

“I am Sapelo”: Racialized uneven development and land politics within the Gullah Geechee Corridor

EPE: Nature and Space

0(0) 1–25

© The Author(s) 2021

Article reuse guidelines:

sagepub.com/journals-permissions

DOI: 10.1177/2514848620987366

journals.sagepub.com/home/ene**Dean Hardy** 

University of South Carolina System, USA

Nik Heynen

University of Georgia, USA

Abstract

The history of land struggles in the United States demonstrates how ongoing patterns of uneven development depend upon and codify the legacies of white supremacy. In this article, we show how the histories of white supremacy continue to be embedded and institutionalized into contemporary land and property politics through the processes of racialized uneven development using the case of Sapelo Island, Georgia. We trace the history of property relations on Sapelo over four periods (covering 1802–2020) to reveal how Black, Saltwater Geechee descendants' presence on the island has persisted despite manifold attempts to manipulate, control, and dispossess families of their land. We re-interpret Sapelo's history through the lens of abolition ecology to articulate how the struggle for life through land consistently runs up against state-sanctioned racial violence, which perpetuates and institutionalizes systemic racialized uneven development. We argue that the “racial state” is facilitating the dispossession of Geechee cultural heritage, which lies in having access to and ownership of the land and requires new political imaginaries to combat the persistence of these tactics.

Keywords

dispossession, gentrification, Gullah Geechee, racialized uneven development, abolition ecology

Corresponding author:

Dean Hardy, University of South Carolina System, 701 Sumter, St Columbia, SC 29208-0001, USA.

Email: dhardy@seoe.sc.edu

In her essay, “I am Sapelo,” Cornelia Walker Bailey began,

I am here to represent Sapelo Island, a little hammock on the Georgia Coast. *It's a dying form of life we have here.* In some ways I relish the new way while at the same time I feel such a heavy loss for the vanishing of the old ways. (n.d.; emphasis added)

The dying she referred to, and often talked about when she was living, was the way that Saltwater Geechee descendants¹ have continued to experience “cultural genocide” (e.g., Bynum, 2013a) since their arrival in the late 18th century predominantly from West Africa via the Caribbean (see Bailey, 2001; Cooper, 2017; Crook, 2007; Gomez, 1994). Such “dying” is based firmly in the ways racialized property relations have produced a history of property dispossession across the U.S. South (see Kahrl, 2012), beginning with a failed promise of land by the United States government in 1865 (see Cimbala, 1989). The long record of racialized land struggles across U.S. history demonstrates how ongoing patterns and processes of uneven development lock-in the legacies of white supremacy, often into path-dependent trajectories.

While geographers have long been interested in the ways uneven development operates as a socio-spatial process (see Peck and Tickell, 1992; Smith, 2008), there has been considerably less attention given to the ways that race has been central to processes of uneven development (Darden, 2010; Heynen, 2019; Wright, 2020). To this end, Marxist geographic theory has contributed important insights into naming processes of uneven development. In *Capital Volume I*, Marx (1976) argued that uneven development is a function of the contradictions characteristic of capitalism. He suggested these contradictions manifest through the simultaneous development of affluence and poverty for those who are able to harness capitalist processes of accumulation and those who are not able to access those processes, respectively (see also Smith, 2008). Such political economic relations have been historically discussed in ways that have failed to take seriously the role of racial capitalism (Robinson, 1983). When paying specific attention to access to land in the face of colonial and racial oppression, we argue, along with Wright (2020), that a more appropriate framing of these historical land struggles is racialized uneven development. In this article, we seek to empirically ground these theoretical arguments by bringing Sapelo Island's history as a plantation, early 20th-century playground, and later wildlife game reserve into conversation with Robinson's (1983) and others' discussions of racial capitalism. Specifically, we want to consider McKittrick's (2013) notion of plantation futures.

Sapelo's racialized uneven development and the continued struggle for land retention experienced by its Geechee descendants inspires us to seek a deeper understanding of the violence inherent to racialized land dispossession. We follow McKittrick's interrogative lead when she states:

[t]he plantation . . . provides the context to put forth the following interconnected questions: What are some notable characteristics of plantation geographies and what is at stake in linking a plantation past to the present? What comes of positioning the plantation as a threshold to thinking through long-standing and contemporary practices of racial violence? If the plantation, at least in part, ushered in how and where we live now, and thus contributes to the racial contours of uneven geographies, how might we give it a different future? (2013: 4).

McKittrick's questions open political insights into how to respond to ongoing land loss and displacement on Sapelo and racial violence through hope and living. To this end, “plantation futures” is about engaging the ongoing tyranny of the racial state as opposed

to allowing its violence to only be visible. The racial state and racial state formation, as discussed by many scholars (Goldberg, 2001; Omi and Winant, 2014), forces us to ask in line with Kurtz (2009: 701), “How do particular state institutions and practices act on understandings of race, and thereby contribute to racial projects?”

In this article, we demonstrate how the histories of white supremacy continue to be institutionalized into contemporary property politics through the processes of racialized uneven development. While a Black Geographic approach informs our research, Clyde Woods’ (1998, 2017) work on plantation and bourbon blocs repurposing/rebranding themselves with each generation is especially important for informing our historical approach. Simultaneously, we try to unpack the deep history of racialized uneven development on Sapelo, informed by feminist notions of embodiment—and in particular the body as a “ground for political exclusion or inclusion” (Threadcraft, 2016)—to calls from historical geography for “embodied practice” (Griffin and Evans, 2008; Lorimer and Whatmore, 2009). Moreover, we use “historical analysis . . . that . . . addresses present-day problems” (Van Sant et al., 2018) to elucidate the disempowering ways racial capitalism and the attendant legacies of white supremacy persistently reshape racialized landscapes.

Specifically, we trace the ongoing history of property relations on Sapelo between 1802 and 2020 to reveal how the presence of Geechee descendants on the island has *persisted* since the Civil War through resisting displacement over the past one and a half centuries unlike the many other sea islands of the U.S. Southeast. Today, Sapelo is considered the most intact Gullah Geechee Sea Island community in the U.S. despite multiple attempts to manipulate and dispossess families of their land. Periods of Sapelo’s racial history is well-documented (e.g., see Cimballa, 1989 for the early Reconstruction period); however, we re-interpret this history through the lens of racialized uneven development (Wright, 2020) and racial capitalism (Robinson, 1983). We revisit the embodied histories of Sapelo’s residents to better understand the moments of resistance to dispossession and to glean clear insights into the “fatal couplings” of the racial state and racial capitalism (Gilmore, 2002; Pulido, 2017). We articulate how the struggle for life through land consistently runs up against state-sanctioned racial violence, which perpetuates racialized uneven development. The understanding of resistance is not simply an intellectual endeavor. The struggle for land amidst racialized dispossession demands continued political response via concrete mobilizing and policy innovation and we argue that intellectual collaboration with these struggles is relevant. Picking up from abolitionist struggles pre-dating emancipation, in this paper we are working to understand how land, property, and ecological struggles can be formulated within an abolitionist framing through the emerging context of abolition ecology.

In the following sections, we articulate our theoretical framing around racialized uneven development and abolition ecology as an important opportunity to contribute to political ecological thought on plantation histories but also plantation futures. Next, we move to the case of Sapelo examining it over four time periods that necessitated Black people mobilizing different forms of Black resistance to evolving white supremacist formations under racial capitalism. We first discuss the rise of the island’s Black land ownership, especially following the Civil War. Then we articulate how in the early to mid-20th century, Black resistance prevailed despite attempts to retain white hegemony over property and everyday life. We next examine how the sale of 97% of the island to the state of Georgia led to a contradictory ambition to promote conservation and preserve cultural heritage. And lastly, we reveal how racialized uneven development persists today in Sapelo’s Geechee descendants’ fight to maintain their land against increasing gentrification pressures, which as Kahl (2012) and others have shown, has been a constant struggle for Black residents across the Southeast and beyond since Emancipation.

Racialized uneven development and abolition ecology

Robinson's (1983) efforts in the 1980s to articulate the combined dynamics of racial capitalism occurred during the same window that Smith (2008) was working to articulate the geographical processes of uneven development. While it should perhaps not be surprising that there was no real intellectual cross-fertilization between these two efforts, it is surprising that there has been little contemporary engagement of the two notions. Robinson argued that capitalism emerged out of feudalism in Europe and was immediately dependent upon a racialized logic given the division of labor that had been produced via Irish, Jewish, Roma, Slavic, and other ethnic groups through processes of colonial enclosure and dispossession. The historical geographical nuances across Europe of which groups were exploited—and to what ends—calls for attending to the embodied nature of these earliest moments of racial capitalism.

Building on Marxist political economy, Smith expanded notions of uneven development to illustrate the ways that the tendencies and contradictions that cohere within the development of capitalism are most visible through the simultaneous development of wealth and poverty. Capital accumulation and the social power that comes with it are unevenly harnessed and put to work across the spectrum of wealth and poverty and this becomes clearly legible on the landscape across spatial scales. Smith was working at a theoretically abstract register and while he did not include the ways racialization was central to the earliest developments of this mode of production or political economic system as did Robinson, nor the gendered dynamics of this process as Federici (2004) has, historically these processes developed together and thus created particular kinds of spaces and logics of spaces we can recover, draw upon, and build upon politically.

It is because of the latent potential within the interstices of these ideas that Gilmore's argument that geographers need to better research the fatal couplings of power and difference as exemplified by racial capitalism and uneven development resonates with notions of abolition ecology. According to Gilmore (2002: 22), "[t]he political geography of race entails investigating space, place, and location as simultaneously shaped by gender, class, and scale." Central to her framing is a "reconsideration of historical geographies [and] radical examination of transitional geographies" that open up more emancipatory possibilities at the intersections of "unequal power and its fatal exploitation."

Currently, there is a generative wave of analysis building off of these foundational ideas that continue to reshape the foundations of geographic scholarship through the importance of Black geographic theory and attendant categories of thought. Through this particular moment of theory building, we are seeing the expansion of spatial logics that make anti-Blackness far more legible globally (see Bledsoe, 2017; Bledsoe and Wright, 2018; Derickson, 2017; Eaves, 2017; McCutcheon, 2013; Rodriguez, 2016; Scott, 2019). Embedded with white supremacy that is constantly institutionalizing anti-Blackness are place-making logics that work to vacate spaces of Blackness and necessitate that place-based historical analyses of property politics be more attentive to racialized uneven development.

