

## Introduction

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For more than a decade I tried to persuade Walters to write his memoirs. Indeed, in my last email communication with him days before he entered the hospital for the last time I raised the issue. I was writing in response to his “Reflections” essay published in this volume and wrote that the essay “gets me to thinking of the perhaps not so dead horse I’ve been beating for lo these many years—you need to write the MEMOIR man—you owe it to the young, and to the intellectual and political understanding of one of the most critical periods of our history.”<sup>1</sup> In trying to persuade him to write the memoir, I would occasionally compare him with Arthur Schlesinger Jr., the distinguished liberal historian and political activist who in 2000 published the first volume of his memoirs.<sup>2</sup> Although he did not particularly care for the comparison, I would say, “Through Schlesinger’s writings and career one can trace the history of post-war liberalism in the United States, and through your writings and career we can trace the history of post-civil rights era black politics in America.”<sup>3</sup>

Walters would always respond by saying something like “no one is interested in reading about me,” or “I am not interested in writing about me,” or “maybe I will get to it when I finish my book on” whatever he was working on at the time. Unfortunately, he died before he could “get to it” if indeed he ever would have gotten to it. This is unfortunate, because as uncomfortable as he might have been with the comparison to Schlesinger, his memoir would have been to black politics what Schlesinger’s was to American liberalism.

That is, his-story was not about him but about history; a history that, like Schlesinger, he not only chronicled but shaped. Indeed, Walters' history goes back to the civil rights era itself, for in 1958 at the age of twenty when he was president of the NAACP Youth Council in his hometown of Wichita, Kansas, he helped to organize the first modern lunch counter sit-in.<sup>4</sup> This was almost two years before the more famous Greensboro, North Carolina sit-in, which historians view as a pivotal event in the development of the protest phase of the civil rights movement and the eventual passage of the landmark civil rights laws of the 1960s.<sup>5</sup> At the time of his death in September 2011 at the age of seventy-three, Walters was internationally recognized as the foremost scholar of race politics in the United States and as the most influential strategist in black politics since Bayard Rustin.<sup>6</sup>

### **From Wichita to Washington**

Ronald William Walters was born in Wichita on July 20, 1938. The eldest son in a family of seven children, his father was Gilmar "Butler" Walters, a "Buffalo Soldier," Tuskegee airman and a professional musician. His mother, Maxine, was a civil rights investigator for the state of Kansas. Walters' parents were racially conscious and socially active, which as Robert Newby discusses in his chapter in this volume, undoubtedly influenced his engagement with politics and civil rights.

After graduating from Fisk University, Walters earned a PhD in political science from American University. In the late 1960s he established and became founding chair of the first African American Studies program at Brandeis. In the early 1970s he became chairman of Howard University's Political Science Department, helping to turn it into one of the two leading academic centers for the study of African American politics.

A prolific writer, he authored more than one hundred articles and seven books, including important studies on the theory and practice of Pan Africanism, on African American leadership, on strategies for black participation in presidential elections, on reparations, and on the resurgence of conservatism as an expression of white ethnic nationalism. In addition to his scholarly writings, Walters was the leading interpreter of African American politics in the national media. He wrote articles in most of the leading newspapers

and appeared on virtually all of the national television and radio news and commentary programs (appearing a record ninety-one times on C-SPAN). His column on black politics was syndicated by the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA). He also worked as a roving correspondent for NNPA, covering major national and international events. He was also a principal commentator on black politics for *BET News*. From these numerous media activities, he helped to shape popular understanding of race politics in America.

Walters was among a handful of black scholars able and willing to bridge the divide between scholarship and politics. This is a divide that many scholars do not wish to bridge because they think scholarship should be detached from politics, while others cannot bridge it because of the esoteric nature of their work and still others cannot because of their critical perspectives. While maintaining a critical perspective, Walters throughout the post-civil rights era was an advisor and strategist for the black leadership establishment. Vernon Jordan, the former head of the Urban League, described him as “an indispensable part of the brain trust of the movement.”<sup>7</sup> He was a top advisor to Charles Diggs, the founding chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, where Walters helped to shape the group’s philosophy and early strategies. He also advised caucuses of local and state black elected officials—the black caucuses of both the Democratic and Republican parties—and was an influential force at the National Black Political Conventions of the 1970s. In 1984 he was a principal strategist in Jesse Jackson’s presidential campaign. And he participated in the writing of every post-civil rights era “black agenda” from the 1972 Gary Convention to the Million Man March.

