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New Destinations of Empire: Imperial Migration from the Marshall Islands to Northwest Arkansas

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines Marshall Islander migration to Arkansas as an outcome of an international agreement, the Compact of Free Association, between the U.S. and the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), a former U.S. territory. While the Compact marked the formal end of U.S. colonial administration over the islands, it also re-entrenched imperial power relations between the two countries, at once consolidating U.S. military access to the islands and creating a Marshallese diaspora whose largest resettlement site is now Springdale, Arkansas. As a result, Springdale, an "all-white town" for much of the 20th century, has recently been remade by Marshallese and also Latino immigration, nearly tripling in size in the past three decades. I examine U.S. empire through three interrelated lenses: through *an imperial policy*, the Compact of Free Association (COFA); through *an imperial diaspora,* the Marshallese diaspora; and through *the town of Springdale, Arkansas*, a new immigrant destination for Marshall Islanders, which I argue has become a *new destination of empire*. These three lenses reveal how empire's interrelated workings—migration, militarization, racialization, labor, detention, capitalism, and the law, among others—inform one another to uphold U.S. imperial power and how U.S. empire both engenders and constrains mobility for its subjects. I argue that COFA status, the visa-free immigration status granted to Marshallese immigrants, is a type of *imperial citizenship* and that its partial, contingent, and revocable character produces precarity for those who hold it, placing them alongside other groups of imperial citizens from U.S. non-sovereign territories. Due to a lack of awareness of U.S. empire, however, long-term residents in new destinations of empire like Springdale are unable to comprehend Marshall Islanders as imperial citizens. Instead, their interpretations of Marshall Islanders' presence are woven back into dominant narratives of U.S. exceptionalism. Such interpretations of *why* COFA status exists exemplify and perpetuate an occlusion of U.S. empire. In Springdale, in other words, the refrain—'We are here because you were there', commonly used to explain the presence of imperial migrants elsewhere—was never heard and, thus, never placed in the context of empire.

NEW DESTINATIONS OF EMPIRE: IMPERIAL MIGRATION FROM THE MARSHALL ISLANDS TO NORTHWEST ARKANSAS

by

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AFPAC   Air Forces Pacific

CBP   Customs and Border Protection

CHIP   Children's Health Insurance Program

CNMI   Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands

COFA   Compact of Free Association

DHS   Department of Homeland Security

ESL   English as a Second Language

FAS   Freely Associated States

FSM   Federated States of Micronesia

HSI   Homeland Security Investigations

ICE   Immigration and Customs Enforcement

IPA   Independent Practice Association

LPR   Legal Permanent Resident

POW   Prisoner of War

RMI   Republic of the Marshall Islands

TTPI   Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands

USCIS   U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

WRA   War Relocation Authority

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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

New Destinations of Empire: An Overview

Thirty years ago, Springdale, Arkansas, was a small town in the Ozark Mountains whose population of 24,000 was almost exclusively white, due in large part to a long history of racialized dispossession and resettlement (Brotherton, 2014; Lancaster; 2014b). A site on the Trail of Tears, Springdale witnessed the forcible relocation of the Cherokee population in the 1830s, followed by repopulation by white settlers from the Northeastearn U.S. (Arkansas Trail of Tears Association, 2013). Springdale was also a "sundown town" during the Jim Crow era: by the mid-1920s, it, like many towns in the region, had expelled or excluded any Black population from residing there (McConnell & Miraftab, 2009). Since the 1980s, however, an influx of immigrants from Latin America and the Pacific has earned Springdale a reputation as Northwest Arkansas's "immigrant town" in the eyes of many white residents in the area (personal communication, Shiloh Museum staff, Springdale, AR, July 2013). Due largely to this migration, the city's population has nearly tripled in the past three decades.

While many sites in the U.S. South are being studied as new destinations for Latino immigrants (Marrow, 2011; Winders, 2005; Smith & Furuseth, 2006), Springdale as a new destination has a different face: it is now home to 8,000 Marshall Islanders, or Marshallese, making it the single largest resettlement site in the Marshallese diaspora (interviews, consular staff, Honolulu, HI, Springdale, AR, Washington, D.C., 2013 and 2014). Arriving in unprecedented numbers, Marshallese residents now comprise more than ten percent of the city's population of 73,000 (interview, Consulate General of the Marshall Islands, Springdale, AR, July 2013). According to 2010 U.S. census figures, there are approximately 4,300 Marshallese living in Arkansas, the vast majority of whom reside in Springdale (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). However, the Marshallese Consul and other community sources estimate the Marshallese population to be somewhere between 8,000 and

12,000 (personal communication, Consul General of the Marshall Islands, Springdale, AR, July 16, 2013; *Northwest Arkansan*, 2010). Marshallese migrants arrived in Springdale on the heels of Latino migrants, primarily Mexicans, Salvadorans, and Guatemalans, who began to settle there in the early 1980s (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010; Guerrero, 2010; García Mont, 2015). Together, these two groups now constitute more than 35 percent of Springdale's population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Without a doubt, their resettlement has radically reshaped Springdale's demographic composition.

Although it is uncommon for rural Arkansas to be thought of as a hub in the Pacific Islander diaspora, the arrival of Marshallese migrants has put Springdale on the map of the "New Pacific" in an unexpected way. The historical roots of this resettlement are based in a 1986 agreement between the U.S. and the Marshall Islands known as the *Compact of Free Association*.[1] The Compact signaled the formal end of U.S. colonial administration over the islands, a control which dated back to 1947 (Hills, 2004). In addition to safeguarding long-term U.S. military access to the Marshall Islands, the Compact established a unique caveat to U.S. immigration law: it granted citizens of the Marshall Islands and other Compact states the right to travel to, reside in, and work in the U.S. without a visa.

As a result of the Compact, Marshallese migration to the U.S. has skyrocketed since 1986. The Compact's migration provision has dramatically reshaped this part of the Pacific diaspora, etching new lines of migration, labor streams, and social networks between former U.S. territories and the U.S. mainland (Shigematsu & Camacho, 2010; Baldoz, 2011). Marshallese migrants' arrival in Springdale conjures up the refrain of postcolonial migrants in many sites: "We are here because you were there" (Kushnick, 1993; *Los Angeles Times*, 2005). Remade through Marshallese migrants' imperial migration, or migration within U.S. empire as U.S. imperial subjects, Springdale is not only a new immigrant destination but also a *new destination of empire.*

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[1] The U.S. elaborated three separate Compacts of Free Association, with the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), and Palau. While these overlap in significant ways, this dissertation focuses primarily on the U.S.-RMI Compact of Free Association.

What does it mean to label a place like Springdale a new destination of *empire*, not just of immigrant settlement? In theorizing contemporary systems of U.S. global hegemonic power, geographers and other scholars have extensively engaged and debated the concept of empire (Dalby, 2007; Agnew, 2003; Hardt & Negri, 2001), as well as related terms such as imperialism (Harvey, 2003, 2007; Dalby, 2008); colonialism (Gregory, 2004; Davis, 2011) and its permutations, including settler colonialism (Wolfe, 2006; Veracini, 2010) and "breakaway settler colonialisms" (Sidaway, 2000); hegemony (Agnew, 2003; Grewal, 2005); and globalization (Sparke, 2003, 2004). Working alongside and with these concepts are a series of terms marked by temporal distinctions that both separate them from and link them to colonialism and imperialism: neoimperialism (McEwan, 2003), postcolonialism (Sharp, 2008; Sidaway, 2003); and neocolonialism (Sparke, 2003). As the wide-ranging debates over the meanings and uses of these concepts reveal, demarcating the line(s) between imperialism and colonialism has been a complicated, and in some ways irresolvable, endeavor. Because these frameworks and debates have animated much productive scholarship and because they are foundational to the chapters that follow, they—especially imperialism, empire, colonialism, and postcolonialism—merit attention here as conceptual anchors.

In recent geographical scholarship, definitions of colonialism have tended to emphasize direct settlement, occupation, and formalized political control by one state over another, which cedes or subsumes its own sovereignty, at least partially and/or in theory (Gregory, 2004; Harris, 2004; Blaut, 2012). Definitions of imperialism, by contrast, often articulate an influence or exertion of power that does not necessarily rely on direct settlement or formal political control by an external power (Clayton, 2003; Flint & Taylor, 2007). Painter and Jeffrey (2009), for example, define colonialism as "the establishment of permanent or extended settlement (colonies) in those territories" (p. 170) but see imperialism as "the control by one state of other territories" (p. 170) by military, political, and/or economic means. In this dissertation, my use of the terms colonialism and

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imperialism most closely follows the definitions laid out by Painter and Jeffrey (2009). However, I also aim to retain the implicit tensions *between* the two systems, as many geographers have (Sidaway, 2000; Smith, 1994; Roberts, Secor, & Sparke, 2003), suggesting that global hegemonic powers like the U.S. have been able to manage population movement, economic development, and militarization of territories under and through both systems (Shohat, 1992; Duara, 2004). Tensions in delineating the two systems also come to bear in considerations of what constitutes external political control: while the U.S. may not hold formal political jurisdiction over countries like Iraq or Afghanistan, for example, it is able to exert considerable political, economic, and military influence over them, in part due to the presence of U.S. military bases and troops, an influence that arguably diminishes the sovereignty of those nations (Gregory, 2004; Dowler, 2012). In this way, while the U.S. does not always hold *colonial* control over countries where it carries out war, it often exerts its *imperial* power there using techniques it also employs in its colonies (e.g., through the establishment of military bases, a phenomenon common to U.S. colonies like Puerto Rico and Guam, which *are* under formal U.S. political jurisdiction). While it is ultimately constructive to understand colonialism and imperialism as distinct processes, I argue, the overlaps between them are also significant. In certain moments and places, these two processes are separate; for example, U.S. economic influence on Puerto Rico as a *colony* (LeBrón, 2016; Briggs, 2002) operates differently from U.S. economic influence on NAFTA signatories like Mexico or El Salvador, which are arguably under U.S. *imperial* influence (Knight, 2005; Cowen & Smith, 2009). In others—for example, in the U.S.-controlled Pacific during the 21ˢᵗ century—they are nearly indistinguishable or may operate concurrently.

Within political geography, analyses of the U.S. as an empire have preoccupied scholars for some time (Bassin, 1987; Hudson, 1977), particularly around the role of territorial expansion (Murphy 1990; Jacobson, 1999), resource extraction (Dalby, 2004; Emel, Huber, & Makene, 2011), and access to new global markets (Moisio & Paasi, 2013; Cowen & Smith, 2009). As many scholars

have suggested, territorial expansion has served as a central motor for empires generally (Veracini, 2010; Elkins, 2005). While U.S. territorial expansion within the continental U.S. has involved settlement and dispossession of Native populations (Smith, 2015; Dunbar-Ortiz, 2014), U.S. imperial expansion beyond the U.S. mainland has relied less heavily on direct settlement than have many European empires (Davis, 2011; Lutz & Enloe; 2009). By the mid-2000s, political geographers and critical geopolitics scholars within Anglophone geography had largely settled on empire as the main organizing logic for understanding U.S. hegemonic power (Schuurman, 2009). As many have argued, U.S. power has adopted new political, economic, and military forms in recent decades, signifying a shift from practices of colonialism to imperialism. Scholars have also emphasized that the concept of *empire* extends beyond the political, economic, and territorial practices of *imperialism*, suggesting that an empire is not only a territorial entity but also an ideology (Harvey, 2003), a political system (Sidaway, 2000; Dalby, 2008), and a set of hierarchical social relations shot through with power (Bhabha, 1994; Fanon, 1963; Loomba, 1998), all of which play out at local as well as global scales (Mignolo, 2012).

Reflecting on the Iraq War and the post-9/11 expansion of U.S. global military power, for example, Neil Smith (2003) and David Harvey (2003) argued that such expansion was enabled and enforced through increasingly economic, rather than territorial, means. Over the 20th century, and particularly since the Cold War, they suggest, U.S. empire has retooled itself to consolidate economic control worldwide through deregulation, privatization, and "accumulation by dispossession" (Harvey, 2003). For these scholars and others (Roberts, Secor & Sparke, 2003; Dalby, 2008), global economic power has become a key factor in, if not the central tenet of, U.S. global power. Other political geographers and critical geopolitical scholars, however, have attended to the expansion of U.S. military power as characteristic of contemporary empire itself, particularly U.S. empire (Bernazzoli & Flint, 2009; Dalby, 2007; Farish & Vitale, Woodward; 2013; Pearson, 2012), looking

to the global spread of the U.S. military base network (Vine, 2011; Davis, 2011) and the intensification of militarized borders (Camacho, 2012; Nevins, 2002). Across these works, scholars have examined the new ways in which U.S. empire has expanded its reach.

In contrast to political geography, cultural geography has generally been more committed to postcolonialism (Blunt & McEwan, 2003; Cullen, Ryan, & Winders, 2013) than to a theoretical framing of empire, a difference due in part to the influence of postcolonial theory within cultural geography (Driver, 1992; Jazeel, 2012; Cook & Harrison, 2003). Whereas political geographers and critical geopolitical scholars have focused more on "big-picture" structural analyses of power and territory (Elden, 2007; but see feminist geopolitical scholars like Hyndman, 2004, Pratt, 2005, and Dowler, 2012 for counter-tendencies), cultural geographers have tended to study more localized sites of cultural production and contestation as their objects of analysis (Mitchell, 1991).

This focus in cultural geography has come in large part through the influence of postcolonial theory. Cultural geographers (Jazeel, 2012; Nash, 2002; Robinson, 2003) have mapped out the persistent traces of colonial influence on landscapes and peoples for whom formal colonialism is ostensibly past, although at times this work falls into studying "the colonial past" from the perspective of the "postcolonial future" (Clayton, 2003), as several cultural geographers have noted (Anderson, 2000; Clayton; 2003; Gilmartin & Berg, 2007; Sidaway, 2000). This work in cultural geography also draws on scholarship beyond geography on colonial archives and texts (Stoler, 2002, 2010) and the colonial tendencies animating law, both past and present (Coulthard, 2007; Roy, 2006). Additionally, cultural geographers, including many feminist geographers, have looked to geography's imperial roots, studying practices of exploration and travel writing (Berg, 2001; Anderson & Domosh, 2002); mapping and surveying (Blaut, 2012; Harris, 2004; McEwan, 2003); and the way such pasts "haunt" the colonial present (Cameron, 2008). This scholarship has made significant contributions to theories of colonial and postcolonial influence within geography and

appears most later in this chapter, where I discuss this project's methodology. Postcolonial theory remains useful in this project, both on its own and in its deployment by cultural geographers, in particular because it has helped me to theorize some of the political and theoretical dimensions of conducting anti-colonial scholarship (Mohanty, 1988) and to make sense of my own positionality as a researcher within that project (Smith, 1999). In general, however, this dissertation uses the terms colonialism and imperialism, rather than postcolonialism, to emphasize the active, ongoing sense of the processes I analyze and avoid interpretations of the "post"-colonial as *past* colonialism.

Finally, this dissertation draws on Pacific scholars' theorizations of imperial and colonial power in an effort to understand the differences and continuities between the two systems. Pacific scholarship on U.S. hegemonic power in the region has been largely focused on colonialism or "old school" colonialism, as Julian Aguon (2006) terms it, with the exception of a few key works grounded in American Studies, which have shifted to analyzing and describing the U.S. as an *empire* (Baldoz, 2011; Jacobson, 1999; Camacho, 2011). While, as mentioned above, cultural geography's orientation toward postcolonialism over empire has much to do with the theoretical influences of postcolonial theory, Pacific scholarship's proclivity to this framework has more to do with the grounded location of the scholars analyzing U.S. power. Their geographical and political positionings within a formalized legal system of U.S. colonialism allow for a different vantage point of the workings of U.S. hegemony in the region. For example, Pacific Islanders have experienced ongoing militarization that has recently intensified due to the U.S. military's "pivot to Asia" (Stuart, 2012), and the Pacific region is home to the majority of non-sovereign and semi-sovereign U.S. territories (Shigematsu & Camacho, 2010). For this reason, I join other geographers (Davis, 2007, 2011, 2015; Kajihiro, 2009; Mei-Singh, 2016; Petersen-Smith, 2012) in suggesting that geography as a discipline has much to learn from Pacific scholars about the historical and contemporary dimensions of U.S. global hegemony.

