obadele, 1968). In what is known as his "Last Speech," Malcolm X spoke fondly of the two, urging those in attendance to join them in their efforts to form a progressive Black political organization:

> Also, [Milton Henry] and the brothers who are here in Detroit are very progressive young men, and I would advise all of you to get with them in every way that you can to try and create some kind of united effort toward common goals, common objectives. Don't let the power structure maneuver you into a time wasting battle with others when you could be involved in something that's constructive and getting a real job done (X, "Last Speech").

In 1968, Imari Obadele made two steps towards this progressive plan. The first was convening the Black Governance Conference. The second was publishing *War In America: The Malcolm X Doctrine*, written in 1966, one year following the assassination of Malcolm X. This text, one of his earliest treatises, was an attempt to establish the rationale for Black self-determination by way of the New Afrikan Republic. In its introduction, Imari Obadele suggests Malcolm X was in support of territorial nationalism, and that he believed Blacks in America would establish a nation of their own. According to Obadele (1968), "I was anxious that we should give national form and specific programmatic direction to the new movement that his break from Elijah Muhammad signaled…all that we should do,

Malcolm had already set out before us. It was left but for us to organize and carry out the

work" (p. 4). For the Obadele brothers, what was to be done was to consolidate the fervent

political energy of the Black masses, particularly those inciting rebellion throughout

America's urban centers, into a disciplined, national framework. In so doing, the PGRNA

would carry out "a peaceful campaign to gain sovereignty over lands on this continent that

rightfully belong to black people…[and]…show that the government of the United States

does not have our consent" (Obadele, 1970, p. 36). One way in which the PGRNA sought

to gain recognition and independence was by presenting their case to the United Nations

(UN).

United Nations and Notions of Human Rights

Belief in the ability of the UN to assuage the struggles of Blacks in America was a

constant topic within New Afrikan literature. Malcolm X was a model for the PGRNA's

anti-geopolitical positioning. His stance that Blacks in America should take their claims

regarding systemic racism and economic exploitation to the UN—that Blacks should

mature beyond civil rights and make their claims international by demanding human rights.

> …as long as the Black man in the America calls his struggle a struggle of civil
> rights, that in the civil rights context it's domestic and remains within the
> jurisdiction of the United States. And if any of them open up their mouths to say
> anything about it, it's considered a violation of the laws and rules of protocol. And
> the difference with the other people was that they didn't call their grievances civil
> rights grievances, they called them human rights grievances. "Civil rights" are
> within the jurisdiction of the government where they are involved. But "human
> rights" is part of the Charter of the United Nations (X, 1992, p. 170).

At the time, it was believed that the United Nations, due to its role as a supra-

national governing body, could provide relief to the struggles of Blacks in America.[66]

However, neither the PGRNA nor Malcolm X believed in the benevolence of western

nations, particularly those with ties to colonialism and imperialism. Instead, their hope

rested in the pan-Africanism and socialist ideals of nations in Africa, Asia, and Latin

America with representation within the UN, particularly those undergoing decolonization.

Blacks, according to Obadele, had to elevate their struggle to that of human rights and

nationhood. Only then could they receive global intervention from potential allies abroad.

The use of the UN and national allies was way the PGRNA attempted to establish the RNA

as a global entity in direct opposition to the United States government, its political and

spatial logics. Furthermore, it indicates the PGRNA developed a complex spatial logic of

its own, a subaltern imaginary, that included multiple scales of territorial governance (e.g.

(inter)national and municipal).

There were other reasons for seeking international support. Survival. Imari Obadele

believed relationships with other nations and the UN would protect the RNA from assaults

from the United States. Regarding the essential nature of having such allies, Obadele

(1970) wrote, "Thus, in New Africa we have upon us the obligation to cultivate

unilaterally and through regional associations the support of foreign powers" (p. 7). The

PGRNA's geopolitical tactical alliances were also designed to deter the United States from

conducting a military style assault on the new nation, in effect, thwarting it before it could

gain its footing. Obadele (1970) suggested the PGRNA establish strategic relationships

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[66] Though it is clear, during the administration of George W. Bush, that the United States refused to recognize the decisions and jurisdiction of the UN, in hindsight, there was little hope that western nations within the UN would have aided New Afrikans following the inception of the PGRNA. This is evident by the recent revelation that in 1961, the United States and Belgium colluded, with support from the UN, oust and assassinate, Patrice Lumumba, the first democratically elected leader of the Congo.

abroad so that in the event the New Afrikan republic was attacked by the United States'

military apparatuses, it would incite reprisals from abroad:

> We follow a classic principle of political science; that for a small for a small nation (us) to maintain itself against a big nation (the United States), it is necessary for the small nation to have an alliance with another big nation (China) or groups of nations (the anti-imperialist nations of Africa and Asia) (p. 7).

Support from the "Afro-Asian" world was seen as key to the success of the RNA. From the

outset, the PGRNA sought to develop alliances with nations of the former Third World and

to use that political capital to pressure the United States to abide and respect the human

rights of New Afrikans. The most strategic relationships were with African and Asian

nations with representation in the UN. In a pamphlet entitled *Freedom: The Eight Essential*

Elements Necessary for the Success of a Black Nation, Obadele wrote, "we call on the

Afro-Asian world…to recognize our right to self-determination…we need their recognition

of our government and their moral and material support" (p. 2) (RFW Collection). This

was a page taken directly from Malcolm X. In his last speech he expressed to his audience

that Blacks in America would never be free until they aligned their struggle with struggles

happening in Africa:

> Many of us fool ourselves into thinking Afro-Americans as those only who are here in the United States… Anybody of African ancestry in South America is an Afro-American, Anybody in Central America of African blood is an Afro-American. Anybody here in North America, including Canada, is an Afro-American if he has African ancestry – even down in the Caribbean, he's an Afro-American. So when I speak of the Afro-American, I'm not speaking of just the twenty-two million of us who are here in the United States. (X, 1992, p. 144-145)

Malcolm X went on to state definitively, before a large audience at Corn Hill Methodist

Church in Rochester, New York, "Any kind of movement for freedom of Black people

based solely within the confines of America is absolutely doomed to fail" (X, 1992, p.

168). It was also an escalation of the ambassadorial work done by Robert F. Williams from

1961 to 1969, while he was in exile in Cuba, the People's Republic of China. Seeking to utilize the relationships established by Williams with Fidel Castro, Mao Tse Tsung, Julius Nyerere and other world leaders, PGRNA officials sought favor abroad.

As a top official within the PGRNA, Obadele would draw directly from Malcolm X's geopolitical playbook and employ anti-capitalist nations to support the incipient New Afrikan Republic. In his monograph on Malcolm X's travels throughout the Middle East, Alex Lubin (2014) suggest Malcolm X's travels and the relationships he developed with heads of state contributed to the formation of a geopolitical imaginary informed by the oppressions experienced by African Americans and Arabs. Understanding the struggles of New Afrikans in America as tied to those experienced by people in formerly colonized nations, Obadele attempted to join in the global struggle against colonialism, imperialism, and capitalism. In *Foundations of the Nation*, Obadele (1975) reiterated the RNA's claims to national territory for a people believed to be a captive nation: "We say, like Castro's Cuba before us, if We can achieve freedom and independence with the United States still in existence, We will do so…We are saying our objective is not to overthrow the United States but to create our own nation" (p. 4).

Though Obadele (1970) remained hopeful that the United States would relinquish the five states without violence but through a combination of "polemics and reason" and "international pressure," he seemed certain, due to the teachings of history, that local whites and the United States law enforcement agencies would fight to keep this territory (p. 9). As Tim Tyson (1999) states, in *Radio Free Dixie*, "white Southerners…met black aspirations with a wave of racial violence" (p. 54). As the discussed in a previous chapter on the historical apex and the violent attenuation of the PGRNA, attacks on the RNA's

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Government House in Jackson, Mississippi and the threats from the white supremacist organizations like the KKK and Citizens Council, demonstrated the United States—the governing structure and its citizenry—was undeterred by the PGRNA's ambassadorial approach nor its geopolitical affiliations. In what follows, I offer two examples of the PGRNA's anti-geopolitics via analyses of the writings of Imari Obadele. In these publications one can see some ways in which the PGRNA illustrated its anti-geopolitics and how it positioned itself, rhetorically and militarily, in opposition to the United States' government.

Dispelling Myths and Misrepresentation

In an essay entitled, "Republic of New Africa: Struggle for Land in Mississippi," Imari Obadele explains the drive for a New Afrikan republic. He states, "Because we are persistent, because we are right, because our moment in time has come, because the people…are moving to our side, we shall, without a doubt and in our time: FREE THE LAND!" (p. 73). This persistence based in a belief in one's sovereignty and nationality led citizens of the PGRNA, chiefly Imari Obadele, to challenge the governance of the United States at every turn, to include the country's attempts to malign and delegitimize the RNA. In what follows I offers examples of the PGRNA's anti-geopolitics—representational and material—as presented in Imari Obadele's writings. Much like Routledge's (1998) analysis of the works of key figures of the de-colonial era, Obadele's writing underscores an anti-geopolitics that challenged the legitimacy of the United States and which set a foundation for the growth of a New Afrikan nation. Obadele believed in the notion of "expanding sovereignty," that through the exploitation of local electoral processes and by

consolidating its populace within the Kush District, the PGRNA would spread and concentrate its political power and landed territory (Obadele, 1970, p. 46). Through its separation from the United States government and its attempt to obtain territorial sovereignty, the PGRNA illustrated what a struggle against the "coercive power of the state," no matter who is in power (liberal or conservative) (Routledge, 1998, p. 245). Routledge illustrates that oppressed groups under colonialism abroad and Jim Crow apartheid here in the United States, challenged state government and articulated alternative visions for state governance. The PGRNA, though unacknowledged by Routledge, was one of these groups.

The PGRNA's anti-geopolitics included dispelling myths perpetrated by the governmental official and media regarding their assumed violent nature and attempts to overthrow the United States government. Obadele began refuting these claims following the raid of the RNA Government House in Jackson, Mississippi in August of 1971. In a press conference convened following the raid, Obadele argued against claims that the RNA were a violent contingent of Black radicals. Hinds County District Attorney, Jack Travis, was a culprit. In a television interview, Travis stated that if the federal government did not oust the RNA from the state of Mississippi, local and state law enforcement officials would take on the responsibility.

A key aspect of the PGRNA's framework included the establishment of ambassadorial relationships with officials within the United States federal government. For instance, attempting to work with(in) America's political framework, Imari Obadele delivered copies of the PGRNA "Anti-Depression Program" to members of the United States Congress in 1972 (Obadele, 1975). On a separate occasion, New Afrikan citizens,

Ahmed Obafemi and Malik Sonnebeyata traveled to Miami, Florida to lobby on behalf of the PGRNA at the Democratic National Convention (DNC). They intent were to deliver literature to Democratic Presidential nominee, George McGovern. Days into their lobbying they were unjustly arrested and ultimately charged with the attempted murder of a political official. Their arrest was seen as an attempt by the federal government, specifically the FBI's COINTELPRO, to dismantle the PGRNA and to thwart their plans for independence (Obadele, 1973). Their arrest had multiple affects. First, it removed two dedicated New Afrikans from active duty. Second, it drained valuable resources from the growing nation. Third, it further tarnished the reputation of the PGRNA in the imagination of Blacks and whites in America. Though the Secret Service's initial press release claimed no evidence of a violent plot, according to an imprisoned Obadele (1973), "In the minds of millions — including many Black — the damage was already done. 'A couple of those crazy nationalists got busted trying to kill George McGovern'" (p. 67). These arrests further damaged the reputation of the PGRNA and their geopolitical objectives.

Obadele responded to the false narrative of violence in a letter entitled, "The Talk of Violence Obscures our Program for Independence and Economic Development." Written from Mississippi's notorious Parchman Prison, Obadele disclaimed misrepresentations of the PGRNA's aims and objectives and their reason for migrating to the state of Mississippi. After describing the conditions in which incarcerated New Afrikans were kept captive, Obadele tells his audience, "we're here because of an enemy's plot that failed" (Obadele, 1975, p. 20). Attempting to garner support from Blacks in America, Obadele addressed well-known incidents of police brutality in the South to discredit the country's claims that the RNA citizens were a violent group:

Virtually all of us are familiar with the basic format: in the city a policeman stops a brother, beats him up, and the next day, the policeman hauls the brother into court and charges the brother with assault and resisting arrest. It is all too familiar a pattern. The plot executed against us, of course, is more nearly similar—though more determined and extensive—to that executed in the early Sixties in Philadelphia, Mississippi, against the three civil rights workers, Chaney, Schwerner, and Goodman (Obadele, 1975, p. 20).

The letter, subsequently published in *Foundations of the Black Nation*, was written following the arrest of the RNA-11 in Jackson, Mississippi. Obadele's initial passage immediately dispels any belief that the RNA was at fault. This, he says, was but another instance of police brutality, which Blacks in America know all too well. In fact, Angela Davis once responded to similar claims by the American media regarding the BPP's supposed violent tendencies. When the reporter insinuates that Black revolution is synonymous with violence, she responds that revolution is based in the principles and goals of an organization. She expounds by highlighting a moment of racist violence perpetrated by white southerners and ignored by the American government:

> You ask me whether I approve of violence. I mean that just doesn't make any sense at all. Whether I approve of guns. I grew up in Birmingham, Alabama. Some very, very good friends of mine were killed by bombs, bombs that were planted by racists. I remember, from the time that I was small, I remember the sounds of bombs exploding across the street—our house shaking. I remember my father having to have guns at his disposal at all times because of the fact that at any moment, we might expect to be attacked. The man, who was at that time, was in complete control of the city government, his name was Bull Connor, would often get on the radio and make statement like, "Niggers have moved into a white neighborhood. We better expect some bloodshed tonight." And, sure enough, there would bloodshed.

She then, recalls the terror felt by Black communities in Birmingham following the bombing of the church that killed and mangled the bodies for four little Black girls, some of whom, were friends of hers and her sister:

> After the four young girls, who lived, one of them lived next door to me [and] I was very good friends with a sister of another one. My sister was very good friends with all three of them. My mother taught one of them in her class… In fact, when the

bombing occurred, one of the mothers of one of the young girls called my mother and said, "Can you take me down to the church to pick up Carol…" And they went down and what did they find? They found limbs and heads strewn all over the place…I mean, that's why when someone asks me about violence, I just find it incredible. Because what it means is that the person who's asking that question has absolutely no idea what Black people have gone through, what Black people have experienced in this country since the time the first Black person was kidnapped from the shores of Africa.

A necessary component of Black struggle, be it for land and territory, or community control (as was desired by the BPP), entailed consistently dispelling myths and lies perpetuated by the United States government and the society writ large. Obadele offers a similar history lesson of state-sanctioned violence in the South. He does so in order to link the raid against the New Afrikan Government House to the well-known killings of three civil rights workers in Mississippi. According to Obadele, the only difference between these two assaults is that the state of Mississippi was unsuccessful in killing any New Afrikan citizens (Obadele, 1975).

Obadele also challenged the United States at a federal level. In a letter entitled "On the Question of Human Rights," then President Imari Obadele wrote—while jailed in Mississippi—to President Jimmy Carter of the United States. The letter defends his fellow prisoners of war while admonishing President Carter for what Obadele views as his hypocritical stance on human rights. In an act of critical geopolitical analysis, President Obadele analyzed excerpts of President Carter's address to the UN regarding human rights violations abroad. His incisive analysis is an indicator of what O' Tuathail (1999) considers when he describes critical geopolitics as "a problematizing theoretical enterprise that places the existing structures of power and knowledge in question" (p. 107).

Obadele shamed President Carter for his "personal intervention for persons on trial in Russia," and his support for individuals in Chile, while New Afrikans and other political prisoners languished in penitentiaries (Obadele, 1978, p. 1). According to President Obadele, President Carter's notion of human rights meant "Human Rights *abroad* but rampant abuse of Human Rights for black, New Afrikans" (Obadele, 1978, p. 1).

Through their international lobbying New Afrikans drew the attention and support of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Amnesty International beseeched the US government on behalf of the RNA-11. Though their overtures were ignored, their involvement in the internal affairs of the United States on behalf of New Afrikans validated the human rights of New Afrikan subjects incarcerated in Mississippi. And though Amnesty International did not secure the immediate release of New Afrikan political prisoners, they were a part of a deliberate campaign—crafted by New Afrikans—to disrupt and dispel the narratives developed by the United States government and to expand their political influence, internationally. Here, I turn to the second component of the PGRNA's anti-geopolitics, its material challenges and refutations of the United States sovereignty and rule via calls to armed self-defense and attempts to align with formerly subjugated nations.