In addition to his work in domestic politics and policy, he had an extensive background and experience in international affairs (his doctoral dissertation was on U.S. foreign policy toward Africa, and one of his books was on South Africa’s development of nuclear weapons). At Howard he organized conferences on Pan Africanism, was a leader in several antiapartheid organizations, and was among the founders of TransAfrica and chairman of the board of its affiliate organization TransAfrica Forum. He was also a consultant to the United Nations on racism and discrimination.

As a professor, Walters taught and mentored some of the nation’s leading black political scientists. From 1969 to 1996 he was on the

faculty at Howard; then he was recruited by the University of Maryland, College Park as professor of Government and African American Studies, Distinguished Leadership Scholar, and director of the African American Leadership Academy. He retired in 2009, but at the time of his death he had been persuaded to return to Howard as the senior scholar in residence in African American politics.

In his “Reflections” essay completed weeks before his death, Walters reflected on his career:

For over forty years, my research has sought to address the political condition of African American peoples. I came of age during the civil rights era and, like many of my colleagues, inherited the progressive values of the age with respect to how to utilize my profession. The pressures were also substantial because it was the dawn of black studies, and the thirst of those who had inherited new political rights in 1964 and 1965 pushed many of us to engage the aspirations of our communities for empowerment tactics and strategies. I remember a friend of mine and I would talk on the phone and one question we would ask each other at odd intervals was, “What does this have to do with the liberation of black people?” This question has guided my selection of research topics since that time.

We believe Walters’ work of the last forty years represents an important lens through which one can assess the political aspirations and struggles of African Americans since the death of Dr. King in 1968. We believe further that his legacy of the successful blending of theory and practice is important to this and future generations of scholars and practitioners.

### **Black Activism Encounters American Political Science**

Political science, like most of the sciences, natural and social, in the United States was at its origins a racist and white supremacist profession. Rogers Smith, among others, has shown that an overt ideology of white supremacy and racism dominated political science research from the founding of the discipline in the 1880s until the

1920s.<sup>8</sup> From the 1920s until the 1970s political science scholarship ignored the glaring contradiction of the racial oppression of blacks in the midst of one of the world's leading democratic states.<sup>9</sup> Even after Gunnar Myrdal laid bare this contradiction in his monumental 1944 work, most political scientists remained oblivious to what Myrdal called the "dilemma" of the "Negro problem" in American democracy.<sup>10</sup> In this regard political science lagged behind history, sociology, and anthropology, which as early as the 1940s began to pay some attention to what the black political scientist Martin Kilson called "the edifice of white supremacist pariahization, marginalization, torment and oppression of black people in American life."<sup>11</sup>

The civil rights revolution of the early 1960s, the black power revolt, and the ghetto rebellions of the mid-1960s finally forced the issue of race onto the agenda of American political science and its professional associations. White mainstream political science in its "race relations" approach to the study of race politics tended to focus on the concerns of whites about stability and social peace rather than the concerns of blacks about freedom and equality.<sup>12</sup> As a result of the tumultuous system-destabilizing events of the 1960s and the implementation of affirmative action, the profession in the 1970s began to open its doors to a relatively larger number of African Americans.

In small, token numbers blacks began to enter the profession in the 1930s and 1940s, when scholars like Ralph Bunche, Merze Tate, Robert Martin, Samuel DuBois Cook, Robert Brisbane, and Vincent Brown earned PhDs from the nation's prestigious universities.<sup>13</sup> This first wave of black political scientists, although trained at some of the nation's leading universities, usually could only find employment at the nation's historically black colleges and universities. Working in obscurity in these small, resource-poor institutions without financial support or grants and with large numbers of classes and students, these first-generation black political scientists in a limited way launched an alternative to the mainstream race relations approach. As Walton and Smith write, "They published in obscure and poorly diffused journals and little-known presses, which resulted, in many instances, in their work being overlooked and undervalued. Racism's manifestations in academia allowed much valuable work to remain unseen. Not only was the results of their research made invisible, but these scholars themselves became invisible in the profession."<sup>14</sup>

Walters was a part of the second wave or generation of political scientists, entering graduate school and the profession in the late 1960s and early 1970s. They entered in relatively larger numbers and were influenced by the civil rights and black power movements. Walters and his cohort offered a different perspective, one Katherine Tate in her chapter in this volume describes as a “black science.” This perspective focuses less on system stability and social peace and more on trying to empower blacks as a group as a means to provide solutions to long-standing social and economic problems in the black community, even if this means challenging the status-quo, upsetting whites, and disrupting system stability.<sup>15</sup>

