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# The Politics of the Black Power Movement

James Lance Taylor

Department of Politics, University of San Francisco, San Francisco, California 94117, USA;  
email: [taylorj@usfca.edu](mailto:taylorj@usfca.edu)

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## Keywords

Black Power, black nationalism, black radicalism, social movements, race and ethnic politics, black politics and political science

## Abstract

In notable ways, analysis of the Black Power Movement (BPM) by political scientists has been woefully neglected in comparison to analyses proffered by historians, sociologists, and Black Studies scholars. This comparative neglect is partly owed to political science's reticence to meaningfully engage the ideological locus of the BPM, black nationalism, through rigorous theoretical or methodological analysis. In this review, I highlight some of the major contributions of political scientists to the analysis of the BPM while exploring some of the challenges and opportunities for further study and examination of this singular period in US and international politics.

## INTRODUCTION

Research by political scientists concerning the Black Power Movement (BPM), generally understood as coinciding with the end of the Civil Rights Movement (1954–1968) and extending several years thereafter (1965–1975), betrays a paradox analogous to the one raised decades ago by Wilson (1985): “[P]olitical scientists don’t study black politics, but historians and sociologists do.” Wilson highlighted the relative inattention of flagship political science journals, graduate student theses, and new PhDs in political science to black political actors and behavior compared to the related disciplines of history and sociology. This empirical neglect reflects a broader ideological influence that constricts the study not only of black politics in general but of the BPM in particular. Given the centrality of black nationalism to the BPM (Allen 1990, p. 89; Ogbar 2004, p. 2), this bias has impoverished study of the movement among political scientists, leaving the discipline relatively ill-equipped to engage the BPM as a widespread expression of black nationalist political organizing and mobilization throughout the United States—unlike any development observed since the era of Garveyism in the interwar years, until the current black movements. In considering the 1967 Detroit Rebellion, the most destructive of the so-called race riots that defined the “long hot summers” which characterized the Black Power era, Aberbach & Walker (1970), for instance, conducted opinion research on the meaning of Black Power among black and white respondents in Detroit, Michigan, months following the rebellion. The authors noted that Black Power did not begin with Carmichael & Hamilton’s (1967) *Black Power*, acknowledging that “the current dispute over its meaning is echoed in the speeches of Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Marcus Garvey” (Aberbach & Walker 1970, p. 368), but they did not fully consider the implications of the ideological genealogy that this intellectual history suggested. In this well-cited study, the two political scientists make not a single reference to black nationalism and only one passing reference to black nationalist leader Marcus Garvey. Aberbach & Walker (1970) neglect to relate Black Power to its ideological antecedents in black nationalism (Taylor 2014).

In this article, I examine the politics of the knowledge production in political science and black politics related to the BPM, keeping in mind Wilson’s thesis on the marginalization of black political phenomena in political science scholarship compared to other disciplines. This chronological review of the literature outlines the emergent periods in the promulgation of political science literature related to Black Power. Next, I provide an overview of several prominent studies of the BPM in political science scholarship up to 2000. I then review key black politics studies of the BPM from 2001 through 2008. The last section examines works since 2009 and returns to Wilson’s thesis in light of this review’s call, *inter alia*, for political science to study black nationalist ideology comprehensively in relation to Black Power.

## BLACK POWER POLITICS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE: AN OVERVIEW

Wilson (1985) drew attention to the indifference to black politics in the discipline of political science. Moreover, Wilson proposed the study of black nationalism not only to explicate political phenomena widely prevalent in the recently expired BPM but also to extend the profession’s knowledge of US politics writ large—to expand the discipline’s theoretical assumptions, research questions, methodological diversity, professional organizations, and flagship journals and publications. To address the “disciplinary ‘mismatch’ between the central substantive concerns and current methodological orientations of the discipline, and the most salient and interesting features of Afro-American political life” (Wilson 1985, p. 601), Wilson included voluntary associations, churches, black urban cults [Fauset 1971 (1944), Curtis & Sigler 2009] like the Nation of

Islam and religious behavior, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and Garveyism in the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) as subjects of political science study. These cultural entities were common from the Reconstruction years through Black Power in black-populated cities, leading Baer (1984, p. 24) to suggest that “many distraught persons resorted to the services of these institutions in seeking comfort and solace, employment, love, friendship, and marriage.” Washington (1972, p. 1) adds, “they are poorly judged in the light of white standards. . . . The intention of the black church, sect, and cult types is to be power communities” with secular power ambitions.

Wilson (1985, p. 603) encouraged scholars to apply approaches, theoretical frameworks, data, and analyses appropriate for studying black political behavior, including subterranean aspects, and to avoid approaches “ill-suited for the study of the poor and the powerless.” The related social science disciplines were characterized by “(1) a concern with seeing society from the bottom up rather than the top down; (2) the study of the search for personal and group autonomy under constrained conditions; (3) a focus on the mobilization of new groups which put forward their own legitimate leaders; and (4) the role of nonformal institutions” (p. 603). Wilson’s thesis on black politics in political science in comparison to history and sociology was corroborated in a study that found similar patterns of disciplinary neglect in political science publications from 1986 through 2003 (Wilson & Frasure 2007).<sup>1</sup> The epistemic benefits of centering black nationalism study in political science are particularly salient in Wilson’s scholarship, but they have not been the subject of subsequent tests of Wilson’s neglect thesis.

There is little agreement among scholarly definitions of black nationalism in the United States (Taylor 2016). Partial and often competing conceptualizations and measurements include aspects such as land; nationality and nationhood; pan-Africanism; real or imagined geographic and colonial boundaries over a dominated black minority population; cultural, spiritual, psychological, and ideological orientations; and gender and sexuality dimensions. Students have often structurally mangled black nationalism by organizing it into niche epochs and dimensions, often undermining understanding of the epistemological relationship between Black Power and pre- and post-Civil Rights/Black Power era developments in black politics. In relation to Black Power, Marxist historian Theodore Draper [2004 (1957), pp. 317–18] referred to black nationalism as a poorly conceptualized “rejected strain” in African American politics. Sociologist Robert Allen (1990, p. 89) insists, to the contrary, that “Black power as a variant form of black nationalism” reflects “roots that reach deep into the history and social fabric of black America.” For Allen, “black nationalism is an insistent motif that wends its way through black history, particularly in the last 150 years.” As such, it was one of the “ever-present undercurrents in the collective black psyche which constantly interact with the assimilationist tendency and, in times of crisis, rise to the surface to become major themes” (p. 89). Allen views US black nationalism as “an ever-present but usually latent (or unarticulated) tendency, particularly among blacks who find themselves on the lower rungs of the lower socioeconomic ladder”; and although “nationalism has always existed in the cultural life of black people. . . most whites are unaware of it until it finds a conscious advocate” such as Marcus Garvey or Malcolm X (Allen 1990, p. 118).

Black Power as a political phenomenon was evident across multiple categories of identity, multiple types of ideology, and multiple modes of political engagement. Black Power also resonated among youth and radicals in multiple countries. A shared assumption across these myriad dimensions of Black Power in the United States was the existence of “a Black community; a historically

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<sup>1</sup> Relatedly, Alexander-Floyd (2014) found similar neglect of analyses of black women’s political behavior, in particular.

constructed community of shared history and memory; with distinctive cultural, political, and economic interests; and with a geographical or spatial anchor in the nation's urban centers and the heavily populated Black belt counties of the rural South" (Walters & Smith 1999, p. 249).

The analyses of Walters, who once taught at Howard University, and Smith, a Howard alumnus, were informed by the dean of black political science in the United States, Ralph Bunche—a Nobel Laureate and founding chair of the Department of Political Science at Howard. Bunche's scholarship beyond international relations contributed significantly to Myrdal's *American Dilemma* (1944).<sup>2</sup> Bunche, like most early political scientists, viewed race as an unscientific but important variable in understanding US politics. The studies of Gosnell (1935) and Key (1949) were as exemplary as they were exceptional in focusing on what would later be called black politics. Bunche, who became president of the American Political Science Association, argued that political science as a discipline ignored the "grave and difficult realities" associated with segregation and white supremacy in the United States as well as colonialism abroad (Walton & Smith 2007, p. 32). Smith (2020) agrees that much of the mainstream discipline of political science ignored race and African American politics, even while the Chicago School on race relations was prominent under the sociologist Robert Park, and W.E.B. Du Bois's *Black Reconstruction in the United States* (1935) was challenging the Dunning School in the History Department at Columbia University. Smith (2020, p. 137) recounts the policy-making and practical implications of indifference to black politics during this period and insists that "neglect of the role of race, particularly in American politics, damaged the scholarship and teaching in political science"; in fact, it also "meant that the pluralists who came to dominate the profession in the 1950s and 1960s as part of its behavioral revolution largely failed to predict or to analyze the rise of the civil rights movement." Henry (1999, p. 232) insists, "Bunche understood the ghetto residents outside the South had seen little change in their political and economic status as a result of the civil rights movement." A vehement opponent of Black Power at its inception, Bunche began to temper his critical views over time until the assassination of Nobel Laureate colleague Martin Luther King, Jr., led Bunche to pen "Notes on the Black Revolution," where he expressed support for Black Power (unpublished,<sup>3</sup> p. 234).

The establishment of the National Conference of Black Political Scientists (NCOBPS), the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, and the interdisciplinary National Council of Black Studies, among others, during the still emergent Black Power mobilization was a signal development in the academic study of black politics in political science (McCormick 2012, Belk et al. 2020, Smith 2020). The political scientists of NCOBPS focused on race and politics as no other major group of social scientists had up to that time. Among NCOBPS's founders, Jones (2014, p. 32) viewed the organization's mission as "developing a new, different political science, a black political science, that would be part of an interrelated network of self-defining and self-directed black organizations involved in the struggle for black liberation." This perspective of political science "proceeded from two related sets of assumptions: one dealt with the responsibility of the political scientist to the larger community, and the other focused on the instrumental character

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<sup>2</sup>The work includes widely cited analyses of "biases in the research on the American Negro Problem" (Myrdal 1944, p. 1035). Interestingly, Reed (1999b) found Myrdal's work to be seminal in shaping a warped view of African American life that essentializes the black population as a social category and race "problem" (p. 7). Reed does not discuss Bunche in connection with the Myrdal study. Although Bunche's research focus was international relations—for example, *A World View of Race* (Bunche 1936)—his scholarship on black American politics includes a benchmark monograph on black leadership.