In fleshing out the long history of formal or "old school" colonialism(s) in the Pacific region, Pacific scholars have drawn connections between the overlapping colonialisms experienced by Pacific Islander populations under Spanish, Japanese, German, and French colonial regimes (Dirlik, 1992; Maclellan, 2005; Aguon, 2006). In this key way, Pacific scholarship on colonialism and imperialism differs from cultural geography, which has focused mainly on British imperialism (Nash, 2002). This work also highlights the long histories of resistance to colonialism in the Pacific (Davis; 2011; Fujikane, 2012; Silva, 2004) and is often informed by indigenous conceptualizations of sovereignty and self-determination (Osorio, 2001; Kajihiro, 2009). Pacific scholars, in examining continuities between different empires over time, reveal significant overlaps between systems of imperialism and colonialism, showing, for example, how practices of settlement, labor exploitation, and militarization have been used under both systems to expand external hegemonic power (Poblete, 2014; Go, 2008). Thus, I use this scholarship as a point of departure for examining convergences between colonialism and imperialism, while retaining a demarcation between the two that I find analytically productive, because it facilitates analysis of how formally distinct political systems enable or constrain different techniques of power.

As this dissertation shows, while empire and colonialism may operate at different registers and in different regions, U.S. colonialism has not been *replaced* by U.S. empire but works alongside and within it. If the processes, systems, and formations of U.S. power have changed over the past century, as Chapter 2 discusses, Pacific Island territories' experiences of U.S. influence are a reminder that empire continues to function in ways that are similar to formal colonialism and that map onto geographies whose populations have long been subjected to such dynamics. Moreover, this dissertation argues, the historical precedent of U.S. *colonial* power in the Pacific region has carved out grooves—institutionally, territorially, culturally, even in the landscape itself—that have enabled new permutations of empire, both in the Pacific and around the world. Thus, imperialism

and colonialism, in addition to other formulations of global hegemonic power, must be theorized in tandem, and always with caution toward claims that colonialism is past.

Given this overlap and complexity, then, how does one *study* an empire? Critical geographers (Smith, 2003; Gregory, 2004; Dalby, 2008; Sidaway, 2000) and spatially minded scholars from other disciplines (Mohanty, 1988; Said, 1993) have long grappled with the methodologies of studying empire: Where do we study it? In which locations, scales, and types of places should we look for it? How will we identify it? (Or, should we apply former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart's approach to identifying obscenity and trust that we will "know it when we see it?") (O'Meara & Shaffer, 1964). What kinds of place-making processes are distinctly imperial or colonial, and what are their effects? This dissertation aims to address these questions by developing the concept of *new destinations of empire* and exploring the potential of such sites for exposing different workings of U.S. empire.

In the chapters that follow, I attempt to tell a story of U.S. empire through three lenses or frames: through *an imperial policy*, the Compact of Free Association, forged at the formal end of U.S. colonialism in the Marshall Islands in 1986; through *the Marshallese diaspora*, which began to spread prior to the Compact but whose nodes and channels have expanded exponentially since then; and through *the town of Springdale, Arkansas*, a new immigrant destination for Marshall Islanders, which I will argue has become a *new destination of empire*. The entirety of this story unfolds under the long shadow of U.S. empire. Telling it through these different sites and lenses, I argue, allows me to look closely at how empire's interrelated workings—migration, militarization, labor, detention, capitalism, and the law—inform one another to uphold U.S. imperial power and how empire both enables and constrains mobility for its subjects.

Each of these three frames—an imperial policy, an imperial diaspora, and a new destination of empire—allows this dissertation to ask certain questions of empire and, more specifically, of

empire's relation to power and mobility. In parts of the dissertation, such as Chapters 2 and 3, these three frames appear independently; in others, they work in tandem, as in Chapter 5, which develops a concept of Marshall Islanders' imperial citizenship, produced by the Compact and interpreted by Springdale residents. My engagement with the first frame—an imperial policy—starts with the premise that the Compact of Free Association between the Marshall Islands and the U.S. is, in fact, an imperial policy, despite marking, in theory, the "independence" of the Marshall Islands. I base this claim on two primary factors: first, the Compact emerged from a long history of colonial and military U.S. presence in the Marshall Islands and, second, the Compact reconfigured and enshrined U.S. political, economic, and military dominance over the Marshall Islands, even as it officially brought an end to *formal* U.S. colonial administration there. Critically interrogating the history of the Compact's creation and implementation is crucial to understanding it as an imperial policy because such an approach enables us to see the power relations inherent in its construction, as well as the geopolitical interests—both short-term and long-term—that drove it. In other words, treating the Compact as an imperial policy, rather than a simple bilateral agreement between two sovereign states, enables us to examine the historically produced, wildly uneven power relations between the two signatory parties, as Chapter 2 lays out.

More broadly, study of imperial policies affords critical political geographers, geopolitical theorists, postcolonial scholars, and others a key vantage point on shifting modes of global domination and territorial power. To study contemporary geopolitical policies and bilateral agreements *as imperial policies* is to examine the ways in which such policies reentrench hegemonic power relations between two (or more) nations while ostensibly existing outside, or beyond, formal colonial occupation. While the global political system has largely, although not entirely, shifted away from formal colonial rule and occupation in recent decades, key elements of colonial systems— external control over population movement, economic development, and militarization of

territories—are retained and reentrenched through new modes of global hegemonic governance that need not always rely upon formal colonial rule. A critical analysis of imperial policies, then, sheds light on questions of sovereignty, pushing scholars—as well as policy-makers and activists—to interrogate how formal UN-recognized sovereignty of certain countries and territories is in fact often eroded by bilateral agreements, military accords, and economic provisions like regional and global free-trade agreements. As I argue in Chapter 2, forms of imperial statecraft like the Compact of Free Association effectively devalue the sovereignty and self-determination of countries like the Marshall Islands, exhibiting power relations characteristic of imperialism.

Finally, examination of imperial policies, especially those as broad-reaching in their provisions as the Compact, reveals how imperial powers like the U.S. manage populations in semi- or non-sovereign territories by marrying economic, political, military, and migration-based provisions. By examining the interrelated workings of these policy components and their mutual articulation through documents like the Compact, scholars can examine the costs and contingencies of seemingly benevolent provisions like visa-free migration, revealing their implication with military and economic imperatives of the more powerful signatory nation. This dissertation pursues this approach in examining the Compact of Free Association to show how its provisions ultimately shore up expansive and enduring U.S. influence over the Marshall Islands.

The second frame this dissertation employs is that of an imperial diaspora, the Marshallese diaspora, through an examination of two interrelated concepts that shape the mobility of migrants in diaspora: imperial migration and imperial citizenship. What, though, makes a diaspora imperial? As this dissertation shows, the Marshallese diaspora is imperial for a few key reasons. First, its spread follows the geographic and territorial outlines of U.S. empire, specifically to sites under U.S. federal jurisdiction, including semi- and non-sovereign territories like Guam and the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). Second, and related to the first reason, Marshallese migration is

fundamentally shaped (and delimited) by U.S. laws and policies, borders, and legal status. Although the Marshall Islands are formally sovereign and although Marshall Islanders hold Marshallese citizenship, their diasporic movement and resettlement outside the islands are overwhelmingly shaped, geographically and legally, by the U.S. They are free to travel to, reside in, and work in the U.S. or its territories without a visa, but these rights do not extend beyond U.S. sovereign territory. This dynamic implicates Marshall Islanders as migrants *within* U.S. empire, or as imperial migrants.

Equally important, and relatedly, examining Marshall Islander migration within diaspora as imperial is fruitful because it is legally facilitated by a type of *imperial citizenship* (Gorman, 2010) constructed for Marshallese migrants in the U.S.—namely, Compact of Free Association status or COFA status. COFA status, while unique within U.S. immigration law, joins similar types of imperial citizenship historically created for residents of U.S. semi- and non-sovereign territories, such as the Philippines, Guam, and American Samoa (Baldoz, 2011; Lee & Pratt, 2012; Ngai, 1999, 2004). Characterized by its provisional, partial, and revocable nature, imperial citizenship creates a precarious status for its holders, even as it partially enables their mobility *within* the U.S. territorial system. Seeing this double-edged and precarious mobility as explicitly *imperial* allows me to develop a deeper understanding of the interrelation between empire and mobility and its effects on empire's legally liminal subjects.

This dissertation thus makes two contributions toward a geography of imperial migration. First, it expands the insights of imperial migration studies by incorporating an *explicitly geographical* analysis of empire and migration. Second, it pushes geography toward a more sustained and critical engagement with empire and migration *together*, two areas richly developed independently in geographic scholarship (Smith, 2003a, 2003b; Harvey, 2003; Silvey, 2004; Silvey & Lawson, 1999; Cresswell & Merriman, 2011) but less frequently analyzed in their co-production. In looking at these

processes together, this dissertation shows how empire both limits and enables movement for some of its more legally liminal subjects, specifically through the production of imperial citizenship.

To develop this dissertation's third frame, I turn to one of the many nodes in the Marshallese imperial diaspora, Springdale, Arkansas, which I identify as a *new destination of empire*. I define new destinations of empire broadly as sites where migrants from former or current U.S. territories are arriving for the first time, bringing with them the embodied histories of U.S. occupation, militarization, and political and economic influence. This concept is admittedly broad, in part because the concept on which it partially builds—new immigrant destinations—is itself a new and diffuse concept that is only now becoming analytically clear. To develop the concept of new destinations of empire, I take as one foundation the growing new immigrant destinations literature (Marrow, 2005, 2009, 2011; Massey, 2008; Waters & Jiménez, 2005; Winders, 2012, 2013). This literature defines new immigrant destinations as places that have not previously experienced major migration and are experiencing them for the first time (Marrow, 2011). As diasporas spread geographically, both in the U.S. and beyond (Winders, 2014), migrants increasingly settle in new destinations, often seeking better employment opportunities (Striffler, 2007; Benjamin-Alvarado, DeSipio, & Montoya, 2009) and more affordable housing (Park & Iceland, 2011) than were available in traditional or established resettlement sites or following family members, friends, and acquaintances who have gone before (McDaniel & Drever, 2009). New immigrant destinations scholarship, discussed more fully in Chapter 3, examines the social, political, and economic dynamics that emerge between immigrants and long-term residents in these sites.

This third frame also draws, however, on literatures on imperial migration, which are well-developed in the context of other empires—most notably, British (Tolia-Kelly, 2004) and French

(Hargreaves & McKinney, 1997)—but rarely applied to the context of U.S. empire.[2] Scholarship on imperial migration has focused most centrally on migrants from former colonies to major cities in colonial metropoles; for example, South Asian and West Indian migration to London (McLeod, 2004; Ball, 2004) or West African resettlement to Paris (Thomas, 2007; Schneider, 2008). Such migration streams, I argue, have been well-documented not only because they are long-standing or numerically significant but also because of an tendency to study *urban* migration in both European and North American contexts (Holston, 1999; Sassen, 2006; Le Galès, 2002; Crul & Schneider, 2010). Far less attention has been paid to migration, imperial or otherwise, to rural areas, although many new immigrant destinations scholars are challenging this urban bias (Marrow, 2011; Kandel & Cromartie, 2004; Lichter & Johnson, 2006). As Pacific Islander communities continue to grow throughout the rural U.S. South and Midwest, they arguably create new destinations of some sort to be examined (Reeves & Bennett, 2002; Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, 2013). For all these reasons, Marshall Islander and other COFA migrants' migration to the U.S. presents a vital and exciting opportunity to study new dimensions of U.S imperial migration (Gershon, 2007).

By engaging both new immigration destinations scholarship and imperial migration scholarship, I aim to further a more robust understanding of the movement and resettlement of *U.S. imperial migrants* within U.S. empire. I do so in a few key ways in this dissertation. First, I challenge new immigrant destinations literature to extend its analyses beyond a framework of migrant sending and receiving sites, examining how both are situated within the geographical scale of empire. Such an approach places migration patterns within larger processes of global hegemony outlined earlier in the chapter, revealing how contemporary human mobility is structured by militarization, global capitalism, and geopolitical forces of colonialism and imperialism. In other words, this dissertation

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[2] Notable recent exceptions include Baldoz (2011) and Lee and Pratt (2012) on Filipino migration, Camacho (2016) and Perez (2002) on Chamorro migration, and Duany (2003) on Puerto Rican migration to the U.S. mainland.

suggests, migrants do not simply resettle *anywhere*; rather, their ability (or necessity) to resettle in certain places is largely an outcome of empire.

Second, this dissertation challenges scholars of imperial and postcolonial migration, already actively studying such dynamics in the context of European empires, to consider how U.S. empire similarly produces imperial diasporas, imperial subjects, and imperial sites of resettlement. In doing so, it extends the study of imperial migrants *beyond* colonial metropoles, looking at their movement between places often disregarded in studies of empire, like Arkansas and the Marshall Islands. This approach highlights the more geographically diffuse nature of U.S. empire and its ability to link seemingly unrelated, if not "unimportant," sites. It also reveals that such sites are not isolated or "remote," as they are often portrayed in mainland U.S. discourses (Blevins, 2003; Davis, 2015; Friedlander, 1979; Mountz & Loyd, 2014), but rather that they are central to the workings of empire.

Finally, a focus on such sites also enables study of histories found beyond the formal archives, which can uncover longer-standing connections between those sites and highlight local, place-specific experiences of empire often disregarded in dominant geopolitical narratives (Dittmer & Gray, 2010). In other words, study of local archives can bring to bear "small stories" of empire that reveal a great deal about empire's effects as it touches down in places like Springdale (Lorimer, 2003). I apply each of these of these analytical approaches in this dissertation, both separately and in conjunction, to examine long-term Springdale residents' reception of Marshall Islanders and to scrutinize the logics that they use to make sense of Marshall Islanders' presence in their town, their unique legal status, and their historical connection to U.S. empire.

As I argue in Chapter 6, while Marshall Islanders in Springdale present long-term residents with an opportunity to see the effects of U.S. empire, such observations are often precluded due to a lack of understanding of the U.S. itself *as an empire*. As a result, long-term residents' explanations for Marshall Islanders' arrival tend to reinforce narratives of U.S. exceptionalism, for example,

understanding Marshall Islanders as beneficiaries of reparations for U.S. nuclear testing or as refugees under U.S. protection and hospitality. Further study on new destinations of empire elsewhere and further attempts to use and analytically assess this concept offer great potential for scholars concerned with how discourses of U.S. empire circulate, become modified, or disappear altogether and how the presence of imperial migrants in the U.S. either disrupts or reinforces such narratives. Moreover, study of new destinations of empire can expose the ways that U.S. empire "touches" down and transforms a much wider range of sites than discussions of empire alone might suggest.

Empire's Sites and Practices: Methodological Considerations

My research objectives for this dissertation were threefold: **(1)** to examine the negotiations over, and eventual enactment of, the Compact of Free Association, especially the inclusion of the migration clause; **(2)** to investigate Marshallese experiences of racialization in Springdale, Arkansas, particularly their reception by white long-term residents; and **(3)** to determine how Marshall Islanders' exceptional legal status shaped their encounters with U.S. law and policy. The project's overarching aim was to investigate how the lingering effects of U.S. colonialism in the Pacific were manifested through emigration and how mainland U.S. communities like Springdale were remade in the process. The corresponding research questions were as follows:

1. How were the terms of the Compact of Free Association negotiated, contested, and eventually enacted (1971-1986)? How did U.S. and Marshall Islands government representatives understand the significance of the Compact negotiations, particularly its migration provisions?

2. How does Springdale's racial composition shape Marshallese integration and resettlement? How do Springdale's three racial/ethnic groups (whites, Latinos, Marshall Islanders) perceive each other?

3. How is the legal exceptionality of Marshallese migrants manifested in their day-to-day encounters with representatives of law and public policy in Arkansas? How does Arkansas's specific policy landscape shape Marshall Islanders' encounters with policy-makers and providers?