Bledsoe and Wright (2018) argue, "Black populations are deemed a-spatial as a result of the fact that modern notions of space and practices of spatial production are rooted in specific relations of power." They extend their argument stating,

In the colonial epoch, chattel slavery—the social, legal, and political reduction of Africans to the status of nonhumans—produced the figure of the Black, which had a nullified spatial capacity (Wilderson III, 2010: 279)o, was disavowed as a human being (Ferreira da Silva, 2015: 91), and

was a priori structurally prevented from enacting 'rational' spatial expressions (Santos, 2002: 24). (Bledsoe and Wright, 2018: 12)

Scott (2019: 1096) calls this “nowhere at all-ness” in his effort to show how recovering Black histories is about “wrestling with a violently imposed spatial precarity.” This erasure of Black lives and histories is central to McKittrick’s (2006) *Demonic Grounds*, and other instances of her work, in which she argues that attention to Black place and placeness-less is crucial because of the naturalization and normalization of status quo “cartographic rules” that “unjustly organize human hierarchies in place and reify uneven geographies.” Crucially for those of us invested in radical geographic potential, she also argues these rules can be changed through attention and struggle, and that “different geographic stories can be and are told” (x). In this retelling we see an entry for abolitionist politics.

Land and property politics since colonial conquest of the Americas has depended on force and brutality to overwhelm populations residing on lands they deemed their home, whether initially for Indigenous populations, and as the colonial proliferation of racial capitalism evolved, eventually all people of color. This ruthlessness is not always physical, although the degree of physical violence to Black Indigenous and people of color has been abundant and merciless as the colonial archive demonstrates just as does the contemporary daily news (see Barbot, 2020). The textured, nuanced, and banal ways in which “Black populations are deemed a-spatial” centers on forms of brutality that have been centuries in the making. The construction of “the Negro,” or “Africa’s transmutation” as Robinson (1983: 71) discusses as a central pillar of contemporary racial capitalism was about the theft, erasure, and obliteration of incredible historical accomplishments and robust cultural sophistication. While the pernicious processes of racialization Robinson articulates as beginning with the Irish, Jews, Roma, Slavs and other European ethnic groups, the ramifications of this process for colonial land grabbing along the U.S. Southeastern Coast has been remarkably resilient. As history shows, white supremacy has had many faces, worn many masks and transformed landscapes variably and differentially. The forces of anti-Black racism that have shaped property relations on Sapelo Island are indeed unique given the historical-geographical context of Saltwater Geechee struggles and at the same time tracks the universal process of racialized dispossession under racial capitalism.

There is something of a reduced historical-geographic proximity from the colonial era and that of chattel slavery on Sapelo Island given the deliberate efforts of Saltwater Geechee residents to maintain their rich cultural history that developed in such contiguity with, and in resistance, to these anti-Black logics. Because of the ways the ruins of the literal plantation is still part of everyday life on Sapelo and the ways in which the reconstructed “Big House” still plays such an important role, there is an opportunity in this living history of the plantation to simultaneously inform contemporary abolitionist tactics that are mobilized daily in response to the “death-dealing” state logics intent on vacating Blackness from the island.

Political renderings of a-spatiality and Black spatial nullification amidst racial capitalist theft of land and the ongoing ways in which racialized uneven development props up the vestiges of cultural genocide not only require acknowledgement, but also require response. McKittrick (2006) articulates that amidst the politics that deem the geographies of Black lives “ungeographic” there are still important pillars and means propping up the histories of Black lives even if these same pillars hold up the Big House. The tension between spatial nullification and struggles over space open up dialogues about abolitionist visions and actions toward, as Gilmore (2017) has articulated, “Freedom as a place.” In order for this logic to ring true, McKittrick’s (2006: xiii) assertion that “Black lives are necessarily

geographic, but also struggle with discourses that erase and despatialize their sense of place” sets the contours of struggle in the U.S. to go back to moments of conquest and the Trans-Atlantic Slave trade.

We see a value and need for the sort of in-depth case study work that helps recover Black geographies and show how hard they are fought over and how difficult it is to maintain them amidst the economic, political, and cultural reach of white supremacy and anti-Blackness.

To this end, McKittrick’s (2006: xiii) argument that the concreteness of geography “with its overlapping physical, metaphorical, theoretical, and experiential contours—must be conceptualized as always bringing into view material referents, external, three-dimensional spaces, and the actions taking place in space, as they overlap with subjectivities, imaginations, and stories” becomes salient on Sapelo.

While there are abundant material referents that call upon and elucidate the weaving together of subjectivities, imaginations, and stories, abolitionist histories about land and rebellion mobilized to reclaim territory are important to connect to contemporary emancipatory political remediation. A central logic to these histories is the fact that the racialized dispossession of land across the Caribbean and U.S. was legal according to colonial law. The legality of what today we clearly see as theft and the destruction of life and culture it produced is ingrained in every “legal” action the state enacts around property and land today. Here the realm of policy becomes a necessary modality through which to enact change. To this end, Gilmore (2011: 264) suggests, “Policy is the new theory. Policy is to politics what method is to research. It’s a script for enlivening some future possibility—an experiment.”

Abolition geography as defined by Gilmore (2017) has helped establish a way of engaging in political ecological questions around land that we discuss more specifically as abolition ecology. The notion of abolition ecology as a specific subset of abolition geography is about more precisely articulating the machinations of Black self-determination and racialized property politics within the political ecological tradition. Political ecology has inadequately engaged with the devastating ways white supremacy has configured social-nature relations the world over, including in the U.S. (Van Sant et al., 2020). Staging intellectual and political dialogue between the rich history of abolitionist politics across the U.S. with the goals of political ecology can open up new understandings about how land has been stripped of Black folks and continues to be stripped from them. At the same time, as these relations become more legible, strategies, tactics, and coalition building geared toward reclaiming land through concrete policy strategies can halt the further dispossession of land and more emancipatory futures can be imagined.

Agriculture has always been a central historical *cum* empirical component of political ecology. That agricultural land relations centered in chattel slavery have been slow to emerge as central to political ecology continues to pose fundamentally ontological contradictions to how the world we inhabit is being understood and acted upon. McKittrick suggests (2011: 948), “The plantation evidences an uneven colonial-racial economy that, while differently articulated across time and place, legalized Black servitude while simultaneously sanctioning Black placelessness and constraint.” Here we see the spatial nullification Bledsoe and Wright (2018) discuss with insights into the contradiction of how the actual spaces of the plantation creates placelessness. That much of Sapelo Island was a maroon plantation and that much of the contemporary property relations rely on this history for their structure, there exists an important opportunity to inform political ecological thought on the role of racialized uneven development.

The case of Sapelo Island

From Rebellion to Prominence (1802–1912)

The 19th-century rise of an agricultural empire fueled by the exploitation of enslaved labor on Sapelo Island did not occur on land that was unoccupied. For centuries prior to the arrival of European settler colonialists, the coastal area that would come to be known as Georgia was home to Indigenous peoples of whom a small population likely lived on Sapelo for year-round residence, but also large gatherings for feasting—though it is likely feasting had slowed by European arrival (Thompson and Andrus, 2011). The region of coastal Georgia was disputed territory for England and Spain throughout much of the 17th and 18th centuries; yet, it was home to Yamasee and Guale indigenous people, likely of Muskogean relations, both of whom regularly interacted with Spanish missions that existed during the middle 17th century up and down the region's coast (Worth, 1995). By the late 17th century, however, the region became mostly uninhabited after the colonial disputes, associated raids, and disease drove out the Spanish missionaries as well as most of the remaining Yamasee people (Worth 1995).

Following the Spanish retreat and Yamasee migration south, Creek claims to coastal Georgia existed in 1733 when James Oglethorpe settled Savannah and established the English colony. Oglethorpe established a treaty with the Creek who ceded their coastal lands except three sea islands including Sapelo (Georgia Historical Quarterly, 1920). Chief Malatchi of the Creek later granted the three islands to a Creek woman named Mary Musgrove—daughter of an English trader and a Creek mother—yet the English denied her claim “on the grounds that a nation can cede or grant land only to a nation, not to individuals” (New Georgia Encyclopedia, 2020). After offering Musgrove one of the islands and £2100 to settle the decade long dispute over ownership, the English colonial government sold Sapelo at auction to a Georgia councilman in 1760 (O’Grady and Juengst, 1980), but agricultural activities did not begin in earnest until the early 19th century. As Patrick Wolfe has argued, “Settler colonialism is inherently eliminatory” (2006: 387) which in this case aligns with Cheryl Harris’s (1993) thesis on the origins of “whiteness as property” in the English colonial government’s refusal of Musgrove’s claim to two-thirds of the land (i.e., two of the three islands), but recognition in her general claim to property through partial compensation for Sapelo. Thus, the logics of settler colonialism’s erasure of Indigenous claims to the land on Sapelo is integral how institutions central to the proliferation of racial capitalism exploited Black labor.