<sup>3</sup>From the Urquhart Collection of Material About Ralph Bunche, Box 28, Folder 3. Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles. <https://calisphere.org/collections/23585/>.

of knowledge” (p. 34). Jones’s “frame of reference” for study of black politics implicated black radical intellectual traditions for an alternative paradigm for the study of American political behavior. As part of the second generation of black political scientists, these scholars were heavily influenced by the professional and diplomatic stature of Bunche and by their direct and indirect experiences in the Civil Rights Movement and nascent BPM, while entering academia in relatively larger numbers than their predecessors. The combination of both factors allowed them to generate novel frameworks for the study of black politics in the discipline (Smith et al. 2014). The earliest research journal of NCOBPS, the *Journal of Political Repression*, published between 1975 and 1979 (Belk et al. 2020, p. 142), did not, however, focus scholarly forums or symposiums thematically on Black Power and the BPM even at the peak of the Modern Black Convention Movement (Woodard 1999), and despite foundational work in political science and black politics, neither produced a partial or monograph-length study on the BPM until the 1990s (Jennings 1992, Smith 1996).

The political science the NCOBPS founders pioneered was not intended simply to describe black political phenomena but to change constitutionally the discipline’s disposition toward black politics. Tate (2014) and Smith (2014) each refer to a distinctive subfield they call the “Black Science” of politics or political science that is distinctive from the larger discipline in producing pioneering race research, social movement activism, a focus on the development of an African American orientation toward political science research centered on the race variable, and vital administrative work at historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs). Nevertheless, this early second-generation focus on black political science did not prove to be a wellspring of scholarship on Black Power or black nationalism among the emergent scholars at the time or among mainstream political science scholars (Joseph 2008, p. 12).<sup>4</sup> While there are sundry reasons for this relative inattention to the BPM, one that stands out is the discomfort of political scientists in addressing one of the central tenets of the BPM, namely, its black nationalism.

Essien-Udom’s (1962) study of contemporaneous black nationalist movements in the United States is an important exception to this scholarly lacuna, and its focus on Elijah Muhammad’s Nation of Islam (NOI) and Malcolm X made it more indispensable to study. Notably in relationship to early studies in emergent black politics and political science, Essien-Udom conducted interviews with Malcolm X, Elijah Muhammad, and rank-and-file members of the organization, while also conducting content analysis of the NOI’s internal documents.<sup>5</sup> Essien-Udom’s interpretation of black nationalism mapped it longitudinally through black religious subculture and anticipated later studies (Robinson 1983, Allen 1990, Taylor 2014, Henderson 2019). Wilson (1985, p. 603) also notes in this regard how the related social sciences benefit, compared to political science, from employing “methods that permit them to collect data from nontraditional sources using oral histories, slave narratives, demographic records,” and more.

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<sup>4</sup>Black Power and the BPM, as subjects of study, were not central to research interests in black politics any more than in political science generally (Joseph 2009, p. 753).

<sup>5</sup>Essien-Udom (1962) reports that a 12-page questionnaire was administered to 500 members of the Chicago Temple of the NOI, receiving only four responses. The final study had to overcome the major obstacle of distrust of the researchers’ scientific motives. Essien-Udom (1962, p. ix) explains that “the difficulty of studying the group lies partly in its lack of appreciation of the ‘scientific’ value of the information they would provide. Partly, it lies in their deep-seated suspicion of the outsider. The Muslims’ sense of persecution and fear of the so-called ‘enemy’ thus makes their co-operation difficult to secure.” A criticism of Essien-Udom’s study relates to its ungeneralizable case-study approach to the NOI, where substantial Garveyite strains continued to thrive in major urban areas like Harlem, Detroit, Chicago, Philadelphia, Newark, and Washington, DC. We are also aware of the importance of Harvard University political scientist Martin Kilson (1969), whose engagement with black nationalism and Black Power was communicated in forms other than book-length study.

The seminal work on Black Power, however, was *Black Power* (Carmichael & Hamilton 1967), written at the peak of both the BPM and the behavioral revolution in political science. Significantly advancing the empirical standards and methodological rigor of the discipline, the methodological innovations associated with statistical applications utilizing computer technology advanced both the academic and policy relevance of political science research, especially in the realm of electoral studies—just as the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 was markedly increasing black electoral participation in the United States. Although seminal arguments of the BPM are captured in *Black Power*, what seems lost to memory is that the book is deeply imbricated in black integrationism, not black nationalism. The black nationalism of the era exemplified in the pronouncements of Malcolm X is largely absent from *Black Power*, and Malcolm X is not mentioned in the text (Taylor 2014; 2017, pp. 166–69). Moreover, while Carmichael & Hamilton (1967) invoked elements of the black nationalist theoretical core, self-determination and the internal colonization thesis, *Black Power* is not a black nationalist treatise.

The important intervention of civil rights leader and strategist Bayard Rustin in shaping the intellectual contours for engagement with Black Power is evident in the impact of his writings on political scientists a generation after *Black Power*. For example, the 1980s–1990s has been characterized as an era of “new Black politics” (see below) informed by Rustin’s (1965) *Commentary* article, “From Protest to Politics,” where Rustin acknowledges the nonviolent but revolutionary implications of the black movement as it shifted stages, tactics, and goals, and its need for multiracial liberal and progressive alliances in the move from protest to social movement militancy (Preston et al. 1987, Tate 1993, Taylor 1999). But Black Power, Rustin expresses in “‘Black Power’ and Coalition Politics” (1966, p. 35), “not only lacks any real value for the civil-rights movement, but . . . its propagation is positively harmful. It diverts the movement from a meaningful debate over strategy and tactics, it isolates the Negro community, and it encourages the growth of anti-Negro forces.”

The wholesale adoption by mainstream political science—including the most prominent black political scientists—of Rustin’s opposition to Black Power reflected the deeper and more enduring problem of an ideological orientation’s detractors being its principal interpreters. Henderson (2014, p. 174) notes, for instance, “U.S. blacks continue to be dominated by liberal integrationist hegemony within mainstream electoral politics and quasi-radical or liberal integrationist dominance within the U.S. academy; and each of these tendencies denigrates black nationalism as a political ideology and even more so as a basis for political strategy or political organizing.” Rustin’s assimilationist critiques of the BPM were reproduced and repackaged in black political science (Singh 2004) and, more than Hamilton or Carmichael, critically defined Black Power for the academy and white liberal establishment. Rustin’s views shaped popular criticisms and inspired the theoretical frames that would emerge, not with the NCOBPS founders and their scholarly works, but with their students and the next scholarly cohorts. As Rustin elaborated the deficiencies of black nationalism and Black Power, Holden’s (1973) *The Politics of the Black “Nation”* outlines a thesis for integration and rejects the black nationalist implications of “the black liberation struggle” as escapism and withdrawal. Despite its misleading title, Smith (1983, p. 75) views Holden’s book as “the academic manifesto of the integrationist wing of the Black leadership group in the United States. As such, it is probably the most systematic and cogent defense of integration extant.” Like Rustin, Holden (1973, pp. 5–6) promoted a “Black-White interdependency” and was unsympathetic to the black nation as a concept.<sup>6</sup> Belk et al. (2020) summarize the scholarly production of the founders of NCOBPS and their students, which transformed the study of black politics in the

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<sup>6</sup>In a twenty-fifth-anniversary *National Political Science Review* symposium (Persons 2001), respondents offered mixed reviews of Holden’s (1973) work. The responses to Holden’s scholarship are an excellent demonstration of critical black political science.

United States. The scholarship of Hanes Walton, Ronald Walters, Mack Jones, and Jewel Prestage has pride of place in their analyses (Belk et al. 2020, Smith 2014). The BPM was deeply implicated in these works but seldom a focal point. Walton (1973) lists seven categories of study: electoral, racial, coalitional, nationalist, development, policy, and Marxist-socialist approaches to black politics of the 1960s–1970s. Where Walton (1973, pp. 105–8) provides a list of scholarly publications under the subheading “Black Political Revolutionary Movements,” noticeably few are studies by political scientists, apart from Hamilton.<sup>7</sup>

Walters’ definition of black nationalism was central to the organization of the National Black Political Assembly, which many observers insist was the culminating political mobilization of the BPM (see, e.g., Walters 1973, 1975).<sup>8</sup> The activist-scholar was more concerned with an applied black nationalism than with theory discourses of academic black nationalism. Henderson’s (2014, p. 168) analysis of Walters’ thought on black leadership and conceptualization of black nationalism suggests that Walters’ was a “unifying ideology of black nationalism.” This ideology was shaped by the political effort to bridge the disparate, competing ideological forces of the 1970s and 1980s in developments such as the assemblies and conventions, and advising the Jesse Jackson campaigns, where ideological sectarianism prevailed and obstructed movement organizing and strategy. Walters’ ecumenical, “mature” black nationalism, which rejected “back to Africa”-type schemes as fantastical, centered the importance of black consciousness as an organizing principle to achieve the social, economic, and political objectives of black Americans (Henderson 2014, p. 169). Walters’ contribution was less a definition of black nationalism than a theory of black political unity in the United States and sought to incorporate the main black ideological tendencies of the 1970s. Smith (1996, p. 59) and Henderson (2014, p. 171) are critical of Walters’ attempt at theoretical and operational synthesis in the “unity without uniformity” pitch at Gary, Indiana, and Little Rock, Arkansas—a pitch that downplayed intractable theoretical, organizational, and political chasms between the various positions in BPM activism. Moreover, the influence of Walters’ writing on black nationalism was undermined by its timing during the decline in black nationalist influence in black politics “relative to black integrationists as represented by the emerging class of black elected officials (BEOs) concentrated in the Democratic Party” (Henderson 2014, p. 172). Concurring with Walton’s (1985) study of the period, Henderson (2014, p. 175) argues that “black nationalism is among the most misunderstood concepts in American politics.” In the end, neither Walton nor Walters published a canonical, book-length study of Black Power or black nationalism that students could engage with or build on.