This section aims to make sense of the tactics I used to answer these questions. Some of these tactics were carefully structured in advance; many were developed along the way. Perhaps one should not admit to these things in a dissertation; perhaps they read as methodological failures (Rose, 1997), or worse, indulgences. Nonetheless, methodological indulgences—research actions that are outside the scope of the formalized research method and, thus, deviate from "the plan"— can be the most fruitful acts. In this project, it has often been the quirky, the odd, the unexpected, and the seemingly illogical that have worked their way into the study's center.

Another ongoing desire at the heart of this project has been to pursue an anti-colonial and anti-racist methodology in line with the political imperatives of the project's research aims. As this work reminded me repeatedly, decolonizing one's scholarship and methodological practices in an intensely racialized, classed, and settler-colonial police state—a state and society determined to deny these characteristics in themselves—is incredibly challenging and demands reflexivity (Sandoval, 2000; Smith, 1999). Over the course of this research, I tried and failed several times, changed course, and was plagued by ambivalence about how to proceed. Guidance on questions of ethical, anti-colonial, and anti-racist research practices came from the activists, advocates, and community leaders in the many sites where "the field" resided over the course of this project's implementation (Katz, 1994).

As this research taught me, postcolonial and anticolonial scholarship requires sustained attention to power. Cheryl McEwan (2003) emphasizes the question of power as she beckons geographers into scholarship on postcolonial methodologies, writing that "[p]ostcolonialism…is a *geographically* dispersed contestation of colonial and neo-imperial power and knowledge, and geography should lie at the heart of postcolonial critiques" (p. 340; see also McClintock, 1995; Loomba, 1998). The *particular* geographies in which we choose to explore colonial and imperial knowledge, however, profoundly shape our view of those dynamics, as do our own subjectivities as

researchers (Hansen & Stepputat, 2001; Comaroff & Comaroff, 2003). In line with these considerations, the persistent complications of siting empire empirically, methodologically, and analytically pervaded all areas of methodology and research planning in this dissertation. As a result, the theme of the complicated geography of postcolonial and imperial fieldwork reverberates throughout this chapter, if not the dissertation as a whole.

In its focus on policy, this dissertation brings together two methodological approaches— policy ethnography (Dubois, 2009) and a "follow the policy" approach (Temenos & McCann, 2013; Peck & Theodore, 2012)—to examine the Compact and its effects as they travel, through Marshallese migrants circulating in diaspora, to new destinations like Springdale. Policy ethnographies have allowed scholars to scrutinize policies' implementation by diverse actors and their effects on various groups, situating these factors within larger social and political structures (Mosse, 2011). A "follow the policy" approach draws on policy mobilities literatures that look at policies' circulation, modification, and adoption between different sites and the "follow the thing" method that traces the movement of objects in global circulation to examine the power relations that enable, guide, and constrain those objects' movement (Cook, 2004; Cook & Harrison, 2007). My approach in this dissertation has been to follow the Compact as its effects, embodied in Marshallese migrants moving in diaspora, arrive to new destinations like Springdale. To study how the Compact touches down in Springdale, I also draw on studies of immigrant reception (Reitz, 2002; Ong, Dominguez, Friedman, Schiller, Stolcke, & Ying, 1996) and its effects on local policy-making (Coleman, 2012; Winders, 2007). In "receiving sites" like Springdale, the Compact's effects radiate out from Marshallese migrants to touch long-term residents, policy-makers, social service providers, activists, and other local groups. By following the Compact and its effects to Springdale, I reveal the intimate and embodied linkages the Compact creates between apparently disparate sites in U.S. empire, such as Arkansas and the Marshall Islands.

This general approach was carried out through a combination of qualitative methods, including archival research, textual and policy analysis, semi-structured interviews, informal meetings, and participant observation. Broadly, the research took place in two phases. The first was carried out during six weeks in Summer 2013 in Saipan, CNMI, Guam, and Hawaii. In this phase, I analyzed archival documents related to the historical political relationship between the U.S. and the Marshall Islands, focusing in particular on the negotiations and passage of the Compact of Free Association. I also interviewed actors who had been involved in island and regional politics surrounding the Compact and the Marshall Islands' political status negotiations. I followed this fieldwork with a weeklong research trip to Washington, D.C. in August 2014, where I interviewed policy officials, Compact negotiators, and embassy staff from the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) and the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). Lastly, I analyzed policy documents, including the Compact and its corollary documents, U.S. federal policies, and Congressional hearing transcripts, which pertained broadly to the U.S.-Marshall Islands' political relationship. This phase of the research addressed my first research question regarding the Compact's negotiation .

The second research phase was conducted over five months (March-July 2014) in Northwest Arkansas. There, I interviewed long-term residents of Springdale, state actors and policy-makers, social service providers, and immigrant rights activists, in order to understand the various impacts of the Compact on Springdale. To this end, I also attended regular meetings of immigrant rights' coalitions, sessions of Springdale County Court, and cultural events hosted in Springdale and neighboring Fayetteville to gain a sense of social dynamics in the town and interactions between different groups, including new immigrants and long-term residents. Finally, I analyzed local historical archives, including news articles, promotional brochures from area organizations and companies, and other publications on Springdale's growth and development. Research conducted in this second phase addressed this dissertation's second and third research questions on Springdale's

racial and ethnic dynamics (both past and present) and Marshall Islanders' encounters with local

actors (see p. 14). Although on paper, this two-phase approach to fieldwork seems straightforward,

in practice, it raised a series of question about the field, the experts, and the past.

Where is the Field? Defining the Imperial Field Site

The troubling questions of selecting field sites—of *where* this research should be conducted

and what it meant to tell a story of U.S. empire from a place like Springdale, Arkansas—plagued me

throughout fieldwork in Arkansas, generating an anxiety that is traceable in my fieldnotes. After

about a month in Arkansas, I reflected on the issue:

> This morning, I'm thinking about methods and field research, thinking back to that
> unshakeable question: "Where is the field?" I'm really struggling with questions of legitimacy
> here: my legitimacy as a research on this topic, and this "population" in this particular place;
> the legitimacy of the dissertation proposal and whether or not it is structurally sound. Many
> days, it feels like a loosely-tacked-together tripod, with the three legs (the research questions)
> wobbling, barely balancing, perilously spreading ever farther apart. As they spread, they
> produce a distinct sense of vertigo in me and in this project: where is the center of gravity? If
> this project is really about the Compact (*is* it?), then why have I chosen the "field" to be in
> Northwest Arkansas? (fieldnotes, March 25, 2014, Fayetteville, AR)

Even now, in its writing, this project stubbornly retains the uncertainties of field siting. At the end of

May 2014, nearly three months after I had arrived in Arkansas, I wrote in my field journal: "One of

my biggest fears is that I'm in the wrong place, in other words, that my field site is the wrong field in

which to be asking the questions I'm really concerned with." My three research questions were large

and became larger. Over time, they grew both more interrelated and more spread apart. The image

of the three-legged stool splitting under a heavy occupant—my fieldwork—haunted me throughout

the proposal process and fieldwork. Writing, I felt, meant wrestling them into submission, all three

at once. Hardly fair odds for a fight.

This "where" question returned me repeatedly to an earlier query I had wrestled with as I

began to outline this study: Where is U.S. imperialism *most* at work, and what does (and doesn't) it

envelop? These were profoundly geographical questions but also necessarily questions of

methodology. I felt compelled to find some central motor, some especially pernicious agent of imperialism at work, and then latch onto it to discover where it took me and what glimpse I could get of empire's workings as it circulated. This would be my methodology.

But I digress: Let me return to the question of "where." This research began to germinate in a number of different spaces. As mentioned above, the largest portion of fieldwork, about five months, was conducted in Northwest Arkansas. At this juncture, readers may wonder why I was studying Pacific Islander migration and U.S. militarism in "Arkansas, of all places."[3] While Arkansas was the site where I conducted the most extensive qualitative fieldwork, 'the field' was much broader, including sites across and beyond the U.S. mainland: Washington, D.C., Hawaii, and the U.S. Pacific Islands.

While finding the kernel of my interest in processes of imperial migration was no challenge, identifying *where* to study those processes proved much more difficult. Initially, the 'where' problem seemed fairly straightforward: I was interested in studying migration and resettlement, so it seemed logical, at least initially, that if I wanted to study *more* than the receiving site, in order to expose empire's workings in sites historically obscured to U.S. mainland populations, I would also study the sending site. Thus, in the earliest iteration of this research, I planned to conduct fieldwork first in the Marshall Islands and then in Arkansas.

This two-sited model refused to manifest itself for a host of reasons. In these early stages of research planning, I began to realize how my proposed project differed from traditional studies of immigrant resettlement and integration (Fawcett, 1989; Castles, Miller, & Ammendola, 2005).[4] First, migration studies that frame geographic movement between sending and receiving sites risk presuming an ontological fixity in these sites as separate, even when analyzing how those places

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[3] A common response to my description of this research. I discuss this sentiment and the geographical imaginaries that motivate it in Chapter 4.

[4] See Alba and Nee, 1997, for a critical overview of immigrant assimilation literature.

remake one another and even when recognizing a transnational, ongoing flux between them (Brah, 2003; Schiller, Basch, & Blanc, 1995). Migration literatures in anthropology generally focus on the sending site (e.g., Dyrness, 2012), while immigrant resettlement studies in sociology tend to focus on the receiving site, especially the themes of immigrant integration and assimilation (Waters & Jiménez, 2005; Bloemraad, Korteweg, & Yurdakul, 2008). Generally speaking, each of these literatures upholds a distinction or separation between sending and receiving sites, one that proved increasingly problematic for my own analysis of imperial migration.

As I reviewed the literatures on immigrant integration from geography, sociology, and population studies, I began to realize, as have some transnationalism scholars (Guarnizo, 1998; Pessar & Mahler, 2003), how much the sending and receiving sites—in my case, the Marshall Islands and Arkansas—were interrelated. I was still troubled, however, by the task of defining the sending and receiving sites in question. Initially, I identified them as the Marshall Islands and Arkansas, posing an incongruity of scale: the sending site was a country, and the receiving site was a state (and, in fact, my research focused even more narrowly on the city of Springdale and the region of Northwest Arkansas). Even after reflecting on this scalar incongruity between sending and receiving sites, I was still no closer to knowing what the comparable scale to the Marshall Islands was. Was it the U.S., the former colonial "administrator" (to use the euphemistic parlance of the UN Trust Territory system) of the islands? Or, if the Marshall Islands was still a site contained *within* the geographic scale of U.S. empire, was it even possible to conceive of them (the U.S. and the Marshall Islands) as separate geographic entities? My mind contorted in attempts to reconcile these scalar quandaries but was unable to arrive at a clear resolution. The resulting tensions and contradictions remain throughout this dissertation largely because they are inherent in studies of imperial migration (Baldoz, 2011; Poblete, 2014; Bender & Lipman, 2015). Put differently, the notion of separate

sending and receiving sites begins to fall apart when we look at intra-empire migration, or migration *within* an empire.

The question of siting field research is one of the challenges posed by using U.S. empire as a geographic scale or frame of analysis (Gregory, 1995). Although I argue that the Marshall Islands exist in a particular imperial relationship with the U.S., with a political status that is unique to certain Pacific Islands under the Compact of Free Association, this argument does not change the fact that the Marshall Islands is now also formally an independent *country*. In some ways, arguing that it operates as a site in U.S. empire could delegitimize or minimize Marshallese struggles for independence and the Marshallese people's self-definition as a political, territorial, and cultural entity. Therefore, identifying research sites in this study brought up fraught geographical questions: Where is the (post)colonial? Where is the imperial? What has changed, and what has remained the same? The difficulty in resolving these questions again points to the need to both blur and maintain the line between the imperial and the colonial.

Part of what I struggled with was and is the relationship between the local and the global and the nested scales in-between, challenges other geographers have also addressed (Katz, 2004; Mountz & Hyndman, 2006; Swyngedouw, 1997). I grappled with how to articulate a suitable lexicon to describe these spatial relationships, one that could account for messy scales and for questions of colonial territoriality, legal jurisdictions, and liminal legal spaces produced during the so-called post-colonial era after World War II. Gilmartin and Berg (2007), in addressing this need to weigh the colonial local against the global, call for a "double movement" that balances globalizing tendencies in grand theory with the local, site-specific, and historically materialized places that colonialism has reconstituted. Several feminist geographers have also engaged such methodological dilemmas posed by the desire to balance the particular and the universal (e.g., Nast, 1994; Staeheli & Lawson, 1994). As Mullings (1999) writes, linking "smaller scale methodologies to larger-scale political concerns

thereby reveals how power is distributed between macro and micro scales" (p. 348). Following calls by Mullings and others, this dissertation's design remains an attempt to study the *macro* scale of U.S. empire through the *micro* scale of Springdale, Arkansas.

In an effort to reconcile the local and global tensions inherent in empire, many scholars have employed the geographic and analytical framework of core-periphery (Wallerstein, 1979; Smith, 2008) or metropole-colony. The core-periphery model, however, has also been challenged by a number of scholars, including Gilmartin and Berg (2007), who critique McClintock's earlier call for "reorienting the globe around a new binary opposition, that of colonial and post-colonial, of centre and periphery, of past and present, of in Here and out There" (p. 123). In the chapters that follow, I try to recuperate from the core-periphery framework an emphasis on the relational scales of power in an imperial system that is at once territorial, cultural, racialized, classed, gendered, and always shifting.

The question of scale posed another challenge to siting this research on imperial migration and diaspora: How could I clearly delimit this project's geographic scale, when research subjects, many of them migrants, seemed themselves to be constantly moving across sites and scales? At certain points, the scale I was focusing on was that of diaspora, at other times, that of U.S. empire. On this question, a few key texts have aided my thinking about imperial research sites, particularly works by scholars who have studied imperial diasporas and postcolonial migration, including Mongia (1999), Dawson (2007), Baldoz (2011), Poblete (2014), Lee & Pratt (2012), and Mains, Gilmartin, Cullen, Mohammad, Tolia-Kelly, Raghuram, & Winders (2013). Collectively, this scholarship has shown how imperial subjects have always moved within empires and how that movement has always been surveilled, controlled, and fretted over by imperial powers.

As these works and others argue, imperial migrants' attempts at mobility threaten to disrupt imperial distinctions between here and there, home and abroad, colony and metropole—the very

constructs on which empire itself often depends. This dissertation echoes this argument, making such literatures central to its germination. Most of these studies of imperial migration, however, come from outside geography, despite the compelling spatial dimensions of diaspora, mobility, and empire and the invaluable insights that a geographical analysis *could* bring to bear on phenomena like the effects of territorial law on colonial subjects' migration patterns, dispersion, and experiences of borders and immigrant detention (Mongia, 1999; Camacho, 2012).

The geography of my research plan eventually materialized into the two phases described previously. As I began the first phase in Summer 2013, when I traveled to Saipan, in the CNMI, the sheer geographic spread of the U.S. territorial system astounded me. To reach Saipan, I flew from Syracuse to New York City to Tokyo to Guam, an organized, unincorporated U.S. territory, north to Rota, the southernmost island in the CNMI, before finally arriving at Saipan International Airport, about 28 hours after I had left Syracuse. Without passing through customs on the ground, I left U.S. jurisdiction and then re-entered it upon arrival in Guam. This month-long field visit concluded with a short stop in Guam for the 2nd Annual Marianas History Conference, followed by a week in Honolulu, Hawaii, where I examined the archives at the Pacific Collection at the University of Hawaii at Mānoa, before flying back to Syracuse.
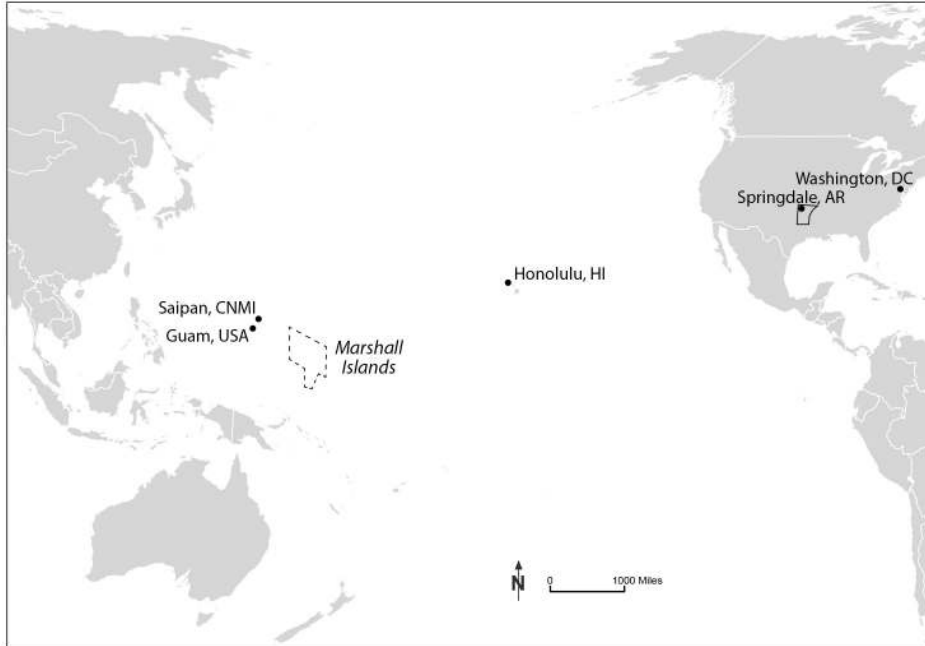
Figure 1: Map of field sites[6] (Source: Joe Stoll, Syracuse University)

As this island-hopping indicates, my fieldwork, particularly in the Pacific region, was characterized by hypermobility. I have full U.S. citizenship by birth, so all of the sites I visited, or could have wanted to visit, were within my reach. This has to do not only with the mobility enabled by my U.S. passport but also with my travel and work *within* the U.S. territorial system. Thus, my own citizenship status—specifically when paired with my whiteness—allowed me the luxury of virtually unfettered movement between field sites.