Challenging America's Military Might

In *We Will Shoot Back: Armed Resistance in the Mississippi Freedom Struggle*, Akinyele Umoja dispels popular claims that Blacks in the Deep South were all pacifists. Challenging the dominant narrative regarding the Civil Rights Movement, he and others have shown that many within the Civil Rights Movement were proponents and

practitioners of armed self-defense (Cobb, Jr., 2015; Umoja, 2013). Umoja (2013) devotes

a full chapter of the text to the RNA and their use of armed self-defense to defend their

land and territory against what (Obadele, 1970) called "uniformed and ununiformed white

violence" (p. 37).

Aside from establishing a governance structure, a significant development by the

PGRNA was its military. Obadele's earliest expressions of the PGRNA's anti-geopolitics

and military strategy are discussed in *War in America: The Malcolm X Doctrine*. Published

in 1968, *War in America* provides a practical and defensive rational for the PGRNA's push

for a Black nation state, rather than seeking political power solely through American

electoral politics. (Obadele, 1968) declares:

> It was to remove the Malcolmites and other black nationalist revolutionaries in
> America from a position where the United States might with impunity destroy them
> to a position where attacks upon us by the United States become international
> matters, threatening world peace, thereby within the reach of the United
> Nations…within the reach of our friends in Africa and Asia (p. 2).

Obadele formulated a three-part military defense strategy. First, the RNA would

receive the loyal, and capable protection of its "inherent military force" (Obadele, 1970, p.

3).[67] However, as the raid on the RNA in Jackson demonstrated, everyday New Afrikan

citizens were also vital to the defense of their nation. Citizens were instrumental, however,

the PGRNA relied primarily on the training and dedication of the Black Legionnaires, the

PGRNA's formal military. The Black Legionnaires were in charge of protecting PGRNA

dignitaries and citizens during gatherings and defending the nation from foreign

governments, chiefly the United States.

Their first challenge came in Detroit, Michigan, on March 31, 1968, the

commemoration of the founding of the RNA one-year prior. The shootout between DPD

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[67] See Figure 1.1.

officers and Black Legionnaires would come to be known as the New Bethel Incident. A separate incident occurred when New Afrikans migrated to Mississippi in order to acquire land and territory in the rural town of Bolton. According to Chokwe Lumumba, one time Vice President of the PGRNA, New Afrikans moved as a formidable military mass. Some "two hundred and fifty New Afrikan security forcemen" ventured south to liberate and defend a parcel of the RNA (Lumumba, 1981a, p. 73).

The strength and dedication of the PGRNA's military along with the defensive capabilities was a point of pride. Black Legionnaires dressed in military attire, stood in formation, and defending the nation, at all costs. While on a tour of cites in the history of the Black Freedom Struggle in Mississippi, one New Afrikan citizen recalled, triumphantly how the PGRNA, in its battles with local and federal law enforcement (the raid of the New Afrikan Government House), suffered no causalities.[68]

The sole responsibility of this "inherent military viability," would be to defend the budding nation from assaults—which Obadele felt were imminent—from whites, particularly those in the South. Because the New Afrikan nation was in the South, the Black Legion was, thus, stationed there. However, it was envisioned that a key component to the successful defense of the RNA's efforts to expand its territory, included aid from local Mississippians. Regarding the significance of local support to the defense of the RNA, (Obadele, 1970) wrote, in *Revolution and Nation-building*, "our strategy has to include the people on the land in the cities as a vital element…The army…must be able to depend on the people for reconnaissance and intelligence information, against the enemy" (p. 9). And, to an extent, the PGRNA was successful in garnering support from the local people of Mississippi. Though the deal went awry, Lofton Mason—a Black farmer who

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[68] Baba Lukata . Personal Communication. Civil Rights Tour.

owned land in Bolton, Mississippi—originally planned to sell the PGRNA twenty acres of farmland to begin construction of New Communities.

Following the FBI and JPD's raid of the RNA Government House, Jacksonians came to the aid of New Afrikans. In the wake of the raid, when local and national news were lampooning the RNA as a group of violent radicals, famed novelist and poet, Margaret Walker, wrote favorably of the group in her personal journal. In an interview with Mikea Kambui, member of the Jackson Chapter of the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement, he recalled encountering citizens of the PGRNA as a child. He and his mates were enthralled by their presence as they marched through his West Jackson neighborhood. Kambui stated, "We thought they were the [Black] Panthers. We didn't know any better" (Personal Communication, 2017). State Representative Bennie Thompson, who since 1993 has served as the U.S. Representative for Mississippi's 2nd congressional district, came out in support of the citizens of the RNA. In the aftermath of the shootout, Representative Thompson stated his beliefs regarding self-determination: "My position is people are allowed to live as they choose, so long as they are law abiding and peaceful." He goes on to say, following an inquiry about the presumed militant nature of the RNA:

> You know, any Black person who speaks up for his rights in Mississippi is classified a militant. So, I wouldn't consider them militants to the form of being revolutionaries. You know, I see them militant as being [interested in] protecting their own homes, which I believe any man in this state would do, be he Black or white [MDAH Video].

Representative Thompson describes how the RNA sought to purchase land in order to develop communities through which they would subsist off of, and defend, the land. The response of Representative Thompson, Margaret Walker, and Mikea Kambui indicate that citizens of the RNA received implicit and explicit support from Mississippians

representing all walks of life. No doubt other local people were in support of the PGRNA. Collectively, the tacit and outright support for "Black radicals" from the North by residents in the Civil Rights South not only speaks to the blurred politics and spatialities of the Civil Rights Movements (Ahmad, 2007; Jeffries, 2010; Umoja, 2013), it indicates, as does John Dittmer (1994), that local people were essential—in part, by forming regional and national support structures—to the success of groups organizing for civil and human rights in the Deep South.

The second component of the PGRNA's three-tiered military strategy included harnessing the unstructured, power and rage of Black youth rebelling in cities throughout the United States. When the PGRNA came into being, Black youth throughout the North and West had begun to bring into fruition the fiery future foretold in James Baldwin's (1963) *The Fire Next Time*. According to (Obadele, 1970), these rebellious masses of Black youth throughout the urban regions of the North composed a secondary strike force. Though leaderless, their spontaneous, self-organized guerilla attacks were viewed as imperative to the RNA's ability to fend off attacks *and* launch successful offensive measures within urban centers. Regarding the strategic importance of this group, (I. A. Obadele, 1970) wrote:

> Finally, beyond the south, the black man's SECOND-STRIKE CAPABILITY must be believable. The second-strike capability is the Underground Army, the black guerillas in the cities. So long as black people are able to remain in the cities and there are over 120 major cities where the brothers have used the torch — and retain relative freedom of movement, the black man has, or can develop, the means for destroying white industrial capacity and — if need be — white America in general as mercilessly as a missile attack (p. 10).

The second strike showed how Obadele's political strategizing and belief that even those who did not subscribe to a New Afrikan identity were dedicated to gaining freedom and a

better way of life. Obadele discussion of this secondary defense force speaks to the

PGRNA's military and political strategy regarding urban centers in the North.

Last, Obadele hoped that the RNA would receive aid from communist and socialist

nations in Africa and Asia, particularly, China, which at the time, was the only non-

western nation with nuclear power. Obadele also relied on international law to lobby on

behalf of captured New Afrikans as prisoners-of-war. In his letter to President Jimmy

Carter, he suggested Carter honor the Geneva Convention and respect the RNA-11 as

prisoners of war. Furthermore, he suggested President Carter secure the release of the

RNA-11 so that they may acquire asylum in Cuba or Tanzania, nations that were providing

support for oppressed populations the world over:

> President Fidel Castro has offered to receive men and women in Cuba, providing
> them asylum and a chance to work and study and have decent lives. The Republic
> of Tanzania has long granted asylum to political refugees and freedom fighters.
> Their rights under the Geneva Convention include the right to exchange. I urge
> you, Mr. Carter, to agree to exchange (Obadele, 1978, p. 13).

In his writing, Obadele remained vague as to how these geopolitical relationships would

coalesce. However, it is my position that through international travel and asylum seeking,

citizens of the RNA formed international relations, transgressed political-economic

borders, and practiced an embodied geopolitics. By traveling abroad to nations like Cuba,

Tanzania, and the People's Republic of China, New Afrikans established the relationships

necessary to gain global support for their cause for liberation.[69] One may look to Malcolm

X's travels to Africa, Asia, and the Middle East as a pre-functionary feminist geopolitics,

one that the PGRNA would later emulate. Malcolm X's post-NOI travels crafted

relationships, allies, and allegiances that transcended race, religion, and international

boundaries (Lubin, 2014).

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[69] See Figure 12.

One would not be misguided in using Malcolm X as a model for the PGRNA's geopolitical relationship. However, the migratory patterns of Robert F. Williams, the first President of the PGRNA, are a sound example of the ambassadorial relationships developed at the onset of the PGRNA. In what follows, I provide a relate the PGRNA's feminist geopolitics to the years Williams and his family spent in living, exiled in Cuba, the People's Republic of China, and the Republic of Tanzania.

CHAPTER 5

The Praxis of Feminist Geopolitics

Introduction

The second edition of *The Geopolitical Reader* was a precursor to feminist geopolitics. In this volume, Ó Tuathail, Dalby, and Routledge (1998) address a glaring limitation within the first edition of the text—its lack of critical geopolitics by way thinkers who represent populations marginalized by orthodox geopolitics and traditional geopolitical actors (i.e. presidents, prime ministers, etc.). These forgotten, repressed voices resound in a section on anti-geopolitics wherein Routledge (1998) defines geopolitics from below as "an ethical, political and cultural force within civil society" (p. 245). I am wary—and apparently, so is he (Routledge, 1996)—of the assertion that anti-geopolitics comes from populations *within* civil society not afforded the virtues of this socio-spatial and political-economic structure. The notion that Black people[70] and other subjugated groups referenced in this text are members of civil society is antithetical to the arguments raised by thinkers re-published in this edition (e.g. Martin Luther King, Jr., Frantz Fanon, and Edward Said).[71] Nonetheless, his development of anti-geopolitics as a discursive challenge to geopolitics is useful.

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[70] Recent inquiries into the spatialities of Blackness have articulated how and why Blacks are not privy to the residential and civil zones formed by/for whiteness (McKittrick & Woods, 2007; Sexton, 2010; Wilderson, 2003; Woods, 2002). This is precisely because Blacks exist, spatially and ontologically, *outside* civil society.
[71] Such is also the case with citizens of the RNA (Lumumba, 1973, 1980, 1981, 1987).

In the essay, "Critical Geopolitics and Terrains of Resistance," Paul Routledge stretches the canon even further. Therein, he argues that critical geopolitics should look to social movements and how dissenters resist homogenizing geopolitical policies and projects as well as how they articulate their own critical geopolitical imaginaries. He states:

> A critical investigation with social movements within geopolitical enquiry can, therefore, approach movement agency not only in terms of the particular (economic, political, cultural, etc.) causes and crises that precipitate the mergence of resistance but also social movements' own rationality, representations, interpretations, organization and stories and resistance (Routledge, 1996, p. 524).

However, Routledge suggested a grounded engagement that he, himself, did not conduct. Gearoid O' Tuathail (2010) takes up this challenge in "Localizing Geopolitics: Disaggregating Violence and Return in Conflict regions." Here O'Tuathail articulates the usefulness of conducting place-based critical geopolitics, using, as an example, his fieldwork in war-torn Bosnia. According to O' Tuathail (2010), "critical geopolitics can deepen its critical practice by grounding itself in regional research" (p. 257). Though an important example of critical geopolitics removed from the isolation of the ivory tower and grounded in everyday realities, O'Tuathail and Routledge's interventions exist as solo endeavors, ones that did not come to define the methodology of critical geopolitics.

Feminist geographers have approached the limits of critical geopolitics, offering constructive critiques of their intellectual forebears. Though valuable contributions to the study of hegemonic statecraft, for some, the first generation of critical geopolitics were little more than "very eloquent deconstructions of dominant political discourse," written, seemingly, from nowhere (Dowler & Sharp, 2001, p. 167). At the 2001 Canadian Association of Geographers, Jennifer Hyndman (2001) states the combination of feminist and political geographies to recalibrate geopolitical analyses and practices so as to

acknowledge actants "operating at scales finer and coarser than the nation-state," such as the body. Much of her work on the subject consist of articulating this intrinsic link between feminist and political geography (Hyndman, 2001, 2003, 2004, 2010). Similarly, Linda Dowler and Joanne Sharp (2001) associate feminist geographies with bringing women and other marginalized people into the purview of critical geopolitics. Their work encourages scholars and political actors "to think of bodies as sites of performance in their own right rather than nothing more than surfaces for discursive inscription" (p. 169). Put another way, the State is embodied in the polis. Allison Mountz (2003) illustrates and declares as such in her work on human trafficking in Canada when she writes, "The state does not exist outside of the people who comprise it, their everyday work, and their social embeddedness in local relationships" (p. 640).

Scholars have taken heed. Sara Smith's (2009, 2013, 2014) research on love and reproduction among Ladakhi young adults illustrates how the body is more than a component of state territory. It creates and transgresses territory. Via decisions of whom to love and with whom to procreate, Ladakhi youth become territorializing agents through which the territories of the Ladakhi state are reinforced and challenged. Jennifer Fluri (2009) offers insight on the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) use of cameras to surveil the Taliban and its policing and beating of women's bodies via the burqa and floggings. Her work indicates how women and children are positioned as "collateral bodies" locally and globally via the ongoing strife between the Taliban and the United States government, both of which exact state violence (via flogging and bombings) upon Afghanis (p. 263). Last, in her corporeal approach to the study of the Middle East, Jessie Hanna Clark (2016) works through the body as a "justice-oriented

methodology of studying and knowing the Middle East" as a multi-scalar place with groupings of people who are vulnerable, loved, and worthy of being grieved (p. 2).

Though under-mentioned in feminist geopolitics, the work of rescaling geopolitics through the body is an act of re-territorializing the geopolitical canon in a way that focuses to how people re-territorialize space. Claude Raffestin and Samuel Butler (2012) take up the role of embodiment in the production of territory by theorizing territoriality as part and parcel of processes of everyday life which re-position territories. They state, "Territory and territoriality derive from the activity that humans carry out in the space that is given to them in the common, within the limits of the conception that they have of it" (Raffestin & Butler, 2012, p. 124). Thus, all humans are territorializing agents, particularly for feminist geographers, those who traverse contentious geopolitical contexts. Furthermore, according to Stuart Elden (2010, 2013a, 2013b), "territory" is best understood within specific historic and spatial context and through the political mechanisms that make it. Thus, rather than viewing "territory" as simply a bounded space, Elden (2010) encourages researchers to question how territory is conceived, defined, and enacted in varying historic and spatial contexts—along with the political technologies that allow for its management and control.

The Embodied Politics of a Black Radical Tradition

Work in feminist geopolitics has been abstracted from and applied to the actions and impositions of marginalized groups of people throughout Canada, Latin America, the Middle East, and South Asia (J. H. Clark, 2016; Hyndman, 2001, 2003, 2004, 2010; Mountz, 2003; S. H. Smith, 2009, 2013; Swanson, 2016). Furthermore, the application of feminist geopolitical analyses has referred, generally, to present day social issues and

social movements. Scholars have yet to test the application of a feminist geopolitical approach retroactively, suturing this analytic to individuals and organizations that existed prior to its formation. Can one successfully apply a feminist geopolitical approach to timeworn challenges to hegemonic statecraft? And, if so, will the application hold?

Furthermore, the feminist geopolitical praxes of oppressed people in the United States, particularly, Blacks people in America has gone unstudied. Perhaps, feminist geographers share more in common with critical geopolitics than they think. For, if critical geopolitics is terribly concerned with producing critiques from nowhere, it would seem that feminist geopolitics (as is custom among research within the field Geography) is too concerned with the geopolitical challenges of actors from elsewhere. Thus, in the wake of interventions made by political and feminist geographers into the critical study of geopolitics, the field is ripe for an engagement with the critical geopolitical logics and territorializing praxes of Black Nationalists who challenges to imperial America occurred within particular historical and spatial contexts.