This new perspective resulted in the creation of African American Studies programs and the strengthening and restructuring of the graduate political science curriculums at Howard and Atlanta universities. As I indicated earlier, Walters began his career as the founding chair of the first African American Studies program at Brandeis. Although his graduate specialization was international relations, at Brandeis he shifted to domestic U.S. politics, developing courses in African American politics. In 1970 Samuel DuBois Cook, the first African American appointed to the political science faculty at Duke University (in 1971), while a program officer at the Ford Foundation persuaded the foundation to award major grants to Howard and Atlanta to strengthen and expand their doctoral programs in political science. In 1972 Walters was recruited to head Howard’s Political Science Department. With the resources of the Ford grant, Walters expanded the department’s faculty, recruited a larger number of graduate students, reshaped the curriculum to include a full-fledged black politics field while at the same time attempting to infuse the traditional fields (American politics, international relations, public administration, comparative politics) with the new black science perspective.<sup>16</sup>

Also, at this time new, autonomous disciplines challenging black professional associations were organized in the social sciences. Walters played important roles in organizing and leading two of these associations, the National Conference of Black Political Scientists (NCOBPS) and the African Heritage Studies Association.<sup>17</sup>

In 1973 Howard University sociologist Joyce Ladner edited *The Death of White Sociology*. This was the earliest effort of black scholars to render a systematic critique of mainstream “white bourgeois” social

science and think through what a black alternative, a black science, might look like. Walters was one of two political scientists contributing to the volume; the other was Charles Hamilton the coauthor with Stokely Carmichael of the influential black power manifesto *Black Power: Politics of Liberation in America*. In his chapter "Toward a Definition of a Black Social Science," Walters wrote, "one of the clearest duties of the black social scientists is to challenge the very foundations of white social science and its effects on the black community. . . . Each social scientist must recognize the need to bend his efforts toward the creation of some form of community power."<sup>18</sup>

In addition to challenging the epistemological, theoretical, and to some extent methodological foundations of the social sciences, activist-oriented scholars seeking to empower the black community also had to challenge the discipline's apolitical, disengaged norm of neutrality and objectivity in social research. In general, graduate students in the social sciences in the 1960s and 1970s were socialized to adhere to the Weberian canon of objectivity. This canon eschews normative concerns by focusing on describing, explaining, and theorizing the world, leaving changing it to the "politicians."<sup>19</sup> As an activist scholar Walters was more inclined toward the Marxian view of the role of the social scientist. "The philosophers have only interpreted the world," Marx wrote in his famous *Theses on Feuerbach*, "the point, however, is to change it."<sup>20</sup> Walters was not a Marxist; he was a Du Boisian and drew his professional inspiration from Du Bois' view of the duty of the black scholar to use knowledge to uplift the race.

The kind of activist, change-oriented research and publishing Walters wished to pursue was antithetical to the norms of professional political science. In his forty years Walters published more than one hundred articles; not a single one of them was in a traditional, mainstream political science journal. As he wrote in the "Reflections" essay:

My work is and has been interdisciplinary, since as a young scholar attempting to break through the rejection slips of the major journals, I came to understand the standards by which I was being evaluated for publication and decided that many of them, while useful to the discipline, were not useful to the truth I was attempting to discover, consistent with my larger objectives. So, I came to be somewhat suspicious of

the disciplinary narrowness, not only with respect to subject matter but methodologies, and came to believe that what was needed more than anything was the correct interpretation of the studies that were done on African American political life. The sum total of that concern was that I was not led to produce much original data from self-initiated studies but to test the studies that were being produced against what I knew from deep involvement in community politics to arrive at the black truth as I understood it.

Thus, most of his work was published in specialized journals, in journals of black studies and in journals of thought and opinion, most notably *Black World*.

### **Political Strategist and Public Intellectual**

This activist approach to research and writing also informed Walters' book-length manuscripts. They were change-oriented or what he referred to in his *Death of White Sociology* essay as "liberation oriented social science."<sup>21</sup> Often his writings emerged directly out of or were informed by his work as a political strategist, as, for example, in his book *Black Presidential Politics: A Strategic Approach*, which flowed partly from his work as Jesse Jackson's principal strategist in his 1984 presidential campaign. Similarly, he published a series of articles in *Black World* written in the midst of the ideologically divisive National Black Political Convention of the 1970s, essays deliberately crafted to bridge the ideological conflicts he observed as a leading convention strategist.<sup>22</sup> Finally, out of his many years of advising the Congressional Black Caucus and other black elected officials was forged his thought that the post-civil rights era system-oriented electoral politics and processes were not enough to extract policy benefits from the system. Instead, he urged black leaders to simultaneously employ an "insider strategy" of electoral politics and an "outsider strategy" of protests and mass mobilization. This dual strategy he explains in detail in his contribution to *African American Leadership* and in *Freedom Is Not Enough: Black Voters, Black Candidates and American Presidential Elections*. Again, these studies are informed as much by his

“deep involvement in community politics” as they are by traditional academic research and theorizing.