Sapelo’s earliest white landowners began enslaving Black people decades before 1800 with 66 enslaved people reported in 1791 (Thomas, 1989) and as many as 80 in 1802 when a wealthy Scottish descendant, Thomas Spalding, began consolidating Sapelo’s holdings (Sullivan, 2001). Spalding owned the entire island by 1843 (Crook et al., 2003), except 650 acres on the northeast side at Raccoon Bluff (Sullivan, 2001; see Figure 1). Spalding built an empire growing rice and sugarcane, but on Sapelo he established one of the largest Sea Island cotton plantations in the United States. His wealth accumulation occurred through the exploitation of Black labor, requiring as many as 40 enslaved people to produce one 300 pound bag of cotton for market (Spalding, 1835). By 1825, Spalding held 421 Black people in bondage, 310 located on Sapelo specifically (Sullivan, 2001). Despite persistent narratives of Spalding’s “benevolence” (e.g., Coulter, 1940; Mulligan, 2015; O’Grady and Juengst, 1980; Sullivan, 2001), Black people consistently rebelled against their bondage prior to Reconstruction as indicated by several accounts of runaway notices posted by Spalding during his tenure, a maroon community at Behavior (see Figure 1), and just before the Civil

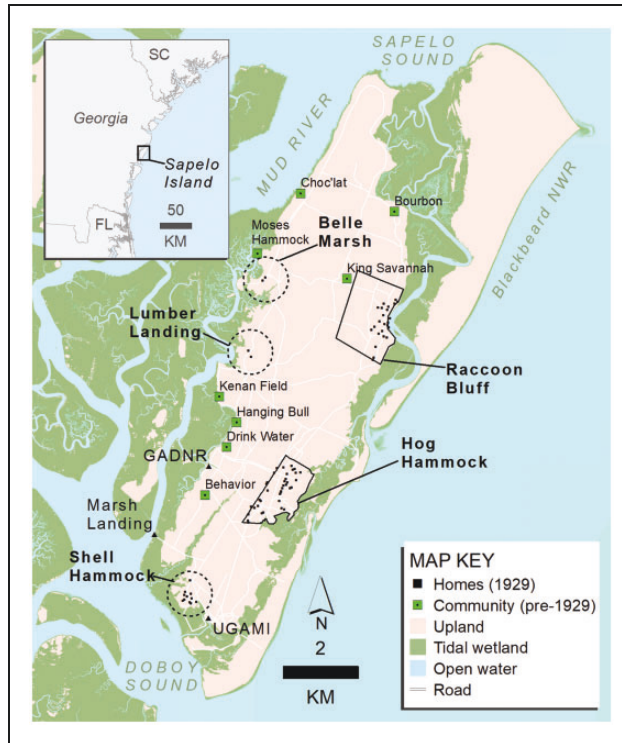


Figure 1. Map of Sapelo Island's historical communities and current community as well as facilities. Data sources: Pre-1929 communities' approximate locations from Bailey (2001). Homes digitized from USDA 1929 Soils Survey map and ethnographic information in Crook et al. (2003). Hog Hammock boundary from McIntosh County Tax Assessor's Office. Raccoon Bluff boundary digitized from surveyor's map (White and Marsh, 1940). See inset map for approximate location of Sapelo Island, Georgia, USA. GA DNR is Georgia Department of Natural Resources office location; UGAMI is the University of Georgia Marine Institute; Marsh Landing is the DNR-operated ferry boat dock.

War, a plea by one of Spalding's heirs to the Georgia militia to send assistance to mitigate concerns of enslaved people revolting (see Cooper, 2017: 4; also see McFeely, 1994).

Following the Civil War and the end of chattel slavery, land became central to the question of achieving racial equality (DuBois, 1935). At a meeting in Savannah, Georgia in January 1865, months before the Civil War's end, President Lincoln's Secretary of War asked 20 Black leaders how they could best "'take care of themselves'... Reverend Garrison Frazier replied, 'The way we can best take care of ourselves is to have land, and turn it and till it by our labor—that is, by the labor of the women, and children, and old men—and we can maintain ourselves and have something to spare'" (Heynen, 2016). Four days after the Savannah meeting, U.S. General Sherman issued *Special Field Orders, No. 15*, which led to the creation of the U.S. Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands (i.e., Freedmen's Bureau) and its settling of freed Black people upon confiscated lands along the southeastern coast.

Despite the Bureau's initial success and the need for the United States to address the injustices of the exploitive labor system of chattel slavery, the Bureau's official records for coastal Georgia settlements are lower than the reported estimates. To carry out the order, Sherman appointed Brigadier General Rufus Saxton, who reported settling as many as

40,000 freed people throughout the “reservation” (see Cimbala, 1989). By August 1865, 352 freed people lived on Sapelo (Cimbala, 1989) and by December one estimate suggested as many as 900 freed people were living there (see Duncan, 1986). However, the Bureau only recorded 745 acres of land issued to 25 families consisting of 107 people on Sapelo (U.S. Freedmen’s Bureau, 1865b). One reason cited for the count discrepancy is insufficient documentation time (see Cimbala, 1989).

More important is the permanent severance of the possibility to document settled freed people due to a rapid about-face by the U.S. government. Under pressure from former plantation owners and white northern entrepreneurs as well as suspicions of low agricultural productivity of freed people and a growing narrative of free labor market capitalism, President Andrew Johnson rescinded *Special Field Orders, No. 15* in September 1865 (U.S. Freedmen’s Bureau, 1865a). This triggered the process of restoring “abandoned and confiscated lands” to their previous white owners via state-ordered changes to less supportive Bureau officers and agents, which on Sapelo meant the denial of land to the 25 families that the Bureau had documented as well as those not documented (see Cimbala, 1989). Such changes did not occur without ample resistance. For example, on Sapelo in September 1866, 12 leaders were jailed for refusal to follow the newly appointed, more plantation friendly Bureau agents’ requests—several of the newly appointed agents for Georgia had financial and/or family stakes in the former plantations (see Cimbala, 1989).

This turn in U.S. policy constitutes state-sanctioned racial violence and signaled the beginning of the end for *Reconstruction*. The U.S. government disrupted the process of a new postbellum racial formation (see Omi and Winant, 2014) premised upon reparations for centuries of exploited labor. Such a tactic aligns with Bledsoe and Wright’s argument that anti-Blackness is not a product of capitalist relations, but constituent of racial capitalism such that, “anti-Blackness remains a necessary precondition for the perpetuation of capitalism, as the perpetual expansion of capitalist practices requires ‘empty’ spaces open for appropriation—a condition made possible through the modern assumption of Black a-spatiality” (2018: 1; see also Pulido, 2017). Sherman’s order threatened white supremacy by enclosing productive agricultural lands within a persistent Black spatiality that would occur through Black land ownership. Even though Black people were physically present on Sapelo and many other sea islands during this period, the U.S. government’s refusal to acknowledge the political, conceptual, and material realities of Black presence—as with previous Indigenous claims to Sapelo such as Mary Musgrove’s—evidences Black and Indigenous peoples’ a-spatiality to the state. By re-opening former plantation lands to northern capitalist investment, the state created “empty” spaces for new flows of capital and continued accumulation through exploitation of Black labor later through sharecropping contracts with northern entrepreneurs and returned plantation owners.

While rescinding Sherman’s order significantly slowed Black land acquisition, Black people’s presence on Sapelo persisted (Figure 2) and Black land ownership grew as freedmen accrued funds to purchase land in five communities (Figure 1). One of Sapelo’s first major Black land purchases came in 1871 via the William Hillery Company, comprised of three freedmen named William Hillery, John Grovner, and Bilali Bell, who bought approximately 650 acres (263 hectares) at Raccoon Bluff, divided it into smaller tracts and sold those to several other freedmen and their families (Humphries, 1991; Thomas, 1996). Caesar Sams and Joseph Jones purchased two tracts including 60 acres (24 hectares) at Lumber Landing and 50 acres (20 hectares) at Belle Marsh, respectively (Sullivan, 2001). By 1878, formerly enslaved residents began to acquire land in the communities of Hog Hammock and Shell Hammock via purchasing small tracts from Thomas Spalding II (Thomas, 1996). In addition to these communities with Black-owned land, several other places around the island

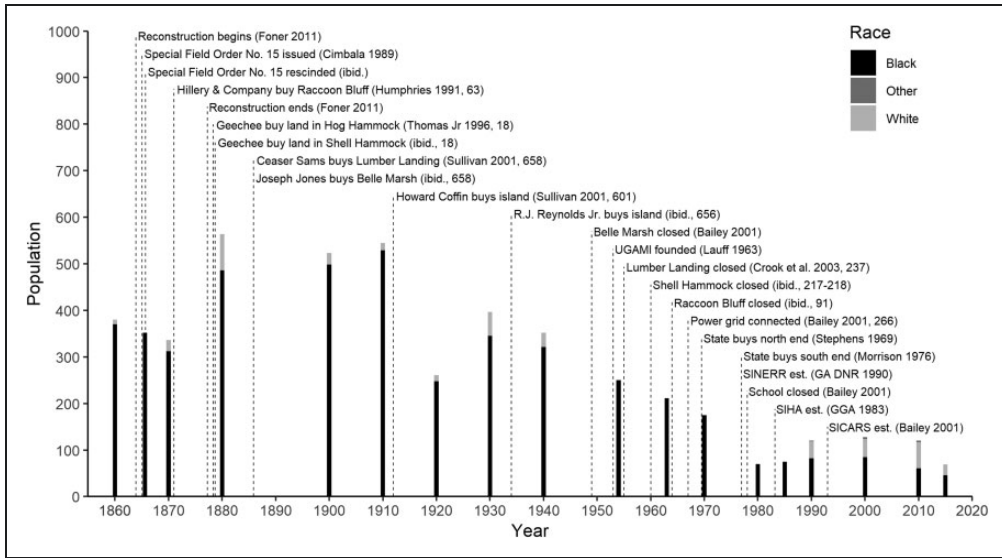


Figure 2. Estimated population of Sapelo Island alongside significant events (1860–2015). Event sources cited in figure. Estimated population sources include: 1860 to 1940 from the U.S. Census (1860, 1870, 1880, 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930, 1940); 1954 estimated for Black people only by Crook et al. (2003: 38); 1963 estimated for Black people only by Blumberg and Hesser (1971); 1980 estimated for Black people only by Thomas (1996: 25); 1985 estimated for Black people only by Crook et al. (2003: 39); 1990 and 2000 from the NHGIS (Manson et al., 2018a, 2018b); 2010 from the U.S. Census (2010); and 2015 based on personal observation. UGAMI is the University of Georgia Marine Institute; SINERR is the Sapelo Island National Estuarine Research Reserve; SIHA is the Sapelo Island Heritage Authority; SICARS is the Sapelo Island Cultural and Revitalization Society.

had Black residents living and working as sharecroppers (Humphries, 1991; see Figure 1). While the years between 1865 and 1912 on Sapelo are characterized by Black population growth, self-subsistence, and exploitive sharecropping contracts, the next 57 years are frequently portrayed through the lens of two white patriarchs—often described as investors, entrepreneurs, and entertainers—who came to be majority owners.