Though Jennifer Hyndman (2004) and Kate Coddington (2015) consider the ramifications of decoupling feminist geopolitics from gendered bodies, and Sara Koopman (2011) views feminist geopolitics is about more than "gender and geopolitics," they are among a small cohort pushing the subfield in this vein (p. 276). Kate Coddington (2015) states, "one of the most contested debates within feminist scholarship and politics—and feminist geography more specifically—is the attempt to break the taken-for-grated connection between "feminist" work and a specifically *gendered* focus" (p. 214). Though novel, feminist geopolitical thought is often used to addresses the statecraft of nations and the state-sanctioned assaults upon women's bodies. I am compelled to query, "Does

feminist political purchase exist in men's embodied movements?" If so, why has so little research addressed men's corporeal capacity to challenge hegemonic statecraft? And furthermore, does this persist within an era and an organization known for the patriarchal views of Black revolutionaries regarding the role of women within the revolution (Brown, 1992; Lorde, 1984; Moody, 1968).

This chapter will highlight how citizens of the PGRNA—in an attempt to produce an anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist nation within the territorial borders of what is commonly known as the United States of America—challenged geopolitical narratives, roles, and relationships within and beyond the boundaries of the United States. By placing a focus on the geopolitical praxis of New Afrikan citizens within the United States, this section heeds Dowler & Sharp's (2001) advice that scholars study organizations in their hemisphere in order to unveil additional insights into "the ways in which the nation and the international are reproduced in the mundane practices we take for granted" (p. 171).

This section addresses these concerns via a historical analysis of the migratory patterns—within and beyond the territorial boundaries of the United States—of New Afrikan citizens like Robert F. Williams and Mabel Williams, throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Robert F. Williams was the PGRNA's first president, a stalwart figure of the Civil Rights and Black Power Movement who served his term in self-imposed exile in Cuba, the People's Republic of China, and Tanzania.

Since the establishment of maroon communities throughout the Americas, self-emancipating men and women sought form autonomous liberated zones (Robinson, 1997). Cedric Robinson (1983) notes, in his foundational work on the Black Radical Tradition, "at first, as a rule, resistance among the enslaved Africans took the form of flight to native or

"Indian" settlements" (p. 130). From the onset of the America's system of plantocracy, those enforced into slavery posed an embodied challenge to their lot within America's racial, economic, (geo)political, and spatial order. It was by no accident that white enslavers through the United States sought to keep news of incidents like Nat Turner's Rebellion and the Haitian Revolution from within earshot of those they enslaved. It was feared that Haitians' victorious rebellion would serve as a model and incite insurrections that threatened to overturn America's political economy, much in the way that the Haitian Revolution did to France's political and economic standing, globally.

Within maroon spaces, praxis was essential to replicating a way of life and livelihoods antagonistic to a system of racial capitalism institutionalized as racial slavery. Though research on maroon communities proliferates, none speak to their fugitive movements and their existence in Mountains and swamps as *embodied* challenges to the state sanctioned systems of enslavement as challenges to hegemonic statecraft by Western nations (Aptheker, 1939; Hall, 1985; Lockley, 2015; Lockley & Doddington, 2012; Sayers, Burke, & Henry, 2007; Shoats, 2001).

Daniel Sayers' (2015), *A Desolate Place for a Defiant People*, an archaeological history of the maroon communities that inhabited within the Great Dismal Swamp from the 17th to the 19th centuries, argues that within this dismal place maroon communities developed a unique political economy born of praxis, one that challenge the exploitative worldview of the white American planters and the nation itself. Maroons are said to have created a world separate from that outside the borders of the swamp:

> …the diasporic communities of the Dismal Swamp collectively represents a previously unrecognized Praxis Mode of Production that existed in contradiction with other contemporary modes of production, such as the Capitalist Mode of Production… the Praxis Mode of Production is a rare example of people

undersmining inequalities and oppressions inherent to capitalistic modes of
production and social worlds by forging and perpetuating a novel social world
outside the capitalistic world" (p. 10).

These freedom dreams, as one would have it, would be continually repurposed throughout

generations in the Americas. Post-emancipation, a Black Nationalist feminist geopolitics

developed individuals like Jamaican national, Marcus Garvey, W.E.B. Dubois, and Maya

Angelou attempted, all of whom attempted to make a home for Black Americans in Africa.

For sojourners such as Jan Rynweld Carew, Paul Robeson, and various engineers and

agricultural specialists trained at Tuskegee University, solace was sought in the Soviet

Union (Carew, 2008; Carew, 1964). For citizens of the PGRNA home was the Deep South.

However, in order to materialize and defend this nation, citizens found it expedient to

develop political allies throughout the globe.

Robert and Mabel Williams' Geopolitics of Mobility

Long before he accepted the position (via telegram from China) of the first

President of the PGRNA, Robert F. Williams was a stalwart of the Civil Rights Movement

and a leading figure in the verging Black Power Movement. A native of Monroe, North

Carolina, Williams came to regional and national prominence as the President of the

Monroe chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

(NAACP). Within this role that he would begin to openly challenge the system of Jim

Crow terrorizing Monroe's Black residents. Like other Black activists of this era, prior to

leading the NACCP, Williams was a member of the United States armed services,

specifically the Marine Corps. He joined with the hopes of receiving a skilled trade along

with free education. He soon learned that much of his time would be spent battling the

same system of Jim Crow he thought he had escaped. Mabel F. Williams states, he "ran

into problems right away in the Marine Corps" (Robert and Mabel Williams Resource Guide, 2005, p. 8). Upon his return to the United States, following a dishonorable discharge, Williams was determined to defend the rights of his family and community from Monroe's white supremacist social structure.

When a local child drowned swimming in an unsupervised creek, Williams and other Black residents pressured the city to make a separate pool for Monroe's Black children. When they were told the pool would be too costly, parents petitioned to have use of the city's public pool, which their tax money helped to pay for. The city opted to drain the pool rather than allow Black children to use and subsequently disinfect it (Tyson, 1998).

The FBI had been keeping tabs of him since his time in the military. Following his military service, Williams was launched into prominence during the infamous "kissing case," an incident that would initiate his earliest formal relationship with American communist party. As the story goes, while playing a game, two girls sat on the laps of two Black boys and kissed them. After the parents of one girl were alerted, the two boys—ages 8 and 10—were charged with assault and sentenced to lengthy stays in a homes for boys. Williams mobilized the community in defense of the youth.

As the men of the Monroe NAACP providing security for the families of the two boys, the national chapter of the NAACP, fearing involving itself in a sex case, hedged on providing legal support. As Tim Tyson (1999) writes in *Radio Free Dixie,* the United States' inhumane racial politics were, for Black Southerners, a geopolitical weapon; "domestic racial politics had been a tiresome liability for the United states in its postwar struggle with the Soviet Union. The activists of the black freedom movement wielded

these Cold War contradictions as weapons in their own struggle for democracy," he says (p. 103). Black activists were not the only one's to use the kissing case for geopolitical purposes. The Socialist Workers Party (SWP), no doubt seeing an opportunity to expose the duplicity of American democracy and to enlist Blacks into the worker's class struggle, came to the aid of the children by providing legal support and journalistic exposure.

Williams was well aware of the importance of national and international visibility and support, particularly during the Cold War. The federal government did "not want racial incidents which draw the attention of the world to the situation in the South," and he was prime to expose them (Tyson, 1999, p. 104). Call it the power of organizing or the "power of international politics," on February 13, 1959, the boys were finally released to the custody of their parents (Tyson, 1999, p.104).

As a result of the media attention brought about by the "kissing case" Williams became well versed in using international pressure to influence domestic racial politics. Williams's first international trip would be to Cuba in 1961, on the heels of the 1959 Cuban Revolution. He and a number of other Black writers and activists went to report on the country's racial situation. Give the United States support for the ousted dictator, Fulgencio Batista, Williams's travel to Cuba as an international reporter was seen as a direct assault to United States international politics. Upon his return, Williams's helped form the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, a group of Americans who lobbied on behalf of the Fidel Castro's Cuban government ("Robert and Mabel Williams Resource Guide," 2005).

As a testament to the geopolitical capital established by he (and Malcolm X)— upon which the PGRNA would later build—when Fidel Castro visited the Harlem, New

York in 1960, following the successful overthrow of Fulgencio Batista's dictatorial government, in addition to meeting with heads of state from the Soviet Union, Egypt, and India, Castro met with Malcolm X and Robert F. Williams. Malcolm X and Robert F. Williams were Black America's unofficial diplomats, and Harlem, was their territory. A year following this historic meeting, Williams was charged in Monroe with the kidnapping of a white couple. He offered them refuge after they wondered into a Black neighborhood during a time of heightened racial strife. Though the couple would acknowledge Williams did them no harm, a warrant was placed for his arrest, an act believed to be an FBI dragnet designed to thwart his efforts for Black arm and inspire Black residents (Tyson, 1999). Rather than subject himself to the American system of justice, Williams and his family fled the country in August of 1961—first to New York, wherefrom he charted passage to Cuba. Cuba's support for Black asylum seekers would be a tactic used by Imari Obadele to influence President Jimmy Carter to intervene in the case of the RNA-11 (Obadele, 1978).

During his visit to Cuba in the summer of 1960, "Williams strolled at his ease in the streets of Havana, where his color was no hindrance, following his curiosity without a tour guide. There were no "white only" signs to affront him. For the first time in years, Williams did not need to worry about his personal safety" (Tyson, 1999, p. 224). The freedom Williams experienced was what he sought for every Black person in America. It also stoked his fiery desire for Black enfranchisement back home. While abroad, Williams became the embodiment and unofficial ambassador of Black radical politics and political organizations in America. He used this platform and his experiences to dispel myths held by some Black Americans regarding communism and Cuba, forming a transnational bridge between Black power and class struggle. Williams was courted by the Communist Party-

USA (CPUSA), selected as the leader of the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM), and voted President of the PGRNA (Tyson, 1999).

In Cuba, Robert Williams was given dignity, respect, and a platform from which to speak to the world about the conditions in which Black communities lived throughout the United States. During the three years in which the Robert and Mabel Williams, and their two sons Robert Williams, Jr. and John Chalmers Williams resided in Cuba, they advocated for the human rights of Black people in America via the radio station, *Radio Free Dixie* and the publication, *The Crusader*. As an ambassador of the Black Freedom Struggle, Williams briefed Fidel Castro on the United States' human rights violations with regard to Black people in America. Providing Fidel Castro with intimate knowledge of America's racial affairs, with which the Cuban nation could create propaganda helped tarnish the United States' image in the world and the United Nations (UN).

After years of living in Cuba, in 1964, the Williams family accepted a personal invitation from Chairman Mao se-Tsung and Chou En-Lai to visit the People's Republic of China. Williams, continuing his journalistic efforts, became the first Black American to interview Chairman Mao. In a column published by the NOI's *Muhammad Speaks*, Williams documented the respect and deep regard Chairman Mao and Chinese citizens held for Black Americans and their plight in America:

> I found that the Chinese people have a great admiration for Negro Americans, Black Americans of African descent. Even little children express great concern for their oppressed black brothers and sisters in America. They are eager to learn much about Afroamerican life in the U.S. They have already published a Chinese edition of my book, "Negroes with Guns" (p. 14).

Continuing their particular geopolitical praxis, the Williams's traveled to Vietnam to offer their support for Ho Chi Minh and the North Vietnamese during the Vietnam War. As

Mabel Williams put it, "Rob and I went to Hanoi and participated in a conference in support of the Vietnamese people in their fight against the United States" ("Robert and Mabel Williams Resource Guide," 2005, p. 29). Through their travels, their associations, and their writing, the Williams performed a feminist geopolitics that was in stark contradiction to the United States domestic racial politics and its imperial geopolitics. As representative of unrecognized Black political formations, the Williams's remade geopolitical borders and connections, making the Black struggle in the United States palpable and plain to those struggling abroad.

Back in the United States, Dr. Obadele critiqued the Vietnam War and expressed the provisional government's desire to bring Black soldiers back from the battlefield. During a press conference held in Jackson, Mississippi, Obadele stated the following:

> We want to also emphasize that the Republic of New Afrika, speaking the needs and desires of Black people, is currently undertaking to disengage Black troops from Vietnam. Now you in Jackson will be hearing more about that. But we intend to bring Black troops home to stop the carnage and the killing of Black people in Vietnam regardless of what the United States government does. We're doing this as a separate and independent government speaking for all Black people down in America…It's now important for Black people all over to stand up and say out loud, 'That we do oppose the war in Vietnam and we oppose, specifically, killing other people of color in a land for people who are killing us.' [MDAH Video].

The longer the Williams' stayed abroad, the more developed and nuanced was their critical geopolitics. If at first, their international travels were due to forced exile, by the time they visited China, Vietnam and other parts of Southeast Asia, their actions had become deliberate challenges against racism and imperialism. Through the relocations, the meetings with dignitaries and working people, the Williams's formed bridged Black Freedom Struggle in Black America and to the anti-colonial and anti-imperialism struggle. No longer were they informing anti-capitalist nations of Americans transgressions. They

were currying favor with political leaders in order to gain support for Black liberation in America.

Hence, nearly two month following his election as President-in-exile of the PGRNA, Williams visited Dar es Salaam, Tanzania in May of 1968. Mae Mallory and Gaidi and Imari Obadele joined him. Their intent was to inform Williams of goings-on in the United States and to strategize as to how to move the newly formed nation forward. Though it is not known what exactly transpired during their meeting, which included with South African freedom fighters, the gathering was fruitful. Furthermore, the New Afrikan economic strategy of Ujamaa (African socialism) was borrowed from Julius Nyerere, the first democratically elected President of the Tanzania.

Williams's ambassadorial actions created—in defiance of the CPUSA and the United States—geopolitical ties between Black America and the anti-capitalist world, He also had a direct impact on the foreign policy and practices of the United States and Britain. In 1969, when Williams decided to return to the United States to face the kidnapping charges eight years prior, on the behest of the United States, the British government blocked him from flying through their airspace and attempted to return him to Cairo, Egypt. Due to international pressure from the allies abroad and revolutionaries in America, not to mention many New Afrikan citizens gathered at Detroit's airport in anticipation of his arrival, British officials capitulated, permitting Williams to board a fight to the United States—not before officials from the PGRNA delivered a stern response, invoking Williams's rights under international law.

Though adamant about his return, many New Afrikans saw geopolitical purchase in Williams's life abroad. In an edition of the *New African*, published during the period of

Williams's return to the United States, the author spoke to the significance of Williams's travels to the PGRNA's struggle for international recognition and support:

> Since his departure eight years ago, Williams has visited Cuba, North Vietnam, China, and Tanzania, and in each place continued to urge the liberation of black people in America, which has been a constant source of irritation to the U.S. imperialist regime.[72]

In addition to listing the countries to which Williams traveled during his eight years in exile, the author makes note of the fact that Williams's time abroad challenged the domestic and geopolitical line and borders of the United States, a country the PGRNA viewed as an "imperialist" power. Furthermore, while abroad, Williams informed the international community of nations, most of which had representation in the UN, of the human rights violations Black communities faced in the United States.

As President of the PGRNA and *de facto* ambassador of Black America, Williams's embodied transgressions exposed America's "Cold War contradictions" to a rapidly de-colonizing world, one which showed its support for Black liberation (Tyson, 1999, p. 103). Though Williams's feminist geopolitics developed through more official channels (e.g. as a governmental official for a self-ascribed sovereign nation), his rhetorical and embodied—their writing and cartography—challenge to the domestic and international politics of the United States indicate that New Afrikan citizens had an understanding of the potential impacts of geopolitical possibilities born by tarnishing America's territorial integrity. Furthermore, the Williams family carries (Coddington's (2015) conversation on feminist geography beyond prophecy and into praxis.

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[72] President Robert is Home. *The New African*. 2(2), 1-3. Williams, Robert Franklin, 1925-Republic of New Africa material (1). University of Michigan Bentley Historical Library. Robert F. Williams Collection.

Robert F. Williams would return to the United States September 12, 1969, greeted warmly by his family and citizens of the PGRNA. Though, Williams relinquished his presidency not long after returning to Michigan, he and Mabel remained a to challenge the United State's political narrative and a beacon of justice, the bedrock of New Afrikan anti-geopolitics, and a model for how the international transgression of borders is a valuable tool.