## **BLACK POWER AND “THE NEW BLACK POLITICS”: SEVERAL TRENDS IN BLACK POWER MOVEMENT INHERITANCES**

Iton (2008, p. 82) took particular note of the “Rustinian conceptions of black politics [that] became hegemonic in the immediate post civil rights era.” Political science focused on the move, encouraged by Rustin, “from protest to politics.”<sup>9</sup> The 1965 Voting Rights Act increased the number of BEOs by 121% between 1969 and 1973, when the total was 2,621 according to the 1973 National

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<sup>7</sup> Walton’s (1973) bibliography includes Carmichael & Hamilton’s *Black Power* and Chuck Stone’s (1968) book *Black Political Power in America*.

<sup>8</sup> For an extended analysis of the work and impact of Ronald Walters, see Smith et al. (2014).

<sup>9</sup> Johnson (2007, p. xxviii), focusing on studies of the New Black Politics in the 1980s and 1990s, argues that “such writing often assumes some coherent transhistorical black interests in advance. The arguments tend to flatten class contradictions within the black population and minimize the presence of transracial organizations and forms of political community.” But none of them provided a book-length treatment centered on Black Power or the BPM in the era of the New Black Politics.

Roster of Black Elected Officials. By 1983, there were 5,000 BEOs in the United States. Interest in electoral, bureaucratic, and appointed political leaders and processes grew in the subsequent period of black politics, and political science interest in black politics reached its highest level of scholarly engagement up to that time (Joint Cent. Political Econ. Stud. 1973, pp. iii, v). Students of black politics who entered the academy in the 1980s encountered the contemporary works of political scientists Hanes Walton, Ronald Walters, Mack Jones, Robert Smith, Michael B. Preston, Adolph Reed, Jr., Georgia Persons, and James Jennings, among important others. Their research centered political and intellectual theorizing on the outcomes of the Civil Rights Movement and BPM, often more than the politics orienting their practices. The latter, again, was often left to historians and sociologists as political scientists aimed to discern the prospects of the apparently greater electoral efficacy of black voters and the prospects for greater descriptive and substantive representation of black voters among local and national representatives.<sup>10</sup>

Overall, the emphasis in black politics in the 1980s continued to reflect the pattern of inattention to Black Power theoretically, and to a lesser extent, BPM organizations (see also Smith 1981, Tate 1993). Black Power informed the premises and postulates of the literature of the New Black Politics mainly tangentially as studies focused more on formal and institutional politics (Preston et al. 1987, Johnson 2007).

First, Smith's *We Have No Leaders: African Americans in the Post-Civil Rights Era* (1996) provided a fresh analysis of the BPM and its aftermath in both the grassroots movement and electoral politics domains. Smith sees the BPM's impact much more expansively than did previous studies of the era and relates it to both Jesse Jackson campaigns and the first administration of Bill Clinton. Smith's study takes state violence and police repression seriously as part of an explanation for understanding the BPM's internal and external deficiencies, and Smith presciently recognizes its continued relevance as a focus of black political mobilization decades into the post-Civil Rights era. A key lesson from BPM organizing is that "the black community is too ideologically diverse to operate for long in a single, all-inclusive organization capable of representing the interests of the race in its relationship to whites or the larger political order" (Smith 1996, pp. 74–75), such as a black political party. The importance of Smith's study to subsequent scholarship in early twenty-first-century black politics lies in its call for greater, not less, commitment to black nationalist projects and has become increasingly evident since its publication. Students of black politics focused increasingly on Black Power ideologies and the BPM in the 1990s and after.

Second, Dawson's corpus has contributed significantly to black political science knowledge through study of political attitudes and public opinion research. Dawson (2013, p. ix) observes "a stunning absence of analysis of black activism and the political thought generated in the context of black struggles for freedom, equality, and justice" in the study of social movements in the United States, "but also a more general absence of taking race seriously as a historical phenomenon that has profoundly shaped American institutions, politics and civil society." Noticeably absent in Dawson's summary of studies and analyses of black radicalism are political scientists. At the end of the new Black politics phase of black political science in the 1990s, and following his more influential *Behind the Mule: Race and Class in African American Politics* (1994), Dawson (2001) explored a wide spectrum of black political ideologies, including the black nationalism of the BPM. Dawson's studies significantly advanced understanding of the range of ideological orientations,

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<sup>10</sup>Scholarly interest in this vein was renewed by the mayoral victory of Harold Washington in Chicago, the gubernatorial victory of Douglas Wilder in Virginia, and Jesse Jackson's popular presidential campaigns of 1984 and 1988.

attitudes, and class differences among US blacks. *Blacks In and Out of the Left* (2013) is perhaps Dawson's most serious engagement with Black Power and the BPM. His scholarly corpus did not produce a book-length study of black nationalism or the BPM.

Smith (2008) points to the political science corpus of Adolph Reed, Jr., which represented a third influence in political science study of Black Power and the BPM<sup>11</sup> and gained wide interdisciplinary attention after the 1984 Jesse Jackson campaign and political developments in black politics and culture during the 1990s, when black nationalist sentiment experienced a post-Black Power period of saliency (Tate 1993, Taylor 2014). Reed, a labor-oriented Marxist and veteran activist of movement organizing in the 1960s and 1970s, is perhaps the most well-known male student of black politics in the United States, certainly in elite white intellectual, academic, and left journalistic circles (e.g., Mackaman 2019). Reed's engaged left critical pursuit of the interracial working-class popular front anti-capitalism has ruthlessly criticized most major developments in black politics—from Booker T. Washington's emergence from slavery to the *New York Times*' 1619 Project controversies and the present-day antiracist movements (Reed 2020, p. 40; Mackaman 2019). In the Holden and Rustinian mode, Reed is the leading black political science opponent of solidarities based on race (especially black nationalist formulations), gender, or other identities, in deference to labor-oriented, class-based organizing or mobilization (Reed 2012). Behind racial solidarities are elite cooptations. Just as readily, Reed's materialist perspective rejects prerogatives of “the very important ways in which class relations are constructed through and in conjunction with gender and race relations. Understanding the roles of gender, race, and other non-class based social divisions within the labor force is particularly important in contemporary rounds of economic restructuring, which is segmenting the labor force in new and ever more complex ways” (Staeheli & Clarke 1995, p. 3).

Drawing on frontline experience, generational perspective, singular compass of mind, systematic criticism, and political writing from a Marxist perspective, Reed largely set the terms of the critical reception of Black Power and the BPM in political science in the post-BPM era and their characterization in scholarship, typically without a scholarly counterpoint or answer. Apart from Smith's *We Have No Leaders* (1996), no major book-length analysis of Black Power and the BPM in political science existed, alongside the wide-ranging, excursive interventions that mark Reed's work. Although Reed referred to Smith's work in footnotes (Reed 1999a, p. 227, fn. 7; p. 276, fn. 36), Reed opted not to contest it, nor the work of anti-Marxist Robinson (1983), despite well-known criticisms of other contemporaries (Reed 1986a; 1999a, pp. 38–49; 2000). Smith, of the Howard University school (and one significant student of Walters' to develop the nationalist line), and Reed, of the Atlanta University school, indeed share much in their criticisms of Black Power radicalism and its fateful turns following the protests, arts, black conventions, and emergent BEOs of the 1970s. But they sharply part ideologically on the appropriate organizing principles for black political mobilization, informed by Black Power's intervention, and in their conceptualizations of the black community as a political reality (Smith 2008).

Reed's *Race, Politics, and Culture* (1986a), *The Jesse Jackson Phenomenon* (1986b), *Stirrings in the Jug* (1999a), and *Class Notes* (2000) excoriated Black Power radicalism, BPM organizations, black protest and new urban political leadership, and black nationalism in case studies and partial

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<sup>11</sup>The best survey of Reed's corpus is Smith's (2008) presentation for an NCOBPS panel in which Reed participated. Reed's critical approach to black mainstream and movement politics resembles the polemical mode of Rustin, Cruise, and Martin Kilson. See Reed (1999a, fn. 25, pp. 273–74) for his discussion of Rustin's activities and impact.

treatments, through polemicizing black power politics and performing an often one-dimensional, purist quest in the study of Black Power in political science and black politics. Like other prominent black Marxist intellectuals (e.g., Cornel West, Barbara Ransby, Angela Davis, Cedric Johnson, and the late Manning Marable among many others), Reed's genre of polemical political science is properly characterized as anti-black nationalist—and unreservedly anti-antiracist (Reed 2020).