Resisting the return to White Hegemony (1912–1969)

A large Black presence has persisted in coastal regions of the U.S. South despite the targeted efforts to dispossess land from African Americans via what Andrew Kahrl (2012) has called “coastal capitalism,” which is derived from his reading of Robinson’s (1983) work on racial capitalism. In early 20th-century coastal Georgia, Kahrl highlights how places of labor were transformed into places of pleasure, which we argue also transformed the capabilities and opportunities for social reproduction for Black folks who had long established communities across the region. Such transformation occurred through, “the collapse of long-staple cotton and the rise of Black subsistence fishing and farming [which] were soon followed by the development of exclusive winter resorts owned by prominent families of the nation’s Gilded Age aristocracy” (Kahrl, 2012: 8). Similarly on Sapelo, the decline of such crops and the timber industry along with the purchasing and consolidating of smaller parcels of land—many of which were Black-owned—started in 1912 (Sullivan and Gaddis, 2014; Thomas, 1996). The result of this land accumulation on Sapelo led to Black residents’ resistance to forced relocations (e.g., see quote from Bailey, 2001 below).

In 1910 Black presence on Sapelo dominated with a population of 529 people living in 109 households compared to the white population of 16 people living in five households (U. S. Census, 1910; Figure 2). In 1912, Howard Coffin, an automobile industrialist, bought the majority of the island and expanded agricultural efforts, held hunting retreats, and hosted two U.S. presidents and other famous guests (Courson, 1999). During this early part of the 20th century, many Black people fled the U.S. South's oppressive Jim Crow environment, even in the face of resistance to their departure facilitated by the "white rage" that arose from white people's fear of the Black labor force leaving the South (see Anderson, 2016). Similarly, Sapelo's population declined to below 300 Black people living in 61 households by 1920 (U.S. Census, 1920). At the same time, the public's romanticizing of Black life and culture as well as academics' fascination with the hunt for African survivals in remote African American populations placed Sapelo and its Geechee culture at the center of national discourse on racial identity, which continues today (see Cooper, 2017).

By 1930, there were five communities on Sapelo with 345 Black residents, but a significant change in the island's Black geography was coming (Figure 1; U.S. Census, 1930). Using a 1929 USDA soils survey map, census data, and oral histories from island residents, Crook et al. (2003) report that there were 75 Black households on Sapelo around 1930; the 1930 U.S. Census schedules only record 68 Black households (however, some may not have been counted), 32 of whom were owners. In 1934, Sapelo's majority ownership changed again with Coffin selling to R. J. Reynolds, Jr, a wealthy white heir to a tobacco fortune. Reynolds commissioned a survey of the island in 1940, which shows the same number of structures (27) as the 1929 soils map in three of the island's five communities, six fewer structures in Hog Hammock, and zero structures in Shell Hammock, the community closest to Reynolds' mansion. This suggests that 11 homes in Shell Hammock may have been torn down between 1929 and 1940, yet the 1940 census schedules clearly show an increase in total Black households on the island to 77, not a loss of 17 as suggested by the missing structures from Reynolds' surveyors' map.² Moreover, a 1954 USGS quad map shows three structures in Shell Hammock and Crooks et al.'s (2003) interview data suggest that community did not close until about 1960, further evidencing that Shell Hammock had Black households in 1940 when Reynolds had the island mapped. We are uncertain why Reynolds' surveyors would not have identified those structures.

The significant change to the island's Black geography came between 1949 and 1964 when Black landowners in four of the communities either sold their land and left the island or traded their land through acre-for-acre swaps with Reynolds and relocated to Hog Hammock (see Figure 2; Bailey, 2001; Crook et al., 2003). Based on the above evidence, we assume that most households of 1929 still existed in 1949 when Reynolds started relocating families.³ With this assumption, we estimate that Reynolds' coerced relocations affected at least 27, but possibly as many as 46 Black households (those not in Hog Hammock in 1940) between 1949 and 1964 (see Figure 1).

Some families reported moving against their will via coercion by Reynolds and his employees. In the following excerpt, a Geechee resident, Mrs. Cornelia Walker Bailey, recounts how Reynolds' manager, Frank Durant (a.k.a. "Cap'n Frank"), coerced her father, Hicks Walker, to move from Belle Marsh to Hog Hammock in 1949 through bribes and threats.

Cap'n Frank liked to know everything that was going on. He didn't miss much if he could help it, and that's why Cap'n Frank came by [our house at Belle Marsh]. He was being nosy, just coming by to check on what Papa was gonna do with the lumber he wanted but that started the wheels going and Cap'n Frank started working on Papa after that.

He never came back to Belle Marsh, he just talked to Papa wheresoever he saw him, whether Papa was working on the North End or whether he was down on South End getting his paycheck.

“Hicks, why don’t you move up to Hog Hammock? Your Uncle Nero has died, you’re down there by yourself, you’re the only family down there. The kids gotta walk so far to school. You gotta walk so far to come to work and if somebody gets sick, you have to walk so far to get help.”

Papa kept on clearing his land.

Cap’n Frank acted like he was all kindness, like moving was all for Papa’s benefit, but Papa said no. He was determined he was gonna build his house in Belle Marsh.

So they sweetened the pot.

“Well, Hicks, since the lumber mill is here on the island, you can get all the lumber you want for nothing if you move over to the Hog Hammock community. All you’ll have to pay for are the doors, the windows and the tin.”

Still Papa kept on clearing his land.

Then Cap’n Frank told him, “We’ll make it easier for you, Hicks. We’ll pay you while you’re building your own house. You’ll be earning the same salary and you won’t have to worry about going to work.”

When that didn’t work, Cap’n Frank said, “Well, Hicks, you know it’d be too bad if you lose your job and have to go to the mainland and your family have to fend for themselves.”

When you say job and family in the same breath, that’s pressure. Reynolds and his people controlled all the jobs on the island and they controlled the boat to and from the mainland.

I don’t know what Papa told that man. I don’t think he cursed, a Black man couldn’t curse in front of a white man back then, especially not in a violent tone. All I know is that when Papa got home, he ranted and raved to Mama. He absolutely did not want to move. This was his land. But there was a price to pay if he stayed. (Bailey, 2001: 98–99)

The sentiment conveyed by Bailey’s father about not wanting to live near other Hog Hammock residents is counter to many of the narratives that romanticize Black life and suggest that racial segregation leads to racial congregation. Kahrl states, “In casting victims of oppression as exemplars of communalism, mutuality, and sustainability, we fail to appreciate what [George] Lipsitz himself calls the ‘pernicious power of the white spatial imaginary’ and tend to underestimate the role of land-based capitalism in shaping and giving texture to Black struggles for freedom” (2012: 18). With this interpretation, Bailey’s story becomes one (of many) about Reynolds’ capacity and willingness to invoke the “white spatial imaginary” by manipulating many of Sapelo’s Black residents out of home and land (see Crook et al., 2003 for more accounts of manipulation from former residents of those communities). Such forced racial congregation by Reynolds—ostensibly to gain more consolidated control of the island to develop a resort—set the stage for the later sale of Sapelo to the state of Georgia by his widow. The transfer of Sapelo to the state signaled a

new era of governance, one that persists today and prioritizes environmental conservation for game management and hunting.

Navigating the racial state (1969–early ‘90s)

The struggle for Geechee access to land continued when the state of Georgia purchased the island’s north end in 1969 and the south end in 1976 from the Sapelo Foundation—Reynolds’ philanthropic legacy (Morrison, 1976; Stephens, 1969). With these two transactions, Sapelo came under the domain of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and soon thereafter approximately two-thirds of the island became the R. J. Reynolds, Jr Wildlife Management Area. The effect of these sales led to dispossession through enclosure of access to land for conservation, a political ecological process that extends far beyond Sapelo Island (see Peluso and Lund, 2011). Reynolds’ legacy shows how even in death, the power accrued by white people from dispossessing Black folks of their labor, lives, and land lives on.

The long-term effect of Sapelo coming back under the purview of wealthy white men in the early 1900s followed by state control has been a slow displacement from land through attrition of Black space-making potential. Such a white spatial imaginary based on “[pursuits of] the ideal of pure and homogenous space through exclusiveness, exclusivity, and homogeneity” (Lipsitz, 2007:14), achieved through Coffin’s and Reynolds’ relocations of Black households and state-supported, racialized conservation ethics (see Davis, 2019; Finney, 2014), disrupted alternative paths of Black development. Members of the Sapelo Foundation and the state did not perceive such enclosure as limiting the potential of Black development, but rather viewed it as a means of protecting Sapelo’s Geechee cultural heritage and sought to extend it into the sole remaining community of Hog Hammock.

The state of Georgia has long acknowledged a need for cultural preservation on Sapelo, but with mixed levels of commitment. In 1983, citing Hog Hammock as “the last community of its kind in the state of Georgia,” state legislators passed the Sapelo Island Heritage Authority Act, “for the benefit of present and future generations” (Davis, 1983; Georgia General Assembly, 1983). Under the Authority, the state became empowered to purchase property on Sapelo even when the title was unclear due to heirs property, undocumented property transactions, or misplaced deeds. It was not funded until many years later in 2001 when it received \$3.5 million in bonds and made its largest purchase acquiring approximately 140 acres (57 hectares) within Hog Hammock from the Sapelo Foundation, including partial stake in 40 acres (16 hectares) and right of first refusal on 70 acres (28 hectares; Williams, 2001). The Heritage Authority currently holds approximately 150 acres (61 hectares) 150 acres. At the time of the Heritage Authority’s creation, some of Sapelo’s Geechee residents agreed that the state should be involved, but also thought that the details of how the authority would operate were suspect given it was a board of three white men (Davis, 1983). It was not until 2002 that the heritage authority legally added a Black resident to the board (Kemp and Johnson, 2002).

In another effort by the state to preserve Sapelo’s cultural heritage, the DNR commissioner imposed a moratorium on building in 1995. The commissioner attributed his action to “concern about land speculation in the Hammock” and needing time to decide upon best management practices “so that the beautiful culture doesn’t erode away completely” (Davis, 1995). While many residents were reported to be supportive of the moratorium, concern also arose with one resident stating, “‘we’ve been moved around so much without our consultation that I think we have a right to be suspicious,’ [Mrs. Bailey] said. ‘No matter how good

the moratorium is, why wasn't the community consulted?" (Cheves, 1995). A pertinent question since the community had been organizing for two decades by that point.