New Afrikans Migrate South

During the summer of 1970 a faction of the RNA led by Dr. Imari Obadele and a young Chokwe Lumumba migrated south in an attempt to materialize the New Afrikan republic. An estimated 250 New Afrikans caravanned to the rural town of Bolton, Mississippi, located in Hinds County (Lumumba, 1981b). There, citizens moved forward on a purchasing agreement made with an area farmer by the name of Lofton Mason. Their movements were anticipated. County and state officials viewed the New Afrikan subjects move into Mississippi and their mission as a direct assault against the state of Mississippi and the sovereignty of the United States of America. Mississippi Attorney General, A.F. Summer, after urging the federal government to intervene, declared Mississippi would rid the state of the would be invaders:

> If this is not anarchy, or, if this is not a declaration of independence from the United States, accompanied by an overt act, then I've never seen one. Now, it's my opinion that the United States has the prime responsibility to act in this manner. I have written the Attorney General of the United States. And, I have pointed these matters out to him. I have pointed out the constitutional provisions by which he could act. I've pointed out the federal laws that have been broken. And, I've asked him to give the people of Mississippi the position of the United States in regarding that duty. I went further to put out to him that if the United States did not assume its duty, and *remove these people from our soil*, the state of Mississippi and the local,

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the county and local officials would assume this duty and would remove them from this soil [MDAH Video].

The chief legal counsel for Mississippi expressed his outright fear and disdain for the very idea of the RNA and its existence as a direct threat to the state and country. Furthermore, he expressed that his fear was not just because the RNA, in name, existed. He was troubled by the challenge that its citizenry and their presence in the state posed to his authority and that of the United States to govern the region. It was the body politic of the New Afrikan republic who represented what Attorney General Summer called an "overt act" against the sovereignty of the United States. By crossing lines and claiming territory in Mississippi, New Afrikans had began to, quite literally, "move themselves onto the map" (Koopman, 2011, p. 276).

In a separate news clip, one is given a glimpse of the overt acts that caused fear and anxiety among white Mississippians. New Afrikans are seen fellowshipping on the land in Bolton, Mississippi. In one snippet, members of the Black Legionnaires, the New Afrikan military, are seen marching and standing in formation before Dr. Imari Obadele, Chokwe Lumumba, and members of the People's Center Council (PCC). In yet another scene, a white bus and a string of cars are seen parked alongside a rural stretch of rode. Audiences are given audiovisual evidence of how New Afrika was became embodied in Bolton.

In an interview conducted during the commemoration ceremony, it was made clear that the mobility of New Afrikan subjects into their chosen territory essential to the maturation of the RNA, serving, effectively as a psychological and material threat to the territorial sovereignty and integrity of the United States. A rather cantankerous exchange between a local news reporter and a New Afrikan woman indicates as much. The reporter was perturbed that the New Afrikan gathering was, apparently, not going according to

schedule. After asking a New Afrikan citizen when the ceremony would begin, the woman

responds, "The ceremony continues until we leave. All this is what we consider our land

celebration. We'll be having a wedding. We'll be having naming ceremonies. As far as

we're concerned, it's an all day celebration" [MDAH Video]. She continues, "we're

having consecration of our capital, El Malik…[and] a sister and a brother are getting

married." Her response to the reporter's question exposed his myopic and sensationalist

understanding (attuned to the spectacle) of the PGRNAs, its goals, and its practices. As a

result, the reporter failed to see the obvious, the banal. Not only were the PGRNA's

(geo)politics present in its writings and international travels. The nation's embodied

geopolitics existed in its citizens' practice of everyday life (e.g. weddings, naming

ceremonies, and their sheer presence on the land)

The actions of New Afrikans—walking, jogging, marching, standing, talking and

commemorating—in place, indicate what Michel de Certeau (1998) refers to as practices

of everyday life. Their embodied practices demonstrate and replicate the RNA's

geopolitical imaginary. When talking about the New Afrikan marriage that was at El

Malik, the same New Afrikan women tell reporters, "We know longer will go to your

justice of the peace, to the enemy, to sanctify our marriages. That, for now on, we are

living under our own lifestyle. So, that when we marry, we will marry under New Afrikan

law. Our births will be registered under New Afrikan law for now own." [MDAH Video].

The RNA, as a formal governmental entity, was sanctioned, made palp[able by New

Afrikans and their cultural practices, a position discussed by the historian, Ed Onaci

(2015).

Shortly after the caravan arrived in Bolton, they were evicted from the land. An injunction had been filed barring them from returning to the property. Undeterred, the PGRNA established a government house at 1148 Lewis Street in Jackson, Mississippi. It is assumed by some that the governmental repression that followed the PGRNA's move to the community of West Jackson, led its demise (Berger, 2010; Davenport, 2014; Umoja, 2013). In spite of this thesis, it is my position that throughout ensuing decades, New Afrikans continued to move to the South, to Jackson, in particular. For instance, Chokwe Lumumba, along with his family and legal practice moved to Jackson in 1988, heeding the call of the PGRNA for New Afrikans to move south.[73] Though an attorney by trade, New Afrikans of all ages, professions, and skill sets were encouraged to move the heart of the Republic. In a flyer advertising for the New Afrikan Freedom Corps—likely, a riff off of the United States Peace Corps—all skills are stated as essential to forming the New Afrikan nation. Emboldened on the advertisement are the image of a Black man and woman. The man is holding a hammer and the woman, a scissor. Next to them is a community of houses encased in a thought bubble. The flyer reads, "Say brothers and sisters, can you spare 6 months to 'do our thing'.

Two southern towns are listed as construction areas: Brownsville, Mississippi and Ocean Hill, Alabama. The first location is significant because it is located in Hinds County, the county in which both Bolton and Jackson, Mississippi are located. The flyer furthers, "Help build our young nation…Join together young people who are serving as teachers, medical aides, patrolmen, truck drivers, laborers, and employees in New Afrikan government owned industries." This flyer makes a number of statements. First, it

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[73] See flyer advocating the Freedom Corps, encouraging Black people to move south, bringing with them skills, dedication and discipline.

illustrates, again, that New Afrikans citizens—from far and wide—are the essence of the RNA. Second, it shows that the nation valued all forms of labor and felt many skills were necessary to successfully develop the infrastructural, educational, economic, and juridical capacity of the nation. Last, it demonstrates through the phrase, "New Afrikan government owned industries," that the PGRNA desired a socialist nation, in which the government, by way of the people, would own the resources and industries therein. Today, individuals and families continue to relocate south to the Kush District, carrying on the RNA's praxis of "questioning boundaries" and pushing the nation (at various scales) into another phase of development (Coddington, 2015, p. 219).

The PGRNA articulated more than what an Paul Routledge (1998) deems an anti-geopolitics. The embodiment of the RNA's claims to land and territory was more than an attempt, in the words of Sara Koopman (2011), "move themselves on to the map" (276). The RNA's rhetorical challenge to colonial and imperial geopolitics and their transgression of amity lines were attempts to re-create[74] the map altogether via their vision for a Black territory in the Deep South based on racial equality, sustainable communities, and cooperative economics. The next chapter addresses the enduring legacy of the RNA in Detroit and Jackson

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[74] See Figure 4.1

CHAPTER 6

The Afterlives of the Republic of New Afrika[75]

> The Rebellion is characterized by an ascending spiral of radicalization… At each step of the spiraling process of confrontation and contention some leaders and organizations dropped out and new leaders and organizations emerged" – Lerone Bennett, Jr. *Ebony Magazine* (1969)
>
> "The past lives, and breathes, for all" – Scott Martelle *Detroit: A Biography* (2012)

This chapter addresses the outcomes of Republic of New Afrika, first, by addresses literature on the outcomes of social movements. Rather than believe reports regarding the RNA's demise, I draw on this literature to suggest the RNA underwent a maturation of political thought and praxis, along with shifts in organizational structure. The changes undertaken by New Afrikan citizens to carry on their desire for Black self-determination in the South not only represent the amorphous nature of social movements, it demonstrates that across historical periods and spaces, varying notions of territory and forms of territoriality have emerged within this movement. Thus, one looks at the RNA through a Black geographic optic, it becomes clear that the RNA did not exist in structure or politics. Instead, the past lives in the present: "in the wake, the past that is not past reappears, always, to rupture the present" Sharpe (2016, p. 9).

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[75] In *Foundations of the Black Nation*, published following the disastrous raid on the New Afrikan Government House in Jackson, Mississippi, Obadele (1975) declares, before the world, "reports of our demise are greatly exaggerated." Following the Davenport's (2014) assertion of the RNA's death, I invoke President Obadele's words to indicate that the RNA lives.

Social Movements and Civil Society

In *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, Antonio's Gramsci (1971) develops the concept of hegemony as a tool with which to explain the cooptation of social groups (e.g. workers) and the social space (i.e. civil society) they inhabit. Both, he believed, were under constant assault by *political society* (i.e. the State and capitalists). The political society, according to Gramsci, desired homogeneity within the social space of civil society. This, according to Gramsci (1971) is accomplished, chiefly, through the use of coercive measures (e.g. by using intellectuals). If the intellectual is unable to induce consent to the hegemony of the State, the State will induce hegemony via force, what Frank B. Wilderson, III (2003) terms "coercion-in-reverse" (p. 228). This tension (always spatialized) is the "product of the struggle between civil society and political society in a specific historical period" (Gramsci, 1971, p. 245). And the victor determines into what form of hegemony will be crystallized. Gramsci (1971) avows, the end of political tyranny would require the demise of the State that only a "social group that poses the end of the State and its own end as the target to be achieved can create an ethical state (p. 259).

In *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985) recoup, revitalize, and repurpose Antonio Gramsci's (1971) concept of hegemony. Laclau and Mouffe (1985) suggest that following the fall of the Soviet Union, Leftist thinkers, rather than double down on the production of democratic alternatives based upon antagonisms (e.g. communism v. capitalism), abandoned the political potential of antagonisms as a place from which to develop a radical democratic politics; "antagonisms are not objective, but [are] relations that reveal the limits of objectivity," they say (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985, p. xiv). Accordingly, antagonisms are necessary in order to envision

political possibilities beyond, not within, a given hegemony. Frank B. Wilderson, III (2010) agrees. He states, "it is hardly fashionable anymore to think the vagaries of power through the generic positions within a structure of power relations – such as man/woman, worker/boss" (Wilderson, 2010, p. 6). This is their only collective agreement.

One of Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) contributions to Gramscian Marxism is their expansion of social groups that may bring about a new socio-spatial and political order. Where Antonio Gramsci (1971) envisioned the political possibilities of the working class, Laclau and Mouffe (1985) see potential among the worker, the environmentalist, the feminist, and the anti-racist. It is their investment in a multiplicity of social groups (e.g. multiculturalism) marginalized by an ever-expanding and exploitative capitalist system that Frank B. Wilderson, III challenges. He believes the study of "myriad identities," particularly within the context of the United States, furthers the alienation of the Black (and the indigenous) subject. The existence of the former is one of (and based upon) enduring suffering and accumulation (Wilderson III, 2010, p. 6). Continuing his challenge, Wilderson, III announces that by seeking out a route of multiculturalism, "left-leaning scholars help civil society recuperate and maintain stability. But this stability is a state of emergency for Indians and Blacks" (Wilderson III, 2010, p. 6-7).

Laclau and Mouffe (1985) view the (re)emergence of dissident social movements as a derivative of "advanced industrial societies" and foresee the concept and practice of hegemony as representative of the potential for a transformative politics (p. 159). Yet, one might argue that the notion of hegemony is rendered untenable when applied to the Black people, particularly in the United States. I introduce Frank B. Wilderson, III's (2003) reading of Antonio Gramsci's notion of hegemony in order to critique Laclau and

Mouffe's (1985) work on new social movements. This engagement also serves as a segue into my reading of research on the outcomes of social movements. Wilderson, III (2003) states, "Any serious consideration of the question of antagonistic identity formation… must come to grips with the limitations of marxist discourse in the face of the black subject. This is because the United States is constructed at the *intersection of both a capitalist and white supremacist matrix*" [Emphasis added] (p. 225). Contextualizing his argument within the United States, Wilderson, III asserts Black people destabilize any analysis based purely on class dynamics. Embedded within an under-contextualized Marxist analysis of domination, Laclau and Mouffe (1985) fail to take seriously the significance of white supremacy to/within the (re)construction of civil society.

To appreciate the significance of this critique, one must understand the relationship of hegemony to civil society. Gramsci (1971) described civil society as a social space upon which (white) workers exist among one another under a hegemonic Italian (or European) order. Hence, Wilderson, III (2003) suggests the concept of hegemony has no bearing on the Black people. He defends his position with a discussion of violence. The political society (i.e. the State and capitalists), according to Gramsci (1971), exact violence on social *dissidents* only when they have committed the mores of society. That is, workers experience state-sanctioned violence following provocation. However, with regard to Black people across the Diaspora, state-sanctioned violence is "gratuitous" and strikes for no other offense than their existence (Wilderson, III, 2003, p. 229)—" our always already weaponized Black bodies" (Sharpe, 2016, p. 16). Second, and perhaps most important, this violence emerges from sources other than the State and capitalists. Gratuitous violence against Black communities erupts from the State *and* (white) social groups (e.g. workers,

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environmentalists, feminists, and anti-racists) that inhabit and benefit from civil society.

Wilderson, III details this distinction implicates anti-Blackness as the scaffolding upon

which the hegemony of civil society (and its internal groupings) is given existence. In

other words, the white worker, regardless of their political standing, is the State; non-Black

people of color, on the other hand, are enlisted as junior partners in this crime against

humanity. "In this regard, the hegemonic advances within civil society by the Left hold out

no more possibility for black life than the coercive backlash of political society"

(Wilderson, III, 2003, p. 229).

What, then, is required is the reconstruction of society. Laclau and Mouffe (1985)

view the rebirth of society through the rebirth of democratic hegemony, or hegemonies

produced by various social groups. This vivisected political approach disavows the United

States' initial antagonism (founded in the accumulation of African and indigenous people)

renders Blackness and indigeneity "more unimaginable and unintelligible" (Wilderson III,

2010, p. 9). Building from the understanding of civil society as an anti-Black socio-spatial

and political-economics construction concomitant with political society, the next section is

an engagement with literature on the outcomes of social movements.

Social Movements Literature

Much of the contemporary research on social movements, much of which has

emerged from sociology and political science, does not explicitly engage Antonio Gramsci

(1971) nor Ernesto Laclau and Chantel Mouffe (1985). However, social movements

research often exemplifies the diffuse "field of social conflictuality" to which Laclau and

Mouffe (1985) refer (p. 163). Furthermore, much of the literature on the outcomes of social

movements studies social movements within the context of their impact upon the

hegemony of a given nation and/or civil society, or their ability to make changes while remaining within the structure of the State. Engagement with movements that propose an end to the oppressive State and the reanimation a society are much harder to come by. Next, I review a selection of literature on social movement outcomes and propose scholars consider the demands of social movements that imagine political possibilities beyond the State as is. the state and civil society, as given. I engage readings on social movements selectively to contextualize my multi-site study of the spatial and political legacies of the PGRNA in present-day Detroit and Jackson.

David McAdam and David Snow (2010) define social movements as "a loose collectivity acting with some degree of organization, temporal continuity, and reliance on noninstitutional forms of action to promote or resist change in the group, society, or world order of which it is a part" (p. 1). By 'loose collectivity,' McAdam and Snow (2010) mean that every social movement is the product of organizations and individual actors that act in accord and discord with one another, but primarily in opposition to governments and institutions that ignore and/or disavow the needs of various segments of its population. In a study of the influences of social movement leaders integrated into newly reformed democratic states, Brian Grodsky (2012) argues that policy officials and scholars have neglected the long-term impacts of social movements on new pro-democracy governments—the "what next question has been largely pushed aside," he says (p. 21). Speaking over a decade prior, in an edited text on *How Social Movements Matter*, Sidney Tarrow (1999) believed the outcomes of social movements had been "relatively neglected areas of inquiry" (xi). Some scholars are more optimistic. Marco Giugni (2004) believes

"that more attention will be paid in [the] future to crucial consequences of social movements previously neglected" (p. 354).

A number of trends are perpetuated throughout the literature on the outcome of social movements. For instance, there is an ongoing debate as to how best to measure the outcomes of social movements. Felix Kolb (2007) states difficulties in measuring outcomes are due to "causal complexity" regarding internal (i.e. movement actors, aims, and goals) and external factors (i.e. public officials and coalitions) (p. 1). Renate Mayntz (2004) argues that more attention should be placed upon how structural factors within institutions impact the outcomes of collective action. Christian Davenport (2005, 2006, 2014;) has found that both internal (i.e. ideological differences) and external (i.e. state surveillance, coercion, and repression) factors have impacted the longevity of the Republic of New Afrika. Last, Marco Giugni and Sakura Yamasaki (2009) suggest, in order to circumvent the issues of measurement, that scholars employ comparative research designs.