Then there was the receiving site: Springdale, Arkansas. The scale of this receiving site shifted frequently during field research: at different times I variously understood it as Northwest Arkansas, the state of Arkansas, or the U.S., this last scale being more technically congruent to that of the Marshall Islands as sending site, although, as discussed previously, this framing also posed its own theoretical problems. As a research site, Springdale was, in some ways, a fluke. For my initial

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[5] While I did not conduct fieldwork in the Marshall Islands, I include it in this map for reference.
[6] The place names used in this map, specifically "Saipan, CNMI," and "Guam, USA," reflect official usage by the U.S. federal government. However, each of these places, including those on the U.S. mainland, has other names that reflect indigenous ownership and belonging.

purposes, it could have been any place in which Marshall Islanders resettled. The city and larger region, however, came to take on an enormous significance as this project unfolded. The following chapters, thus, devote extensive space to Springdale and Northwest Arkansas and the historical, political, and geographical reasons that Springdale isn't just *anywhere*. They map out the particular social dynamics that make Springdale a *new destination of empire*, dynamics which in turn shape both local reception of Marshall Islanders and local (mis)understandings about U.S. imperial power.

Who are the Experts? On Sources, Subjects, and Informants

The empirical content of this research was derived from a variety of practices: observation, reading the newspaper, attending community meetings, informal or informational meetings with community leaders, writing, reading, taking photos, digging in archives, and gathering maps. In these encounters, I searched for themes of transience, mobility, permanence, fluidity, vulnerability, isolation, or "self-isolation." I thought about connections forged within a community, within a diaspora, and across racial lines, whether despite or because of those lines. In this dissertation's original methodology, I outlined four groups of research subjects to target for interviews in Northwest Arkansas. In the first group were "key actors," whom I defined as individuals that engaged with Marshallese residents under the pretext of U.S. law and policy, not just immigration law but also other "domestic" areas of law, such as labor, health, and public housing, where Marshall Islanders may have appeared as special beneficiaries or been excluded as ineligible due to their status as Compact migrants. These key actors also included individuals who, through their professional or personal engagements, had more sustained engagement with members of the Marshallese population: social-service providers and advocates; city officials and representatives; attorneys and legal service providers; educators at the high school and college levels; and others. They were predominantly white, with a smaller number of Latinos and an even smaller number of Marshall Islanders. I also initially planned to conduct individual interviews with members of three other

groups of Springdale residents: (1) white long-term residents, (2) Marshallese residents, and (3)

Latino residents.[7] For a number of reasons related to Springdale's history and political economy,

most white residents I interviewed were, in fact, long-term residents of the city. Not only had many

of them lived much of their lives in Springdale, but a majority had parents and grandparents who

had spent their lives there as well.

My early field interviews in Arkansas began with these first two groups: key actors

and white long-term residents of Springdale. This decision was strategic on a certain level. I

wanted to become as immersed as possible in local discourses and conversations about

Marshallese resettlement in Springdale and as informed as possible about immigration, labor,

and racial and demographic shifts before conducting interviews with Marshallese residents. It

was not long, however, before I started to pick up on tensions, primarily among advocates,

immigrant organizations, and a select handful of Marshallese community representatives,

about the presence of external researchers studying Springdale's Marshallese community. An

excerpt from my fieldnotes:

> Met with Debbie[8] tonight. She told me about an initial meeting with the Marshallese
> Consul General of Arkansas, who, when Debbie told her she was planning to do
> some research on, or with, the Marshallese community, said: "Oh, no, don't tell me
> you're going to do another survey. *We are so tired of surveys!*" (Fieldnotes, Springdale,
> AR, June 2014)

At this point, I had not yet begun to reach out to Marshallese community members—I had

planned to do so under the second phase of Arkansas fieldwork—yet I was quickly learning

that pursuing this approach might have negative consequences, both for the validity and

ethical standing of my research and for its potential impact on research participants. I had

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[7] In my original dissertation proposal, these categories appeared as "white residents," "Marshallese immigrants" and "Latino immigrants." My own misguided assumptions about the conflation of racial/ethnic identity, legal status, and length of residence in Springdale are evident in that first proposal and became clear to me as I began fieldwork.
[8] Field contacts and interviewees are referred to with pseudonyms in this dissertation, except in cases where the individual has given explicit permission to use his or her real name.

already had several conversations with field contacts about the fallout from a previous study

that had been conducted (quite shoddily, most felt) within the Marshallese population.

Researchers live in the wake of previous researchers in the communities where they work

and are left to contend with the legacies of other scholars, most perniciously when those

researchers are not part of the communities on whom/in which they conduct research

(Atalay, 2006; Smith, 1999). In Springdale, I knew that previous research had left negative

sentiments among some, which would limit my potential access to research subjects. More

importantly, these other studies served as a cautionary example of the kind of research

approach I wanted to avoid.

Thus, I found myself bumping up against the limitations of formalized methodology

and the thorny politics and decisions associated with attempting anti-colonial research. I

realized that some research methods were not feasible, given one's politics (in this case,

inserting myself immediately into Marshallese community groups to conduct interviews). As

a result of these conversations, I gradually moved away from the plan to interview

Marshallese residents of Springdale (see literatures on "research fatigue," e.g. Clark, 2008;

Sukarieh & Tannock, 2013) and toward a focus on other local actors and groups, and

especially on the reception side of Marshallese resettlement. While this shift created an

absence around Marshall Islanders' lived realities in Springdale, it also allowed me to ask

different kinds of questions about how U.S. empire becomes visible (or not) in new

destinations of empire.

Over the course of fieldwork, I conducted formal semi-structured interviews with 55

people, as well as roughly 50 informational meetings. In these interviews and meetings,

perhaps the richest methodological experience was bearing witness to the grounded

theorizing of research participants (Strauss & Corbin, 1997). I thought aloud with

interviewees, friends, colleagues, and travel companions about the reasons behind what we saw, the structures that guided social, racial, economic, and political relations, and the histories they dragged behind them, carving trenches in the ground. These were everyday analyses and analyses of the everyday, theorizing to make sense of our small lives dropped down within grand histories of empire, racial capitalism, and global migration.

In these conversations, I was often struck by the "sense-making" moments, those points in an interview or conversation where respondents paused, offered a tentative wording, backtracked, and then proceeded, one or two words at a time, to piece together an on-the-go analysis of what they were trying to make sense of. During fieldwork, there were countless such moments in which interviewees wondered about their lives and the lives of those around them. Long-term residents in Arkansas, for example, often ruminated on why Marshall Islanders had visa-free migration provisions, and Marshallese migrants frequently reflected upon the restriction of COFA migrants' access to health care benefits in the 1990s. Many of these sense-making moments have worked their way into the heart of this dissertation.

In addition to formal and informal interviews conducted in Arkansas, I also conducted site visits and observed public events at a number of other locations. At the early suggestion of a University of Arkansas law professor, I attended several sessions of Springdale County Court, which met weekly and frequently included Marshallese defendants. These sessions gave me a partial window into the workings of the local legal system and the ways in which Latino and Marshallese residents, in addition to white (and occasionally Black) residents, were drawn into it. In Northwest Arkansas, I additionally visited a plethora of more mundane sites: local restaurants and cafés, gas stations, public buildings, city administrative offices, Walmarts, poultry plants (although I was never able to gain internal access to these, despite repeated attempts), grocery stores, and libraries, among others. These

visits allowed me to flesh out a more detailed view of daily life in Springdale and the sites

and spaces where Springdale residents, new and old, interacted.

Beyond Springdale, I conducted interviews with key policy players and regional

experts in Washington, D.C., Saipan, and Honolulu. These are the key actor policy

interviews, and although there were those that might fall into that category in Arkansas

(interviews with the Mayor and Police Chief of Springdale, for example), most policy

interviews related to the Compact of Free Association took place in D.C. In these

interviews, my aim was to learn about the events that led to the Compact's passage and the

debates that ensued (at the time and since then) about its migration provision, as well as

these actors' interpretation of the Compact's significance. Their perceptions helped shed

light on the U.S. interests as they manifested during and after Compact negotiations.

My own legitimacy and authority as a researcher, as perceived by those I encountered in the

field, fluctuated, depending on the site and on the research participant. Others' perceptions of my

research "expertise" shifted as well: from my Rotary Club talk in Saipan, to community

presentations in Springdale, to policy interviews in D.C. This, of course, influenced whom I gained

access to, how I framed my work, and which knowledges I was comfortable claiming. As Mullings

(1999) reminds us, our legitimacy as researchers is always contingent on our positionality as insiders,

outsiders, something of both, or in-between: insider-ness and outsider-ness are intersectionally

constructed and constantly in flux depending on the contexts we navigate (Crenshaw, 1991;

Valentine, 2007). Sometimes, being perceived as an outsider facilitates access and lends authority

(Clifford, 1983), greasing the wheels of research. In other circumstances, being an outsider can be a

hindrance, restricting research access and limiting what a researcher is able to see or understand.

My outsider-ness in fieldwork took on various and shifting dimensions across sites. In

Arkansas, it was compounded at multiple levels. First, I do not speak Marshallese. This was one

reason—although not the only or even the most important reason—why inserting myself among

Springdale's Marshallese residents was so difficult and why I ultimately chose to shift attention

toward other Springdale community members and English-speaking Marshallese residents. Second, I

had never lived in Arkansas or spent any meaningful time in the U.S. South. While I believe my

positionality as a northerner gave me a fresh perspective on local Arkansas happenings in some

ways, this positionality also undoubtedly prevented me from understanding local and regional

dynamics in their full nuance and historical context. I was thus indebted to the insights of long-term

local residents, which they generously provided. In the CNMI, Guam, and Hawaii, all Pacific Island

sites where I conducted archival research and preliminary informational meetings, my outsider-ness

was more explicitly racialized as white or *haole*.[9] In those sites, whiteness is more frequently

recognized as a colonial racial formation (Rohrer, 2008); this enabled research access in some

institutional settings, while complicating access in others. My own racialized positionality, as well as

my status as a mainland U.S.-born U.S. citizen, thus, was significant in how I thought about and

conducted this research.

Which are the Archives? Tracing the "Paper Empires"

Locating the appropriate imperial archives for this project was as difficult as determining

sites for qualitative fieldwork. While archival researchers are inclined—or obligated by potential

funders—to think about archival research in project planning terms and to identify the official

repositories for the documents we assume we will need for a rigorous historical study, archival

research is often much more dispersed and unpredictable (Stoler, 2002). For a geographer, locating

the archives of (U.S.) empire raises the questions of *where* the colonial past resides and where the

imperial present and future are located. Stuart Hall (1996), Ella Shohat (1992), and other

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[9] The term *haole* is used to describe white Americans in Hawaii and the Pacific Islands, occasionally as a pejorative term similar to 'whitey.' Merriam-Webster offers this definition of *haole: "*one who is not descended from the aboriginal Polynesian inhabitants of Hawaii; *especially*: white. *Sometimes disparaging"* (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2013).

postcolonial scholars are joined by geographers critical of empire (Harvey, 2007; Smith, 2003a, 2003b; Agnew, 2003) in problematizing the idea that there is a temporal demarcation between colonialism and imperialism. As they argue, and as this dissertation avows, seeing colonialism and imperialism as deeply interrelated allows us to also see key continuities and similarities between these systems. Assumptions about the temporal beginning and end of political systems can impact where we anticipate finding the "right" archival sources, where what Stoler (2008) calls "paper empires" will reside. While I discuss the specific content of these archives in subsequent chapters, here I provide some insight into the way I theorized the archives, the sources I used, the geographies they mapped onto, and what those geographies told me about empire's memory.

Although I did not know it at the time, my archival research on this dissertation began on my second trip to Saipan, in Summer 2012. At this time, I was working as a researcher on the Island Detention Project,[10] studying the experiences of asylum-seekers intercepted, detained, and processed on islands. In 2013, I returned to the CNMI, under my own research project, to work with Samuel McPhetres[11] to organize, catalog, and scan his personal collection of archives. Sam, a retired history professor, was one of the most fascinating and uniquely credentialed individuals I have ever known. His archives documented a remarkable five-decade career spent variously as the UN Coordinator for International Organizations for the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI), which included being a liaison contact for the United Nations Trusteeship Council; a professor of history at the Northern Marianas College; a regional director for the Peace Corps; a lead archivist for the TTPI; and an independent researcher, the position Sam held when we worked together and which he holds still, determinedly and resiliently, despite his age and intermittent health issues. Sam's encyclopedic knowledge of the Pacific region and its history, politics, and peoples was humbling. Working with

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[10] NSF CAREER grant Award # 0847133, Principle Investigator: Dr. Alison Mountz.
[11] Individual's real name is used here with permission.

him taught me, repeatedly, to resist the temptation to gloss over nuance and differentiation within the experience of Pacific Islander communities and states, particularly within the TTPI as a whole.

Scholarship on the TTPI has largely been conducted by colonial administrators of some sort, U.S. government officials from various agencies who, in many instances, spent decades in the Pacific Islands, often raising families there and settling permanently (interviews, Saipan and Guam, 2013, Washington, D.C., August 2014). While I recognize the problems and challenges of building a historical study almost exclusively on their scholarship, I do not want to discredit the long, committed careers and personal lives many of these scholars have built in the region or their careful attention to Micronesia on its own varied, complex terms. Their insights on the nuances of U.S. policy implementation in the Pacific region have been invaluable to this project, offering critical perspectives on how and why certain policies were pursued, challenged, or discarded in different moments.

An additional phase of archival research took place in Arkansas, primarily in Springdale and Fayetteville, with an additional visit to the Clinton Presidential Library in Little Rock. These Arkansas archives were quite different from those in the Pacific, in terms of form, content, and the histories they interpellated, as the latter were more similar to the formal archives analyzed in much historical scholarship on empire (Edney, 2009; Stoler, 2002). While the archival materials I gathered and analyzed from the CNMI and Hawaii were primarily government documents, the materials I collected in Arkansas included a more mixed set of forms: newspaper articles and photographs; city planning documents and maps; oral histories collected by local historians; constituent letters to politicians; and innumerous other forms of paper memory.

The Shiloh Museum of Ozark History in Springdale was an invaluable site of this research, and without the support of its excellent staff, this project would not have been possible. Working there was something of a fishing expedition, in which every dip of the fishing rod brought up

something colorful and fleshy. A fair amount of my time at the Shiloh Museum was spent in the enjoyable company of the museum's small staff, including an outreach coordinator and two full-time archivists, and the slow but steady stream of regular volunteers who came to assist with newspaper clippings, photo identification, and other tasks. The volunteers, mostly older white folks from Springdale and its environs, made up a lively collection of what the museum's outreach coordinator called "everyday historians": among them, a University of Arkansas professor, a WWII veteran, a church group leader, and a number of local authors (one was researching a book on Springdale's railroads and train history). They were all fascinated by local history and deeply committed to its preservation and exploration. As such, they made excellent conversationalists and lively storytellers. There was one author in particular whose work a museum staffer encouraged me to read, more for color and less for veracity, saying: "She never lets truth get in the way of a good story." These individuals comprised my research companions and daily company during archival research in Springdale.