Reed's corpus, which is deeply grounded in high historical and materialist criticism of black American political and urban development, does not amount to systematic study of black nationalism, even in book chapter- and journal article-length criticisms of Black Power (1999a, 2000). Where Smith (1996, p. 75), for instance, argued that the mid-nineteenth-century Negro Conventions forecast the ideological implosions and diffusion of the 1970s movements, Reed's point of entry begins and ends with Booker T. Washington (and Du Bois). The genealogy of Black Power, the 1965 Voting Rights Act, black elected leadership, the 1984 Jackson campaign (Reed 1986b, pp. 31, 128), public intellectual peers in the 1990s, black urban regimes (Bennett 2016), and opposition to the 2016 Bernie Sanders campaign are attributed to the bourgeois class leadership strata forged in the uplift assumptions of Washington, Du Bois, and others (Reed 2018, pp. 111–12). One of the consistent stultifying charges made toward black nationalist thought and politics is of the transhistorical nature of many accounts (Robinson 2001, Johnson 2007); it has largely replaced “essentialism” as the slander on black solidarity. Reed both rejects and employs, without qualification, “the black community” in different and sometimes the same writings (1979, pp. 73–74). Where Reed surveys what he terms “vindicationist” scholarship concerning its conceptions of Du Bois's “double consciousness” idea (Reed 1999b, ch. 7), Cruse's penetrating critique of the double-minded device concluded, “It's meaningless. It's an extension of Du Bois's egotistical idealism. In reality he was trying to refashion the whole Negro race in his own image. That is what he was trying to do and it doesn't fit. The double consciousness thing is philosophical romantic crap. It's been handed down as a verity, and it's not. It had nothing to do with those blacks he met when he was at Fisk University. They had no goddamn double consciousness, they knew who they were” (interview in Cobb 2002, p. 297). Cruse's extensive scholarship on the BPM in general is footnoted or all but ignored in Reed's black Marxist politics. Moreover, in *W.E.B. Du Bois and American Political Thought* (Reed 1999b), rival Garvey is mentioned within the first two pages, scarcely to be referenced again in the text. Garvey is evident neither in analyses of contemporary elites (ch. 5) nor in competition with NAACP liberalism and integrationism, nor related to leadership recruitment and organizational competition in Harlem; he is mentioned summarily in an analysis of Du Bois's “cultural nationalism” during the 1920s New Negro era (Reed 1999b, pp. 76, 82) and omitted from discussion of the “Three Confusions of Du Bois” (racial pluralism, pan-Africanism, and socialism) (Reed 1999b, p. 89). Wilson's thesis of neglect, again, directly highlights Garvey's UNIA and suggests black politics knowledge is incomplete with such inattention in political science study.

Reed's discursive and ambulatory approach to contemporary black political development is not without other contradictions. Reed emanates from an Ivy League institution and is a foremost public intellectual, who loudly criticized fellow academic and public intellectuals for speaking, like the “drums” of Booker T. Washington, to an essential, white audience; he uses “the Jug” and “class notes” for analogies (Reed 2018) but harps on Alexander's poorly titled “New Jim Crow” (Reed 2020, pp. 36, 38) in criticism of antiracist claims. Early on, Reed claimed that his move from organizing to the academy was driven by contemplation of questions seeking account for the failure of left-critical black radicalism in the 1960s (Reed 1999a, p. 2). Much of his corpus explains the internal contradictions of the movement's “race” dimensions, but Reed's scholarship deemphasizes racism, or the “aristocracy of American [white] labor” (see Barbalet 1987).

Reed troubles race consciousness and encourages class consciousness, without accounting for racial discrimination in labor or the New Left. Like Rustin (1965) and Holden (1973), Reed is hard on black nationalism and politics and soft on the racism of whites in left radical circles. Untheorized in much of his corpus is recognition of how the major labor mobilizations of the twentieth century, save Debs and the Congress of Industrial Organizations, mobilized antiblack racism among white labor, while in the United States, black racial politics advanced the democratic project for all groups. As Marxist historian Herbert Aptheker notes, “The Negro people have fought like tigers for freedom; and in doing so have advanced the freedom struggle of all other peoples” (quoted in Smith 2008, p. 19). Given the character, rather than the world historical temporality, of racism (Reed 2020, p. 36) in the US political and social systems, Reed’s political science should account for how “black consciousness” under American conditions might move en masse dialectically to class consciousness, without dispensing black racial or cultural solidarities, which he disdains and Aptheker recognizes to be indispensable to multiracial democracy. In the next section, we contend that political science’s and black politics’ neglect of Robinson’s black Marxism contributed to the failure of black political science’s most serious engagement, with Cruse, Marxism, and race, and largely anticipated the picayune interpretations that emerged in the 1980s and 1990s.

Reed’s failure to actually flesh out the politics that black nationalists won in Harlem (Cruse 1967, pp. 41–47), for instance, is a failure to acknowledge how most Negroes, with important exceptions, agreed with Garveyite charges that “the danger of Communism to the Negro, in countries where he forms the minority of the population, is seen in the selfish and vicious attempts of that party or group to use the Negro’s vote and physical numbers in helping to smash and overthrow, by revolution, a system that is injurious to them as white underdogs, the success of which would put their majority group in power, not only as Communists, but as white men” (Garvey 1963, p. 93). The racism of Euro-American labor should be theorized in studies because it, more than black racial mobilization, according to Cruse (1965, p. 3), weakened “the Marxist movement because the theory and practice of revolutionary Marxism in America is based on the assumption that white labor, both organized and unorganized, must form an ‘alliance’ with Negroes for the liberation of both labor and the Negro from capitalist exploitation.” Meanwhile, “the Negro movement’s rise to the ascendancy as a radical force in America completely upsets Marxian theory and forces Marxists to adopt momentary tactics which they do not essentially believe in” (pp. 3–4) or to which they have since adapted.

Despite being the first and only discipline to formally develop and theorize Black Power as an analytical category, 30 years later black politics had produced only one full study centering Black Power as its focus (Smith 1996), approaching those of Van Deburg (1992), Woodard (1999), or Self (2003).<sup>12</sup> Sales (1994, p. 42) observes the dearth of studies, noting, “the nationalist phase of the Civil Rights movement has no studies comparable to those of McAdam and Morris” in sociology.

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<sup>12</sup>This is not to slight the well-cited work of Sales (1994). Sales’ outstanding study of the NOI years and the final 11 months of Malcolm X and the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU), and the revival of interest in Malcolm X in the 1990s, addresses black nationalism and Black Power only partially, providing important insights in relation to the ideological development of Malcolm X’s thought, from black nationalism to pan-Africanist internationalism. Black Power, which was politicized after the death of Malcolm X, is linked to Malcolm X and black nationalism in a single page (pp. 170–71) and is otherwise incidental to the study of “pre Black Power” developments in the final months of Malcolm X (which are the subject of the book’s first four chapters) and the OAAU (the subject of the book’s last five chapters). Malcolm X’s OAAU period represented the “final period in the development of his thinking, the period of Pan-African internationalism,” juxtaposed with black nationalism in the Nation of Islam (Sales 1994, p. 61).

Tate (1993, pp. 150–51) notes, nevertheless, that the “Black Power movement profoundly affected Black politics” and “helped promote the idea of Black political independence during the early electoral phase of Black politics.”<sup>13</sup> Tate adds that “published analyses of Black nationalism, which peaked in the early 1970s only to disappear in the 1980s, have been limited and inconsistent. In addition, research on Black nationalism, perhaps more than other topics in Afro-American studies, has tended to suffer from the methodological and political prejudices of researchers” (p. 155).

Myers (2012) outlines how Africana Studies in the 1980s and 1990s benefited from “the last productive attempts to (re)imagine methodological rules and theory construction in Africana Studies,” enhanced by works of signal (inter)disciplinary achievement by Outlaw (1987), Asante (1980), and Karenga (2002), among others.<sup>14</sup>

No less important in the early 1980s literature were emergent albeit largely neglected treatments of the black radicalism that infused the BPM by political scientists such as Cedric Robinson (1983). Given that Robinson’s monumental if misleadingly titled analysis, *Black Marxism*, is viewed as groundbreaking in other fields (e.g., history and sociology), its relative neglect in mainstream political science is indicative of the persistence of the disciplinary neglect that Wilson first observed in the 1980s. In fact, McClendon (2007, p. 10) argues that “very few works ever come close to *Black Marxism* in having such influence outside of their disciplinary boundaries and professional specialization.” Despite this neglect, the book has surpassed nearly every influential black politics book of the 1980s–1990s in political science.<sup>15</sup> Assessing Robinson’s impact (and engagement with Cruse on blacks and Marxism), McClendon (2007, p. 13) notes:

In my estimation, what makes *Black Marxism* a pivotal text in Black intellectual culture stems from how it has decidedly reigned upon the ideological position of certain key “Marxists” and putative “Marxist-Leninists” in African American Studies and intellectual culture. I tender the strong claim that in Black intellectual history and culture no other anti-Marxist text has won as much favor among the ranks of “Marxists” and “Marxist-Leninists” as Robinson’s *Black Marxism*...

Indeed, “*Black Marxism* was openly anti-Marxist,” according to McClendon (2007, p. 19), “while at the same time it was not manifestly opposed to the tradition forged by Black Marxist intellectuals.... [I]t goes without saying that intense ideological struggles form the backdrop to (and indicate the ideological/political significance of) Robinson’s work upon its arrival in 1983.”

Robinson (1983) theorizes Black Power and the BPM as an expression of the black radical tradition. This tradition in the twentieth century is manifest in the ideology, organization, and political agency of Du Bois, Garvey, C.L.R. James, and Richard Wright. Rather than articulating a black variant of Marxism, as the name implies for many, Robinson’s work is more an exegesis of

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<sup>13</sup>Tate’s influential study of black politics, *From Protest to Politics* (1993), utilized the 1984 and 1988 National Black Election Studies to map the post–Civil Rights terrain. Chapter 7 of the book, “Black Power and Electoral Politics,” provides important empirical insight on voter attitudes concerning Black Power and black nationalism but occupies fewer than 10 pages. Price (2009) drew on Tate’s “The 1996 National Black Election Study: Survey Respondents Report” in her quantitative analysis of black public opinion in the post–Civil Rights era.

<sup>14</sup>Also, it is noteworthy that Karenga, Manning Marable, and Imari Obadele were trained in political science. <sup>15</sup>*Black Marxism* had received 2,820 academic citations as of Jan. 22, 2021, according to Google Scholar. By comparison, Preston et al.’s era-defining *New Black Politics* (1987) received 94 citations, while Walton’s important *Invisible Politics* (1985) received 292. Tate’s *From Protest to Politics* received 1,106. Dawson’s *Behind the Mule* (1995), with 2,267 citations, may be the exception compared to *Black Marxism*, given the relative publication dates. Dawson’s *Black Visions* (2001) received 966 citations, and Cohen’s *Boundaries of Blackness* (1999) received 1,623. Reed’s *The Jesse Jackson Phenomenon* (1986b) received 277 citations, *Stirrings in the Jug* (1999a) received 365 citations, and *Class Notes* (2000) received 147 academic citations.

anti-Marxist black nationalism that seeks to retain black Marxists along with other black radical traditions, without Eurocentric Marxism (where Cruse's criticisms retained a dialectal view of US black political history that otherwise discarded Marxism for black America). Robinson "aimed to broker the reconciliation of Marxists [with] nationalists in the Black liberation movement and particularly with the idea that nationalism would remain the dominant ideological force" (McClendon 2007, p. 19). Robinson sought to trouble and undermine the European roots of formulaic, dogmatic Marxism (class, economic determinacy, and its Hegelian stage systems) and was critical of contemporary black nationalism that tended toward exaggeration and charismatic personality politics.