Instead of "measuring" social movements via quantitative and qualitative methods, scholars might begin to engage and align themselves with the social movement organizations they study. Perhaps then they may address this concern regarding outcomes. Wendy Wolford's (2010) *How Social Movements Die* is an instructive example. Wolford (2006) argues for an embedded ethnographic approach to the study of social movements. "Ethnographic research is invaluable for social movement research," she instructs (Wolford, 2006, p. 335). Furthermore, the text, based on Wolford's study of the landless workers' movement throughout rural Brazil, utilized distinct schools of research on social movements to investigate the heterogeneities within the *Movimiento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra* (MST). Her study uncovered that within the MST's chapters in northern

and southern Brazil, actors contest one another, and pose differing political, spatial, and agricultural visions. They even circulate in and out of the movement. In the end, the MST is shown to be a les than homogenous movement.

Unfortunately, Wolford's (2010) attempt to highlight multiplicities within the MST and the contradictions among its actors, not only airs dirty laundry, it fails to acknowledge how these differing visions may have been connected to differences in racialized histories, agricultural production, and patterns of landownership between northern (descendants of enslaved Africans) and southern (descendants of German immigrants) Brazilians. As such, she misses a key opportunity to explicate how and why differences in political ideology and spatial imaginaries exist between these bi-coastal chapters of the MST. Limitations aside, the differences brought about by Wolford's (2010) multi-site ethnography have aided the development of my study, which encompasses two geographically and culturally variant regions.

Social movement scholars have shown keen interest in changes within policy and patterns in electoral politics following social movement organizing and protests (Andrews, 1997, 2001; Giugni, 2004; Giugni & Yamasaki, 2009; Kane, 2010; Kolb, 2007), This is what Wilderson, III (2010) describes as "dreams of civic reform and social stability" (p. 6). Paul Burstein and April Linton (2002) suggests that the effectiveness of a social movement is based on how "strongly [they] influence public policy" (p. 381); social movements are "indispensable to democratic policy making," they say (Burstein & Linton, 2002, p. 382). It is my position that such a narrow understanding of politics as policy has led to an intense focus on "the place of social movements *in* democratic politics" (Burnstein, 1999, p. 8, emphasis added) and has obscured the study of forms of politics outside the hegemonic

political notion and spatial expressions of liberal democracy. However, if William Gamson (1975) was correct when he stated in the influential text, *The Strategy of Social Protest*, that the United States is a selective democracy, then, perhaps as researchers, we should not focus solely on social movement organizations that seek inclusion, but turn our attention to groups like the PGRNA, which extracted itself from the United States in order to create spaces within which to formalize an alternative politic. In the words of Marco Giugni (1999) "…if we restrict our analysis to political effects, we fall short of giving a complete picture of the consequences of social movements" (p. xxii). Giugni (1999) suggested the study of social and cultural outcomes of social movements. I suggest the study of alternative social movement groups and their alternative politics.

There is another disconcerting trend within the literature on social movements. Studies of Black-led social movements in the United States, have in large part, been a study of the Civil Rights Movement (CRM) and its ongoing impact on electoral politics and public policy. This interest is found, initially, in France Fox Piven and Richard Cloward's (1979) *Poor People's Movements*, wherein they discuss the political successes and failures of the CRM. Marco Giugni (1999) contributes to this avenue of interest despite his own acknowledgement that it "…has received greater attention than that of other movements" (p. xiv). Kenneth Andrews's (2004, 1997, 2001) work on the CRM in Mississippi questions whether mobilizations during this era have impacted voter turnout and access to local political and economic resources in select counties. *Freedom is a Constant Struggle*, Andrews's (2004) book length inquiry on political organizing in Mississippi's CRM, frames freedom as the effect of social mobilization on legislation and desegregation—an ongoing struggle for respect and recognition from the United States

government. Many scholars, however, have ignored the contributions of more radical

Black-led social movements beyond the spatial, temporal, and political CRM (Ahmad,

2007; Haywood & Hall, 2012; Kelley, 1991, 2002; Umoja, 2013). A study of the PGRNA

and its citizenry would direct more attention to and expand the study of other forms of

Black politics and Black-led social movements in the United States by assessing, similar to

(Akinyele Umoja, 2005, 2013), how the provisional government had contributed to

political and spatial outcomes in the present.

Last, social movements literature endeavor to apply a finite lifeline to social

movements. Jo Freeman and Victoria Johnson (1999) speculate social movements, on

average, "last roughly twenty to thirty years" (p. ix). Others have measured the lifespan of

social movements by charting their emergence and endurance, which is said to happen "by

abandoning their oppositional politics" (Piven & Cloward, 1979, p. xxi). In an essay on

how "movements form, grow, and dissipate," Jonathan Christiansen (2009) outlines five

stages of social movements, which are said to decline as they receive mainstream

acceptance (p. 1). Dan Berger's (2009, 2010) historical studies on the RNA insinuate that

the PGRNA's organizational and political impact atrophied between the 1970s and 1980s.

Christian Davenport's (2014) illuminating monograph reasons, persuasively, that the

provisional government died in the 1970s. Taken at face value, Davenport's (2014)

analysis would quell any attempt to study the outcomes of the RNA. However, rather than

follow in Davenport's (2014) line of reasoning and focus on the *demobilization* and "death

of a single challenging institution,"

I see potential for circumventing the replication of a finite logic to social movement

progress via Cedric Robinson's (1983, 1997) work on the BRT. Robinson (1983) describes

the BRT as an intellectual and activist response to racial domination and capitalist

exploitation throughout the Black Diaspora. In *Black Movements in America*, Robinson

(1997) follows a trajectory of Black social movements in the Americas, starting with early

maroon colonies that existed among and harassed early Spanish and British colonies. He

ends his discussion of Black social movements with a discussion of the Civil Rights

Movement. Despite the shortcomings in Robinson's (1983) historiography of Black social

movements[76] – he does not address other Black political movements of the 1960s and

1970s – his understanding of the BRT as *ongoing* tradition that lives within scholarship

and social movements is instrumental to this study. In the following sections I offer

examples of the PGRNA's spatial and political legacies in Detroit, Michigan and Jackson,

Mississippi.

I argue the PGRNA's goals were *remobilized* and *reformulated* by various

communities, organizations, and individuals across Detroit and Jackson (Davenport, 2014,

p. 6).[77] Though the PGRNA has changed in form since 1971, when it relocated to Jackson.

Furthermore, its oppositional politics, demands for Black self-determination, stance on

cooperative economics and spatial autonomy/control continued across organizations (e.g.

the New Afrikan People's Organization, the MXGM), most recently in MXGM,

Cooperation Jackson, and the Cooperative Community of New West Jackson.

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[76] A number of historians have addressed these gaps in the study of Black radical social movements in
America. Some notable works include Hasan Jeffries's (2009) *Bloody Lowndes: Civil Rights and Black
Power in Alabama's Black Belt*, Robin Kelley's (1990) *Hammer and the Hoe: Alabama Communists in the
Great Depression*, and Akinyele Umoja's (2014) *We Will Shoot Back: Armed resistance in the Mississippi
Freedom Struggle*.

[77] Jonathan Christiansen (2009) views the changing of organizational structures and goals, particularly
through bureaucratization, as a key way in which social movements develop longevity. I do not, yet, have the
confidence to state that bureaucratization is the way the RNA's desire for an independent nation has stood
political repression and the changing of time.

Commemorating Chokwe Lumumba — Detroit, Michigan

I learned of a celebration in honor of Chokwe Lumumba while in New York City and traveled back to Detroit in enough time to catch the event on Sunday, August 2, 2015. The celebration took place at the intersection of Warren Avenue and Second Avenue, on the grounds of Wayne State University (WSU), Lumumba's alma mater. In addition to celebrating his birthday, this gathering was a celebration of the Committee to Preserve the Legacy of Detroit's success in pressuring the city of Detroit to name a significant stretch of Warren Avenue, "Chokwe Lumumba Avenue."

Upon my arrival, organizers were setting up for the event. Red, black, and green balloons were being tied and taped to planters. A table for vendors was erected and covered with cloth, t-shirts, and compact discs. Chairs were set in a number of rows, striating the green grass. Each of the chairs pointed towards WSU's Chemistry building, on the side of which was a long, rectangular banner with an image of Chokwe Lumumba holding a megaphone. There was another image, this one a street sign. It read, "Chokwe Lumumba Avenue." And resting on an easel near the building was a beautifully framed sketching of a young Chokwe Lumumba. He was sporting a thick handlebar mustache and a large, flared high top with a part on the right side.

The Committee to Preserve the Legacy of Chokwe Lumumba (the Committee) convened the commemoration ceremony. Comprised of friends, family and comrades, the Committee is dedicated to ensuring that the legacy of the radical lawyer, the former Mayor of Jackson, and Detroit native is instilled in the city's conscious and physical landscape. Having moved to Jackson, Mississippi 1988, organized and eventually became mayor there, Chokwe Lumumba had become associated with Mississippi and less so with his

place of birth. The Committee sought to remember him through a marker. The city of Detroit has a number of such markers commemorating notable Black figures (e.g. Rosa Park, Coleman Young, Joe Louis, Reverend C. L. Franklin, etc.).

The Committee's commemoration of Mayor Lumumba by is the kind of place making noted in research by scholars who engage in critical studies of toponyms (place names). Beginning in the 1990s, geographers began taking a critical approach to place names (Alderman, 1996). Now this subfield of human geography has grown into an established canon. In addition to growing interest within the academia (Alderman & Inwood, 2013; Inwood, 2009a, 2009b, 2011), laypersons have made valuable critiques of monuments and buildings, particularly on colleges campuses worldwide. These revelations and struggles are about who/what memories communities, cities and institutions commemorate, what histories they honor (and omit) in the process. This is evident in the words of Black women students at the University of North Carolina (UNC) when they cried out, with nooses around their necks, "This is Saunders would do to me!" (Fairbanks, 2015; Lamm, 2015; Lederman, 2014; Stancill, 2015). Students at UNC, Eastern Carolina University, Duke University, and Rhodes College in South Africa were demanding that universities admonish the historical manifestations of white supremacy (e.g. Jim Crow and colonialism) engrained in the landscape via buildings and statues. These universities capitulated to student demands, but not with a struggle.

In his work on the renaming of streets in honor of Civil Rights leader, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., (Alderman, 1996, 2000, 2003) and others (Inwood, 2009a, 2009b) show that these streets—due to opposition from white communities and business owners—often end up in disinvested Black neighborhoods. As a result, in cities throughout the United

States, the renaming becomes "a socially contested process of determining the geographic extent at which the civil rights leader should be memorialized" (Alderman, 2003, p. 164). In Detroit, the efforts of the Committee's members were similar. However, they were demanding that one of Detroit's own be memorialized. All of these attempts to impact the placement of memory are examples of what Derrick Alderman and Josh Inwood (2013) see as "the broader rights of people to participate in the production of place and to have their cultural identities and histories recognized publicly" (p. 212). However, their rewards of their activism were hard fought. Shushanna Shakur, younger sister of Chokwe Lumumba shares the committee felt the process would be easy, considering Lumumba's legal and political prowess. However, it was not. They received considerable imposition from city of Detroit Planning Department. Furthermore, though the city had promised the Committee eight blocks of street signs, it only provided two blocks worth. Researchers show that the process of street naming is contentious and political (Alderman, 2003). Perhaps this is why communities often forgo the bureaucratic process of street commemoration for street level signification, a process determined by the community that is a more expedient and, often times, more clear expression of the demands of local residents (Wright & Herman, 2017; Wright, 2017). If nothing else, it certainly demonstrates that "commemoration takes numerous different forms in the streetscape" (Rose-Redwood, 2008, p. 447).

Similar to research on the naming of streets after Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (Alderman, 2000, 2002; Alderman & Inwood, 2013; Inwood, 2009a, 2009b), the Committee received considerable opposition. However, unlike the previously scholarship, their opposition was not from white residents. It, instead, came from the city government, which has been known to provide bureaucratic barriers to renaming efforts (Alderman,

2015). Such barriers emerged in Detroit the Committee lobbied to rename as section of Warren Avenue after Chokwe Lumumba. Their efforts to name a main thoroughfare after Lumumba, not in recognition of MLK or the Civil Rights Movement, but a Black Radical Tradition of organizing for racial and economic equality in Detroit speaks to regional differences in the nature and performance of Black politics. Rather that attempting to name a street in honor of MLK, a man associated with the Civil Rights Movements, and whose legacy as a radical agent of radicalism has been sanitized by the halls of history, the Committee sought to honor the legacy of Chokwe Lumumba, an activist who never disavowed his Black Nationalist past and its influence on his electoral aspirations. Second, unlike "successful" renaming efforts throughout the South, the Committee's success occurred in an area of Detroit that is experiencing growth in white and middle class residents, and a decline in working class Black residents. Where in the South, streets named after MLK are widely associated with Black neighborhoods (Alderman, 1996, 2000, 2003; Dwyer & Alderman, 2008), in Detroit, Chokwe Lumumba Avenue stands in the midst of a neighborhood undergoing spatial, classed, and racial shifts from dilapidated buildings inhabited by working class Black and Asian residents, to nearly renovated buildings housing upwardly mobile (mostly white) residents. This is partly a result of the gentrification of the Cass Corridor, an area that is actively being renamed "Midtown." As is shown in Wiiliam Bunge's (2011) classic work of participatory geography, historically, the Cass Corridor has been a centralized cite inhabited by working class Black and Asian Detroiters. At one time, it was the sight of the city's Asian markets.

Thus, Chokwe Lumumba Avenue, though meant to commemorate Chokwe Lumumba, is now exist in the landscape as a marker of Black Radical politics and Black

place making, as the city of Detroit actively removes Black geographies and Black place makers. Next, I will address some political legacies of the RNA that have emerged in Jackson, Mississippi.

Chokwe Lumumba's Electoral Aspirations — Jackson, Mississippi

Chokwe Lumumba was born 1942 in Detroit, Michigan's west side and grew up as one of eight children. A sharp student and talented athlete, Lumumba attended college at Kalamazoo State College. While in attendance, the young Lumumba joined the Black Student Organization (BSO) and contributed in producing a number of document and demands, such as one document printed May 6, 1968 in which Lumumba and others demanded increased efforts to by the College to hire non-white faculty and that BSO members be a part of the hiring process.[78] Following graduation, Lumumba would attend law school at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan. In 1974, Lumumba penned an important and infamous letter to the Acting Dean of the Wayne State Law School and the Editor-in-Chief of the Wayne State Law Review, declining their invitation to join the review. Giving multiple reasons for his declination, Lumumba emphasized, " Essentially, I have declined membership on the Review because to accept would be to enshrine myself as window dressing displayed to conceal the avid anti-Black education practices existing at Wayne State University Law School" (Ferrell, 2015, p. 18).

Chokwe Lumumba and his family would relocate to Jackson, Mississippi in 1988, embodying a form of domestic feminist geopolitics seen in earlier generations of Black radicals, namely Robert F. Williams. According to interlocutors, it was the mandate of the

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[78] Black Student Organization. Kalamazoo College Library.

New Afrikan People's Organization (NAPO) that citizens move to the national territory—

an extension of the mandate made by the PGRNA, decades prior. Says Akil Bukari,

member of the Jackson chapter of the MXGM, When I joined NAPO it was Chokwe

(Lumumba) and Safiya (Omari) had moved here and they had found out that the mandate

out of NAPO was for people to move into the territory. This goes back to the RNA."

(Personal Communication, 2016). As before mentioned in the historical section of this

work, NAPO was formed in Los Angeles, California in 1984 by a select group of

organizers. The organization and its founders represented a representative conglomerate of

the RNA, the House of Umoja, and the Revolutionary Action Movement

Throughout his years as a leading figure in Jackson, Chokwe Lumumba and other

members of NAPO came to form the MXGM, as a more inclusive grassroots organization

for individuals dedicated to Black self-determination, but who, perhaps, were not on board

with liberation in the form of a Black territorial nationalism. Bukari expounds further on

the nature of NAPO and the decision by lead organizers to form MXGM:

> That NAPO isn't for everybody. The philosophy of land and independence
> everybody ain't with that. The old five state concept; everybody ain't with that.
> They required contributions: physically, psychologically, financially- everybody's
> not with that…But a lot of people want to do something so MXG was founded.
> Which was not as rigid. And rigid's not the term. Not as disciplined. And the
> ideology would be broader in the sense that...matter of fact MXG's founding
> principles is the three fold concept where Black folk had a choice- they can
> integrate if they so choose, they can repatriate to Africa, or believe in the
> philosophy that we did- Independence within US borders. And so that was a little
> looser to bring more people in. And we felt like that if you stay with it over time
> you're more than likely to come around to our way of thinking (Personal
> Communication, 2016).