Finally, Walters believed that black scholars, to the extent they were able, should be public intellectuals. They should be public intellectuals in the sense of translating their sometimes esoteric academic knowledge into information that could be shared with the general public in lectures, newspaper interviews, radio and television appearances, and in regular columns and occasional op-eds in both black and mainstream outlets. The most frequently quoted black political scientist—and one of the most frequently quoted scholars of any color—Walters saw this time-consuming and often tedious engagement with the media as an integral part of his work. In a 1990 *Washington Post* profile, Jacqueline Trescott suggested Walters’ effectiveness with the media, his “media savvy,” was based in part on his activism. Describing him as the “peripatetic protester” and the “griot of black politics,” she concluded that his engagement with the events, issues, and personalities he wrote about enabled him to “edit years of expounding into an electronic sound bite.”<sup>23</sup> Aspects of this part of Walters’ work are treated in Cedric Johnson’s chapter in this volume.

### **Major Themes in Walters’ Writings and Work**

Although it is not easy given forty years of work encompassing the broadest array of writings and activism, five major themes may be distilled to constitute the core themes or concerns of Walters’ life and career.

The first is scholarship in the production of knowledge; knowledge relevant to, what he often referred to as, the liberation of black people. Although the dignity, freedom, and equality of people of African descent were the principal focus of his work, he believed that the black freedom struggle would inevitably contribute to the freedom struggles of all people. This knowledge acquisition, however, must be integrally linked to activism. This idea of activism is a second theme of Walters’ work.

A third theme of Walters’ work was African American leadership; a leadership that emanated from the black community in the sense

that the individuals who present themselves for leadership have their origins in the community and its culture and reflect its needs and aspirations. The study, development, and nurturing of this kind of leadership was an abiding concern.

A fourth theme is public policy, the development and implementation of public policies to achieve for African Americans equal access to and the equal allocation of societal resources. This required, in his view, policies sensitive to the historical legacies of racism as well as racism's manifestations in contemporary institutional practices.

A final theme is unity, the bringing together collectively of African Americans of different ideologies, parties, and institutional affiliations to develop common agendas and strategies around serious programs devoted to bettering the spiritual and material conditions of African people.

### **Overview of Chapters**

In a single volume we cannot claim to cover all of these themes or any one of them with the greatest of depth. However, within the limitations of space, and the availability, resources, and time of the contributors, we endeavored to be as representative, comprehensive, and detailed as possible. We have assembled a distinguished, diverse, multigenerational group of scholars to provide this assessment of Walters' work and its impact and influence on African American thought and politics. All of the contributors are admirers of Walters and several are his former students. We honor his life and legacy in this book. But in the letter of invitation we made it clear that the "best way to honor him is to subject his work to rigorous, critical assessment. . . . We honor him best with that degree of admiration and detachment that great thought deserves."

All except three of the essays were especially prepared for this volume.<sup>24</sup> The essays by Cory Cook and Errol Henderson were originally prepared for presentation at the 2005 annual meeting of the National Conference of Black Political Scientists at a special plenary on Walters' work. The essay by Katherine Tate was originally prepared for the 2012 annual meeting of the National Conference of Black Political Scientists.

The volume is divided into seven sections. The first section begins with an essay by Robert Newby. Newby is Walters' oldest and dearest friend, having grown up with him in Wichita. His chapter is a personal, somewhat idiosyncratic biographical essay that places Walters' career in the context of his growing up in the semi-segregated "wheatlands" of Kansas. A strong, close-knit race-conscious family in a vibrant black community and his study at Fisk University are among the forces that shaped Walters into one of the "tallest trees" of the last half century in the struggle for the liberation of African peoples. Aldon Morris' chapter recounts the history of the Wichita drugstore sit-in in 1958 and the role played by Walters in organizing this first modern sit-in. Morris also discusses the significance of this "low visibility" protest in the emergence of the lunch counter sit-in movement. He writes that "It is rare that a major leader of a pioneering protest movement also becomes an accomplished social scientist who provides a scholarly account of the movement in which he participated." This is exactly what Walters did. Morris draws on Walters, other studies of Wichita, and his own seminal research to present a nuanced and learned history of this "groundbreaking model" of civil rights protest.