Just as historical research is not only practiced by archivists, archival research is not only useful for exclusively historical studies. Despite the tendency to think of archives as the sole domain of historians and historical geographers, archival research can also serve as a rich method for studying complex temporalities and geographies (Mills, 2013). Archival research, alone or in conjunction with other methodologies, can provide rich textual details through which to flesh out connections, often unexpected, between places in larger systems such as empires (McClintock, 1995), allowing us to trace intimate links between seemingly disparate sites of empire and their multiple pasts, presents, and futures. As Stoler (2008) writes,

> Scholarship is produced in uneven waves of reaction and anticipation—sometimes prescient about that which has not yet entered the public domain, other times struggling to keep up with seismic shifts that render our observations belabored and late. Studies of empire hold something of both. (p. 191)

Following Stoler, I argue that archival methods open up histories as more than just a pretext to the "colonial present": they also offer rich visions of partial pasts and possible futures. Stoler's notion of imperial debris (2012) is in part an attention to the colonial hangover that hovers as a specter over former colonies and territories. Gordon (1997) articulates a similar phenomenon through her theorization of "haunting." These authors implore us not to forget the after-effects of colonial occupation and imperial governance. These histories, in refusing to fade quietly into capital-H History, also migrate and morph, melding into other local and regional histories of the U.S. In this way, it becomes possible to have an "authoritative archive" of the Pacific and of U.S. imperialism in a small town in Arkansas. In this dissertation's methodology, the archival history of the colonial present in Arkansas is brought together with encounters between immigrants and long-term Arkansans, as well as the policies that have brought the Pacific to this new destination of empire. What follows is that story.

Chapter Outlines

To tell that story, the dissertation proceeds in the following way. **Chapter 2** turns to the policy dynamics between the U.S. and the Marshall Islands, arguing that the Compact is an imperial document forged between the two entities. It also suggests that the migration provision established by the Compact for Marshallese citizens creates a type of *imperial citizenship* for Marshall Islanders in diaspora. To make these arguments, the chapter lays out a history of U.S. colonialism and imperialism in the Pacific Islands in the twentieth century to show that the current political relationship between the U.S. and the Republic of the Marshall Islands—defined as Freely Associated Statehood[12] between two formally sovereign nations—emerged from and itself

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[12] Freely Associated Statehood is identified by the UN as one of the three self-determination options available to formerly colonized peoples (Lawson & Sloane, 2009). While it does not have a singular definition under UN regulations or U.S. law, it is generally understood as a partnership between two political territories, one of which—historically the formerly colonized party—functions as a minor or lesser partner to the other (Lawson & Sloane, 2009).

reproduces a long trajectory of colonial and imperial relations. Over time, those relations took different legal and state forms, but despite (or perhaps because of) these changes, the U.S. military was able to maintain its foothold in the Marshall Islands and in the Pacific region more broadly. The 1986 Compact and the 2003 Amended Compact, the chapter demonstrates, were pivotal in shoring up that foothold. Although the Compact's migration provision was in some ways incidental to the objective of maintaining a U.S. presence in the Pacific, at least for U.S. negotiators, the types of mobility it engendered would become hugely influential for the expansion of the Marshallese diaspora. This chapter expands upon this history to critically examine the interlocking of militarism and migration in imperial policy-making, as exemplified by the Compact.

Chapter 3 pivots the storyline from the Marshall Islands to a small town in Northwest Arkansas, traveling 6,000 miles to follow Marshallese migrants to the diaspora's largest resettlement site—Springdale, Arkansas. In doing so, it looks to the place-specific racialized histories and racial formations that created Springdale's "racial present," in an effort to better understand how Marshall Islanders are received there. Although these racial histories are in some ways particular to Springdale, they are also much larger. For this reason, Springdale can serve as a site *through which* to tell larger histories of empire, as its own formation through settler colonialism, Black exclusion, and immigration exemplify, on a small scale, key factors in the larger formation of empire and racial capitalism (Robinson, 1983). These histories, condensed into the scale and site of Springdale, shape local narratives about race, identity, and belonging in ways that profoundly affect immigrant incorporation. As this chapter argues, the arrival of Latino and Marshallese immigrants to this once virtually all-white town radically changed Springdale's population and, in some ways, its residents' understanding of the town's (and their own) racial identities. Nevertheless, some key racial dynamics—the Black/white "color line" (Du Bois, 1903) and the partial erasure of indigeneity and settler colonialism—have persisted, despite Springdale's demographic shifts in the past three

decades. Such racial dynamics, this chapter argues, are central to understanding how this *new destination of empire* racializes Marshall Islanders, how racialized narratives about belonging currently operate in Springdale, and how long-standing racial meanings persist despite local demographic change.

Chapter 4 offers a different historical vantage point on the concept of new destinations of empire, scaling out from Springdale to Arkansas as a state to examine how U.S. war-making abroad has funneled different populations into Arkansas since WWII. In light of this longer history of migrant, refugee, detainee, internally displaced, and forcibly relocated arrivals to the state, this chapter argues that Arkansas, and Springdale within it, is in fact a long-standing destination of empire. To develop this idea, it traces imperial arrivals to Arkansas, starting with the forced movement and internment of Japanese-Americans and German prisoners of war (POWs) during WWII. From there, it examines the arrival and detention of Vietnamese and other Indochinese war refugees after the Vietnam War and the detention of Haitian and Cuban refugees and asylum-seekers during the 1980s, when the U.S. government was deeply involved in (often-violent) regime change in the Caribbean as a means to shore up its economic and political influence there (Girard, 2004; Renda, 2001; Braziel, 2006).

Each of these population movements was in some way produced by U.S. military engagements "abroad," and these groups' migration to Arkansas, whether forced, coerced, or chosen, brought the effects of U.S. military imperialism "home" to the U.S. mainland. As such, this chapter aims to disturb clean distinctions between home and abroad, domestic and foreign, distinctions that are blurred by the movements provoked by empire. It also works to reveal the nexus between migration and militarism, while showing that U.S. wars abroad—most notably, WWII—forged an early link between Arkansas and the Pacific, when Arkansan veterans deployed to military engagements in the Pacific Islands returned with recollections of the region and its people.

These veterans constitute one of many human links between Arkansas and the Pacific, links that were forged through U.S. military imperialism during war.

Chapter 5 returns to the concept of imperial citizenship, first outlined in Chapter 2, in two interrelated ways. First, it examines the production of the legal status of the Compact of Free Association (COFA) migrant in law and policy, situating it as a kind of imperial semi- or non-citizenship. As the chapter argues, COFA status is a U.S. imperial status that is both novel—nothing else like it exists within U.S. immigration law—and long-standing, taking precedent from other types of imperial citizenship granted to subjects of U.S. empire since 1898, such as Filipinos, Puerto Ricans, and Chamorros in Guam and the CNMI (Levinson, 2000; Baldoz, 2011; Le Espiritu, 1996). As a provisional, liminal, and unsustainable legal status, COFA status reveals something important about citizenship on the margins of the U.S. nation. COFA status and COFA migrants, the chapter argues, embody the tension between two conflicting tendencies or desires: U.S. political and military leaders' desire to *maintain and expand* global hegemony through military, economic, and political access to sites around the globe[13] and the U.S.'s desire to *limit access* of migrants, especially those from former and current U.S. territories that form key nodes in the constellation of U.S. military power abroad, to the U.S. Viewed from a different perspective, this second desire is also the desire of migrants from those far-flung sites of empire to *maintain access* to the U.S. and to leverage their mobility to seek new modes and locations of living.

Chapter 5's second and third parts turn to the production of COFA status on the ground in Northwest Arkansas, examining encounters between Marshallese migrants and the law, as well as between Marshallese migrants and policy actors, social-service providers, advocates, and activists that work with them. As these actors build relationships with Marshallese community members, they gain partial familiarity with the technicalities of COFA status and its attendant rights, benefits, and

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[13]The latter two types of influence—economic and political influence—are facilitated by the former, military influence, as Neil Smith (2003a, 2003b) and others (Vine, 2011; Davis, 2015; Lutz & Enloe, 2009) have argued.

restrictions. Nevertheless, these encounters between local actors and Marshall Islanders often fail to reveal to local actors the *imperial* nature of COFA status, as the imperial history of its construction (presented in Chapter 2) remains largely unknown. Thus, their interpretations of *why* COFA status exists exemplify and perpetuate an occlusion of U.S. empire, even and especially at the very moments and sites within which they encounter U.S. imperial subjects.

Finally, **Chapter 6**, the dissertation's conclusion, returns to the Compact's significance for studies of U.S. empire and imperial migration more broadly. It opens with a discussion of what I call "imperial sense-making," examining the logics long-term residents use to make sense of why COFA status exists or why Marshall Islanders have the right of visa-free migration to the U.S. As this chapter argues, long-term residents make sense of a Marshallese presence in their town by interpreting them as *refugees* resettled by the U.S. and/or by assuming that their right to visa-free migration has been granted as U.S. *reparations* for nuclear testing. Both logics—the refugee logic and the reparations logic—rely on notions of U.S. exceptionalism,[14] upholding the good name of the U.S. as either as a benevolent provider of safe haven or a progressive democracy that eventually rights past wrongs. Neither of these two explanations, however, understands the U.S. as an *imperial* power that continues to exert control over the Marshall Islands and other Pacific Islands. In this way, long-term residents' interpretations of why COFA status exists exemplify and perpetuate an occlusion of U.S. empire.

As Chapter 6 shows, the Compact's story is in fact a story that both precedes the Compact, stretching back into the long-standing U.S. colonial and military presence in the Pacific islands, and follows its initial passage, extending its effects to locations unforeseen by its negotiators, such as Springdale, Arkansas. New destinations of empire like Springdale are remade in many ways by Marshallese Compact migrants' arrival and resettlement in them. In these sites, different tangents of

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[14] I replace the commonly-used term "American exceptionalism" with "U.S. exceptionalism" to differentiate between the United States and the Americas, a geographical entity that spans much of the Western hemisphere.

U.S. imperial histories and the U.S. "colonial present" (Gregory, 2004) entangle in compelling new ways, presenting valuable insights for scholars of U.S. empire and the mobilities it both engenders and curtails.

CHAPTER 2: The Compact of Free Association

Introduction

Marshall Islanders are able to migrate to Arkansas, and to the U.S. in general, because of a unique policy provision that grants them visa-free migration to the U.S., a kind of provision that does not exist anywhere else in U.S. immigration law. The policy mechanism that granted Marshall Islanders this option was the 1986 Compact of Free Association, a agreement elaborated between the Marshall Islands and the U.S. to formalize Marshallese independence from U.S. colonial administration, which began immediately after World War II. At the same time, the 1986 Compact also ushered in a new phase of U.S. imperialism in the Marshall Islands, establishing a new political relationship between the Marshall Islands and the U.S.: that of Freely Associated Statehood. As this chapter argues, Freely Associated Statehood (FAS) is in many ways just the most recent version of U.S. political, economic, and military influence in the islands. The Compact of Free Association is thus an *imperial* agreement between the U.S. and the Marshall Islands—one that upholds U.S. imperial control over the Marshall Islands, thus diminishing their sovereignty—as much as a *bilateral* agreement between two formally sovereign states. To understand it as such, one needs to know the longer history of imperialism and colonialism in the islands. Providing that history is this chapter's primary aim.

The full geopolitical significance of the Compact of Free Association can only be understood if situated within the longer historical trajectory of the U.S. colonial and military presence in the Pacific Islands. Derek Gregory (2006) warns scholars that "the imbrications of law and violence which shape the colonial present have a longer genealogy that needs to be recovered as part of the process of critique" (p. 408-409). Heeding Gregory, what follows is a history of U.S. colonial territoriality in the Pacific, beginning in the early-20th century. This history identifies key

shifts in the political, legal-jurisdictional, and colonial geographies of the Marshall Islands, in order to provide a context for the territorial dynamics that set the stage for the Compact itself.

This chapter examines the 20th-century U.S. colonial history in the Pacific region, the dissolution of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI) in 1986, the Compact's negotiation and eventual implementation in 1986, and the passage of the Amended Compact of 2003. The histories provided here outline the Marshall Islands' distinct territorial and jurisdictional periods under U.S. colonial power. In doing so, the chapter traces the Marshall Islands' forced inauguration into the South Pacific Mandate under Germany and then Japan, its role as a network of "unsinkable aircraft carriers" in the Pacific Theater of World War II, and its status as part of the TTPI and subsequently the Pacific Proving Grounds, a nuclear platform forged from the Cold War's geopolitical and military escalation.

These territorial blueprints form a backdrop to the Marshall Islands' contemporary political status, particularly as articulated in the Compact of Free Association. The political and territorial shifts this chapter discusses, however, are significant not only for their temporality but also for their *spatiality* (Smith, 2003a, 2003b). This chapter, thus, also aims to respond to Neil Smith's (2003a) call to "respatialize the history of these imperial moments" during the so-called "American Century" (Luce, 1941) in which U.S. empire consolidated global hegemonic power. It does so by examining the legal/colonial production of territory in the U.S. Pacific Islands, specifically in the ways that the U.S. military uses, and shores up its future use of, the islands.

To develop these ideas, this chapter works in four parts. The first examines the period of the TTPI (1947-1986). In place for four decades prior to the Compact's passage, the TTPI set the stage for the Compact's negotiation and eventual passage, as well as for the formalization of an ongoing U.S. political and military presence in the Pacific region. During the TTPI's early years, the U.S. military conducted massive nuclear testing in the Marshall Islands. I dedicate some attention to this

period, as it was part of the TTPI's legacy in the region and since the nuclear testing effects would color discussions of political status, future U.S.-RMI partnerships, and Compact terms in both 1986 and 2003.

The chapter's second section turns to the Cold War and the protracted negotiations over the TTPI's future political status (1969-1986) (Armstrong & Hills, 1984). Drawing on key historical archives from the Kennedy and TTPI administrations, it reveals U.S. imperial desires and tensions of the time. During this period, U.S. administrators were eager to maintain a strong economic, political, and military presence in the Pacific and to exclude other super-powers from this region, as they did elsewhere (Mason, 1989; Eilenberg, 1982). At the same time, U.S. administrators wanted to limit direct U.S. political leadership in the islands and to heed, at least nominally, the UN's original intent for the Trust Territories to transition to self-government. The tension between these two desires is revealed in the original Compact negotiations and continues to animate discussions of the Compact today.

The chapter's third section focuses on the original Compact of 1986, looking closely at the text that was eventually approved and enacted. In particular, it dedicates attention to a few key provisions related to Marshallese migration and U.S. military access. By focusing on the Compact's migration and citizenship provisions, this section aims to show how Compact migrants' status, or COFA status, is a type of *imperial citizenship*, forged, as it was, in a distinctly colonial/imperial document, despite the fact that the document ostensibly created the terms of *post-colonial* sovereignty for the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, and later, Palau.

Finally, the chapter's fourth section turns to the post-implementation period and the Amended Compact of 2003. It examines key changes to the Compact in the areas of migration and military access, locating them in the larger geopolitical shifts taking place under the so-called "War on Terror" (Coleman, 2007; Cowen & Gilbert, 2008; Elden, 2005). As this section shows, the

Marshall Islands were increasingly dependent on U.S. economic aid and reliant on the option of visa-free migration to the U.S. by the early 2000s, a dependence, many argued, intentionally fostered by the U.S. (Diaz, 2012; Underwood, 2003; Johnson, 1982; Gale, 1979). U.S. negotiators, thus, had vastly disproportionate power in influencing the outcomes of the Compact renegotiations in this latest round.