The study of Black Power and the BPM became more prominent in the 1990s, but as scholars such as Reed played an outsized role in the analyses of these phenomena, a thorough engagement with black nationalism was sacrificed to prevailing integrationist orientations in the broader society, coupled in the academy with neo-Marxist privileging in scholarly interpretations of Black Power and the BPM. Political science does not, for instance, benefit from full-length study of black women nationalists (Taylor 2014) in the BPM akin to Spencer (2016). Indeed, counter- or anti-black nationalism interpretations undermined serious engagement with Black Power and the BPM in political science. Articles and texts proliferated on these subjects without the informed and serious exegeses of Robinson (1983).

A final trend among students of black politics concerning Black Power and the BPM is apparent in the scholarship of Sales (1994) on the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU) and of McCartney (1992), Jones (1998), and Jeffries (2002, 2007, 2010), which has made significant political science contributions to the study of the Black Panther Party (BPP), including its local chapters, and the political thought of Huey P. Newton (Jones 1998, Burke & Jeffries 2016).<sup>16</sup>

Historians fiercely debate the periodization, boundaries, and popular conceptions of the BPM (Theoharis & Woodard 2003, Ogbar 2004, Joseph 2006a, Cha-Jua & Lang 2007, Theoharis 2018). Fenderson's (2013) sharp critique of Joseph's (2001) historical analyses of Black Power studies—a body of scholarship that Joseph is viewed as central in developing—is emblematic of the ongoing contestation among historians and Black Studies scholars on the BPM. New understandings of Black Power and the BPM continue to emerge with fresh insights, broadening our knowledge of Black Power. However, these scholarly impacts arise mainly from Black Studies, history, and sociology, while the black politics literature on these subjects in political science is typically bogged down in polemical retrospectives of committed counter- or anti-black nationalist scholars oriented by a "deficiency paradigm" when explicating Black Power initiatives (Karenga 2002, p. 307). This suffocation leaves political science unprepared to inform or respond meaningfully to contemporary local, national, and international developments, and leaves black politics poised to offer little useful knowledge for the contemporary black movements, having been discredited after being largely ignored.

Black political science developed differently than did other black social sciences in relationship to the fields where they emerged. History and sociology, for instance, had key scholarly contributions such as those of W.E.B. Du Bois, Alain Locke, Carter G. Woodson, and J.A. Rogers long

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<sup>16</sup>Noteworthy also is the critical race theory scholarship noted by Marable (Marable 1995, p. 213) which included "Patricia Williams, Lani Guinier, and Kimberle Crenshaw; the feminist thought of Angela Y. Davis, bell hooks, Michelle Wallace, and Patricia Hill Collins; the historical works of Gerald Horne and Robin D.G. Kelley; the political analysis of Clarence Lusane and James Jennings." But many on this list are ideologically reticent and some hostile to black nationalism.

before the first generation of black political scientists emerged with Bunche and the Howard School.<sup>17</sup> Black political science did not experience the Black Studies transformation in academia in the same way as the humanities, with history the most affected. Among the social sciences, sociology led the way, given its focus on social movements, intergroup processes (including intergroup conflict), and a long history of focusing on inequalities; but political science, with its penchant for viewing its ambit as the study of political elites and political behavior, most commonly viewed in terms of voting, saw little need to change its paradigms, methods, and foci to accommodate what was heretofore seen as the “protest politics” of black America. Instead, black politics as a field of study was established institutionally at HBCUs before Black Studies emerged out of the BPM. Black Power militancy was the entrée for Black or Africana Studies at majority-white institutions in ways that black political science, born in the discipline in the HBCUs, did not find necessary (Alexander-Floyd et al. 2015).

In a summary of developments in black politics, Tate (2014, p. 105) acknowledges “a small but growing number of black political theorists [who] are documenting what represents a serious analytic flaw in black power frameworks, namely the presumption that the cohesive set of black interests that springs forth from the oppression of blacks is, in fact, egalitarian and progressive.” Previously, Cohen (1999) and Harris-Lacewell (2006), whose work is closely aligned with Dawson’s public opinion research corpus, highlighted similar concerns for study, policy, and organizing. More generally, Walton (1971, p. xxv) argued that “Black [people] have been alienated not only from the realities, rewards, and benefits of the American political system, but from the governing categories and presuppositions of political science as well.” To be sure, though epistemologically Black Power provided the baseline for most of the scholarship produced in black politics at the time, the focus on black radicalism, Black Power, the BPM, and black nationalism since the late 1960s and early 1970s, for many of those who experienced the BPM firsthand, were resistant to the “teaching of a Black-liberation philosophy that would weaken the discipline’s focus on the existing system” (Alexander-Floyd et al. 2015, p. 320). After initially seeking common ground with political science, scholars of black politics set out upon a separate path through black political science (McCormick 2012). Historians and sociologists of Black Power observed and participated in the factional sorting at a much earlier stage, largely because Black Power was inseparable from Black Studies in its shared origins and foundations in the BPM as compared to other initiatives emerging in disciplines dominated by whites. Among these shared origins in the BPM were its precursors tracing back to the Harlem Renaissance, where the contentious Marxist–black nationalist battle had roots.<sup>18</sup> The politics of the BPM and understanding of Black Power and black nationalism as intellectual concepts apart from the movement (or the genealogy of related concepts outside of black experiences) are powerfully shaped by the political predilections, intellectual machinations, institutional supports, and predispositions of scholars and analysts in what is now a cottage industry in the study of Black Power (Fenderson 2013).

Black politics should have been integral to political science, and the politics of the BPM a natural subject of study. Yet, an inordinate number of published works on black politics tend to be poorly grounded in the history of the BPM and limited in their understanding of black nationalism in the United States. Significantly, the leading historian of Black Power studies, Peniel Joseph, in a

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<sup>17</sup>It was during the Black Power period that African American Studies was formally introduced to the university, and that period was also when Du Bois, Woodson, and others took on greater importance to militants (Colon 1984); on the Howard School, see Henry (1999).

<sup>18</sup>This contention was prevalent in the Atlanta University Department of Political Science (see Reed 2002, Jones 2014).

lengthy note (2006b, pp. 288–89, fn 70), charges black political scientists Adolph Reed, Jr., Cedric Johnson, Dean Robinson, and Jerry G. Watts with promoting Black Power research that “plumbs the depth of what might be called an ‘archeology of failure’” scholarship that is indeed “hampered by their quest to find out why the movement failed, rather than search for the way in which Black Power unfolded historically” and politically.<sup>19</sup> Less common among political scientists are studies of the BPM and its ideologies in their own right (e.g., McCartney 1992, Henderson 2019). In contrast to these intellectually and ideologically biased and shortsighted political analyses, one is reminded of Walters’ (1973) exegesis of Black Power even as he functioned at the vortex of the ideological sectarianism prevalent throughout the BPM, wherein he provided informed and timely analyses of black nationalism.<sup>20</sup> Further, one might consider, only recently has Harold Cruse’s corpus of writing and organizing, which was so influential among BPM activists and observers, overcome being minimized, dismissed, or ignored in black politics scholarship (Cruse 1962; 1965; 1967; 1968; 1971a,b,c).

Walton et al. (1995) delineated a “dual tradition” in political science scholarship on race across a century of publications in two of the discipline’s flagship journals (the *American Political Science Review* and *Political Science Quarterly*). One tradition, described as the African American politics (AAP) paradigm, was oriented toward frames of black empowerment and cultural particularity, such as Black Power ideologies; the other, the race relations politics (RRP) paradigm, focused more on comparative interracial socioeconomic dynamics. In a subsequent study, McClerking & Block (2016) confirmed their earlier findings. Adding the *Journal of Politics* to their study, the authors write that “the dialogues taking place in mainstream journals typically fit Walton’s RRP (rather than AAP) paradigm” (McClerking & Block 2016, p. 2). That is, even as the subject of black politics became more visible in political science journals, the subject of Black Power or an emphasis on black empowerment became less prevalent in that published research.

Cruse’s impact on black social theory, the BPM, and black nationalist and Marxist intellectual history, in particular, is readily acknowledged in Black Studies (Semmes 1995). In contrast, political science research on BPM organizations, where it examines Cruse’s thought and influence on Black Power at all (Smith 1996, Taylor 2014, Henderson 2019), often does so ham-fistedly. Johnson’s *Revolutionaries to Race Leaders: Black Power and the Making of African American Politics* (2007) exemplifies the latter. In this book, Johnson (2007, p. xxvi), a committed Marxist and anti-black nationalist student of Black Power in the mode of Reed, set as his purpose to “expose certain internal contradictions of Black Power radicalism. . .and how Black Power politics was shaped by prevailing discourses on power, race/ethnicity, and governance, and, in turn, how African American activists, intellectuals, artists, and politicians altered the American political landscape.” Throughout the book, which focuses on BPM organizations, leaders, and ideologies prevalent from the early 1970s through the 1990s, Johnson (2007, p. 45) commits to a polemical approach “to illuminate the ‘pitfalls of nationalist consciousness’ as manifested in Black Power politics.”