In 2009, on behest of the MXGM, Chokwe Lumumba ran for and was elected a city

council member, representing Jackson's Ward 2. As members of MXGM and his political

team have explained it, the decision to run Lumumba for city council was done to test the movement's social and political embeddedness within the city of Jackson. Lumumba would serve two terms as council member and put his hat in the race for mayor in 2012. Despite, Lumumba was not expected to be a strong candidate for mayor. In a field of ### candidates, the future of the city would come to a run-off between two candidates, Chokwe Lumumba and Jonathan Lee. Seemingly, all—particularly, the established political regime—but Lumumba's supporters were surprised by his contention for the role of mayor.

Chokwe Lumumba was well known within the city of Jackson as a fierce advocate for human rights, and avid fan of basketball, having coached numerous children's Basketball teams. One might argue that he—in some ways—represented the age-old form of Black political leadership Ericka Edwards speaks to in *Charisma and the Politics of Black Leadership*. Edwards uses Black cultural production to challenge Black charismatic male leadership as the only form of politics in Black America. Charismatic leadership, what she coins "the teleological lines of traditional African American charismatic spectacle," whereby, a "singular voice of authority, knowledge, and political promise" is presented as the way towards Black liberation is both antiquated (dating back to Black Reconstruction), masculinist, and politically limiting. She, in her analysis of poetry, novels, and the like, is concerned with the forms of "postcharamatic politic[s]" penned by Black artists (p. xviii). Lester Spence (2015) challenges the Black leader trope in *Knocking the Hustle*: *Against the Neoliberal turn in Black Politics*, he suggests rather than continue to exalt individuals like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., influential though he was, what is needed is a Black politics that commemorates and immolates the ordinary people that

organized in the Deep South for dignity and voting rights, before, during, and after Kings

impact on the Civil Rights Movement. Groups who have been successful in building self-

sustained lives, says Spence (2015), are those that have "stayed away from the type of

prophetic politics that have often created problematic internal hierarchies" (p. 144).

According to my interlocutors, Lumumba was not enthralled with the idea of

participating in electoral politics. Nor was it his decision to run for office. This is likely

due to the initial position of NAPO to not involve itself with electoral politics, not to

mention, the many examples of Black activists being coopted by the infrastructures of

liberal democracy. Nevertheless, on the behest of NAPO and MXGM, Chokwe entered and

won two local elections. His entrance and electoral success give credence to the plethora of

research on the electoral politics outcomes of social movements. According to Bukari, the

decision to enter electoral politics was influenced by such attempts made elsewhere:

> he idea of a convention to bring Black folks together to select a candidate to run for
> mayor because the demographics in Jackson gave us the idea that there's enough
> Black folks here to run somebody to get elected. The idea was not an original one
> of ours. It was a young man named Teddy Withers(sp?) out of Memphis,
> Tennessee. Who had the idea, I don't know if it was his solely but he brought it to
> us. They had executed it successfully in Memphis and elected Willie Herenton who
> was a multi-term mayor in Memphis…multi-term Black mayor in Memphis
> (Personal Communication, 2016).

Much of the sociological literature on the outcomes of social movements limits discussions

of politics to policy and electoral outcomes. Some, like Wolf, question how dissidents are

impacted once they enter traditional political arena. And though it is obvious that the

efforts of Chokwe Lumumba, NAPO, and MXGM are examples of this body of

scholarship, it should be understood that the work done to secure Lumumba's position as

city council and mayor were tactical maneuvers that were part and parcel of a large

strategy of Black self-determination that includes self-governance, territorial control, and economic self-sufficiency.

However, the decision to influence Black self-determination via electoral politics was not solely the idea of strategists in Memphis, Tennessee. During the earlier years of the RNA's development, New Afrikans believed one way in which the RNA could gain political strength in the South, and Mississippi, in particular, was through municipal elections. The PGRNA, that the positions of Mayor and Sheriff could provide citizens of the nations significant jurisdiction at the municipal and county levels. In a pamphlet titled, "Guide to Units & Citizens: The Four Key Areas of Work," dated 1975, then President, Imari Obadele shared part of the PGRNA's local electoral vision and tactic. The fourth key point is labeled, "Organize for Victory in the Mississippi Elections Scheduled for this Year." Therein, Obadele encourages New Afrikans to venture to Mississippi to assist in registering Black Mississippians to vote in the upcoming local and state elections:

> In 1975, the Sheriff's office, Justice of the Peace, Constable, and Supervisor positions will all be up for election. So will all positions to the Mississippi House of Representatives and Senate. We must prepare to send money and people into Mississippi as early as March to help register blacks and campaign for strong black candidates… We Blacks must win back as many of these positions as possible. Such victories are essential to the success of the Independence movement… (Obadele, 1975, p. 8).

From these examples it becomes apparent that electoral politics was, and continues to be, a *tactic* used by New Afrikans to gain spatial, political grounding in Mississippi. What separates their political aspirations and outcomes from those discussed in literature on the outcomes of social movements (Cress & Snow, 2000; Diani, 1997; Giugni, 1998; Kolb, 2007; Snow & McAdam, 2010), particularly, that which focuses on the Black Freedom Struggle in Mississippi (Andrews, 1997, 2001; Biggs & Andrews, 2010), is that

that New Afrikans viewed their electoral efforts as a *tactic* that would open up the potential to muster in greater liberties based upon alternatives notions of politics beyond liberal democracy.

Scholars of social movements in Latin America take up the difference between political action as tactic and strategy. Specially, they are questioning the effectiveness and effective use of legal strategies to gain and retain access to land and territory among urban and rural areas throughout Latin America (Reyes & Kaufman, 2011; Wolford, 2010; Zibechi, 2012) and Palestine (Quiquivix, 2013). A central concern of these studies is the difference between the use of strategies and tactics as ways of facilitating change and/or fostering the appropriation of social movements into the state. The former often involves the exercise of power for the purposes of (re)creating new subjects and territories, the latter, often involves asking and/or demanding of power from within a given hierarchal and unjust social-political paradigm (Zibechi, 2012).

The law as a tactic of resistance for the expansion of autonomous territory emerges in Wendy Wolford's (2010) work with the Movimento Sem Terra (MST) in Brazil. The MST's use of "Brazilian law to argue for the right to property that is considered unproductive and not fulfilling its social function according to Article 184 of the Federal Constitution" is a tactic through which the MST are able to acquire territory and reproduce themselves via economic, social, and educational relations (p. 14). The MST's use of the legal process as a way to hold the government accountable to the needs and demands of its communities allows for a two-pronged attack based on politics of representation and difference.

Alvaro Reyes and Mara Kaufman's (2011) essay on the politics of the Zapatista movement compliment Wolford's (2010) and Zibechi's (2012) claims regarding the usefulness of the law, if applied aptly. They argue that although the Zapatista's use of the states legal apparatus for the recognition of one's *rights* externalizes the authentication of one's rights to the state, the Zapatistas use of these legal rights as a tactic towards the implementation of a strategy of self-reproduction of Zapatista subjects and territory actually subverts state politics. Linda Quiquivix (2013) suggests that the Zapatistas' tactic, by which they have been "able to deploy rights-based claims to work at the service of self-determination" as a model for Palestinians seeking to re-gain territory from the state of Israel. She views Palestinians' appeal for recognition from Israel and the UN – as a strategic engagement rather than a tactical one – as a folly that gave renewed energy to an Israeli government weakened by the Palestinian front. Instead of a politics of recognition as an end goal, Quiquivix (2013) argues that the Palestinian resistance should turn their gaze towards a tactics of recognition, which may allow the time and space necessary to strategize and eventually build an autonomous Palestinian territory.

The law, she states, should not be approached as a matter of good and bad, but as a "force that can be complicit and effective" (Quiquivix, 2013). Her analysis is annexed from Shannon Speed and Alvaro Reyes's (2002) work whereby they link western juridical law to the production of the sovereign as a circular logic of domination – based in the conquest and enslavement of the people of the New World and Africa – that produced and re-produces the state as a hierarchal structure of dominance. Derrick Bell (1995), the late professor of law, and widely acknowledged founder of critical race theory, does not offer as extensive an exercise into the social-historical conditions upon which western juridical

law is established. However, he does challenge the notion that "laws are or can be written

from a neutral perspective" (p. 901). Speaking for himself and his contemporaries, Bell

(1995) declares:

> We [critical legal scholars] emphasis our marginality and try to turn it toward
> advantageous perspective building and concrete advocacy on behalf of those
> oppressed by race and other interlocking factors of gender, economic class, and
> sexual orientation. When I say we are marginalized, it is not because we are victim-
> mongers seeking sympathy in return for a sacrifice of pride. Rather, we see such
> identification as one of the only [tactical] hopes of *transformative resistance
> strategy* [Emphasis added] (p. 902).

Given their understanding, he and his contemporaries began – in the mid-1990s – to "bring

to legal scholarship an experientially grounded, oppositionally expressed, and

transformatively aspirational concern with race and other socially constructed hierarchies"

(Bell, 1995, p. 901). Therefore, though the creation and application of the law is fallacious

and unequal, the above-mentioned scholars believe as though it can be used, tactically, in

order to produce a more just society.

Raul Zibechi (2012), in *Territories in Resistance*, speaks to these differences in his

treatise on the origins, political philosophies, tactics and strategies of multiple Latin

American land-based social movements post-1960. As Latin American countries shifted

from a post-Fordist/Taylorist mode of production to a neoliberal economy that further de-

valorized workers and their labor, communities shifted from a politics of recognition that

seeks to join the state to a self-affirming politics of difference that seeks separation from

the state – at least politically. The autonomous communities of Latin America remain

engaged with the state – in part – via economic relations but seek to separate themselves

from all other forms of attachment. The result has been urban and rural revolts, the

usurpation of territory, and the re-production of autonomous subjects via new social-

educational relations. This process is a circular logic and practice that reaffirms Zibechi's (2012) claim that "movement-in-motion is a permanent process of self-education" (p. 24-25), which becomes a basis for the re-creation of new – infinitely more just – worlds. "It is within these new territories that the movements are collectively building a whole new organization of society" (Zibechi, 2012, p. 38). But, again, one must remember that new worlds are a political strategy towards which these social movements' proceed, all the while, engaging in the state's legal structures as a political tactic. With regard to electoral politics, pursuing this line of struggle as a strategy for recompense forecloses future grievances. Whereas, viewing electoral politics and law as a tactical approach towards instilling justice and self-determination may engender any number of political engagements.

Back in Jackson, the hopes of MXGM, the Lumumba administration and the residents of Jackson were delivered a devastating blow when, just nine months into his first term as mayor, Chokwe Lumumba passed, prompting Hinds County Supervisor, Kenny Stokes to cry foul play. Despite this unexpected loss, Chokwe Lumumba's son, Chokwe Antar Lumumba, ran for his seat, receiving support from various grassroots organizations, including MXGM. He would suffer a disappointing loss to Tony Yarber. However the hopes and dreams of local organizers and residents are once again put in the aspirations and talents of Chokwe Antar as he runs for mayor of Jackson. Unlike, during his first attempt, Antar is more well known and respected within the city. And there exist a feeling throughout the city and movement circles, that he will be elected the 52nd mayor of Jackson, Mississippi, carrying on a legacy instigated by the PGRNA, and carried forth by

NAPO, MXGM and his father—that being to create, what the late Chokwe Lumumba

envisioned as "a city beyond contradiction."[79]

Towards a City Beyond Contradiction — Jackson, Mississippi

> "It has long been the dream of many that an alternative to capitalist (ir)rationality can be defined and rationally arrived at through the mobilization of human passions in the collective search for a better life for all. These alternative – historically called socialism or communism – have been tried in various times and places" (p. 223) – David Harvey, *The Enigma of Capital* (2010)

> "We must stand united in our refusal to be led by obstructions and setbacks, but instead, by the inspirations of our collective genius, in our efforts to build a city beyond contradiction. – Chokwe Antar Lumumba, Mayoral Candidacy Announcement (May 5, 2016)

In the quote above, David Harvey's focus is on alternatives from a macro level.

Hence, it is difficult, and worst, folly to attempt such an exercise. However, if he were to

temper the scale of his analysis and actually engage with and engage in an analysis of the

specific political struggles of "the sovereign will of the people" materialized in specific

spatial and historical realities, he might take note of specific socialist-inspired initiatives

carving out post-capitalist spaces of life for themselves and others (Harvey, 2010, p. 203).

In this section, I argue that Jackson is an example of a post-capitalist city and that today

the city's rebelliousness is expressed politically, economically, and spatially, in part, via

two cooperative initiatives like Cooperation Jackson and the Cooperative Community of

New West Jackson.

In order to talk about the spatial legacies of the PGRNA in present-day Jackson,

Mississippi, one must look back to the PGRNA's claims to land and territory. PGRNA

called "New Communities." Not long after its formation, within the PGRNA there was "a

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[79] Chokwe Antar Lumumba invoked this phrase and his father's legacy May 2015, when he announced hi candidacy for mayor of Jackson.

vote among the people to support the RNA demands on the U.S. government for $300 billion in reparations to build cooperatively owned New Communities and industry" (Obadele, 1973, p. 71). New Communities, which would be sustainable communities produced by New Afrikan citizens, were viewed as a way to alleviate the congestion and oppressions Black families experienced in urban ghettoes. New social relations would be key to the production of New Communities. "The impact of new Black social relationships in a successful, nearly Black nation and of thriving Black cultural models would provide strength for Black communities remaining in America," says Obadele (1973, p. 73). Not only would these social relations produce all new Black geographies in the Deep South, they would also produce new subjects—New Afrikans. Put another way, the production of New Communities would—perhaps more so than pledging oneself to the RNA and the New Afrikan Creed—result in a simultaneous production of New Afrikans. New Afrikan subjectivity was not relegated to Blacks in America. Yuri Kochiyama, the Japanese American activist and anti-imperialists took the oath of allegiance, is a prime example of the fluidity of New Afrikan subjectivity. Due to her dedication to Black liberation, she was "the first naturalized [non-Black] citizen of the Black Nation in America" (Chimurenga, 2014, p. 19).

New Communities would be come into being by land development cooperatives supported by reparations and cooperative economics. Within in these cooperative spaces there would be "giant farms, and industry, all owned by the people."[80] In the Land Development Cooperative pamphlet, Obadele writes, "The idea of the Land Development Cooperative is to get together 250 families or more who are willing to put together money

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[80] Obadele, I. We are all citizens of the R.N.A.: Your own invitation to become involved. Republic of New Africa, Box 1, Folder 7. Margaret Walker Center. Jackson State University.

on a regular basis to buy land in the South where they can build a New Community and where farming can begin immediately."[81] This new community would require people of varying skill sets dedicated to living by the New Afrikan Creed: "doctors, nurses, medical technicians, plumbers, electricians, teachers, radio and T-V technicians and specialists, carpenters, store managers, mechanics, etc."[82] According to Obadele, "the hey to the success of the co-op in building a new community is steady, serious work that will go on for three years."[83] Due to intense governmental repression (Davenport, 2014), Obadele's calculations were off by roughly 40 years.

Cooperation Jackson

Cooperation Jackson was launched at the 2013 Jackson Rising Conference, a gathering organized by the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement (MXGM) and Mayor Chokwe Lumumba's administration. Cooperation Jackson was launched as an incubator project that would model cooperative business, one example of how residents of Jackson and Mississippi can create equitable businesses and work to re-orient the political economy of the city and the state, writ large. Kali Akuno, co-Director of Cooperation Jackson, suggest the intent of the Cooperation Jackson is "to create a vibrant social solidarity economy in Jackson and, more thoroughly, to use that to transform the local political economy of Jackson and the State of Mississippi, i.e. to take it over and to move it in a more radical direction" (Jaffe, 2017, paragraph 1). Cooperation Jackson plans to complete

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[81] Obadele, I. Land Development Cooperative. Republic of New Afrika. Margaret Walker Center. Jackson State University.

[82] Obadele, I. ____

[83] Obadele, I. ____

this mission by forming a network of cooperatively owned businesses, which may serve as models for conducting cooperative economics in the South and in cities, such as Jackson, that—throughout history—have been antagonistic to the combination of cooperative economics and Black self-determinations.