Geechee residents recognized the power of the state and the potential for displacement via development such that "[Black people] were being pushed off land they'd owned since Reconstruction all through the Sea Islands" (Bailey, 2001: 272). When word circulated among island residents that the state aimed to purchase the south end in 1975—originally including the entire Hog Hammock community—Sapelo's Geechee residents started organizing by immediately forming the Hog Hammock Community Foundation (Bailey, 2001). Such organizing was in direct response to worries over land loss. Up until the mid-1980s, for example, the state DNR had a map on its office wall with a red circle drawn around Hog Hammock and "to be acquired" written next to it (Bailey, 2001). The map came down after a land dispute arose between the state and local property owners in the mid-1980s (Bailey, 2001; see also Davis, 1984). In 1993, nearly two decades after the state bought the south end, Geechee descendants formed the Sapelo Island Cultural and Revitalization Society (SICARS) with a mission "to preserve and revitalize the Hogg Hummock Community." By working to limit white influx and Black displacement as occurred on other Sea Islands such as St. Simon's Island to the south and Daufuskie Island to the north via restricting development on Sapelo, we argue that the state has inadvertently limited the possibility for a Black spatial imaginary to thrive. Such restrictions have effectively perpetuated racialized uneven development on Sapelo.

For the Sapelo Foundation, the ongoing ownership of 181 acres (73 hectares) of land in Hog Hammock, the last of its land holding on the island, came to a head in 1998. In the 1995 Executive Director's Report, Alan MacGregor suggested, "[t]here is simply too much history between the Foundation and the African-Americans of Sapelo for this work to be abandoned. Progress is being made...but needs continuing nurturing from the Foundation" (Brendlar, 2015: 64). The previous year in Foundation meeting minutes, however, the sentiment was shared that the Foundation could not "fix Hog Hammock," according to board member Smith Bagley. There was a growing sentiment that, despite all the ways Reynolds and his Foundation had led to a fundamental spatial reimagining of the people on the island, the Foundation should completely "cut its remaining ties."

While there was a mix of opinions about how the Foundation should proceed, the Executive Director's Report for 1998 illustrates how the Foundation perceived its relationship with Sapelo's Geechee descendants:

[With empowerment] comes the certainty that peoples' choices will not always be yours. That is part of giving up control. The people of Hog Hammock may make strategic gains and errors but must be allowed to do so for their own growth and sense of freedom. Along with financial support from foundations and technical support from organizations, they should be encouraged and allowed to play an active role in determining their own destiny. (Brendler, 2015: 65)

The 1990s signaled a change that has only intensified over the past 20 years with the community resisting increased dispossession through land grabbing.

Fighting dispossession and gentrification (early '90s–2018)

Despite efforts to retain Black-owned land, the factors affecting land loss on Sapelo since the early 1990s include gentrification and dispossession. The naturalized language of the state that speaks about the needs for "growth" and "progress" and thus "inevitable" need to revisit property relations constitutes the nefarious core tactic of the racial state in its efforts

to displace and dispose of Black culture and Black people. To suggest these processes of displacement are an “unintended consequence” of progress is precisely the logic of the racial project of the state (Pulido, 2017).

Over the past 25 years, the frequency of property transactions has increased—including sales that involve financial exchanges as well as all other transactions that do not through, for example, quit claims (Figure 3(a)); several smaller parcels of land (<0.5 acre), as well as land with houses, have sold at a rate of \$500,000 per acre or more (Figure 3(b)). While there were a few land-only sales that occurred in early 2008 after the onset of the recession, the trend in land value has been downward until recently. Geechee residents have also expressed concerns about the impact that such land sales have on their annual property taxes to journalists for decades including in the 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s (e.g., Breed, 2001; Cheves, 1995; Severson, 2012; Toussaint, 2013).

In 2012, Georgia required McIntosh County to reassess property values (see Hardy et al., 2017). The reassessment raised effective tax rates throughout the county, but on Sapelo—with one sale over a million dollars in 2002 and seven over \$400,000—the appraised property values increased by more than 1000% for several properties (Figure 4(a); also see Severson, 2012). Following the increase, several Geechee property owners appealed to the county and then higher courts to reassess their properties based on a 1994 county zoning ordinance that was supposed to prevent “land value increases which could force removal of the indigenous [*sic*] population” (Bynum, 2013b). The county returned most Hog Hammock properties to their 2011 assessed value, but not before several Geechee descendant families lost their land at auction due to delinquent property taxes.

The convergence of such a dramatic increase in taxes with a high rate of heirs property led to a wave of delinquent property tax auctions on Sapelo (see Darien News, 2015a,

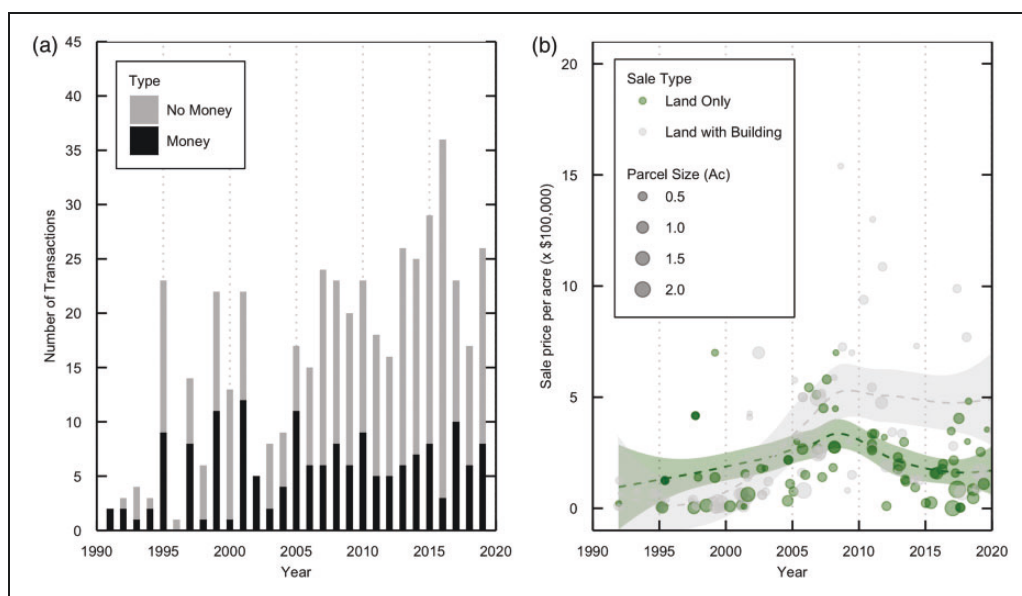


Figure 3. (a) Annual frequency of property transactions (1991–2020, $n = 533$). (b) Hog Hammock property sales price per acre (1991–2020, $n = 169$). All data from McIntosh County Tax Assessor’s Office and updated for years 2016–2020 via property data available through qPublic (<http://www.qpublic.net/ga/mcintosh/>).

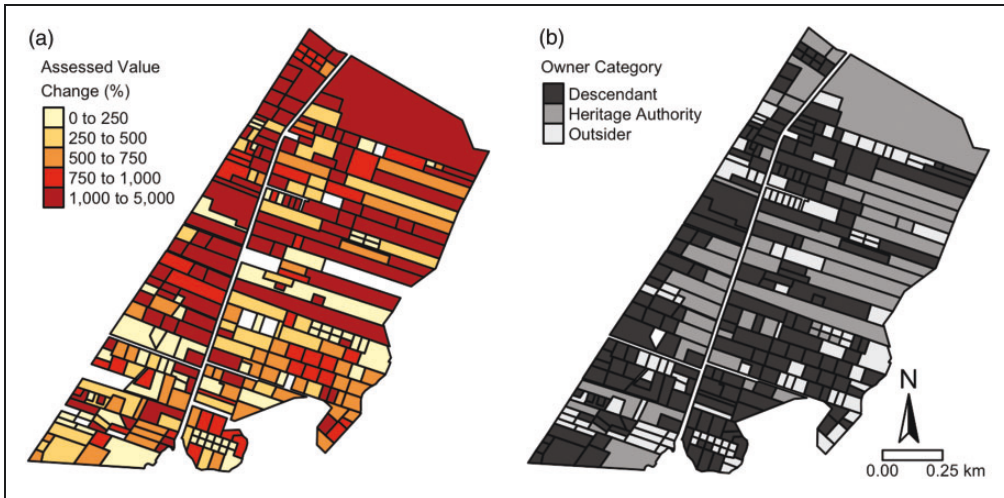


Figure 4. (a) Map of Hog Hammock properties' assessed value changes between 2011 and 2012. (b) Map of Hog Hammock properties by owner category. All data from McIntosh County Tax Assessor's Office and updated for years 2016–2020 via property data available through qPublic (<http://www.qpublic.net/ga/mcintosh/>). Categories based on interviews with local residents.

2015b). Heirs property, or property that is divided evenly among heirs with each successive generation, can have dozens of family members that hold partial interest after only two to three generations (Grabbatin, 2016; Johnson Gaither, 2016). Failure to secure resources has led to delinquent property tax auctions and a form of “dignity taking” as those in delinquency have to seek financial assistance from friends and family as well as navigate the legalese of legal advice (Kahrl, 2018). Since the re-assessment that lowered appraised values in 2015, many Geechee descendants have expressed concerns to us that it is only a matter of time before the county raises effective tax rates again.

Loss of Black-owned land on Sapelo has been of concern for decades. Sapelo's Geechee people have more to lose than property, however, as Safransky (2018: 503) recalls Goeman's (2015) “storied” land and Nixon's (2011) “vernacular” landscapes to insist that, “land becomes a repository for people's experiences, aspirations, identities, memories, and visions for alternative futures.” An increasing interest by “outsiders” has only heightened potential discord with Geechee descendants regarding the persistence of Geechee culture on the island, recognizing that loss of land means loss of culture. In an interview with a *New York Times* reporter in 2008, one descendant stated that, “To somebody else it might be a nice place to be—it's more than that to us” (Dewan, 2008). Many outsiders are investing in second (or even third) homes. Mindful that the Heritage Authority is charged with preserving the island's cultural heritage, the then SICARS President, Charles Hall, told the same *Times* reporter, “If you're going to keep the culture, it's a Black culture,’... ‘It's a Black language. So every time you dilute it, you're getting away from it.”