Johnson adopts a “good Sixties/bad Sixties” frame of reference (Joseph 2006a, p. 4) with Cruse’s materialist class critiques in the former and his black nationalism at the heart of the latter. Johnson interprets through a divarication of Cruse’s body of thought (1962, 1965, 1967, 1968), a prism yielding a “good Cruse/bad Cruse” binary as the inlet for his critiques of black nationalism, and the case for labor-based black radicalism and socialism. Johnson envisions a good Cruse who critically theorized pre–World War II class stratifications, ideological formulations of the leadership class, cultural revolution, Old Left black politics, and internal colonization while retaining “residual

<sup>19</sup>For Joseph’s comments, see also Johnson (2007, p. 238, n 42).

<sup>20</sup>See Madhubuti (1974); for a detailed analysis of the Madhubuti and Baraka debates, see Henderson (2019).

Marxist sensibilities” (Johnson 2007, p. 5). Despite the manner in which 1970s black nationalist discourses utilized Cruse’s criticisms of Communist Party USA Marxist dogma and theoretical shortsightedness concerning racial politics in the United States, Johnson (2007, p. 5) recovers a Cruse who

remained engaged with the Marxist tradition in meaningful ways. His intellectual style was no doubt influenced by Karl Marx’s insistence on “ruthless criticism of everything existing”. . . . [D]espite his anticommunism, the ghost of Cruse’s Marxist past reemerges in both his approach to the study of American life and culture and, perhaps more importantly, in his incomplete attempts to think through the possibility of developing a transformative left politics unique to American soil.

Johnson thus highlights “Cruse’s most delicious insights” (2007, p. 5) and bemoans the lost “promise of Cruse’s social criticisms” that are undermined by the “conservative turn” from Marxism to black nationalism and cultural revolution. Bad Cruse made a tragic turn to ethnic pluralism from the Marxism of *Rebellion or Revolution?* (which was actually written first), and “even more troubling, Cruse’s articulation of cultural nationalist politics entailed a departure from consistent, substantive critique of Cold War American social order and black politics” (Johnson 2007, p. 29). If the author of *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* (1967) is bad Cruse due to its cultural nationalist analytical frame and its anti-Marxism polemics, organization, and historical analysis, then Johnson attributes *Rebellion or Revolution?*, the Cruse book for which Johnson wrote the foreword for its publishers, to good Cruse (1968), for highlighting the class and interethnic tensions in black racial politics in the 1960s. Johnson notes how his “initial infatuation” with *Crisis* gave way to a more mature reading that revealed “how commonsensical his arguments had become. . . in many respects *Rebellion or Revolution?* is Harold Cruse’s finest work” [Johnson 2009 (1968), p. 2]. Johnson celebrates the Cruse who “acknowledges the presence of distinctive class interests among the black population” and rejects the Cruse who “embraces a political strategy that negates those differences” in the same sentence (p. 5).

Cruse is consistent and emphatic in his rejection of Marxism as it pertains to black American movements and politics, and he is unrelenting in criticisms of the performative excesses of the black nationalists and others, which he discourages at every turn (Cruse 1968, pp. 130–32). His critiques in “Marxism and the Negro” (Cruse 1965) suggest that the Negro movement far exceeded the Marxist movement and Communist Party in social impact on behalf of US blacks. American communism was patently “conservative, pro-capitalist and strongly anti-Negro. . . . [T]he fact that white labor in America today is clearly unsympathetic to the ‘emancipation’ of either Negro workers, or the ‘petite bourgeois’ Negroes, or the ‘intellectuals,’ as the Marxists are fond of citing, poses, as was said, a serious dilemma for the revolutionary Marxists” (Cruse 1965, pp. 3–4).

Johnson’s (2007, p. 133) use of labor theory to analyze Black Power offers important insights concerning neglected pre–Civil Rights era black popular left formulations among leading intellectuals, farmers, skilled laborers, artisans, welfare recipients, renters, students, activists, and professionals. *From Revolutionaries to Race Leaders* (Johnson 2007) also recovers the manner in which, over time, a broad-based black left anti-capitalism and anti-imperialism orientation succumbed to the narrowing of agendas around race solidarity and perceived racial interests, earlier in Civil Rights and more in Black Power, led by the nationalists. Johnson’s methodological approach relies heavily, nevertheless, on citing confirmatory examples of his thesis rather than engaging potentially disconfirming ones. For instance, Johnson tends to downplay the Black Panther Party (BPP) of Oakland, which functioned with a very different set of ideological and migration factors than other cities and regions (Cruse 1971a,b,c; Self 2003), and Johnson’s study might find that its premises require different conclusions regarding black radicalism if the focus were not “revolutionaries to

race leaders” but “race leaders to revolutionaries” in Black Power, as the BPP sought to be under Huey P. Newton.

Moreover, the cases drawn on may not be sufficiently generalizable to support the book’s wholesale condemnation of black nationalism and Black Power. Black Power’s international appeal in countries including South Africa, India, Israel, New Zealand, Australia, and England, and its wide appeal across the US black population, weaken Johnson’s strained treatment of key BPM organizations as bordering on being “race only” organizations. It appears that if it were separable, Johnson would retain Black Power’s radical impetus (2007, pp. xxii–xxiv) without its black nationalism. Johnson resorts to caricaturing black nationalism and holding it accountable, wholly or partly, for each development in the internal collapse of the BPM.

Cruse wrote several articles planned for a book, but instead serialized in *Black World* in three parts (1971a,b,c) as “Black and White: Outlines of the Next Stage,” in which he employs a “theory of black cities” that he thought could unravel the rivaling tendencies in the emergent Black Power 1970s. This framework theorizes the ideological and regional/migration implications of the cultural revolution not only for Black Studies as an “academic front” (Semmes 1995, pp. 84–89) but also for the BPM leaders in each US city with a significant black population or community. Spillers’ (1994, p. 70) review of Cruse noted in his work a concern “for the plight of the American city and its implications for the social landscape [which] must be examined as one of the primary structural givens to which social formations variously respond.” In “Black and White,” which echoed key arguments in *Crisis* (1967), Cruse relates Black Power to vital antecedent developments that would benefit it but are either omitted or untheorized in Johnson’s (2007) analysis. Cruse does so as part of a broader thesis on black political development, emphasizing the relevant transformative focus of each historical phase, working chronologically from a political phase during Reconstruction to an economic phase during the Booker T. Washington era (1885–1915) to a cultural phase during the Harlem Renaissance. These phases resulted from several migrations of black Southerners between the Civil War and World War II, suggesting for Cruse that black migration/urbanization should be a central focus of Black Studies programs and research. Cruse insists, “All of these historical facts, and more, raised many issues during the 1920s that were unresolved; and raised more questions than were ever answered by the historians, economists, and political scientists. *These questions are still, in 1971, waiting in the wings of passing time to be revived and answered*” (1971c, p. 11; emphasis in original). According to Semmes (1995, p. 88), “Cruse hypothesized that future social movements would be urban based,” which suggested in turn that “a theory of cities was required. He also stressed that each Black population in a given city had a peculiar history that needed to be studied. Thus, the urban socialization experiences of Blacks need to be differentiated from one another in order to discern their disparities and similarities and potential for African American development.”

Before any national interpretation of post–World War II black politics can be proffered, black politics must be understood as foremost a local phenomenon, derived from the activities, relationships, and ingredients of cities where significant populations settled following migrations. Each city, county, and state across US regions harbors its peculiar local black experience, usually with a particular relationship to the dominant white cultural, economic, legal, and political forces. The failure of the BPM was the failure of each city’s movement leaders to stay in their respective organizational, philosophical, and programmatic lanes instead of warring ideologically among themselves, or with adversaries and ostensible allies over orthodoxies and leadership prerogatives. Efforts to assume a vanguard national leadership detracted from building both empirically and theoretically on each particular urban circumstance. The pursuit of the siren song for national black organization, or, even less fruitful, internationalization of the movement struggle, contributed to the confusion of supporters, the enervation of organizations, the overextension

of limited resources, and the collapse of the movements into militant personality performances. Cruse (1971c, p. 14) further explains, “Because the 1960s generation was intellectually severed from these earlier events, they did not view these processes as vitally necessary background facts to their condition. Hence, they were not able to adequately deal with the Black urban condition as they found it. This deficiency created severe difficulties which the Black movements of the 1960s could not overcome.” At bottom, Cruse’s theory of cities explained how the BPM’s “lack of an informed historical perspective on the origins and developments of Black urban issues negated all of the feverish attempts to establish a viable ‘theory and practice’ of social action grounded in Black urban realities” (p. 14).<sup>21</sup>

The distancing of Cruse, outside of Black Studies, is bound up in the academic rejection of black nationalism, as historian Jelani Cobb notes. The main critics of Cruse emerged in the academy on the academic left (Cobb 2002, p. xvii). Though some, as we have noted, have sought to retain Cruse’s early Marxism, Cobb holds that Cruse’s black nationalism left him “virtually alone among his generation of intellectuals in that he created an agenda and provided an intellectual blueprint for a movement—in this instance, the Black Power project of the 1970s” (Cobb 2002, p. xviii). Between Malcolm X in the 1960s and Louis Farrakhan in the 1980s and 1990s, Cobb insists, “Black nationalist thought had fallen into disfavor in an era where race is routinely dismissed as a ‘social construct.’ But for most African Americans society is a *racial* construct” (p. xvii; emphasis in original).