The final essay in this section is by Walters himself. In fact, it is the last thing that he completed days before he entered the hospital for the last time. We have titled the essay "Reflections." It was written in response to a series of questions asked by the editors of the *National Political Science Review*. In his response he reflects on the difficulties he faced in the discipline in trying to do political science research as an activist scholar committed to making his work relevant to the liberation of black people. Often, he writes, as he attempted to navigate the norms and ethos of the discipline he would find himself asking, "What has this got to do with the liberation of black people?" As he often did with his writings, he sent me a copy of the essay, writing, "Bob, you have heard some of this before. But in print, is it too candid?" My response: "No, the candor makes the essay all the more alluring. It is poignant and will make our older colleagues reflect and should be of inspiration for some of the young."<sup>25</sup>

In the next section the chapter by Tate serves to foreground the rest of the chapters in the volume. She compares Walters' work with the works of Linda Williams and Derrick Bell, two other recently

deceased black scholars who practiced what she calls “black science.” Rejecting the “assumptions that the politics and personal attributes of researchers are irrelevant to the science they practice,” black science “competes with values rooted in white nationalism that generally dominates mainstream work.” Black science scholars’ values she avers are rooted in the “bias” of black liberation, concerned with the development of knowledge that exposes and explains “the inherent inequality in the status of African Americans” and work in the “tradition of advocating group empowerment.” In locating Walters’ work within this tradition, she analyzes his books on black presidential politics, white nationalism, African American leadership and reparations, highlighting the “often subversive” nature of his scholarship and its “unyielding pessimism.” Tate, like other contributors to this volume and other scholars of black politics generally, is critical of Walters’ tendency to view the black community as possessing “an organically grown set of unified black interests” and his downplaying of the significance of black conservatives, which she claims Walters “surgically” remove from black politics.

Cedric Johnson’s chapter describes his experiences working with Walters as a graduate student at the University of Maryland and at the African American Leadership Institute, which Walters founded. He then situates Walters work in what he calls the “wider new Democratic political milieu” of Clinton era neoliberalism, focusing on Walters’ critique of the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act as an example of his oppositional public intellectual work.

The third section begins with Andra Gillespie’s analysis of Walters’ contribution to the coauthored *African American Leadership*, highlighting his advocacy of a dual “insider-outsider” strategy where black leaders link routine electoral-institutional politics with mass mobilization and protests. Like Tate, Gillespie too is critical of what she sees as Walters’ failure to see the “increasing diversity of interests within the black community.” Rejecting what she calls Walters’ “unity imperative” or his “big tent” philosophy, Gillespie offers a “modest proposal” for the recognition of differences in the black community and a new leadership “model of organized factions.” She also calls on scholars and journalists to employ “fact-based empirical” assessments and other “metrics” to evaluate black individuals’ claim to leadership and the effectiveness of their strategies and programs.

Errol Henderson brings together or attempts to synthesize two of the most important—perhaps the two most important—themes of Walters’ work—black leadership and black nationalism or the imperative of black unity in spite of ideological diversity. Walters believed black unity was imperative because, in spite of all the talk of the declining significance of racism and a post-racist, colorblind society, racism—dynamic and evolving for sure—remains the decisive determinant of the well-being of the black community. While Henderson acknowledges the significance of racism and the importance of black nationalism in combatting it, he, with Tate and Gillespie, too believes Walters often in his activism and scholarship “succumb[ed] to the siren call of the black unity thesis.” Henderson contends that the enormous ideological diversity in the black community renders Walters’ “big tent” black nationalism a “chimera.” This prominent “lacuna” in black politics was unresolved by Walters and continues to be unresolved. Thus, Henderson calls for further research and reflection because, “simply put, we need to understand the motive forces driving the adoption of diverse ideologies and the dynamic factors that lead to changes in the ideological outlook of black peoples with respect to which leaders they support and follow, utilizing whatever means and toward whatever ends.”