To date, Cooperation Jackson has created two cooperative ventures: Fannie Lou Hamer Freedom Farm and Nubia's Café, named after the late wife of Chokwe Lumumba. There is also discussion of creating a landscaping/composting cooperative. If formed, the Cooperation Jackson will have formed a closed loop in which food waste from the café is turned into compost, which, in turn, fuels their urban farm. Though designed to challenge and improve Jackson's political economy, these cooperative projects fuel shifts in subjectivity. In September 2016, I spoke with Brandon King, a key member of Cooperation Jackson. We talked about the newly erected wooden fence around the Fannie Lou Hamer Freedom Farm, which Cooperation Jackson erected. He shared that the process of getting individuals together, doling out responsibilities, dealing with differences in interest and skill was a hands-on course in participatory democracy (Personal Communication, 2016). This exchange illustrates that though members of Cooperation Jackson are dedicated to the cause of building a sustainable solidarity economy, for those involved in this process of building an alternative society and economy, understanding is not always inherent. Instead, it requires study and praxis and time times it comes through the process of building, through praxis.

Cooperation Jackson's latest initiative has the potential to spatialize the PGRNA's claim to New Communities; that is Cooperation Jackson's Community Production

Initiative (CPI).[84] In the summer of 2016 Cooperation Jackson partnered with Incite

Focus, a community-based 3D Printing Initiative based in Detroit, Michigan. The basis of

this relationship was to train members of Cooperation Jackson in 3D printing. Following

an initial meeting during a retreat to the historic Black community of Idlewild, Michigan.

This initial meeting cumulated into a 6-month apprenticeship at Incite Focus for two of

Cooperation Jackson's members. Cooperation Jackson's aim for its CPI is multiple. One of

which, includes means of production. Kali Akuno, believes harnessing this technology,

Cooperation Jackson hopes to "seize the means of production" (Jaffe, 2017b). This

statement is technologically and historically prescient. Akuno indicates that Cooperation

Jackson is aware of the technological trajectory in which corporations (e.g. McDonald's

and Amazon) are growing and how increased automation may impact workers moving

forward:

> It is increasingly becoming more and more computerized and more and more
> automated, which is going to have some major consequences for labor
> displacement. Ultimately, what we think is disposability on a grand and global
> scale [is coming] and we need to get prepared for it now. We do so, in our view, by
> fighting and creating a program which is about democratizing technology and
> putting it in the direct hands of the community so that we control the process, so
> that automation is going to serve humanity and not just serve the 1% or small elite
> (Jaffe, 2017a).

Second, this statement indicates linkages between Cooperation Jackson's vision for

community development with that of the PGRNA's vision of community development.

Whereas, the PGRNA desired New Communities comprised of New Afrikan citizens,

Cooperation Jackson hopes to harness this technology in order to form sustainable homes

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[84] There are other spatial legacies in the city. For instance, following the election of Chokwe Lumumba an
area park was retrofitted with a mural and renamed in his honor. Shortly after his untimely death and the
election of Tony Yarber as his successor, the mural was painted over by the city of Jackson (Ladd & Nave,
2014). Furthermore, the original Government House for the PGRNA still stands, located at 1148 Lewis
Street, and is a part of the city of Jackson's civil rights tour.

and eco-villages. Its partnership with Incite Focus will assist them in moving in that direction. During the fall of 2016, Cooperation Jackson sent two members to intern in Incite Focus' fabrication laboratory. The results of their time in Detroit were an introduction to 3D printing technology and the production of a model 3D printed home. Cooperation Jackson hopes to scale up this model in the not too distant future. A Facebook post made by the group explains the model's relationship to Cooperation Jackson's spatial imaginary:

> Check out the work of our Community Production interns. Our interns have recently returned from working at the Incite Focus Fab Lab in Detroit, MI. on the completion of a model off the grid, eco-house that we aim to build in Jackson as part of our Eco-Village. This model will soon be on display in Jackson at the Lumumba Center. (Facebook, 2016).

Cooperation Jackson views 3D printing technology as a counter force against the anti-labor mechanizing of industries. Furthermore, they envision this technology as a way to form sustainable housing initiatives in the city, one's formed by residents and workers in Jackson.

Cooperative Community of New West Jackson

> "And, so we decided to work the land" – Takuma Umoja (Personal communication, 2016)

The Cooperative Community of New West Jackson (CCNWJ) formed in 2013 through the efforts of Nia and Takuma Umoja. The Umojas relocated to Jackson, Mississippi from Fort Worth, Texas. At the time they were members of the MXGM and the owner-operators of Roots-N-Kulture, an arts and culture center. Following a local battle with developers and municipal leaders intent on gentrifying their neighborhood, the

Umojas lost Roots-N-Kulture and the area around it through eminent domain. As long time organizers and members of MXGM, the Umojas moved to Jackson to support and work alongside the Mayor Lumumba's administration. During Mayor Lumumba's initial campaign, the Umojas began purchasing property in West Jackson, beginning with their home. The Umojas envisioned a cooperative community through which they could organize and work to improve the living conditions of area residents.

The CCNWJ has two community-based initiatives. One of which is its land/property enhancement project. To date, the CCNWJ has acquired over 50 properties in an 8-block radius. Nia and Takuma plan to convert this land into a community land trust managed by area residents. Aside from fostering community control in West Jackson, the Umojas view the land as a way to circumvent the uneven development of the West Jackson through municipal plans for urban renewal. Drawing from their experience in Fort Worth, the Umojas learned the significance of acquiring property, not as a commodity to exchange, but as a buttress to outsiders seeking to impose themselves within the community, to the detriment of current residents.

Another of the CCNWJ's projects is its community housing initiative. Through this project, the Umojas, volunteers, and "modelers"[85] work to renovate houses in their immediate vicinity. Some of the homes are owned by the Umojas and others by slumlord who were unwilling to sale them to the emerging cooperative. Dealing with area slumlord is a contradiction of which the Umojas are well aware. Their explanation for partnering with landlords who rent inhospitable residences at market rates is fairly clear. The Umojas believe that in order to organize the community, they must first address the everyday

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[85] "Modeler" is the term the Umojas use to refer to apprentices that live in the houses they have renovated in the community.

conditions in which they immediate neighbors live. One of these needs is housing. Many of the slumlords, the astute capitalists, refuse to sale their homes to the CCNWJ. Therefore, the Umojas, rather than see their neighbors live in unhealthy homes, entered into long term management contracts with landlords. This way they control the way the homes look and make sure that, once renovated by the CCNWJ, the buildings remain rent controlled for a definite period of time. Takuma Umoja refers to this as "building on the contradictions," to better the living conditions of the community.

Much of the housing and farm work done within the CCNWJ draws on the skill set present in the community, what the Nia Umoja calls, "neighbor labor." Nia Umoja discusses the underutilized skills within the community in a short video produced by the CCNWJ. She says, We don't have to have a lot of money. With a work ethic, and whatever skills we have, and whatever tools we have. We have things that we can use to get things done" (COOP New West Jackson, 2015). Similar to the PGRNA's call for New Afrikans of various skill sets to help build the nation, the Umojas are relying on the skills of residents of West Jackson to build the cooperative community. Early in its formation, the CCNWJ conducted a skills assessment and discovered that a number of their neighbors have marketable skills that are lying underutilized—namely farming and carpentry skills. Residents are encouraged during meetings and with paid work to utilize those skills within the neighborhood. In the documentary crafted by CCNWJ, a narrator states, "In the neighborhood there are people with skill sets lying dormant. From contractors to farmers, electricians to artists, brick layers to mechanics" (COOP New West Jackson, 2015). It is incumbent upon the CCNWJ to harness these skill sets through organizing residents and encouraging them to adopt their vision for the community.

Though their local efforts benefit residents' immediate needs (e.g. food, housing, employment), Nia is aware that they also make the community desirable to area developers. "As we begin to transform our neighborhood, the value will go up. And the, as the value goes up speculators will come in and try to buy up property to sit on it, so that they can rich later on down the line. But we don't want that cause that doesn't do anything for the development of our neighborhood" (COOP New West Jackson, 2015). This is a process has happened in other parts of the country, particularly in Houston, Texas (Wright & Herman, 2017). As Project Row Houses (PRH), an arts and community based organization located in the historically Black community of Third Ward flourished and obtained the attention of funders and art lovers, the neighborhood became more desirable to developers. In the documentary, *Third Ward, TX*, Deborah Grotfeldt, former Managing Director for PRH acknowledges the organization's unintentional involvement in gentrifying Third Ward. She says, "The really scary part of it all, is the more we do brings more attention to the Third Ward, which has got the cheapest land prices now in the city. Real estate speculation has already begun" (Third Ward, TX 2007). By bringing art to the Third Ward, and, more importantly, viewing the Third Ward as a community of arts, PRH was used (as capital) to gentrification the community, a process that increased the criminalization, surveillance, and removal of long-term residents. Nia is aware of the potential for this process to occur in West Jackson. Furthermore, the city of Jackson has expressed, via a documented entitled Jackson 2020, its intent to develop the Capital Corridor—a main road that stretches from downtown Jackson to the Jackson City Zoo. The CCNWJ is located along this corridor.

With the future of development looming, the CCNWJ aims to "ultimately become an asset in the view of the developers, which we know are coming. They're coming, you know. And, we want to be seen as an asset, not a liability. Not something that needs to be pushed out" (COOP New West Jackson, 2015). One might find the use of language like "asset" and "liability" contrary to CCNWJ's communal and anti-capitalist ethics. However, I believe Nia's commentary speaks to a particular understanding regarding the machinations of neoliberal capitalism, particularly, how the search for increased capital has led to the rampant accumulation of urban spaces. Thus, in order to stave the community from being pushed out—as is being experienced by communities throughout the country and world —the CCNWJ purchased property in its immediate vicinity. Another way to analyze Nia's use of these terms would be to see the CCNWJ's association with the city of Jackson and developers as a tactic, a way in which to protect themselves and their neighbors from a potential storm of development that has little to no interest in their needs.

The CCNWJ's work with local capitalists, despite its collective and communal ideals, also speaks to the contradictions and challenges that exist for communities attempting to disassociate from capitalists logics and practices, while steeped in them. To be clear, not all residents participate in the CCNWJ. And not all of those who do participate have fully adopted the CCNWJ's tenants. This is not uncommon. Recent works have exposed the challenges faced by communities seeking to recreate social, economic, and spatial relations in opposition to capitalism (Hancox, 2013; Sayers, 2008, 2015; Sayers et al., 2007). In his archaeological and anthropological study of the make shift communities that existed in the Great Dismal Swamp in the 18th century, Daniel Sayers argues within the swamp communities of fugitive slaves, indigenous peoples, and poor

whites developed an anti-capitalist "praxis mode of production" that was incumbent upon the terrain in which they inhabited (Sayers, 2015, p. 10). Though developed in opposition to capitalism (and in concert with the landscape of the swamp) these communities were not exempt from its presence. Based on the presence of artifacts exhumed throughout the swamp, Sayers (2015) suggest residents of the swamp engaged, at certain times, in economic exchange with merchants from outside the swamps.

Capitalist contradictions aside, the CCNWJ sees its work as a step towards producing new socio-economic and spatial relations within the neighborhood, ones that may protect neighbors for outside interests as well as reproduce a new, more healthy community. This is apparent when Nia states, "We're not fighting gentrification. You know, we're not fighting development. You know, we are building a sustainable model community, you know, where gentrification will be a non-issue" (COOP New West Jackson, 2015). At the time of this recording, there were over 35 abandoned properties within an eight-block radius. Though such infrastructures still exist, the CCNWJ has made strides to renovate and re-populate some of these structures. But there is much more work to do. "We runnin' out of time. Our people [are] dyin'," Nia says during a particularly engaging conversation at the CCNWJ Neighborhood House, stressing the necessity that groups set aside egos and work together, and that academics do more than speak from the ranks of ivory towers (Personal Communication, 2016).

Conclusion

This work makes a number of claims and contributions. First, it disputes Christian Davenport's (2014) claim—for which he uses the RNA as a model—that "repression kills

social movement organizations" (p. 5). Instead, I suggest that though citizens heretofore, have been unsuccessful in acquiring the five-state nation desired, the RNA lives in various political and spatial forms. I have shown that through the imposition of a street named in honor of Chokwe Lumumba, the Committee to Preserve the Legacy of Chokwe Lumumba commemorates his legacy, and by association, that of the PGRNA during a time in which the city of Detroit is actively erasing traces of its history of political activism and working class residents via processes of urban renewal. Furthermore, in Jackson, the collective efforts of groups like Cooperation Jackson and the Cooperative Community of New West Jackson indicate that the PGRNA's design for creating cooperative communities in the Deep South has been taken up and moderated to fit the needs of New Afrikans within a current socio-political moment. Third, the successful participation in electoral politics in Jackson, Mississippi is a clear political outcome of the RNA as a social movement organization. However, unlike current work on the outcomes of social movements, the electoral and policy implementations in Jackson are but one way in which politics has been envisioned and enacted in Jackson. Their tactics and strategies, in fact, broaden rather myopic understandings of what constitutes "politics" within given literature—foreshadowing various embodied and spatial forms of politic from a particular New Afrikan spatial imaginary.

These outcomes, and my ability to observe them, are both a product of my multi-site ethnography and my application of a Black spatial imaginary. It is my position, that because Davenport's methodology was chiefly archival and because he did not imbibe and incorporate what Clyde Woods (1998) calls a "blues epistemology," he remained unaware of the many ways in which the RNA manifest today, despite repeated attempts to quash it

ideology and aims. More than a theory or methodology, a blues epistemology or Black spatial imaginary is based on an alternative way of seeing and understanding the world— the result being alternative intellectual and spatial productions. By allowing oneself to be guided by the understanding and spatial imaginary of New Afrikan citizens, this work has unveiled the enduring presence of New Afrikan spatial imaginaries, both in Detroit and Jackson.

Methodologically, a confluence of methods (e.g. interviews, participant observation, archival research, and multi-site ethnography) resulted in a multiple forms information. Particularly, the use of a multi-site ethnography unearths findings in Detroit and Jackson, both temporally and spatially. When most studies of the RNA have focused on one region or one historical era (Berger, 2009, 2010, Karolczyk, 2013, 2014; Onaci, 2015; Umoja, 2013), this research speaks the RNA's inception and its maturation across space and time. Hence, in the context of this study, Wendy Wolford's (2006) claim regarding the usefulness of ethnographic methods for social movements research holds true: ethnographic research is invaluable for social movement research" (p. 335).

Within this study, respondents were overwhelmingly male. Future studies of the RNA may look at how New Afrikan women have and continue to take central roles in conceptualizing and materializing the aims of the New Afrikan Independence Movement across various spaces. Recently, Ashley Farmer (2016, forthcoming) has begun to centralize the contributions of women throughout various manifestations of the Black Power movements. More work is needed that focuses on the PGRNA and its organizational derivatives.

Research Questions

RQ#1: How did citizens of the RNA view its relationship with urban spaces in the

north? Furthermore, were there citizens of the RNA who preferred the urban north

as a home? And, if so, why?

RQ#2: Why did the PGRNA create New Afrika as a nation-state in south? Second,

what is the relationship between New Afrikan subjectivity and the New Afrikan

territory?

RQ#3: In what forms have the outcomes of the RNA's mobilizations in Detroit and

Jackson taken shape (i.e. spatially, politically, and culturally) in either city?