The persistence of broader structural processes driving racialized uneven development on Sapelo reveal themselves in the common strategies of outsiders that often lead to dispossession followed by gentrification. As of December 2020, Hog Hammock has 308 parcels:

263 (85%) are privately owned and 46 are owned by the Sapelo Island Heritage Authority. Of the privately owned properties, 169 (66%) are owned by Geechee descendants and 94 are owned by outsiders (including all company holdings such as Inc., LLC, LLP that may include some Geechee partners; Figure 4(b)). While Geechee descendants still hold the largest portion (46%) of the community's 400 plus acres, the strategy of buying up properties under company names is persisting. Perhaps what is most signaling of investment is that there are 23 companies that hold 39 properties (~6% of the area) with four companies holding stake in multiple properties. Regarding current land loss, we argue that the triad combination of the state's control of the Heritage Authority but with limited progress in preserving Geechee culture, its management of the Reynolds WMA for conservation, and McIntosh County's control of effective tax rates in the ongoing processes of land grabbing are all contributing to racialized uneven development and perpetuating the dispossession of Black landowners on Sapelo. Despite this triad, Geechee descendants are organizing for land retention.

What next? Abolition ecology and community-engaged scholarship

Since at least the time that Reverend Frazier told the U.S. government in 1865, "land [is how]. . . we can maintain ourselves and have something to spare," it has been clear that land ownership is requisite for Black people's prosperity and overcoming the white supremacist logics of racial capitalism. But land is bigger than property and prosperity as it is co-constituted with the stories, vernacular, and cultural identity of its inhabitants (e.g., see Safransky, 2018). Mishuana Goeman has argued that "a consequence of colonialism has meant a translation or too easy collapsing of *land* to *property*, a move that perpetuates the logics of containment" (2015: 72). These ideas are not lost on Sapelo's Geechee descendants as Mrs. Bailey indicated in a 2008 interview with National Public Radio, stating, "Geechee culture . . . always center[s] around land. Your culture is no good if you don't have land. So, we are holding onto the land so we can hold onto the culture and the history at the same time" (NPR, 2008). In other words, land retention and cultural preservation are intimately intertwined.

In the spirit of abolitionist geographies as articulated by Wilson (2017), abolition ecology seeks to work to name, and dismantle oppressive institutions that have maintained racialized uneven development around land and property. Simultaneously, abolition ecological politics demand the transformation of those existing institutions worth recuperating as well as creating new institutions that can establish and maintain land-based justice (see Heynen and Ybarra, 2020). We might then ask, what role can abolition ecology play on Sapelo specifically? Or more directly, how can we as academic researchers contribute to SICARS' mission to retain Black-owned land and preserve Geechee cultural heritage?

Before answering those questions, however, we want to be transparent and offer a brief reflection on our community-engaged scholarship. Our research on Sapelo has—perhaps unsurprisingly to many including ourselves—not been an easy or simple process. We must constantly challenge our positionality as privileged white male academics and, in our opinion, bring a level of humility outside the norm for academia to these spaces of encounter. Acknowledging the heterogeneity of perspectives, opinions, and desires among any "community," there is a *constant* process of (re)negotiation that occurs in our work with the community of Hog Hammock and SICARS. It is one that has necessitated intense conversations and open community meetings, regular and often long phone calls, and tough negotiations over who benefits from our work. We have come to the likely conclusion that our work is never free of reproducing certain forms of white supremacy by extension of

our positionality, but we can continue at the same time to be certain our intentions are to dismantle it. Thus, we either are, or are aspiring to, contribute in different ways that facilitate SICARS' goals of Black-owned land retention and Saltwater Geechee cultural preservation on Sapelo.

Both a community land trust and the Heritage Authority could function to preserve access to the land and culture for descendants while offering those who own land an alternative route for selling their land. Thus, one way of the ways we are working to contribute to SICARS' goals is by organizing parts of our research around juxtaposing the empirical evidence of historical and contemporary rates of descendant land loss (see Figures 3 and 4) with theoretical arguments related to the political and economic systems that have facilitated that loss (see Derickson, 2017). Within an abolition ecology praxis, we are hopeful that we are building capacity for land retention and securing future philanthropic donations to fund a community land trust by: (1) documenting and categorizing decades of Sapelo property transactions, but specifically Black land loss, (2) publishing our findings as peer-reviewed research to build credibility (in potential donors' eyes) regarding narratives of Black land loss, (3) working with SICARS to connect to the non-financial resources needed to create a land trust in order to receive such donations, and (4) writing and publishing with Geechee descendants on land issues (e.g., Hardy et al., 2020). We must acknowledge the work that SICARS and other Geechee descendants have been and are doing of their own accord. We are hopeful our work contributes to those efforts in productive ways. When SICARS re-establishes its community land trust, it will be able to preserve the land for future generations, but also allow the homeowners to accumulate wealth through the house's value appreciation.

We further hope our published research (and other forms of documentation) on land loss will inform and motivate state legislators to fund the Heritage Authority for preservation of the culture—its original charge—through land acquisition, part of our abolition ecological politics strategy to transform a state institution. Related, wealth accumulation is, in part, tied to land ownership, and Geechee descendants at times want to sell their property (as of December 2020, there are seven properties listed for sale on Zillow, all of which we have identified as descendant-owned). A SICARS-based community land trust and a state-funded Heritage Authority would offer two avenues for descendants to sell their properties that would retain the integrity of Saltwater Geechee cultural heritage as well as descendant access to the land.

Another SICARS goal we are contributing to includes agricultural rejuvenation work to generate a revenue stream and ideally to create more island-based employment opportunities. Working with SICARS' agricultural program and in partnership with the Heritage Authority, we have helped to expand the program to over five acres (with the potential of up to approximately 40 acres planned for future cultivation) including several heirloom crops such as purple ribbon sugarcane, Geechee red peas, indigo, sour oranges, and Sapelo garlic to generate revenue. For the SICARS' agricultural project, we have focused our efforts to date on (1) helping to procure labor through our own efforts and that of student volunteers, (2) helping to secure incubation funding to help establish land and crop development, and (3) working to assist in developing strategies to process and market agricultural products.

Further aspirational goals include writing policy briefs based on our research findings, supporting onsite legal advice for landowners, developing and supporting onsite processing of heirloom crops, and optimistically job creation (e.g., Bailey and Heynen, 2020; Heynen, 2020). Policy briefs, of course, would be only part of a communication tactic for reaching policy-makers, yet we realize the limitation of policy for abolishing the institutionalized

structures of the racial state that underpin centuries of racist policy (Goldberg, 2001; Kurtz, 2009; Omi and Winant, 2014). Beyond policy, to mitigate issues associated with heirs property losses, for example, we intend to work with SICARS staff and volunteers to organize more educational workshops for community residents related to heirs property retention mechanisms, similar to one previously held by the Georgia Heirs Property Law Center. Land retention, cultural preservation, and job creation are all intermingled and require full engagement of an abolitionist politics and policies to succeed.

Conclusion

Sapelo Island's history as a plantation matters for the future of the Geechee descendants who still call Sapelo home. This history, however, does not determine its future despite the continuation of racialized uneven development. We take stock in McKittrick's discussion of "the coalitional effort to understand decolonization and modernity as unfinished projects" and the way "this poetics dwells on postslave violences in order to provide the context through which Black futures are imaginable" (2013: 12). From McKittrick, and other scholars in the Black Geographies tradition, we know that plantation futures are not codified but mutable and transformable and we will continue to work to understand and support Geechee land focused efforts to do more than solely *preserve* Black identity on Sapelo, but to support its thriving and its growth.

Scholars like Du Bois and Gilmore, through offering contemporary logics of abolition democracy and abolition geography open up new ways of imagining the political ecological relations of property dynamics that have been produced through an ethos of white supremacy. In the face of what feels like "cultural genocide" by some Geechee residents of Sapelo, the need for solidarities to be strengthened by working toward the goal of abolition ecology rely on better understanding the granular and specific histories of property relations. Bledsoe (2017: 47) suggests that

marronage has this continued importance precisely because of its variable and open nature and its fundamental commitment to valuing all life, including that of populations deemed non-existent. In this way, marronage, as a political subjectivity and ethic, transcends time and place, remaining relevant in the present, in potentially innumerable iterations.

While marronage provided safety and security in isolation for many years in the aftermath of enslavement, the draw of seclusion has pulled capital and exurbanites in search of new investment and recreation, which challenges some of the historical motivations and results of marronage. Abolition ecology, in drawing on these rich histories as discussed by Bledsoe and others, works toward preserving the right to exist and the right to exist on their land. Geechee residents and their allies are working together to preserve, in the land, the rights and recognitions emancipation was supposed to bring. Through abolition ecology, Geechee residents can combat the violence of dispossession wrought through capital and white supremacy.

To end her essay, Bailey (n.d.) wrote:

For in many ways we are still living in the days of the Buckra [white man] house and the Buckra fields. I am still in Massa fields. I can see and hear traces of the old days but there in those fields I can also retain my dignity and be myself without undo influences. It's not easy, but I watch the birds and my mind is free, even if the rest of me have committances.

That the plantation will always be sewn into the land and the lives of the Geechee descendants on Sapelo reinforces that “plantation futures demand decolonial thinking that is predicated on human life” (McKittrick, 2013: 3).

Highlights

- There has been considerably little attention given to how race has been central to processes of uneven development.
- The histories of white supremacy continue to be institutionalized into property politics through the processes of racialized uneven development.
- The “racial state” is facilitating the dispossession of Geechee cultural heritage, which lies in having ownership of the land.
- Racialized uneven development persists today in Sapelo’s Geechee descendants’ fight to maintain their land.
- Abolition ecology seeks to name and dismantle oppressive institutions that have maintained racialized uneven development around land and property.