The two chapters in the next section use Walters’ *White Nationalism, Black Interests: Conservative Public Policy and the Black Community* as theoretical and hypothesis-generating frameworks for the conduct of innovative and important empirical research. In this most provocative of his books, Walter argues that a “substantial component” of the ascendant conservative movement in the United States should be theorized as akin to other ethnic nationalist movements observed historically and comparatively as, for example, in the former republics of Yugoslavia. In other words, a part of the conservative movement is not just principled opposition to “big government” and high taxes but is also a manifestation of a long-standing white nationalist movement committed to reinstituting and strengthening racialized hierarchies of power and privilege. This theorizing of conservatism, white nationalist interests, and public policy opens fascinating new possibilities for research on race politics, which are explored in the Belk and Cook chapters.<sup>26</sup>

In a penetrating, data-rich analysis of the Tea Party movement that emerged during the Obama presidency, Belk argues that it

emerged precisely out of the “very conditions that Walters predicted would produce a radical conservative uprising.” With the election of the first nonwhite president and the economic dislocations caused by the Great Recession, some whites experienced what Walters called a sense of “power deflation” that made them more receptive to appeals of radical conservatives. Consequently, white nationalism animates the Tea Party movement and some of the more virulent opposition to the president and his policies. Belk’s is a fine study of the Tea Party movement in its own right, but its theoretic and analytic powers are enhanced by his skillful application of Walters’ theory of white nationalism.

Cook is equally skillful in his use of the theory. His work focuses on “identity politics” research on Congress. Cook notes that this fairly extensive body of research has ignored the representation of whites and males, the dominant groups in the society, while concentrating on the representation of subordinate minority groups: blacks, Latinos, and women. Using Walters’ work as a frame of reference, Cook’s chapter addresses this gap in the literature on congressional representation by focusing on how Congress represents the interest of whites. Cook acknowledges that it is more difficult to identify “white interests” than black, Latino, or female interests, but he finds Walters’ suggestion that legislation designed to produce “racially disparate outcomes” that favor whites or males is a useful empirical indicator. Using this indicator, Cook coded over twenty thousand bills introduced in the House between 1991 and 1999 to determine whether they had racially disparate impacts.

Analyzing bill sponsorship, co-sponsorship, and roll call voting, his preliminary findings lend support to Walters’ theory: white legislators do promote white racial group interests although less consistently so than blacks promote black interests. He also found that white, conservative Republican representatives are more likely to advance white racial group interests. Cook concludes that Walters was correct that the 1994 Republican takeover of Congress “resulted in white legislators pursuing an agenda committed to maintaining racial hierarchies of prestige and power.” Cook’s research suggests the need to broaden the boundaries of research on identity politics in Congress, and he expands the analysis of white nationalism in national politics to study the emergence of the Tea Party as a nationalistic response to the election of President Obama.

In the fifth section Hanes Walton and Lenneal Henderson focus specifically on Walters' activist scholarship, with Walton looking at his work as a strategist in presidential elections and Henderson looking at his work on the District of Columbia.

Henderson locates Walters' District activism in the action research tradition of sociologist Kurt Lewin.<sup>27</sup> Action research, in Lewin's view, does not "separate the investigation from the action needed to solve the problem." District problem solving was the focus of Walters' last book, *Democratic Destiny and the District of Columbia*, where he brought together a group of young scholars to address the multifaceted problem of democratic governance or lack thereof in the nation's capital. Walters was a resident of suburban Maryland, but his political soul and mind was in the majority black city of Washington, which Henderson avers was his "laboratory" for understanding and working to achieve African American empowerment. Although *Democratic Destiny* was Walters' first book-length examination of District politics, Henderson writes it was "the culmination of nearly thirty years of work by Walters on the political dynamics of Washington, D.C."

Walters was involved in multiple areas of advocacy and activism in the District, including writing dozens of articles in Washington area newspapers and as many interviews on local television and radio advancing the cause of home rule and self-determination. He appeared frequently before congressional committees and used Howard faculty, students, and other university resources to advance District interests. As a pro bono consultant he played an important role in drafting the 1979 constitution for statehood for the District. As the other chapters in this volume show the major foci of Walters' work were national and global; Henderson's chapter serves to remind us that he was a local as well as a cosmopolitan.

Walton's chapter addresses the abiding concern of Walters in national politics, which was the development of "leverage" strategies to empower the black electorate in presidential elections. He wrote dozens of academic papers, strategy memos, and newspaper columns in addition to two books on black strategies in presidential elections. Walton locates Walters' work in a tradition pioneered by Du Bois, Ralph Bunche, and the NAACP's Henry Lee Moon, who in 1948 wrote *Balance of Power: The Negro Vote*. Walters' *Black Presidential Politics: A Strategic Approach* was a theoretical reformulation of the

work of Du Bois, Bunche, and Moon in light of the nationalization of the black electorate as a result of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. Walters' work in the 1984 Jesse Jackson presidential campaign was yet another of his laboratories to test theories he was developing against what he learned from his engagement with the seamy realities of two-party politics in the United States. Walton shows Walters' willingness to reflect on and reevaluate his theories in light of the failures of the Jackson campaigns and especially the campaigns of Al Sharpton and Carol Moseley Braun. At the time of his death he was engaged in further reflection and critical reevaluation of those theories in light of the election, with near-unanimous black voter support, of the first African American president.