This chapter does not address all of the Compact's components, which range from economic and military provisions to foreign affairs, health care, environmental protection, and migration. Instead, it focuses specifically on how the Compact married exclusive U.S. military access through the policy of "strategic denial" in the Marshall Islands—a policy in which the U.S. denies other powers military access to specific countries—with migration provisions for RMI citizens. These were crucial elements for U.S. efforts to implement and maintain global imperial hegemony in the late-twentieth and early twenty-first century (Herr, 1986; Firth, 1989). The policy pairing of militarism and migration, the chapter shows, reveals the links between U.S. colonial and imperial projects abroad and the contingent provision of migration benefits for the 'beneficiaries' of U.S. occupation. Such a linkage lays the foundation for my argument that COFA status—the legal status or category of migrants living in the U.S. under the Compact's migration provisions—is a kind of imperial citizenship. Furthermore, this chapter argues, the Compact served as a key document for cementing U.S. hegemony and dominance in the Pacific more broadly. As other political geographers have suggested, U.S. global hegemony has been "attained not only through naked force or threats but also through favors and coercion" (Davis, 2015, p. 2; see also Agnew, 2005). Those favors and coercion, in the context of military access and migrant mobility, are examined here.

Woven throughout this history are the Marshallese people's own histories of resistance to U.S. imperialism and nuclear testing and their country's transformation through decades of mass emigration. The story of Compact migration, this chapter shows, is the story of how a policy

provision viewed as "relatively minor in the grand scheme of things" (interview, senior government

official, Washington, D.C., August 2014) became a central tenet in the lives of migrants in diaspora,

their families and friends in the islands, and receiving communities on other Pacific Islands and the

U.S. mainland. As Kristina Stege (2004) has written, "[t]he Compact of Free Association colors

nearly every story on the Marshall Islands" (p. 127). Its effects, however, have also been

disseminated far beyond the Marshall Islands themselves, through Compact migrants. Compact

migration, thus, is a story of U.S. imperialism narrated through migration and resettlement

experiences, through the history of the policy itself, and through encounters between groups that the

policy puts in contact: namely, Compact migrants and local residents in resettlement sites. This

policy is part of their history as well.

A Colonial History of the Compact: What Came Before

The Marshall Islands' history has been shaped by extended colonial and imperial rule and a

number of intensive military actions. The islands' first contact with European travelers was

documented as early as the 1520s (Hezel, 1994, 2003; Barker, 2004). In the mid-19th century, they

were subjected to a rapid succession of colonial projects (Barker, 2004). The first American

missionaries arrived in the 1820s, aided in their settlement by the American Board of

Commissioners for Foreign Missions (Lal & Fortune, 2000). In 1885, after a brief period of Spanish

occupation, the Marshall Islands became a German protectorate, a territorial status that persisted

until Japanese capture of the Marshall Islands during World War I.

The early twentieth century saw the beginning of a formalized international presence in the

Pacific Islands, specifically through the League of Nations. Imperial Japan's occupation of the

Marshall Islands during World War I consolidated several Pacific islands under the League of

Nations' South Pacific Mandate (Anghie, 2001; Burkman, 2008).[15] The Japanese occupation (1918-

1944) of the Marshall Islands and other territories in the mandate (the Caroline Islands, Mariana

Islands, and Palau) thus set the precedent for later U.S. occupation and militarization of the islands,

as future UN dealings over the region would rely on the South Pacific Mandate's territorial

designations (Hara, 2006). In this way, one imperial project laid the groundwork for others down the

road.

During World War II, the Marshall Islands, like many Pacific Island colonial territories of

the U.S., Japan, and Germany, became the staging ground for military battles between the Allies and

the Axis powers (Willmott, 2014). While islands like Guam, the Commonwealth of Northern

Mariana Islands (CNMI), and Hawaii withstood (and continue to withstand) longer periods of

formal occupation by the U.S., the Marshall Islands were ruthlessly scripted into the map of the

"Pacific Theater" that set the territorial stage for the Axis and Allied land-grab (Willmott, 2014;

Shigematsu & Camacho, 2010). As such, the Marshallese population survived "the impact of foreign

traders, proselyting missionaries, colonial reformists, and the destruction and dislocation suffered"

during WWII (Mason, 1989, p. 22). Even before the Marshall Islands came under U.S. colonial

control in 1947, Marshall Islanders had long experienced various forms of external influence and

domination. However, the post-war period would usher in an era of intensified and enduring

external control, this time at the hands of the U.S.

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[15] The South Pacific Mandate was issued as a *Class C mandate*, a group of mandates composed of former German
territories or possessions that the League of Nations distributed to Germany's victors following WWI (Anghie, 2001).
The euphemistic language of the UN, U.S., and many Western scholars to describe "transfers" and "distributions" of
territories between colonial powers, of course, disregards any agency, sovereignty, or self-determination of the island
peoples themselves. It also writes out the numerous freedom movements that disturbed these "transfers" (see Schirmer
& Shalom, 1987 on Filipino anti-colonial resistance movements). Despite what this euphemistic parlance conveys, those
colonial hand-offs were never inevitable; indigenous social movements in many colonized sites have fought for and
achieved self-determination (Shohat, 1992; Rajagopal, 2003).

Creating the Trust Territory: "The Invention of a Legal Structure"[16]

An analysis of contemporary colonial relations between the Marshall Islands and the U.S. must begin with an understanding of the TTPI, as it was the first formal geopolitical linkage between the U.S. and present-day Marshall Islands. In one sense, the TTPI was an extension of a long-standing pattern in the region, one of outside occupation, colonialism, and militarization of Pacific islands from the Marshall Islands to Hawaii, Guam, Micronesia, and throughout the South Pacific. In another sense, however, the TTPI's implementation marked the onset of a new stage of U.S. military empire, what C. Wright Mills recognized as a "military definition of reality" (1956, p. 198).

While this dissertation focuses primarily on the Compact's relevance for the Marshall Islands, the Marshall Islands as a politico-legal entity were historically co-produced with other island territories in the region, especially in this time period. My aim here is not to collapse cultural and political differences between these territories—differences that both precede and extend beyond U.S. colonial rule. It is, instead, to emphasize the significance of these sites' grouping under the TTPI, a UN-recognized colonial jurisdiction that endured for nearly four decades. Under the TTPI, the U.S. consolidated administrative, political, and military control of much of the Pacific region. As this section shows, that consolidation laid the foundation for the U.S. presence in the region beyond the TTPI's end.

The war's conclusion in 1945 signified a major shift in the territorial distribution of U.S. power in the Pacific for a number of reasons. First, the war's end brought the dissolution of the League of Nations in 1946, leaving open the question of how to manage the remaining League of Nations Mandates like the South Pacific Mandate.[17] To address these questions, the UN established

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[16] From Dirlik, 1992.

[17] In total, eleven Trust Territories were established at this time, ten of which had originated as League of Nations Mandates and the eleventh of which was Italian Somaliland (Chesterman, 2005).

the United Nations Trusteeship Council in 1945, the administrative body that would oversee the

political administration of the Trust Territories by their respective "administering authorities."[18]
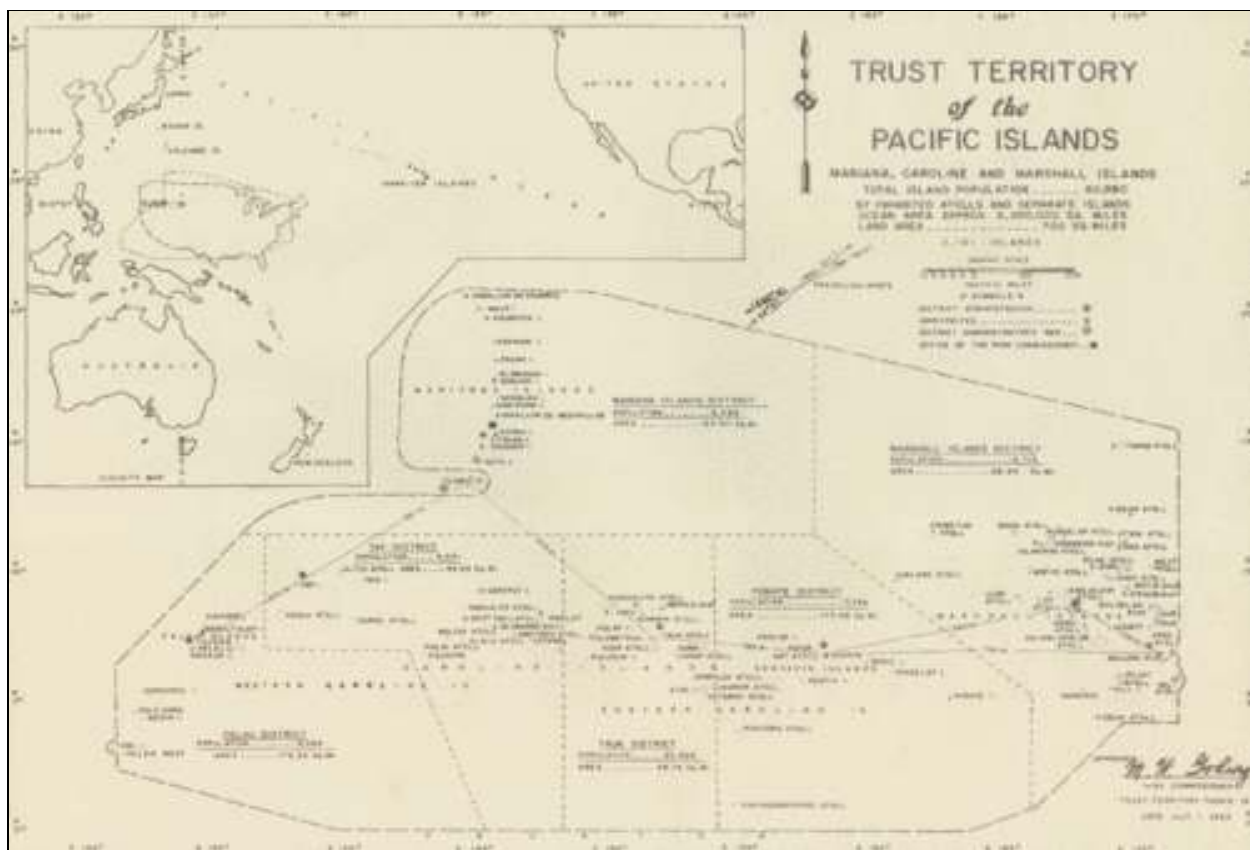
**Figure 2: Official government map, U.S. Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, 1961
(Source: Samuel McPhetres)**

In 1947, the UN created the TTPI, an area that encompassed contemporary Micronesia, Palau, the

CNMI, and the Marshall Islands (Figure 2). One of eleven original UN trust territories, the TTPI

was created through the UN's International Trusteeship System (United Nations and

Decolonization, 2014), and the UN granted control over the TTPI to the U.S. The TTPI's legal

formation as a "strategic trust territory" enabled the U.S. to establish military bases in the islands, to

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[18] Term of art used by the UN to designate neo-colonial powers after WWII. I use the term 'administering authorities' here to be consistent with the legal documents I analyze but underscore that it is a euphemism for colonial powers under a new order of imperialism inaugurated with the creation of the UN Trusteeship System.

oversee their political administration, and to otherwise pursue its military and geopolitical interests relatively unfettered (Leibowitz, 1976; Teaiwa, 1994; Dvorak, 2008).[19]

The TTPI formally entered the UN trusteeship system on July 18, 1947. At that time, it consisted of more than 2,000 islands scattered over close to three million square miles of the Pacific Ocean and contained the area then referred to as Micronesia (the Marshalls, the Carolines, and the Marianas).[20] The TTPI's legal and political code, laid out in the Code of the Trust Territory and enacted in 1952, granted "full powers of administration, legislation, and jurisdiction over the territory" to the U.S. (Leibowitz, 1976, p. 71). Between 1947 and 1951, the Code of the Trust Territory and the TTPI's general administration were overseen from Guam by the U.S. Navy, specifically by five consecutive military governors appointed by the U.S. federal government. Following that period, the TTPI was headed by a High Commissioner, who had "virtual autonomy" as granted by the U.S. President (Mason, 1989, p. 5; see also Leibowitz, 1976).

A brief glance at the United Nations Charter, Chapter XII, which outlines the International Trusteeship System, provides insight into the some of the self-purported motivations of the system itself. Yet there are also some contradictions between the Charter's articles in terms of objectives. Article 76, for example, outlines the Trusteeship System's objectives, the second of which is as follows:

> to promote the political, economic, social, and educational advancement of the inhabitants of the trust territories, and their progressive development towards self-government or independence as may be appropriate to the particular circumstances of each territory and its peoples and the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned, and as may be provided by the terms of each trusteeship agreement. (United Nations Charter, 1947)[21]

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[19] As Leibowitz (1976) points out, the "strategic" designation of the TTPI meant that the U.S. reported not to the UN General Assembly but to the UN Security Council, where the U.S. had veto power. Given this institutional configuration, the U.S. exercised a significant degree of influence in regards to TTPI-related affairs.

[20] The area of Micronesia as referred to here is a geographical and jurisdictional region but is distinct from the contemporary political entity of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM).

[21] Charter of the United Nations (1945). Retrieved on May 14, 2016 from http://www.un.org/en/charter-united-nations/

At face value, this language appears to support the independence and self-determination of

territories and to prioritize the collective will of each territory's residents—an official justification the

UN continues to uphold for the Trusteeship System's implementation. Currently, for example, its

main webpage for the International Trusteeship System echoes the Charter's original sentiments,

emphasizing the UN's benevolent motivations for the Trusteeship System and stressing its

purported development goals:

> [the promotion of] the political, economic and social advancement of the Territories and
> their development towards self-government and self-determination. It also encouraged
> respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and recognition of the interdependence
> of peoples of the world. (United Nations, 2014)[22]

The UN charter's seemingly benign language, thus, purports to uphold self-determination and local

development. Nonetheless, this same language has often served to limit the sovereignty of colonized

peoples (Aguon, 2008a, 2010; Ewalt & Mokuau, 1995). Julian Aguon, Chamorro[23] legal scholar,

reminds readers to pay close attention to the Charter's language: "Note that Article 73 references

'self- government' and not 'independence.' The ambiguous first term was used originally to avoid the

unambiguous second term, which European colonial powers, especially Winston Churchill's U.K.,

rejected" (2010, p. 49). In the same vein, the UN Charter did not predestine the TTPI for

autonomous rule or independence. Instead, it and subsequent U.S. and UN legal documents left

open the possibility of other political status outcomes for the islands, some of which would entail an

even closer political relationship with the U.S. than existed under the TTPI (Leibowitz, 1989; Mink,

1970; Armstrong & Hills, 1984).

Reading further into the UN Charter, one sees more explicitly the paradoxical marriage of

those "fundamental freedoms" and "self-determination" with an imperative for "international peace

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[22] UN Charter, Chapter XII. International trusteeship system. United Nations. Retrieved on March 15, 2016 from
http://www.un.org
[23] Chamorros are the indigenous people of the Mariana Islands, currently politically divided between Guam and the U.S.
Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI).

and security." Here, the UN document both presages and prescribes a variation of self-

determination for the Pacific Islands that will not hamper U.S. military hegemony in the region.

Article 84 of Chapter XII makes more explicit what it means to "recogni[ze] the interdependence of

peoples of the world":

> It shall be the duty of the administering authority to ensure that the trust territory shall play its part in the maintenance of international peace and security. To this end the administering authority may make use of volunteer forces, facilities, and assistance from the trust territory in carrying out the obligations towards the Security Council undertaken in this regard by the administering authority, as well as for local defence and the maintenance of law and order within the trust territory. (UN Charter, Chapter XII, 1947)[24]

This section of the Charter's text is compelling for a number of reasons. First, it reveals how central

the military imperatives were in the formulation of the Trusteeship agreement (Leibowitz, 1976;

Teaiwa, 1994). Second, and relatedly, the text clearly articulates that administering authorities could

(and should) *make use of* territories under trusteeship for the 'maintenance of international peace and

security.' This notion would become a central premise of the TTPI, and later, the Compact of Free

Association for the Freely Associated States and the Covenant for the CNMI. In effect, the

Charter's language served as a *carte blanche* for administering authorities like the U.S. to use the

islands as their military playgrounds. The U.S. would fully test the limits of that *carte blanche* during

the Cold War, justifying increasing militarization of the islands by the threat of Soviet encroachment

in the region. Thus, the UN Charter's outline of the Trusteeship System mandate lays the legal

foundation for the U.S. "colonial present" in the Pacific Islands at the level of international law

(Gregory, 2004).