Acknowledgements

The authors contributed equally to this manuscript. For their valuable input and feedback, we are grateful to the Sapelo Island Cultural and Revitalization Society (SICARS), especially: Maurice Bailey, Agricultural Director; Josiah Watts, Land Retention Committee Chair; and Ron Johnson, President. We thank the University of Georgia Marine Institute for its support of this project through access to its facilities. This is contribution number 1088 from the University of Georgia Marine Institute. We are also thanks to several folks for their continued support of the project including: Doug Samson, Reserve Manager for the Sapelo Island National Estuarine Research Reserve; Fred Hay, Island Manager for Georgia DNR; and Merryl Alber, Professor and Director of UGAMI.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The authors disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: This work was partially supported by the National Science Foundation Geography and Spatial Sciences Program (Award #SBE-1759594), the National Socio-Environmental Synthesis Center under funding received from the National Science Foundation (Award #DBI-1639145), and the Georgia Coastal Ecosystems Long-Term Ecological Research Program under funding received from the National Science Foundation (Award #OCE-1832178).

ORCID iD

Dean Hardy  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4541-9430>

Notes

1. “Saltwater Geechee descendant” refers to African Americans of Sapelo Island who are direct descendants of the island’s formerly enslaved people. Geechee descendants are part of the larger Gullah Geechee cultural group in the U.S. Southeast. For an examination of the making of Gullah Geechee identity and culture, see Melissa Cooper’s (2017) book, *Making Gullah: A History of Sapelo Islanders, Race, and the American Imagination*.

2. We want to note here that total Black homeownership rose from 32 of 68 households in 1930 to 60 of 77 households by 1940 (U.S. Census 1930, 1940), which suggests a substantial increase in Black households' ties to the island.
3. We make this assumption because the U.S. Census embargoes full census schedules containing detailed household data for 72 years, meaning the most recent detailed data available are for the year 1940; 1950 data will not be available until the year 2022.

References

- Anderson C (2016) *White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide*. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Bailey CW (2001) *God, Dr. Buzzard, and the Bolito Man: A Saltwater Geechee Talks about Life on Sapelo Island, Georgia* (Bledsoe C, ed.). New York: Anchor Books.
- Bailey CW (n.d.) I am Sapelo. In: *Golden Isles Navigator*. Available at: www.gacoast.com/navigator/iamsapelo.html (accessed 22 April 2019).
- Bailey M and Heynen N (2020) Sweet (and sticky) redemption. *Scalawag*, 29 September. Available at: <https://scalawagmagazine.org/2020/09/gullah-geechee-crops-agriculture/> (accessed 1 November 2020).
- Barbot O (2020) George Floyd and our collective moral injury. *American Journal of Public Health*. DOI: 10.2105/AJPH.2020.305850.
- Bledsoe A (2017) Marronage as a past and present geography in the Americas. *Southeastern Geographer* 57(1): 30–50.
- Bledsoe A and Wright WJ (2018) The anti-Blackness of global capital. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 37(1): 8–26.
- Blumberg BS and Hesser JE (1971) Loci differentially affected by selection in two American black populations. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 68(10): 2554–2558.
- Breed AG (2001) Gullah fear land sale may portend the end; deal may hike rates, push out Sapelo poor. *Washington Post*, June. Washington, DC.
- Brendler T (2015) *A Part of This Earth: The Story of the Sapelo Foundation*. 1st ed. Hollis, NH: Puritan Capital.
- Bynum R (2013a) Sapelo Island residents say property taxes could force them off ancestral land. *The Florida-Times Union*, 29 January. Available at: www.jacksonville.com/article/20130129/NEWS/801258531 (accessed 22 April 2019).
- Bynum R (2013b) Slave descendants fight property tax increases. *Augusta Chronicle*, 1 October.
- Cheves J (1995) Agency's intervention causes rift. *Augusta Chronicle*, 4 July.
- Cimbala PA (1989) The Freedmen's bureau, the Freedmen, and Sherman's Grant in reconstruction Georgia, 1865–1867. *The Journal of Southern History* 55(4): 597.
- Cooper ML (2017) *Making Gullah: A History of Sapelo Islanders, Race, and the American Imagination*. Chapel Hill, NC: UNC Press Books.
- Coulter EM (1940) *Thomas Spalding of Sapelo*. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press.
- Courson MT (1999) Howard Earle Coffin, King of the Georgia Coast. *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 83(2): 322–341.
- Crook R (2007) Bilali—The Old Man of Sapelo Island: Between Africa and Georgia. *Wadabagei: A Journal of the Caribbean and Its Diaspora* 10(2): 40–56.
- Crook R, Bailey C, Harris N, et al. (2003) *Sapelo Voices: Historical Anthropology and the Oral Traditions of Gullah-Geechee Communities on Sapelo Island, Georgia*. Carrollton, GA: State University of West Georgia.
- Darden J (2010) *Detroit: Race and Uneven Development*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Darien News (2015a) Public notices. *Darien News*, 29 April.
- Darien News (2015b) Public notices. *Darien News*, 2 May.
- Davis J (1983) Sapelo Island's blacks fear their historic town is dying. *The Journal-Constitution*, 3 July.
- Davis J (1984) State has no warranty deed to refuge; 2 private citizens say they own tract. *The Atlanta Constitution*, 19 January.

- Davis J (1995) The haven of Hog Hammock. The Atlanta Constitution, 25 June.
- Davis J (2019) Black faces, black spaces: Rethinking African American underrepresentation in wildland spaces and outdoor recreation. *Environment and Planning E: Nature and Space* 2(1): 89–109.
- Derickson KD (2017) Urban geography II: Urban geography in the Age of Ferguson. *Progress in Human Geography* 41(2): 230–244.
- Dewan S (2008) A Georgia Community With an African Feel Fights a Wave of Change. *New York Times*. Late Edition.
- DuBois WEB (1935) *Black Reconstruction in America: An Essay toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880*. New York: Harcourt Brace.
- Duncan R (1986) *Freedom's Shore: Tunis Campbell and the Georgia Freedmen*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press.
- Eaves LE (2017) Black Geographic possibilities: On a Queer Black South. *Southeastern Geographer* 57(1): 80–95.
- Federici S (2004) *Caliban and the Witch*. Autonomedia.
- Ferreira da Silva D (2015) Before man. In: K McKittrick (ed.) *Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Finney C (2014) *Black Faces, White Spaces: Reimagining the Relationship of African Americans to the Great Outdoors*. Chapel Hill, NC: UNC Press Books.
- Foner E (2011) *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877*. New York: Harper Collins.
- GA DNR (1990) *Sapelo Island National Estuarine Reserve Management Plan*. 18 December. Atlanta, GA: Georgia Department of Natural Resources.
- Georgia General Assembly (1983) Sapelo Island Heritage Authority Act 12-3-440. 259.
- Georgia Historical Quarterly (1920) Oglethorpe's Treaty with the Lower Creek Indians. *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 4(1): 3–16.
- Gilmore RW (2002) Fatal couplings of power and difference: Notes on racism and geography. *The Professional Geographer* 54(1): 15–24.
- Gilmore RW (2011) What Is to Be Done? *American Quarterly* 63(2): 245–265.
- Gilmore RW (2017) Abolition geography and the problem of innocence. In: Johnson GT and Lubin A (eds) *Futures of Black Radicalism*. London & New York: Verso Books, pp. 225–240.
- Goeman M (2015) Land as life: Unsettling the logics of containment. In: Teves SN, Smith A and Raheja M (eds) *Native Studies Keywords. Critical Issues in Indigenous Studies*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, pp. 71–89.
- Goldberg DT (2001) *The Racial State*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Gomez MA (1994) Muslims in Early America. *The Journal of Southern History* 60(4): 671–710.
- Grabbatin B (2016) 'The Land Is Our Family and the Water Is Our Bloodline': The Dispossession and Preservation of Heirs' Property in the Gullah-Geechee Communities of Lowcountry South Carolina. Lexington: University of Kentucky.
- Griffin CJ and Evans AB (2008) Embodied practices in historical geography: On historical geographies of embodied practice and performance. *Historical Geography* 36: 5–16.
- Hardy D, Bailey M and Heynen N (2020) State Legislature working to permit sale of heritage preserve lands to private entities. *The Darien News*, 11 June.
- Hardy RD, Milligan RA and Heynen N (2017) Racial coastal formation: The environmental injustice of colorblind adaptation planning for sea-level rise. *Geoforum* 87: 62–72.
- Harris CI (1993) Whiteness as Property. *Harvard Law Review* 106(8): 1707–1791.
- Heynen N (2016) Toward an abolition ecology. *Abolition: A Journal of Insurgent Politics* 1(1). Available at: <https://abolitionjournal.org/toward-an-abolition-ecology/>.
- Heynen N (2019) Uneven racial development and the abolition ecology of the city. In: Ernstson H and Swyngedouw E (eds) *Urban Political Ecology in the Anthro-Obcene*. 1st ed. London: Routledge, pp. 111–128.