In evaluating Walters' work on presidential strategies in the contexts of mainstream political science, Walton concludes that the mainstream's narrow behavioral focus on the individual voter rather than group concerns or interests meant that Walters' work was "undervalued" except in the African American community.

The next part of the book includes three chapters on Walters' internationalism. Karin Stanford, a doctoral student under Walters, presents a panoramic overview of his entire career in foreign affairs, beginning with his doctoral dissertation and his early interest in a career in the U.S. Foreign Service. Stanford shows Walters' concept of "race justice," which animated his domestic concerns, as the animating concern of his internationalism as well. Horace Campbell focuses on Walters' Pan Africanist work, including his activities with the Congressional Black Caucus, the African Liberation Support Committee, TransAfrica, and the United Nations, in which he worked to build a movement to oppose global apartheid. Campbell suggests Walters' scholarship on Pan Africanism, including his 1993 book *Pan Africanism: An Analysis of Modern Afrocentric Movements*, was an attempt to take a fresh look at the phenomenon in the context of his black nationalist conception of the imperative of the unity of all African peoples in a collective struggle on a global scale against racism and white supremacy. Like the domestic critics of Walters' unity imperative, Campbell is skeptical of its utility given the "kinds of feuds, splits and vendettas that plagued black liberation struggles in the United States." Campbell foregrounds his examination of Walters' Pan Africanism with a discussion of the Arab Spring or what he refers to as the African "Awakening" or "Nile revolution."

This awakening, he suggests, opens up possibilities of a redefinition of Pan Africanism toward a more “people-centered” perspective, a perspective, for example, that would focus Pan Africanism on the neglected “work of radical African women,” a category for the most part scholars of Pan Africanism including Walters ignore.

Finally, Charles Henry’s chapter focuses on reparations for the crimes of slavery and the Atlantic slave trade, which is a subject Walters took up in his 2008 book *The Price of Racial Reconciliation*. Henry, himself the author of a major text on reparations, like Walters, views reparations as primarily a moral issue not subject to the traditional politics of interest group bargaining. Like Walters, Henry also views the issue of domestic reparations as having international implications, comparing, as Walters does, the South African and United States experiences.

The final part of the book gives Walters the last word, followed by an afterword.

In February 2009 Walters was invited to deliver a paper on the Obama election and the prospects for his presidency on issues of concern to African Americans at the Alan B. Larkin Symposium on the American Presidency at Florida Atlantic University. The proceedings of the symposium were prepared for publication by the University Press of Florida.<sup>28</sup> Walters died before he could undertake revisions of his paper. Since I also delivered a paper at the symposium and the editors were familiar with our long association, I was asked and quickly agreed to prepare Walters’ draft for final publication. In revising the essay, I used the comments and suggestions from the anonymous reviewers, material from Walters’ subsequent writings on Obama (mainly from his weekly columns), and recollections from our frequent conversations. In style, language, and substance I attempted to adhere as closely as possible to Walters’ original presentation.<sup>29</sup>

In the essay, he discusses the multiple dimensions of civil rights in the post-civil rights era, the terribly disproportionate impact of the “Great Recession” on the black community, and the pivotal role of the black vote in Obama’s nomination and election. Consistent with his long-held leverage theories of black voting in presidential elections, he argued that the black community, given the disparate impact of the Great Recession and the strategic value of its vote, deserved commensurate policy benefits from the first black

president. Reflecting on the administration after nearly two years, he concluded those policy benefits (especially with respect to the double-digit black unemployment rate) had not been forthcoming. And black leaders and the black community generally, he concluded, instead of using their leverage to extract those benefits, were giving the president a pass. This he viewed as a strategic error, writing,

Blacks have a right to demand a useful product from the political system in exchange for their participation and to evaluate the worthiness of politics on that basis. That is, it is valid for them to ask what difference it makes to the satisfaction of their interests that a black is elected president. To give him a pass is to ask for a loss. Because if a black president can ignore those interests, little can be expected from his white successors.

I conclude the volume with an afterword, in which I discuss changes in the political science profession with respect to blacks, black science, and activism since Walters became a political scientist forty years ago. I also engage the arguments in this volume and elsewhere that are skeptical or critical of Walters' argument about the continuing viability and integrity of a black community with collective group interests.