Furthermore, that U.S. "colonial present" drags a long history behind it, one that reveals

how consistently U.S. military interests have shaped U.S.-Pacific relations. As Sasha Davis (2011)

writes,

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[24] Charter of the United Nations (1945). Retrieved on May 14, 2016 from http://www.un.org/en/charter-united-nations/

[the] denial of rights to people in Micronesia, the erasure of their social histories, and the portrayal of their islands by military planners as "anchored aircraft carriers" lacking any social worth beyond locations for power projection and weapons testing, has been remarkably consistent from World War Two to the present. (p. 221)

This consistency is laid out in the documents that formalized the TTPI. The Trusteeship agreements and the UN Charter are, in this way, key to understanding how *ongoing* U.S. colonialism and imperialism in the contemporary Pacific Islands, and in the Marshall Islands in particular, was built into law and itself built on previous periods of colonization. Since many of these legal documents served as precedent and reference for subsequent laws and policies, they are also central to understanding how U.S. colonialism *continues* to be upheld under the law.

Cold War Hot Spots: Nuclear Testing

The broad permissions granted to Trust Territory administering authorities, as outlined in Article 87, were explored to the fullest extent possible by the U.S. federal government and military during the period of the TTPI (1947-1986). U.S. military and colonial activities during this period ranged vastly from island to island and included nuclear testing, munitions storage, and aerial, sea, and land-based military training exercises (Shigematsu & Camacho, 2010; Aguon, 2006; Davis, 2015; Kirk & Okazawa-Rey, 1998). In the Marshall Islands, however, the U.S. military was preparing to carry out one of the most massive and devastating nuclear testing campaigns in history.[25]

While this dissertation does not focus centrally on the U.S. military's nuclear testing in the Marshall Islands, it is impossible to write a story of U.S. militarism and imperialism in the Marshall Islands, or even a story of contemporary "bilateral" U.S.-RMI relations, without addressing the centrality of nuclear testing. To disregard its place in the Marshall Islands' 20th-century history would be to deny the pervasive, lasting, and devastating effects of nuclear testing on the people and

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[25] The Marshall Islands' nuclear legacy has been well-documented by political geographers, cultural anthropologists, and other Pacific region scholars (Davis, 2005; Barker, 2004; Teaiwa, 1994; Maclellan, 2005) who have traced the extensive social, political, environmental, and health-related costs of the testing on the Marshallese people.

ecosystems of the Marshall Islands. On the other hand, it is important to note that the nuclear

testing, rather than being an isolated, spectacular event, occurred in the context of other ongoing

processes of U.S. empire in the islands (see Nixon, 2011, on slow violence; Stoler, 2013). Ann Stoler

(2013) describes these effects as "imperial debris," the "more protracted imperial processes that

saturate the subsoil of people's lives and persist, sometimes, subjacently, over a longer durée" (p. 5).

Notwithstanding the significance of other ongoing effects of U.S. empire, the nuclear testing was a

devastating period that bears discussion, if we are to understand the push for migration provisions in

the Compact.

The U.S. government wasted no time putting to use the broad provisions laid out by the UN

Charter and the TTPI. On July 23, 1947, five days after the TTPI's formal establishment, the U.S.

Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) announced the creation of the Pacific Proving Grounds

(Buesseler, 1997). This was not, however, the first time the U.S. had engaged in military operations

in the islands (Barker, 2004). A year earlier, on July 1, 1946, the U.S. had conducted the first atomic

weapons testing in Bikini Atoll, which was also the first nuclear testing after the U.S. atomic

bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (Barker, 2004; Niedenthal, 1997).[26] This test, nicknamed the

Baker shot, rendered Bikini Atoll uninhabitable, later necessitating the relocation of all Bikinians to

another atoll altogether.

Fast on the heels of the Bikini tests came two major operations that would prove even more

devastating to life on the Marshall Islands. In 1952, in Enewetak Atoll, the U.S. detonated the first

hydrogen bomb device, nicknamed Ivy Mike, under Operation Ivy (Rhodes, 2012). Two years later,

in 1954, the U.S. military launched Operation Castle and Castle Bravo, the latter popularly referred

to as the Bravo shot—the first test of a dry-fuel thermonuclear hydrogen bomb (Barker, 2004;

Rhodes, 2012). The degree of the test's explosive yield, according to conservative reports by the U.S.

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[26] The atomic bombs targeted for Hiroshima and Nagasaki departed from Tinian, an island in the Northern Marianas (CNMI) occupied by the U.S. during World War II.

Defense Nuclear Agency, was "three times the most probable predicted value and twice the predicted upper limit" (DNA, 1954, cited in Simon, 1997). The Bravo shot yielded an explosive blast equivalent to fifteen megatons of Trinitrotoluene (TNT), making it the most powerful nuclear device ever detonated (Barker, 2004). Nuclear testing at this massive scale was, of course, made politically possible, even arguably *legal*, by the colonial foothold in the region that the TTPI provided to the U.S. military (Barker, 2004).

In the weeks and months that followed, the Bravo shot's preliminary radiological effects became clear: returning islanders, whom the U.S. military had relocated prior to the shot, started to experience symptoms including hair loss, nausea, and skin lesions, as did the crew of a nearby Japanese fishing boat, the *Daigo Fukuryu Maru*, or "Lucky Dragon No. 5." Contaminated fish populations were confirmed as far as the shores of East and Southeast Asia (Simon, 1997). While the testing was conducted within the territory of the contemporary Marshall Islands, the geographic spread of its effects was not contained to the TTPI.

Altogether, U.S. nuclear testing in the Marshall Islands included the detonation of at least 67 nuclear bombs in the Marshall Islands' 750,000-square-mile territory (Barker, 2004). Although the passage of the Partial Test Ban Treaty in 1963 put a halt to all U.S. nuclear testing in the Marshall Islands, the radiological effects on the local environment and the health of the local population were just beginning. As a result of more than ten years of almost-constant nuclear testing, residents of Bikini, Rongelap, Utrik, and Enewetak atolls experienced forced and necessitated relocation to other Marshallese atolls (Johnson, 1979). These relocations produced profound cultural and family dislocations and disruptions to Marshall Islanders' livelihoods (Aguon, 2008b; Hau'ofa, 1994; Teaiwa, 1994), another lasting effect of U.S. military presence in the islands that is still felt by many today (interviews, Honolulu, HI, 2013, Springdale, AR, 2014).

The nuclear tests, in addition to causing long-lasting devastation for Marshall Islanders, also had major geopolitical implications. Sasha Davis (2015) states these unequivocally: "Simply put," he writes, "the first presentation of American hegemony to the world was performed on the stage of Bikini Atoll" (p. 31). This demonstration of American hegemony in the islands, however, would not be the last. Instead, the testing inaugurated a new phase of U.S. involvement in the Marshall Islands, one that would be profoundly shaped by the geopolitical tensions of the Cold War in the decades that followed.

Negotiating Free Association: 1961-1986

Beyond the question of whether the Compact, and associated statehood, would "work" for the Freely Associated States (FAS),[27] the Compact's history also shows the often-fraught and indeterminate history of decolonization, which in the Pacific "was not inevitable, nor was it unconditional" (Lal & Fortune, 2000, p. 259). While neither decolonization *nor colonization* was inevitable, the trajectories of both were influenced by powerful U.S. interests that long conspired to perpetuate Pacific regional dependence on the U.S. These interests are evident in archival documents like the Solomon Report (which I describe in more detail shortly), U.S. Congressional hearings, and other U.S. government documents from the 1950s and 1960s that address U.S. political and military objectives in the Pacific region. The terms and forms of Marshallese decolonization, even the republic's legibility or plausibility *as sovereign*, shift, depending on where we look and how we measure self-determination and its complicated link to formal political independence.

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[27] Freely Associated States, as defined in Chapter 1, are partnerships between two political territories, one of which—historically the formerly colonized party—often functions as a minor or lesser partner to the other (Lawson & Sloane, 2009). In this case, the U.S. eventually elaborated political relationships of Free Association with three independent states: the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), and Palau.

The 1960s opened with the Kennedy administration's interest in building Micronesian unity and strengthening a political partnership with the U.S., in part, of course, to weaken any potential Soviet influence in the region. Kennedy's declared desire for "a new and lasting friendship" with Micronesia, one that would tie the region to the U.S. "within our political framework," inaugurated a new era in U.S.-TTPI relations—an expanded Peace Corps presence, greater U.S./TTPI administrative presence beyond Saipan, the TTPI district capital, and renewed attention to the question of Micronesia's future political status among U.S. politicians (Kennedy, cited in Eilenberg, 1982, p. 62). These shifts signaled the paramount importance that U.S. administrators placed on the region as the U.S. attempted to expand its geopolitical influence in the second half of the century and to limit Soviet attempts to do the same.

The publication of the Solomon Report in 1963 was a key moment in U.S. Cold War-era relations with Micronesia. Anthony Solomon was a senior consultant appointed by President Kennedy to head a Government Survey Mission in the TTPI, with the mandate to assess the island communities' economic, social, and political status (Mason, 1989). Solomon's conclusions, conveyed to the Kennedy administration in what became known as the Solomon Report, heavily emphasized the political advantages for U.S. empire in maintaining a close relationship with Micronesia, if necessary by fostering economic dependence (Eilenberg, 1982). Its recommendations included intensifying U.S. economic support of the islands in the form of economic development. As Giff Johnson, long-time journalist and editor in the Marshall Islands, writes,

> [T]he Kennedy administration dramatically reversed past policies and in the early 1960's millions of dollars and hundreds of federal programs began pouring into the islands. Reacting to pressure from the U.N. and anti-colonial sentiment sweeping the world, Kennedy instituted these changes. But according to National Security Memorandum 145, the goal was to bring Micronesia into a "permanent relationship" with the U.S. by accelerating "development of the area to bring its political, economic and social standards into line with an eventual permanent association"…Because of the Micronesians' overwhelming dependency on American aid, they have been forced to accept a status that falls far short of independence. (Johnson, 1982, pp. 43-44, cited in Diaz, 2012)

As Johnson and others (Diaz, 2012; Gale, 1979) argued, the Solomon Report clearly laid out U.S.

imperatives in linking development aid to the islands with the goal of ensuring ongoing U.S. political

influence there. This strategy, as Stur (2015) has documented, was used widely by the U.S.

government during the Cold War as a means to contain Communism. By delimiting the range of

political status options that would be economically feasible for the islands, the report framed the

islands as inherently incapable of self-government and positioned U.S. political influence there as the

only solution to this malady. When the report was eventually leaked and published in *The Young*

Micronesian, island leaders and activists were infuriated ("The Solomon Report: America's Ruthless

Blueprint," 1971; interviews, Saipan, 2013). Many felt that the Solomon report unfairly painted the

islands as incapable of autonomous rule and "was nothing less than a plan to manipulate

Micronesians into a permanent relationship with the United States" (Howe & Kiste, 1994, p. 231,

cited in Crismon, 2005). Partly as a result of the Solomon Report, tensions were high in the mid-to-

late 1960s as U.S. and Micronesian political leaders entered into political status negotiations.

Early Political Status Discussions and Education for Self-Government (ESG)

As the original Trusteeship System stipulated, administering authorities like the U.S. were to

engage trust territory populations and their local leadership in a process of political discernment,

during which peoples of the territories would engage in decision-making about their future political

status. Thus, beginning in the late 1960s and continuing through the 1980s, the U.S. government

held political status negotiations with leaders from the Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands. At the

time, these included six districts: the Marshall Islands, the Marianas, Palau, Ponape, Chuuk, and Yap

(the last four were eventually consolidated under the Federated States of Micronesia) (interviews and

personal communication, Sam McPhetres, 2013 and 2014). These discussions would determine the

political status of the islands, and any political relationship to the U.S., upon termination of the

TTPI. Therefore, they were of great interest to actors in both the islands and the U.S.

As early as 1967, nine years after the conclusion of the nuclear testing program, island representatives formed the Congress of Micronesia, a political entity whose primary political objective was to examine the possibilities for self-government in Micronesia as a region according to the mandate set by the UN Charter twenty years earlier (Mason, 1989). By 1969, delegates from the Congress of Micronesia convened with U.S. representatives from the Department of Interior, Department of Defense, and State Department in Washington, D.C., to officially set in motion U.S.-Micronesian political status negotiations. Delegates from the Micronesian Future Political Status Commission, established by the Congress of Micronesia, initially considered four political status options for the region: 1) independence; 2) free association; 3) integration in some form with a sovereign nation, most likely the U.S.; and 4) remaining a trust territory (Leibowitz, 1976). Each option would have a different long-term outcome for U.S. political positioning in the region, limiting or enabling, to varying degrees, the degree of political, economic, and military influence the U.S. could exert on the islands.

In 1975, Trust Territory administrators launched what would become the Education for Self-Government (ESG) Program, at the behest of a U.S.-based political action committee (Mason, 1989, p. 17). This program, which was mobilized in all six TTPI districts and funded by U.S. Congress (Coleman, 1977), was designed to provide structured education through workshops, public forums, and reading materials on the options for Micronesia's future political status. Despite its ambitious aims, ESG was not without its detractors, among them Father Francis X. Hezel, a Jesuit priest who had gained wide support and trust from Micronesian communities due to his long career as an educator and social justice activist in the Micronesian region. In a 1976 essay with the delightfully satirical title, "Micronesia's Education for Self-Government: Frolicking in the Backyard?," Hezel wrote,

> One does not tie a child to a clothesline in the backyard and then complain that he has never explored the other side of the street. Yet ESG is very much the child at the end of the

clothesline, confined to the backyard by a solicitous mother who doesn't want her baby to stray into the dangerous road. (1976, p. 62)

Hezel argued that despite the good intentions and committed efforts of many ESG staffers, the ESG mandate had been circumscribed by more powerful interests in the Trust Territory. His critique resonated with and echoed the concerns of many political leaders and social groups in the islands, some of whom saw the ESG Program as another attempt by the U.S. and TTPI leadership to assert heavy influence on the islands' future political status (fieldnotes, Saipan, 2013; "The Solomon Report: America's Ruthless Blueprint," 1971). These fears revealed the tensions underlying the Compact negotiations, which resulted from the great significance both the U.S. and island sides placed on the future of the islands' political status (Hills, 1984, 2004). They also spoke to the heavy hand that the U.S. played in influencing political status considerations.

Compact Negotiations

Despite concerns about the ultimate intentions or motivations of U.S. efforts in the region, by 1979, official negotiations were underway throughout the TTPI to implement transitions to the new forms of political status decided upon by the various island leaders, with the consultation of U.S. representatives (Mason, 1989). Some eight years earlier, in 1971, the Marianas District had opted for a closer political relationship with the U.S. and split from the rest of the TTPI, negotiating a different political status and eventually becoming a U.S. commonwealth (the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands, or CNMI). Among the actors present at the TTPI political status negotiations were representatives from the TTPI's Office of Micronesian Status Negotiations, Ambassador F. Haydn Williams, head negotiators on each side, and their respective attorneys (interviews, Washington, D.C., 2014). According to one senior U.S. official, 29 agencies were involved in the original Compact negotiations, primarily government agencies from the U.S., the UN, and respective islands (interview, senior policy official, Washington, D.C., 2014). The UN

mandate to negotiators was clear: reach agreement about the future political status of the TTPI, a

political entity that had already cleaved itself (or been cleaved) into several sub-divisions.