All told, the first two decades of the twenty-first century witnessed a flourishing of interest in BPM ideologies in black political science, with more journal and book-length studies of black nationalism than in any previous period (Robinson 2001; Brown & Shaw 2002; Davis & Brown 2002; Jeffries 2002; Alexander-Floyd 2007; Price 2009; Valls 2010; Taylor 2009, 2014; Davenport 2015; Henderson 2019). For example, Davenport’s (2015) study of the revolutionary black nationalist Republic of New Afrika (RNA) between 1968 and 1973 assesses the role of internal factionalism and external repression in the organization’s demobilization. Davenport’s research is exemplary political science scholarship on the BPM insofar as he generalizes from this case study of a prominent BPM organization to the broader social movement organization literature.<sup>22</sup>

Intersectional approaches to Black Power and critiques of the BPM, represented in the work of Alexander-Floyd (2007), deconstruct the patriarchal impacts of the excesses of male Black Power radicalism and black nationalism. Her study critiques an informal interracial solidarity among US black and white male nationalists in the 1990s that congealed on welfare policy and the restoration of masculinist prerogatives in US race and gender politics. Alexander-Floyd’s critical but recent role in building a line of black feminist intersectional scholarship demonstrates that this emergent black feminist political science had to resort to sociology and Black Studies—especially the works of Joyce Ladner, Fran Beale, Patricia Hill Collins, bell hooks, and Kimberle Crenshaw—in order

<sup>21</sup>Elsewhere, Cruse makes the same criticism as it related to Herbert Aptheker and other US-based Marxists. Cruse (1968, pp. 239–42) notes that “the separation of Black generations had effectively severed the 1960s from the migratory events of 1910, 1920, 1930, 1940, and 1950.”

<sup>22</sup>Rarely are BPM organizations utilized as case studies to inform a broader literature in political science in this way. Davenport’s (2015) analysis of this Black Power social movement organization is based on primary and secondary source material, interviews with RNA members and supporters, files of intelligence and law enforcement entities, and documents associated with the COINTELPRO of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Davenport relies heavily on state surveillance accounts and theorizes how RNA members, including cofounder and political scientist Imari Obadele (Richard Henry) anticipated and responded to political repression over a five-year period. Davenport’s full study of the RNA contributes to political science a study of a nationalist Black Power organization similar to Brown’s (2003) *Fighting for US: Maulana Karenga, The US Organization, and Black Cultural Nationalism*.

to engage theoretical studies of the BPM, black nationalism, and feminism. Intersectional scholarship emerged in political science later, not only as a black feminist social science critique of the field, but also as an appendage to the left-critical anti-black nationalist discourse, typified in the work of Reed (1986a), which rejects all identity politics. The interracial unity that has eluded Reed, Johnson, and labor radicalism for the past half century was detected by Alexander-Floyd (2007) in a previously underexamined area of study concerning black and white US men in the 1990s. Alexander-Floyd found a unity, though without formal processes or institutionalization, that was forged in an interracial solidarity of patriarchy and wounded masculinity seeking the restoration of real or imagined manly status. The Christian Promise Keepers and Million Man Marchers of the mid-1990s shared in common a moral sensibility related to the restoration of the leadership of men in families and society. Alexander-Floyd's analysis was prescient to developments in the Trump "Make America Great Again" agenda, with which old-line nationalists like football legend Jim Brown and the younger rapper and actor Ice Cube publicly associated themselves. But the current era of salient white reaction in US politics also forged strong voter opposition among black men and women alike. We do not have the benefit of empirical studies of black nationalism, black women, and feminism but note the findings of Spence et al. (2005) concerning gender and black nationalism as a starting point below.

*The Revolution Will Not Be Theorized* (Henderson 2019) provides a comprehensive study of the key BPM organizations covered by other students (Allen 1990, Smith 1996, Reed 1999a, Johnson 2007) and answers many of the explicitly anti-black nationalist studies even as it shares with them, to a point, a critical interpretation of many of the BPM organizations and the fateful courses taken by different factions of BPM conventioners in the 1970s and 1980s [see also Davies (2017) for a study of Black Power which echoes the earlier works that emphasize Black Power and black nationalist absorption and decline]. Henderson, similar to Smith (1996), however, theorizes deeper development for the US black cultural nationalist project after the 1970s conventions, rather than accepting Democratic Party alignment, as did many of the emergent BPM cadres. Henderson (2019) applies the concept "civilizationism" to a critical reading of Malcolm X's and key Black Power militants' views of the relationship of black Americans to African revolution, history, and culture, based on an inversion of Wilson Moses's (1978, 1989, 1993, 1996) studies of black nationalism and black religious and cultural formulations, in which nineteenth-century Christian black nationalists (e.g., Blyden, Crummell, Delany, and Garvey) fixated on African elevation, uplift, and enlightenment, through Christian proselytization, development, and trade (Taylor 2014). Henderson's (2019) thesis argues that Black Power revolutionists employed "reverse civilizationism," which was then a view of politics derived from Malcolm X's perspective that slavery and race oppression had totalizing impacts on black life, culture, and esteem and required a pan-African consciousness to elevate black Americans in the 1960s. Black Power militants missed the revolutionary theory implied in the works of W.E.B. Du Bois and Alain Locke in their search for revolutionary antecedents and theories abroad, which proved of little utility for theorizing and negotiating postwar American conditions.

Much of the quantitative work on the BPM and black nationalism in black politics is based on measures of related concepts, including black nationalism itself, that lack construct validity. Operationalizations of black nationalism, the sine qua non of the BPM, are often ahistorical and are rarely logically exhaustive, conceptually comparable, or mutually exclusive—hindering their use in delineating black nationalism across time and space or in differentiating black nationalism from other ideologies, including its intellectual counterpoise, black integrationism (Henderson 2004) and the differences between statist and nonstatist nationalisms. Most of this research focuses on the practices and attitudes deemed nationalistic in political science survey research that was not designed to capture those characteristics essential for identifying black nationalism, such

as the beliefs that (a) African Americans constitute a nation and (b) this nation has the right to determine its political destiny as an autonomous entity in a broader political system, as an independent sovereign entity distinct from the United States, as a citizenry in a multiracial democracy, or questions related to black religiosity (Taylor 2014).

Brown & Shaw (2002, p. 31), for instance, reject the position that black nationalism “is a singular, uniform set of beliefs,” and their study differentiates “community nationalism” from “separatist nationalism”; the former presumably “advances strong black community control and autonomy within the American political system, while separatist nationalism touts national sovereignty and an actual or symbolic secession from white America” (p. 23). For them, the “very important difference between community and separatist nationalism is that community nationalism seeks black self-determination within existing social and political arrangements, whereas separatist nationalism seeks autonomy external to these very arrangements” (p. 31). Two of the questions relate directly to black nationalism (the last two), and none of them differentiate between black nationalism and black integrationism, or even between American liberalism and conservatism of the era (i.e., proponents of each of these perspectives might agree on most if not all of the remaining six questions, and arguably all eight questions).<sup>23</sup> Employing this instrument, their findings demonstrate that different black subgroups, based on class, gender, and educational attainment, gravitate toward one dimension of black nationalism or the other. Among some of its counterintuitive results, the study finds that “[m]embership in a black organization has a negative effect upon the support of separatist nationalism,” which “suggests that respondents who are members of these organizations are firm adherents of the principles of community nationalism rather than separatist nationalism” (Brown & Shaw 2002, p. 35). Actually, this finding suggests that respondents who are members of these organizations are opposed to separatist nationalism.

After correctly noting that data and methodological constraints prevent them from explaining why they found that “support for community nationalism is gender-neutral” though “black men more readily endorse separatist nationalism than do black women,” Brown & Shaw (2002, p. 40) nevertheless conjecture that future research “may reveal that black women are equally attracted to community nationalist strategies because they conceive of them as more reasonable and more open to embracing a broader agenda—[opposing] racism, poverty, and sexism—than do separatism and its primary emphasis upon race. For now, we simply but unambiguously conclude that when it comes to differing shades of Black Nationalism, *gender matters*” (emphasis in original). Such a powerful endorsement regarding a key empirical finding ignores the earlier qualification—and one should especially appreciate the impact of its telephone sampling method on biasing against poorer respondents who may have been disproportionately female.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, the unambiguous conclusion assumes that gender would affect black nationalism through the supposed limiting impact of a focus on race rather than gender and class among black women as opposed to black nationalists of either gender. But the latter is weakened by the finding of a significant positive relationship between female gender and the outcome “Believes whites want to keep blacks down” in the regression analyses (see Brown & Shaw 2002, table 3). That is, it appears that black women are as strongly concerned about race, even controlling for both types of nationalism in the same

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<sup>23</sup>Brown & Shaw’s (2002) operationalizations are an improvement over those of Gurin et al.’s (1989) use of the 1984 NBES; see also Taylor 1999 for use of the NBES studies and black nationalism.

<sup>24</sup>Brown & Shaw’s (2002) telephone sample likely skews against responses of poor blacks, which the authors expect to skew toward separatist nationalism, thus potentially systematically biasing their results. The authors “hypothesize an inverse relationship between class status and support for black separatism because this dimension most likely appeals to lower income blacks” (Brown & Shaw 2002, p. 28).

regression model, and it is white racial oppression, in particular, that they are concerned with, not antipathy for whites in general, according to Brown and Shaw's findings.

While Brown & Shaw (2002) are nuanced in their appreciation of the historical valences in black nationalism, Davis & Brown's (2002) study demonstrates what may only be characterized as anti-black nationalist black nationalism scholarship, given their apparent unawareness of basic aspects of black nationalism. Their study is perplexed by the core tenet, "a nation within a nation" (Woodard 1999). I address the serious conceptual problems of this study elsewhere (Taylor 2014) and summarize them here. Davis & Brown (2002) contest Brown & Shaw (2002), insisting on the "unidimensionality" of black nationalism, mainly as black separatism.<sup>25</sup> These authors state that "the basic tenets of black nationalism" are static and "have endured over time," including "self-determination, racial intolerance, separatism, self-sufficiency, black pride, and the quest for a separate nation." The literature cited to establish the "antipathies" of black nationalism, such as anti-Semitism, is not grounded in studies of the United States but based almost exclusively on state "nationalisms from above" in the hands of oppressive state actors against minority solidarities. To suggest "racial intolerance" as a "basic tenet" of black nationalism as these authors do is to operate in an alternative intellectual universe. It eradicates black nationalism from its origins in the late eighteenth century as an autonomous, indigenous, American, black ideological development apart from any other form of nationalism (see Moses 1978, 1996; Henderson 2019). The lack of grounding in the literature on black nationalism is also evident in the bibliography, which is missing any reference to respected scholars of black nationalism such as Moses, Stuckey, Bracey et al., V.P. Franklin, Du Bois, Smith, Pinkney, Walton, or Walters. Their ahistorical and antitheoretical approach to black nationalism fatally corrupts their analysis.