### Notes

1. E-mail, Robert C. Smith to Ronald Walters, Subject: *NPSR*, August 18, 2010.
2. Arthur Schlesinger Jr., *A Life in the Twentieth Century: Beginnings, 1917–1950* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000).
3. On Schlesinger's role in understanding postwar liberalism in the United States, see Stephen Depoe, *Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., and the Ideological History of American Liberalism* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1994).
4. Aldon Morris, "Black Southern Sit-in Movement: An Analysis of Internal Organization," *American Sociological Review* 48 (1981): 744–67, and Gretchen Cassel Eick, *Dissent in Wichita: The Civil Rights Movement in the Midwest, 1954–72* (Urbana: University of

- Illinois Press, 2001). The local public television station in Wichita, KPTS, in conjunction with the Wichita-Sedgwick County Historical Museum and the Kansas Humanities Council produced a documentary of the sit-in. see *The Dockum Sit-in: A Legacy of Courage*, KPTS/PBS, n.d.
5. See Aldon Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Free Press, 1984).
  6. On the significance of Rustin as a civil rights-era strategist, see Jervis Anderson, *The Troubles I've Seen* (New York: Harper Collins, 1997) and Bayard Rustin, *Down the Line: The Collected Writings of Bayard Rustin* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1971).
  7. Dennis Hevesi, "Ronald Walters, Rights Leader and Scholar Dies at 72," *New York Times*, September 14, 2010.
  8. Rogers M. Smith, "The Puzzling Place of Race in American Political Science," *PS* 37 (2004): 43–47.
  9. Ibid.
  10. Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*, 2 vols. (New York: Harper & Row, [1944] 1962).
  11. Martin Kilson, "Political Scientists and the Activist-Technocrat Dichotomy: The Case of John Aubrey Davis," in *African American Perspectives in Political Science*, ed. Wilbur Rich (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2007), 187. Kilson's profile of Davis is a study in activism by a first-generation black political scientist. On the relative attention of historians and sociologists to race, see Ernest Wilson, "Why Political Scientists Don't Study Race but Historians and Sociologists Do," *PS* 18 (1985): 600–07.
  12. Hanes Walton, Jr., Cheryl Miller, and Joseph McCormick, "Race and Political Science: The Dual Tradition of Race Relations Politics and Research," in *Political Science and Its History: Research Programs and Political Traditions*, ed. J. Dryzek et al. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
  13. Kilson, "Political Scientists and the Activist-Technocrat Dichotomy."
  14. Hanes Walton, Jr., and Robert C. Smith, *American Politics and African American Quest for Universal Freedom*, 6th ed. (New York: Longman, 2012), xiv.
  15. Hanes Walton, Jr., and Joseph McCormick, "The Study of African American Politics as Social Danger," *National Political Science Review* 6 (1997): 229–44.

16. After graduating from the University of California, Berkeley, I enrolled in the graduate program at UCLA. After a year, my major advisor (Harry Scoble) and I independently came to the conclusion that I should leave UCLA and go to Howard to study black politics in the new program Walters was then developing. In my first year at Howard, I became Walters' research assistant, which eventually resulted in the publication of my first article in a scholarly journal that we coauthored. See Ronald Walters and Robert C. Smith, "The Black Education Strategy in the Seventies," *Journal of Negro Education* 48 (1979): 156–73.
17. Walters was also the principal organizer and founding president of the little-known and short-lived National Congress of Black Faculty, an almost impossible effort to organize and sustain a cross-disciplinary organization of all black college and university faculty in the United States. See Ronald Walters and Robert C. Smith, "Black Faculty: Organizing for Survival, Excellence and Service," *The Journal*, published by the Illinois Committee on Black Concerns in Higher Education, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, 2003. Although engaged throughout his career in organizing and leading black scholarly organizations, he was also active in the discipline's mainstream associations; in 1995, for example, he was elected to the governing council of the American Political Science Association.
18. Ronald Walters, "Toward a Definition of Black Social Science," in *The Death of White Sociology*, ed. Joyce Ladner (New York: The Free Press, 1973), 212.
19. Max Weber, *The Methodology of the Social Sciences* (New York: The Free Press, 1949).
20. Karl Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach," in *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1969), 30.
21. Walters, "Toward a Definition of Black Social Science," 201.
22. Ronald Walters, "The New Black Political Culture," *Black World* 21 (1972): 4–17 and Walters, "African American Nationalism: A Unifying Ideology," *Black World* 22 (1973): 9–21.
23. Jacqueline Trescott, "Howard University's Participatory Pundit: Political Scientist and Activist Ronald Walters," *Washington Post*, November 8, 1990.