- Heynen N (2020) "A plantation can be a commons": Re-earthing Sapelo Island through abolition ecology. *Antipode*. DOI: 10.1111/anti.12631.
- Heynen N and Ybarra M (2020) On Abolition Ecologies and Making "Freedom as a Place". *Antipode* anti.12666. DOI: 10.1111/anti.12666.
- Humphries RL (ed.) (1991) *The Journal of Archibald C. McKinley*. 1st ed. Athens: University of Georgia Press.
- Johnson Gaither C (2016) "Have Not Our Weary Feet Come to the Place For Which Our Fathers Sighed?" *Heirs' Property in the Southern United States*. U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Forest Service, Southern Research Station, e-Technical Report SRS-216: Athens, GA.
- Kahrl AW (2012) *The Land Was Ours: African American Beaches from Jim Crow to the Sunbelt South*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Kahrl AW (2018) Unconscionable: Tax delinquency sales as a form of dignity taking. *Chicago-Kent Law Review* 92(3): 905–935.
- Kemp R and Johnson E (2002) An Act to amend Part 7 of Article 7 of Chapter 3 of Title 12 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, the 'Sapelo Island Heritage Authority Act' 12-3-444 SB 391. Available at: www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/en-US/display/20012002/SB/391 (accessed 30 December 2020).
- Kurtz HE (2009) Acknowledging the racial state: An agenda for environmental justice research. *Antipode* 41(4): 684–704.
- Lauff GH (1963) Sapelo Island Research Foundation, The University of Georgia Marine Institute. *Integrative and Comparative Biology* 3(3): 308–310.
- Lipsitz G (2007) The racialization of space and the spatialization of race: Theorizing the hidden architecture of landscape. *Landscape Journal* 26(1): 10–23.
- Lorimer J and Whatmore S (2009) After the 'king of beasts': Samuel Baker and the embodied historical geographies of elephant hunting in mid-nineteenth-century Ceylon. *Journal of Historical Geography* 35(4): 668–689.
- Manson S, Schroeder J, Van Riper D, et al. (2018a) IPUMS National Historical Geographic Information System: Version 13.0, U.S. Decennial Census 1990, Summary Tape File 1, Table NP12. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota. Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.18128/D050.V13.0> (accessed 30 December 2020).
- Manson S, Schroeder J, Van Riper D, et al. (2018b) IPUMS National Historical Geographic Information System: Version 13.0, U.S. Decennial Census 2000, Summary File 1b, Table NP012D. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota. Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.18128/D050.V13.0> (accessed 30 December 2020).
- Marx K (1976) *Capital, Volume I, Translated by Ben Fowkes*. London: Penguin.
- McCutcheon P (2013) "Returning home to our rightful place": The nation of Islam and Muhammad farms. *Geoforum* 49: 61–70.
- McFeely WS (1994) *Sapelo's People: A Long Walk into Freedom*. New York: WW Norton & Company.
- McKittrick K (2006) *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.
- McKittrick K (2011) On plantations, prisons, and a black sense of place. *Social & Cultural Geography* 12(8): 947–963.
- McKittrick K (2013) Plantation futures. *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism* 17(3): 1–15.
- Morrison D (1976) State's \$4 million purchase to preserve Sapelo Island. *The Atlanta Constitution*, 22 December.
- Mulligan DE (2015) *The Original Progressive Farmer: The Agricultural Legacy of Thomas Spalding of Sapelo*. Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, GA. Available at: <https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1102&context=honors-theses>.
- New Georgia Encyclopedia (2020) Mary Musgrove (ca. 1700-ca. 1763). Available at: www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/mary-musgrove-ca-1700-ca-1763 (accessed 24 November 2020).

- Nixon R (2011) *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- NPR (2008) Georgia's 'Geechee' Culture Braces for Change. National Public Radio. Available at: <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=90268077> (accessed 18 November 2020).
- O'Grady PD and Juengst DP (eds) (1980) The Occupation of Sapelo Island since 1733. In: *Sapelo Papers: Researches in the History and Prehistory of Sapelo Island, Georgia*. Studies in the Social Sciences. Carrollton, GA: West Georgia College, pp. 1–8. Available at: <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/umn.319510011719152> (accessed 30 December 2020).
- Omi M and Winant H (2014) *Racial Formation in the United States*. 3rd ed. London: Routledge.
- Peck JA and Tickell A (1992) Local modes of social regulation? Regulation theory, thatcherism and uneven development. *Geoforum* 23(3): 347–363.
- Peluso NL and Lund C (2011) New frontiers of land control: Introduction. *Journal of Peasant Studies* 38(4): 667–681.
- Pulido L (2017) Geographies of race and ethnicity II: Environmental racism, racial capitalism and state-sanctioned violence. *Progress in Human Geography* 41(4): 524–533.
- Robinson CJ (1983) *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Rodriguez AD (2016) Remaking black political spaces for Black Liberation. Available at: www.metropolitiques.eu/Remaking-Black-Political-Spaces.html (accessed 30 December 2020).
- Safransky S (2018) Land justice as a historical diagnostic: Thinking with Detroit. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 108(2): 499–512.
- Santos M (2002) *A Natureza Do Espaço: Técnica e Tempo, Razão e Emoção*. São Paulo, Brazil: Edusp.
- Scott D (2019) Oral history and emplacement in 'nowhere at all.' The role of personal and family narratives in rural black community-building. *Social & Cultural Geography* 20(8): 1094–1113.
- Severson K (2012) *Taxes threaten community descended from slaves*. *New York Times*, September.
- Smith N (2008) *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Spalding T (1835) Cotton – Its introduction and progress of its culture, in the United States. *Southern Agriculturist and Register of Rural Affairs* 8(1): 35–46.
- Stephens G (1969) Sapelo bought by state: Bargain price is \$835,000. *The Atlanta Constitution*, 28 June.
- Sullivan B (2001) *Early Days on the Georgia Tidewater: The Story of McIntosh County & Sapelo*. 6th ed. Darien, GA: McIntosh County Board of Commissioners.
- Sullivan B and Gaddis AG (2014) *Sapelo Island settlement and land ownership: An historical overview, 1865-1970*. Occasional Papers of the Sapelo Island NERR Volume 3. Sapelo Island, Georgia: Sapelo Island National Estuarine Research Reserve.
- Thomas KH Jr (1989) The Sapelo Company: Five Frenchmen on the Georgia Coast, 1789–1794. In: Kennedy WB, Roach SF and Cowan RP (eds) *The Proceedings and Papers of the Georgia Association of Historians*. Athens: Georgia Association of Historians, pp. 37–64. DOI: 10.6067/xcv8z89bcb.
- Thomas KH Jr (1996) Hog Hammock Historic District: National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. US National Park Service. Available at: <https://npgallery.nps.gov/GetAsset/1735d187-770f-4972-acde-b83e7d5f77a4> (accessed 26 September 2018).
- Thompson VD and Andrus CFT (2011) Evaluating mobility, monumentality, and feasting at the Sapelo Island Shell Ring Complex. *American Antiquity* 76(2): 315–343.
- Threadcraft S (2016) Embodiment. In: Disch L and Hawkesworth M (eds) *The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theory*. New York: Oxford University Press. Available at: www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199328581.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199328581-e-11 (accessed 30 December 2020).
- Toussaint M (2013) Sapelo Voices: Tracy Walker speaks out. *Darien News*, 10 January.
- U.S. Census (1860) Georgia. McIntosh County, Militia District 271. Records of the Bureau of the Census. Available at: <http://www.ancestry.com> (accessed 30 December 2020).
- U.S. Census (1870) Georgia. McIntosh County, Sapelo Island. Records of the Bureau of the Census. Available at: <http://www.ancestry.com> (accessed 30 December 2020).

- U.S. Census (1880) Georgia. McIntosh County, Militia District 1312. Records of the Bureau of the Census. Available at: <http://www.ancestry.com> (accessed 30 December 2020).
- U.S. Census (1900) Georgia. McIntosh County, Sapelo Island, Enumeration District 0109. Records of the Bureau of the Census. Available at: <http://www.ancestry.com> (accessed 30 December 2020).
- U.S. Census (1910) Georgia. McIntosh County, Sapelo Island, Enumeration District 0124. Records of the Bureau of the Census. Available at: <http://www.ancestry.com> (accessed 30 December 2020).
- U.S. Census (1920) Georgia. McIntosh County, Sapelo Island, Enumeration District 0135. Records of the Bureau of the Census. Available at: <http://www.ancestry.com> (accessed 30 December 2020).
- U.S. Census (1930) Georgia. McIntosh County, Sapelo Island, Enumeration District 0003. Records of the Bureau of the Census. Available at: <http://www.ancestry.com> (accessed 30 December 2020).
- U.S. Census (1940) Georgia. McIntosh County, Sapelo Island, Enumeration District 95-3. Records of the Bureau of the Census. Available at: <http://www.ancestry.com> (accessed 30 December 2020).
- U.S. Census (2010) Decennial Census 2010, Summary File 1, Table P12. U.S. Census Bureau. Available at: <https://factfinder.census.gov> (accessed 30 December 2020).
- U.S. Freedmen's Bureau (1865a) Circular No 15, Circulars issued May 1865 – June 1869, Selected Series, M742 & M752, Roll 7. National Archives Records Administration (FamilySearch, 12 February 2015). Available at: <https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C9T4-G73D?cc=2431126&wc=S1N8-C6X%3A1552901902%2C1553018087> (accessed 23 April 2019).
- U.S. Freedmen's Bureau (1865b) Register of land titles issued to freedmen, Georgia, Apr-Sept 1865, Record Group 105, M798, Roll 36. National Archives Records Administration (FamilySearch, 23 March 2017). Available at: <https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C9TZ-3SF7-H?cc=2427901&wc=73QQ-XGN%3A1513389602%2C1513431631> (accessed 22 April 2019).
- Van Sant L, Hennessy E, Domosh M, et al. (2018) Historical geographies of, and for, the present. *Progress in Human Geography*. DOI: 10.1177/0309132518799595.
- Van Sant L, Milligan RA and Mollett S (2020) Political Ecologies of Race: Settler colonialism and environmental racism in the United States and Canada. *Antipode*.
- White RN Jr and Marsh GR (1940) Sapelo Island, Georgia. Historic maps, Surveyor General. Morrow: State of Georgia. Available at: <https://vault.georgiaarchives.org/digital/collection/hmf/id/59/rec/2> (accessed 30 December 2020).
- Wilderson FB III (2010) *Red, White & Black: Cinema and the Structure of US Antagonisms*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Williams D (2001) Supporters say deal could save Gullah Settlement on Sapelo Island, GA. Savannah Morning News, 28 June.
- Wolfe P (2006) Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native. *Journal of Genocide Research* 8(4): 387–409.
- Woods C (2017) *Development Drowned and Reborn: The Blues and Bourbon Restorations in Post-Katrina New Orleans*. Athens: University of Georgia Press.
- Woods CA (1998) *Development Arrested: The Blues and Plantation Power in the Mississippi Delta*. London: Verso.
- Worth JE (1995) *The Struggle for the Georgia Coast: An 18th-Century Spanish Retrospective on Guale and Mocama*. Athens, GA: American Museum of Natural History ; Distributed by the University of Georgia Press.
- Wright WJ (2020) The Morphology of Marronage. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 110(4): 1134–1149.