That a work so distant from the literature on its key subject of interest would be published in the second leading journal in the political science discipline (i.e., the *American Journal of Political Science*) is indicative of the intellectual atrophy of the field with respect to the study of black nationalism—again, a manifestation of Wilson's (1985) observation nearly two decades later. The analyses of Davis & Brown (2002) reflect such a fundamental misunderstanding of black nationalism that little else from this study can be treated as dispositive of the phenomenon understood historically and in contemporary times as black nationalism. The authors seem more interested in contorting the data to conform to factor loadings on concepts that have little theoretical foundation in the historical literature on the components of black nationalism than in actually examining the presence of the ideology among black Americans. Their data do not allow them to plumb the depths of black nationalism in the United States; in fact, the survey itself does not provide questions that allow us to determine advocacy of black nationalism among the limited and skewed sample of respondents in the first place. Not surprisingly, for all their claims of the superiority of their analyses over Brown & Shaw's (2002), the adjusted  $R^2$ s from their regression analyses are consistently lower than Brown and Shaw's, indicating that they are accounting for much less of the variance of the outcome in support for their measure of black nationalism (Davis & Brown 2002, p. 246, table 2: adjusted  $R^2 = 0.077$ ,  $n = 773$ ).

In a subsequent quantitative analysis of the correlates of black nationalism, Spence et al. (2005) largely corroborate Brown & Shaw's (2002) finding that black nationalism is multidimensional and not monolithic. The adjusted  $R^2$ s of Spence and colleagues' generally comparable regression

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<sup>25</sup>Davis & Brown (2002, p. 243) also use the 1993 National Black Politics Study. They refer to all ten items on that survey as "black nationalist items" (p. 244). They replace "blacks form a nation within a nation" with "blacks should participate in black organizations," "black males should attend all black schools," and "black children should study an African language."

analyses are twice those of Brown & Shaw (2002) and Davis & Brown (2002). Spence et al. (2005) make the obvious point—seemingly lost on Davis and Brown—that black nationalism is opposed to white racism/white supremacy rather than embracing a general intolerance of white people. The privileging of whiteness in the analyses of Davis and Brown, in particular, should place their study outside the bounds of serious consideration as a study of black nationalism in US politics. Spence et al. (2005, p. 93) similarly reject the premise of Robinson’s (2001) brief study of black nationalism, which likewise views black nationalism as a mimetic reproduction of white nationalism.<sup>26</sup> This 135-page volume published by Cambridge University Press—one of the most prestigious publishers in political science—is notable for its truncated treatment of black intellectual history, notwithstanding a blurb on the book from fellow Cambridge author and notable historian of black nationalism Wilson Moses, who notes correctly a critique by Robinson of Stuckey’s (1987) excision of Marcus Garvey from his classic treatment of black nationalism, *Slave Culture*. More tellingly, Robinson misreads Cruse’s (1967, 1968) focus on the American nature of the African American predicament by concluding “that black politics—even black nationalist politics—tends to draw upon intellectual and political currents in American society and build upon them to advance the cause of African Americans.” For Robinson (2001, p. 88), “the reason is simple: from early in the history of the United States, Afro-Americans have been embedded in the same matrices of thought, culture, society, and politics as white Americans.” Moses challenges such an interpretation of black nationalism directly, as Henderson (2019, pp. 70–71) explains:

[W]hile Moses (1978, p. 10) asserts that black nationalism “assumes the shape of its container and undergoes transformations in accordance with changing fashions in the white world,” he points out that black nationalism is “one of the earliest expressions of nationalism” and “while it originated in unison with the American and French Revolutions, it was not an imitation of North American or European nationalism” (Moses 1996, p. 6). He is emphatic that the attempts of black nationalists to “construct a theory of history, a philosophy of religion, and an ideology of nationalism must not be misconstrued as unimaginative imitations of what white intellectuals were doing” (Moses 1989, p. 9).

Such arguments belie the assertions of critics of black nationalism such as Robinson (2001) and Glaude (2002), who maintain that black nationalism is essentially conservative and an imitation of white nationalism, or even white racism. This is done often through counter or antinationalist and ahistorical research projects that rest on parochial and stultifying conceptions of black nationalism and liberal ransacking of black political history—often through black Protestant frames of reference in the cases of Eddie Glaude and Cornel West. Similarly, in their analyses, Spence et al. (2005) find neither black xenophobia dominant in black nationalism nor a pattern of black nationalism reflecting the white nationalism of its various salient periods.

## THE REJECTED STRAIN OF THE “REJECTED STRAIN”

Taylor’s *Black Nationalism in the United States: From Malcolm X to Barack Obama* (2014) directly and extensively responds to Robinson’s thesis. Whereas Robinson’s (2001, p. 79) study was based largely on the literary black nationalist writings of selected, mostly Northern, black nationalist elites interpreted by Moses (1978, 1996), Taylor’s relies more on Stuckey’s (1972, 1987) studies of black nationalism in mostly Southern peasant and slave communities. Taylor (2014) contends that black religion is the single most powerful aspect of black nationalism across its various dimensions.

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<sup>26</sup>Robinson’s study was cited approvingly by Reed (1999a, p. 229, n 22) even before its publication and later by Johnson (2007) and Alexander-Floyd (2007). Robinson (2001) informs their view of black nationalism as derivative of and dependent on white nationalism.

Black nationalist religious elites competed for organizational and political leadership influence in black politics well after the Civil Rights and Black Power era (Taylor 2001).

Most quantitative and qualitative studies of black nationalism in political science neglect its religious dimensions and social movement political history. The religious influence of Rev. King and Malcolm X on Black Power, as well as the cult/sect origins of black nationalism in Garveyism and the NOI, are often granted passing reference but are not the subject of systematic study in black politics, apart from Walton's (1971) study of King. Henderson is an important exception. Secular or Marxist-oriented Black Power militants, themselves, underestimated the religious implication of their activism (Henderson 2019). The BPP's Son of Man Temple is seldom theorized in Black Power studies. It was formed in 1973 as one of the "survival pending revolution" programs, in order to reconnect with the black community after what Newton described as the Panthers' "defection of the black community" following brutal verbal attacks on the Bay Area's black churches (Morrison 2009, pp. 44–74). While "the Black Panther Party believed it was the heir to Malcolm, and the Muslim minister did influence several important matters" (Alkebulan 2007, p. 26), the "Panthers were aware of Nat Turner and Denmark Vesey as slave rebels but were completely unfamiliar with their Christian background" (p. 123). The Panthers established the breakfast programs in an Oakland church where its pastor, Father Earl Neal, counseled Newton during his 1968 murder trial and was attacked by Oakland police. The Panthers intended Son of Man Temple to be an example of how a church should be involved in the community. The temple was a nondenominational place of worship. It also sponsored the party's survival programs and served as a community forum for lecturers.

Black Power is inexplicable without taking seriously religion as an independent variable in relationship to it, though study of Black Power cannot be reduced to black religiosity. Surveying black nationalism's religious dimensions may reveal more about Black Power's trajectory, nature, and evolution as a social and political force in black American life, as well as the BPM (Ogbar 2004, Taylor 2014). Henderson (2019) recognizes the transformation in slave religion and the "incipient proletarianization" afforded through the mechanism of slave hiring and exchange as catalytic to the cultural revolution that motivated the political revolution of the general strike which Du Bois theorized in *Black Reconstruction* (1935). Slave culture culminated in the slave revolution of the Civil War that overthrew chattel slavery in the United States. Henderson argues that this pattern of cultural revolution stimulated political revolution and was a theoretical compass available to BPM revolutionists had they sought to incorporate American antecedents in their studies seeking appropriate revolutionary theory, strategies, and programs. Relatedly, at the root of cultural revolution, in the view of Cruse (1971a), was the "spiritual culture" of blacks, which harbored the revolutionary potentials of Black Power but was lost in externalities in cities where Black Power was mobilized.

In the final passage of Walton's (1971, p. 116) political biography of Rev. King is the insistence that "since man is both a political and a religious animal—and no less so when he makes of politics a religion—neither discipline can by itself claim to illuminate fully all of what we may call political behavior. Both are needed." Black Power's religious dimensions are often lost in academic study of Black Power in political science. Its religious sects and subcultures make up the rejected strain of the "rejected strain" [Draper 2004 (1957), pp. 317–18] that may best clarify endogenous cultural and political knowledge (even the imposition of Louis Farrakhan in the NOI), which, in turn, could better inform our understanding of the myriad dimensions of Black Power. Standard measures of black nationalism in black politics recognize its complexities but often rely on simple and single-minded responses to exceptionally coarse-grained survey questions that often were not intended to—and are unlikely to—capture the ideology their authors now deign to measure: black nationalism, the sine qua non of the BPM.

## CONCLUSION

Cruse (1967, p. 565) warned that the “Black Power slogans reveal the depth of unpreparedness and the lack of knowledge that go along with the eagerness of the new black generation of spokesmen. The farther the Negro gets from his historical antecedents in time, the more tenuous become his conceptual ties, the emptier his social conceptions, the more superficial his visions.” Cruse was urging an understanding of Black Power while recognizing how it was misunderstood by many of its participants, advocates, critics, and academics alike. He considered this the major crisis of the Black Power generation, insufficiently understanding its historical antecedents. In this article, I returned to an essay published 35 years ago (Wilson 1985), which admonished political scientists that we were failing in comparison to other social sciences and the humanities in considering the political phenomena that relate to black life in the United States. My review of some of the prominent literature and scholarship that examine the politics of the BPM reveals that Wilson’s critique is just as salient today. What was stifling in Wilson’s time was the unwillingness of political science, as a discipline, to engage with black politics. What is stifling in the present is the unwillingness of black politics, as a subfield of political science, to engage with black nationalism as a multidimensional, multifaceted, dynamic ideology, which has been a potent force in real-world black politics.

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