Work Plan and Timeline

Date: August 1, 2015 – February 29, 2016
Location(s): Detroit, Michigan & Ann Arbor, Michigan
- Archival research at Wayne State University, the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, and the Charles Wright Museum of African American Culture and History
- Began participant observation of workdays and meetings at the Detroit Black Community Food Security Network, Freedom Freedom Growers, and NED.
- Research personal archives made available by interlocutors.
- Interview key informants in Detroit (total of 14 interviews)

Date: March 2016
Location: Louisville, Kentucky
- Archival research in the personal collection of Professor Jan R. Carew

Date: January 1, 2015 – June 30, 2015
Location: Jackson, Mississippi
- Archival research at Jackson State University's Margaret Walker Institute
- Participant observation of Cooperation Jackson, Coalition for Economic Justice, and the Cooperative Community of New West Jackson
- Observation of city council meetings and state of the city address
- Interview key informants in Jackson and Atlanta, Georgia (total of 19 interviews)

Qualifications

As a human geographer, my research interests include political geography, urban geography, Black geographies, and geographies of the south. I am trained in critical theories of space and territory, as well as, theories of race and racism in the U.S. I have also taken courses on participatory research methods, life narratives, and ethnographic research. My theoretical knowledge and methodological experiences will aid in conducting this study. Furthermore, I have taken a number of courses, which have prepared me to undertake this task. This includes courses on Liberation Geographies with Dr. Alvaro Reyes, which introduced me to key theories of space and Blackness, a seminar on agrarian studies with Dr. Christian Lentz that introduced me to social movements literature, and independent studies with Drs. Altha Cravey and Scott Kirsch on Black feminism and territory/territoriality, respectively. Methodologically, I benefitted from anthropological coursework on community based participatory action research with Dr. Dorothy Holland, as well as my role as a Research Assistant in her and Dr. Don Nonini's National Science Foundation sponsored study, entitled, "Research on Food and Farming for All" (ROFFA). The ROFFA study sought to ascertain the local agri-food systems of four regions of North Carolina – Boone, Charlotte/Mecklenburg County, Durham, and Eastern North Carolina (Halifax, Edgecombe, Nash Counties). As an RA for the eastern region I spent 12 months of field research in Rocky Mount, North Carolina. This experience strengthened my interest, engagement, and skills in ethnography, participant observation, and interviewing. Through seminars on life narratives with Dr. Charles Prices, and qualitative research design with Dr. Karla Slocum, I bolstered the skills necessary for crafting and executing the study at hand.

Research Preparation

i. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

On March 27, 2013, I attended a lecture led by Dr. Akinyele Umoja at the University of North Carolina's Bull's Head Bookstore. Dr. Umoja lectured from his text, *We Will Shoot Back: Armed Resistance in the Mississippi Freedom Movement*. Following his talk I met Dr. Umoja along with Herman and Iyaluua Ferguson. The Ferguson's were once citizens of the RNA and members of the PGRNA. Following these meetings I acquired Mr. Ferguson's biography and added Dr. Umoja to my dissertation committee.

ii. Detroit, Michigan

In the spring of 2014 I traveled to Detroit, Michigan. In Detroit I searched the archives of the Walter P. Reuther Library at Wayne State University and the Detroit Public Library. Also, I attended a meeting of the Detroit Black Community Food Security Network (DBCFSN), an all-Black food cooperative that operates a community garden and food buyers club. Following the meeting, the Executive Director of DBCFSN introduced me to members of the cooperative who were once members of the NAPO, an insular Black Nationalist organization founded on principles established by the PGRNA.

I also participated in a community meeting at the Boggs Center, a community center and educational space created by James and Grace Lee Boggs, two well-known activists within the city of Detroit. Though none of the attendees of the meeting were citizens of the RNA, Grace Lee Boggs worked closely with founders of the RNA. Last, I made observations and took field notes regarding the city's geographic landscape, its local food security efforts, and political culture.

iii. University of Michigan – Ann Arbor

During the spring of 2014, I spent one full day at the archives of the Bentley

Historical Library at the University of Michigan – Ann Arbor. This library houses the

personal collections of Harry Haywood, chief theorist of the Black Belt Thesis. My time

was spent accessing his papers. However, in future visits I will access the papers of Robert

F. Williams and Mabel Williams. Both were members of the PGRNA. Robert F. Williams,

in particular, was its first President.

iv. East Lansing, Michigan

During the same week in which I visited Detroit and Ann Arbor, I visited Lansing,

Michigan where I met Dr. Gwendolyn Midlo-Hall, the widow of Harry Haywood. She and

I discussed her husband's theoretical work and her contributions to their development and

dissemination. Dr. Midlo-Hall also provided contact information for Robert Williams, Jr.

v. Jackson, Mississippi

May 3-5, 2016 I attended the Jackson Rising Conference in Jackson, Mississippi.

The gathering was co-organized by the late Mayor of Jackson, Chokwe Lumumba and the

Malcolm X Grassroots Movement (MXGM), a nationwide social justice organization that

is a part of the NAIM initiated by the RNA. While attending this gathering I met citizens

of the RNA and members of the MXGM who moved to Jackson from other cities with the

expressed intent to support Mayor Lumumba and to create intentional communities in

West Jackson, a predominately Black and underserved area of the city. It appeared from

my observations and conversations that the MXGM, with cooperation from Mayor

Lumumba, were implementing the RNA's territorial vision on a municipal rather than a

national scale. By attending this gathering I was able to meet many potential participants, some of whom identified as New Afrikans.

vi. Houston, Texas

Houston is a unique location to study the influence of the PGRNA. For a number of years during the 1990s, Dr. Imari Obadele, the co-founder and second President of the PGRNA taught at Prairie View A&M University (PVA&M). During a visit to my hometown—May 17-30, 2014—I met an alumnus of PVA&M who was also a student of Dr. Obadele. The topic of our conversation addressed his experiences with Dr. Obadele as a professor, his style of pedagogy, and its influence on the lives of his students. During his enrollment, this student served as the President of the student chapter of the National Coalition for Black Reparations in America (NCOBRA), a national organization co-founded by Dr. Obadele. In addition to sharing personal information student provided obtained several of Dr. Obadele's self-published books. These were used in Dr. Obadele's courses on Political Science.

vii. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

From June 3-4, 2014 I visited Philadelphia, Pennsylvania where I met Dr. Muhammad Ahmad, a longtime activist who knew and organized with the founding members of the PGRNA. He is also the author of *We Will Return in the Whirlwind*, an important text that chronicles the inception, histories, successes, and failures of various Black political organizations and nationalist efforts, including the RNA. My second meeting was with Dr. Ed Onaci, Assistant Professor of History at Ursinus College. Dr. Onaci conducted his doctoral research on the RNA and has extensive knowledge and
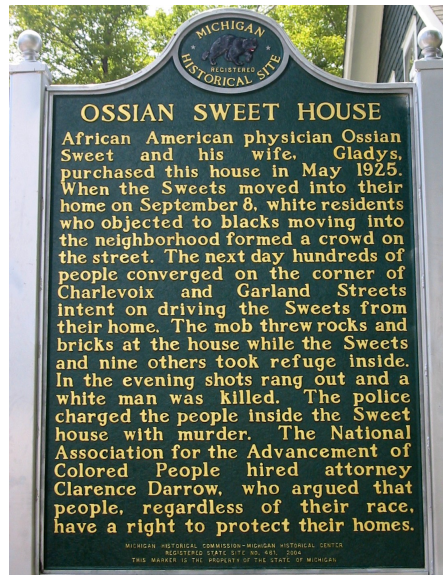
primary documents pertaining to the RNA, both of which he has shared with me. I plan to interview both scholars for my research.
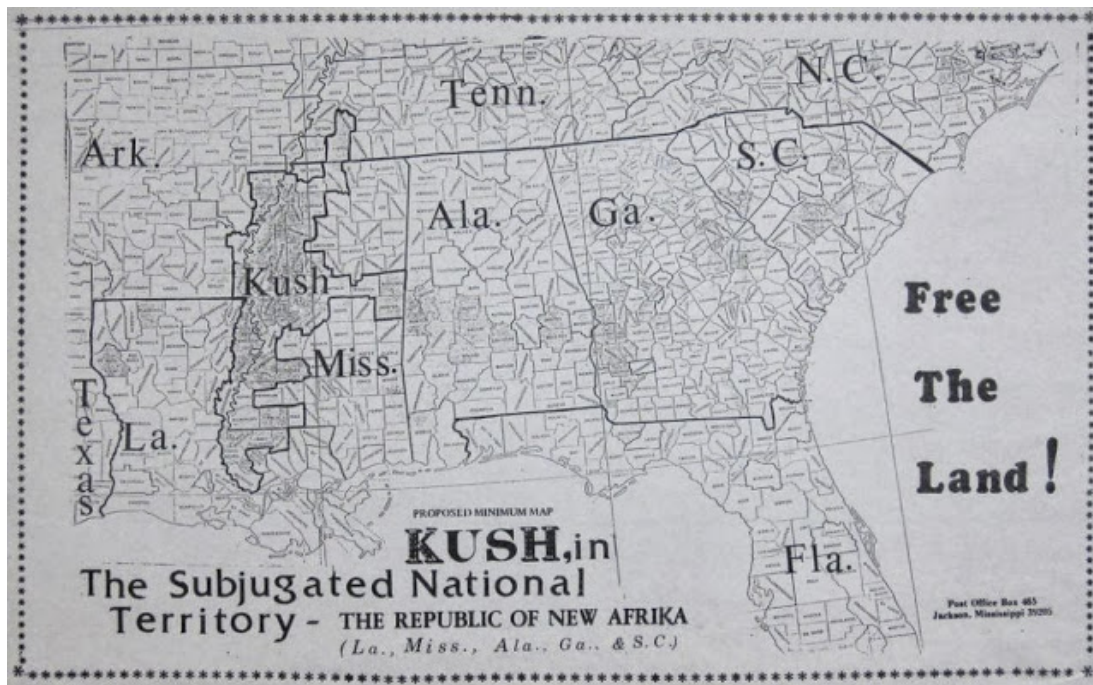
vii. New York, New York

While in New York in the month of July 2014, I visited the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. Known for its vast collection of personal papers, newspapers, photos, and recordings, the Schomburg has amassed a sizable collection of literature on the Black Power Era. This collection includes photographs of RNA citizens and texts written by Dr. Imari Obadele, co-founder and second President of the PGRNA. I scanned each of Dr. Obadele's texts for future access.

FIGURES

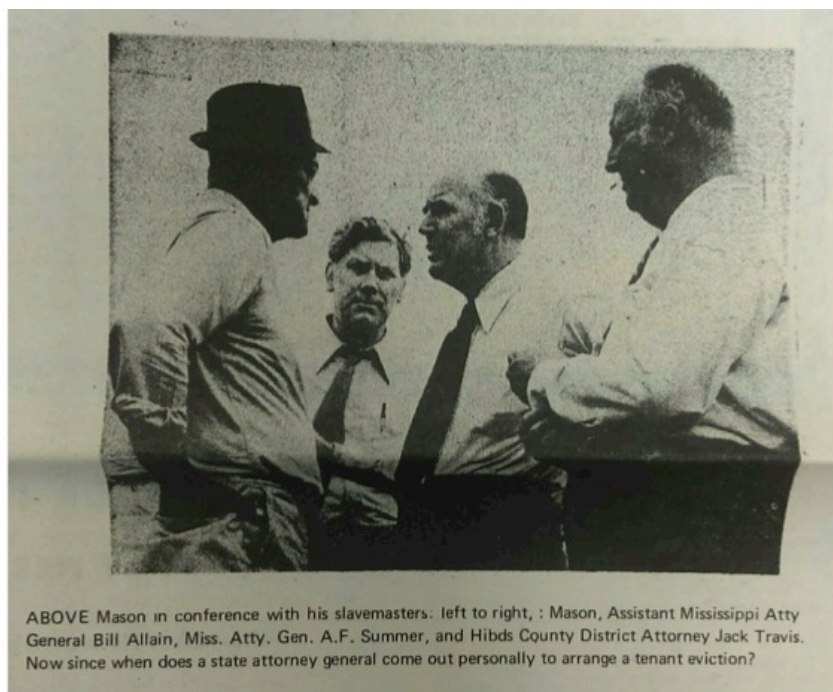**Figure 1.1** Ossian Sweet House Historical Marker

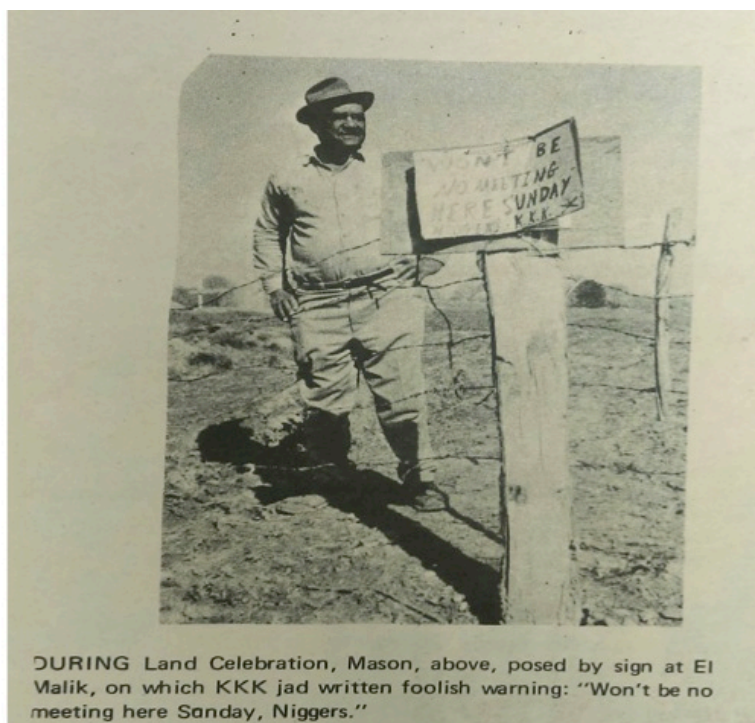**Figure 2.1** Map of Republic of New Afrika

Figure 3.1 Mason meeting with Mississippi Attorney General. A.F. Summer and Hinds
County District Attorney, Jack Travis.
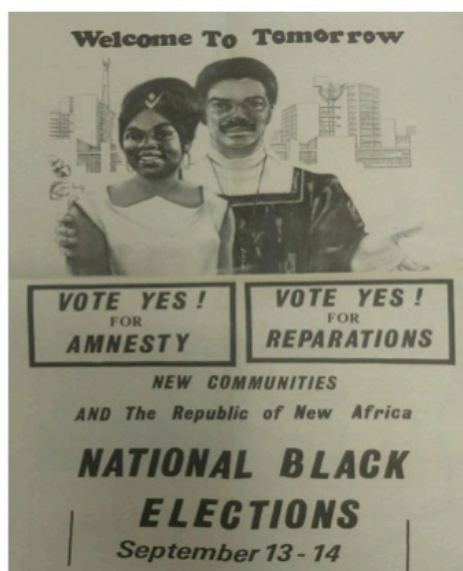**Source:** Margaret Walker Center, Jackson State University

ABOVE Mason in conference with his slavemasters: left to right, : Mason, Assistant Mississippi Atty
General Bill Allain, Miss. Atty. Gen. A.F. Summer, and Hibds County District Attorney Jack Travis.
Now since when does a state attorney general come out personally to arrange a tenant eviction?

Figure 4.1 Lofton Mason next to signpost erected by KKK at El Malik, RNA homestead.
Source: Margaret Walker Center, Jackson State University

DURING Land Celebration, Mason, above, posed by sign at El
Malik, on which KKK jad written foolish warning: "Won't be no
meeting here Sonday, Niggers."

Figure 5.1 Flyer encouraging New Afrikan elections
Source: Margaret Walker Center, Jackson State University

Figure 6.1 Member of AD NIP PARTY illustrated map of national territory
Source: Robert F. Williams Collection. Box 12 Political Organizations. Bentley Historical
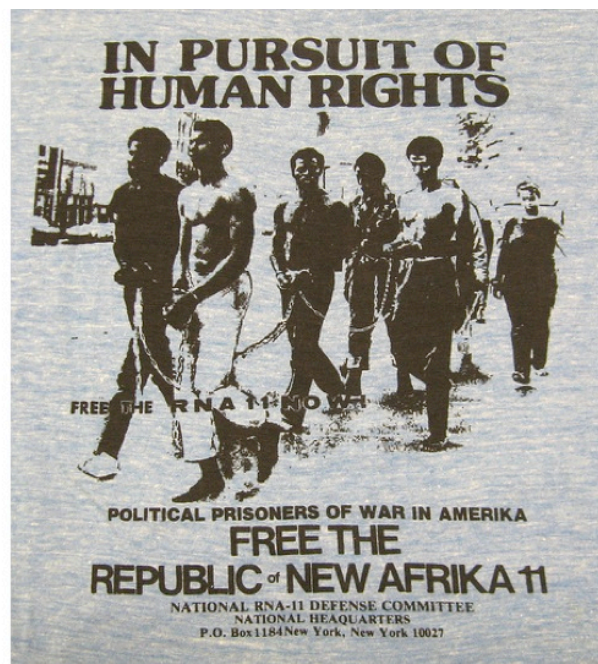 Library. University of Michigan—Ann Arbor.

Figure 7.1 Republic of New Afrika Government House at 1148 Lewis Street
Photo by: Willie Jamaal Wright, Summer 2016

Figure 8.1 RNA-11 paraded in shackles through downtown Jackson, Mississippi.

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