What each side hoped to gain from the negotiations, and how they aimed to do so, however,

was more complex. One senior U.S. government official characterized the two sides' priorities in

this way:

> My understanding is that migration was of the highest priority to the island negotiators while
> strategic denial was the primary objective for the U.S. negotiators. In general terms, the
> Compacts are typical Cold War agreements—the U.S. was seeking an agreement that would
> meet U.S. security interests (keep the Soviets/Chinese out) and it was willing to pay a high
> price. At the time, it was not expected that there would be a high rate of migration. (Personal
> communication, August 2014)

Packed densely into this statement are a number of explanatory logics for the migration provision,

ones that would be echoed in many policy expert interviews. As this U.S. official articulated, the

migration provision, which was of utmost importance to the Freely Associated States negotiators,

was generally seen by U.S. negotiators as having a low political and economic cost since U.S.

negotiators anticipated a low rate of migration from the islands. Although the U.S. had been "willing

to pay a high price" to maintain exclusive military base rights and strategic denial in the Pacific

region, the migration provision itself did not constitute such a high price. Its inclusion in the

Compact, however, enabled the U.S. to push for its own primary objective: maintaining military

access. This interviewee also highlighted the strategic military importance that U.S. officials

attributed to the region, situating it as part of a larger Cold War-era geopolitical project to shore up

exclusive military access around the globe (Barnes & Farish, 2006; Farish, 2010; Hara, 2006). Not

surprisingly, Compact negotiations were influenced by these broader geopolitical objectives that

worked across scales, in the same way they were influenced by imperial maneuvers that preceded

them.

The negotiations were not without obstacles. For one, the CIA was discovered to have

secretly bugged negotiating sessions in D.C. and Hawaii (Woodward, 1976; interviews, Sam

McPhetres, Saipan, 2013, senior policy officials, Washington, D.C., 2014). Discovery of this fact, of course, heightened existing distrust of U.S. negotiators, and of the negotiating process itself, in the islands. Another issue was the Solomon Report referenced earlier, by this point infamous among islanders and anyone involved in island politics. Despite these concerns, it was clear that the U.S. intended to maintain a long-term presence in the Pacific region. For example, Ambassador F. Haydyn Williams, the U.S. President's personal representative for the political status negotiations (1971-1976), was direct in stating that the U.S. would not consider full Micronesian independence:

> I cannot imagine, for instance, that my Government would agree to termination of the [TTPI] trusteeship on terms which would in any way threaten stability in the area and which would in the opinion of the United States endanger international peace and security. (Williams, cited in Leibowitz, 1976, p. 81)[28]

Ambassador Williams's comment reveals the great significance the political status negotiations held for the U.S.' ability to maintain its influence in the Pacific and, by extension, its influence on an international scale. Such considerations would continue to weigh on negotiations as they moved forward in the years that followed. By October 1982, the Federated States of Micronesia had moved to enter into free association with the U.S., and the Marshall Islands followed suit eight months later in June 1983. U.S. Ambassador Fred M. Zeder II signed both the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) and Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) Compacts for the U.S. in 1983 (Reagan, 1984). However, it would be three more years, in January 1986, before the U.S. Congress would approve the Compact and enact it into law (interview, Sam McPhetres, Saipan, 2013).

The Compact of Free Association (1986)

The 1986 Compact is significant as both a political document outlining contemporary Marshallese political status and an archival text imagining and conveying certain imperial geographies. As a *legal* document, the Compact defined the post-colonial relationship that each of

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[28] Statement by Ambassador Williams during the Proceedings of the 6th Round of Negotiations, *Micronesian Status Negotiations* (28 September – 6 October 1972).

the three remaining TTPI states—the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), the Republic of Palau, and the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)—would have with the U.S. As a *bilateral agreement* between the U.S. and the Republic of the Marshall Islands, it covered issues ranging from economic development to military access to migration and citizenship issues that linked the two countries in a number of ways. It was, however, more than a bilateral agreement: it was also an *imperial* agreement, as it extended, in a new political form, the long-standing U.S. political, economic, and military influence over the Marshall Islands, even after formal political independence.

In broad terms, the Compact of Free Association of 1986 covered a number of topics deemed important to either the U.S. or the Marshall Islands, or both. It broadly stipulated that the U.S. federal government would provide financial support through what were called Compact Trust Funds, or Compact Funds, to the Marshall Islands for fifteen years. During the same time period, the U.S. military would be given the right to operate armed forces in the islands, to request operating base space, and to exclude other countries' military forces from entering the Marshall Islands' territory without U.S. permission (U.S.-RMI Compact, 1986; Underwood, 2003; Hills, 1984). The Compact additionally included other provisions in areas including foreign affairs, health care, environmental protections, and federal services (U.S.-RMI Compact, 1986). Also built into the 1986 Compact was the stipulation that the Compact would be renegotiated beginning in 1999, a process that would lead to the 2003 Amended Compact and which I describe later in this section. For the purposes of this dissertation, two aspects of the Compact—its military provisions and its migration and citizenship provisions—are most germane.

The Compact's provisions for exclusive U.S. military access to the Marshall Islands clearly demonstrate the perpetuation of U.S. empire, albeit through different political strategies than were used previously under the TTPI, which placed the Marshall Islands under formal U.S. political jurisdiction. While the Compact established the Marshall Islands as a formally independent,

sovereign nation, it also stipulated that the islands cede plenary power to the U.S., granting the U.S.

government full access to the land and sea within its 750,000 square miles of territory (Barker, 2004;

interview, former RMI ambassador, Washington, D.C., 2014). In this way, the conditions built into

the Compact of Free Association played a role in upholding exclusive U.S. military access in the

islands and in the larger Pacific region (interviews, Washington, D.C., August 2014).

The Compact, however, was also the harbinger of a relatively new type of political-legal

arrangement and political status: that of Freely Associated Statehood. The original Compact

identified both the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia as Freely Associated

States. As with other states in free association, the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) is

considered by the UN as holding sovereign political status (Lal & Fortune, 2002).[29] The Marshall

Islands' status as a Freely Associated State, and the degree of its sovereignty or political relationality

to the U.S., has generated much scholarship and debate (Hills, 1984, 2004; Underwood, 2003; Diaz,

2012; Keitner & Reisman, 2003). Specifically *what kind* of legal document the Compact embodies is

much debated by legal scholars, policy-makers, and local residents and activists within the former

territories (Underwood, 2003; Diaz, 2012; Keitner & Reisman, 2003). One interpretation is that the

Compact functions, along with its subsidiary documents for each republic, as a set of bilateral

agreements between two sovereign states. Other legal scholars have interpreted free association as a

"political 'half-way house' to full independence without association," a "'soft landing' from

dependency (Hills, 2004, n.p.; see also Underwood, 2003). Still other interpretations frame it—

particularly the visa-free migration provision—as a kind of reparations for nuclear testing or

exchange for exclusive U.S. military base access (interviews, Springdale, Fayetteville, Little Rock, AR;

Chong-Gum, *A New Island*, 2006). These various and conflicting interpretations speak to the

complexity of the Compact and the new political arrangement it established, an arrangement not

[29] There currently exist five bilateral "partnerships" of free association; the U.S. is a signatory party in three of these.

easily characterized within dominant definitions of political statehood, sovereignty, self-determination, and colonialism (Underwood, 2003). In other words, the degree of 'freedom' proffered through free association was, and continues to be, a matter of debate.

Whether freely associated statehood, or free association, is a politically sustainable status has been doubted by some scholars familiar with the region. Francis Hezel (1976) wrote,

> The Micronesian people's choice is rather simple over the long run: independence (or something akin to it) or American statehood. Anything short of either one of these statuses appears to be a rather unstable formula, as the recent political ferment in Guam clearly indicates. Free Association itself – that much discussed and little understood option – would almost certainly gravitate in time towards one or the other of these. (p. 2)

Hezel's position that free association, as a liminal political status between statehood and independent sovereignty, would be unsustainable in the long run was shared by many interviewees involved in Compact policy negotiations and U.S. territorial affairs policy analysis (interviews, Washington, D.C., August 2014), with several echoing these precise sentiments (interview, senior policy officials, Washington, D.C., 2014). Associated statehood, nonetheless, was viewed by much of the UN leadership at the time as politically preferential to full sovereignty for the smaller island territories and colonies (Broderick, 1968; Igarashi, 2002), in part because UN leaders may have been concerned about potential shifts in wider geopolitical dynamics if island territories were independent (Aguon, 2010).[30] These conflicting interpretations highlight the different political imperatives held by negotiating parties as they manifested in the Compact, as well as the high stakes both sides placed on the islands' political status more broadly.

Military Provisions and Strategic Denial

One of the U.S. negotiators' primary objectives in implementing the Compact was to assure ongoing military U.S. access to the Marshall Islands, and specifically to Kwajalein, which had been under a land-use agreement since October 19, 1982. As many Pacific scholars have written (Underwood,

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[30] The provisions of associated statehood are laid out in UN General Assembly resolution 1541 (XV) Principle VI.

2003; Hills, 1984; Kiste, 1986) and as interviews also revealed (interviews, Washington, D.C, August 2014; personal communications, senior policy officials, former RMI ambassador, 2014), the Compact's strategic function was tied to military dimensions pivotal to U.S. interests. A closer look at its text, then, provides some insights into the U.S. military interests undergirding the Compact's elaboration.

One revealing segment of the Compact is in Title Three of the original 1986 Compact,[31] which addresses "Security and Defense Relations" between the U.S. and the respective Freely Associated States. Article II of this section, "Defense Facilities and Operating Rights," outlines the basic tenets of the binding principles on this theme.[32] This article asserts that the Marshall Islands and the FSM should "sympathetically consider" any defense-related request made by the U.S. government, should it "require the use of areas within [the FAS] in addition to those for which specific arrangements are concluded" in the Compact's terms. Such language clearly gestures to an ongoing obligation of the Freely Associated States, as Compact signatories, to provide U.S. military access to their islands and the surrounding waters and air space. As previous sections argued, this military access was a primary U.S. objective in Compact negotiations. The Compact language excerpted above, while not mandating outright that the FAS comply with U.S. military directives, reveals a heavy-handed encouragement for them to "sympathetically consider" U.S. military requests and interests. As such, it is exemplary of the kind of "soft power" approach that characterizes contemporary imperial power (Agnew, 2003; Nye, 1990), wielded here not as an absolute mandate but as a strong suggestion for compliance with U.S. imperatives.

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[31] U.S.-RMI Compact of Free Association, 1986. Retrieved on June 1, 2016 from http://www.rmiembassyus.org.
[32] The specific terms of the establishment of military facilities and areas in the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia were outlined in separate agreements, enacted simultaneously with the Compact. For the purposes of this dissertation, I do not examine these texts. For more on the militarized history and geography of Kwajalein, see Davis, 2015; Teaiwa, 2010; Hirshberg, 2011, 2012; and Crismon, 2005.

The significance of the Compact's language on U.S. military access is also illuminated by examining the political documents that followed it, as these, too, shed light on U.S. imperatives and interests at work in Compact negotiations. The 1998 Congressional testimony of Stanley O. Roth, then Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, serves as one example of such military interests. His testimony before the U.S. House Resources Committee and the House International Relations Committee's Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific articulates the historical relevance of the Marshall Islands and other Freely Associated States in the U.S. military's designs on the Pacific:

> [I]n the Cold War environment of the mid-1980s, the United States was keen to bolster its security posture in the Pacific. For much of the post-World War II period, the United States had had unrivaled influence in the Pacific. This position was challenged in the mid-80s as the Soviets undertook an aggressive campaign to increase their presence in the region, concluding a fishing agreement with Kiribati and opening diplomatic relations with Vanuatu. At the same time, consultations with the Filipinos had already begun to cast doubt on the future of U.S. bases at Subic, Clark and other facilities in the Philippines.[33]

In the late 1990s, for the first time in almost three decades, U.S. hegemony in the Pacific appeared to be in jeopardy. Compacts with the Freely Associated States could alleviate this problem in three ways. First, the principle of "strategic denial" elaborated in the agreements with each of the three Freely Associated States guaranteed the U.S. exclusive military access to these countries and their surrounding waterways (GAO, 2016). Second, the U.S. agreement with the RMI ensured continued access to the Kwajalein military facility, part of the Ronald Reagan Ballistic Missile Defense Test Site (RTS) and a key test facility for U.S. missile defense operations (Dvorak, 2008; Davis, 2015; GAO, 2002). Third, the U.S. agreement with Palau included the right to develop a military base should the U.S. need an alternative to the Philippines. Combined, these three components of the Compact served to

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[33] Roth, S. O. (1999, October 1). U.S. and the Freely Associated States. Testimony Before the House Resources Committee and the House International Relations Committee, Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State archive. Retrieved from http://1997-2001.state.gov/www/policy_remarks/1998/981001_roth_fas.html on 10 November 2014.

safeguard long-term U.S. military interests in the region (Roth, 1998). The Compacts'

military provisions were thus part of a larger military strategy to maintain U.S. access to the

broader Pacific region.

Threaded through Roth's testimony are the territorial logistics of the U.S. government as

imagined, and thus projected, onto the Pacific. First, we see the geopolitical importance that the U.S.

government, as articulated by this state actor, placed on U.S. military access to the Marshall Islands.

This emphasis on military access both follows and is scripted by Cold War cartographic logics

(Farish, 2010): territory is contested within a binary oppositional political sphere in which Pacific

space—specifically, exclusive-access *base* space—had to be defended against "aggressive" regional

encroachment by the Soviets. The Marshall Islands, and Kwajalein, are imagined here as key points

in the Pacific constellation of U.S. military bases, echoing the long-held geographical imagination of

U.S. military empire (Gregory, 1994; Kothari & Wilkinson, 2010). As Roth states, the Compact's

military provisions shored up exclusive U.S. access to the region through the concept of "strategic

denial," a military tactical strategy that would ostensibly prevent Soviet encroachment upon the

islands' territory (Herr, 1986; Firth, 1989). Herr (1986) identifies two key elements in the U.S. policy

of strategic denial: "the maintenance of friendly Western access to the region, and the denial of

access to countries regarded as potentially hostile" (p. 174). U.S. military leaders and political actors

at the time of the Compact's negotiation and 1986 passage used this strategy to consolidate exclusive

military control over the Pacific region.

Second, Roth's statements convey a lingering tension, a contingency and conditionality of

the U.S. military's use of the Freely Associated States. At the time of negotiations (1979-1986) and in

the decade that followed, U.S. government officials and military leaders were increasingly concerned

about a shrinking geographical foothold in the Pacific region (Lutz, 2007; Shigematsu & Camacho,

2010). Roth's comments, for example, allude to increasing resistance in the Philippines to the

ongoing presence of U.S. bases, anticipating a need for a contingency plan should the U.S. lose use

of that territory (Lutz, 2007; Yeo, 2011). In 1998, the Philippines had just marked half a century of

independence from U.S. colonial rule. Nonetheless, a U.S. military presence and base territory

possessions in the Philippines—principally, the U.S. Naval Base in Subic Bay, Clark Air Force Base

in Luzon, and other facilities scattered across the islands—had expanded in the "post"-colonial era

(Lutz & Enloe, 2009). Five years later, in 2003, Roth's prediction materialized, when mounting

pressure from the Philippine government and civil society led to the closure of Subic, the last U.S.

base in the Philippines. During Compact negotiations, then, U.S. state officials were aware of the

potential loss of military access to the Pacific (interviews, Washington, D.C., August 2014) and

wanted to use the Compact to cement access points in the FAS for the decades following.

Many Pacific region scholars have written on the Marshall Islands' strategic value to the U.S.,

especially the significance of Kwajalein to the U.S. military (Aguon, 2010; Crismon, 2005; Davis,

2015; Underwood, 2003). Robert Underwood, former U.S. House of Representatives Delegate from

Guam and former president of University of Guam, offered this interpretation of the original 1986

Compact terms (Compact I):

> In Compact I, the key strategic concepts were "strategic denial" for the FSM and access to
> the Kwajalein for the RMI. Under strategic denial, the U.S. was able to deny third country
> access to the FAS and exercise a 'defense veto.' This was explained as reserving millions of
> square miles of Pacific Ocean for American interests. A GAO study released in 2002
> concluded that the value of "strategic denial" was "overstated" and irrelevant in today's
> environment, meaning the post-Cold War era. The only compelling U.S. defense or security
> interest is continued access to Kwajalein. (Underwood, 2003, p. 12)

As Underwood pointed out, and as many others have echoed (interviews and personal

communications, senior government officials, Washington, D.C., 2014, Sam McPhetres, Saipan,

2013), exclusive military access to the Pacific was a pivotal component of the Compact, one whose

ideological roots reached deep into history, especially the Cold War period that preceded its

enactment. The Compact thus serves as a revealing archival document of *enduring* U.S. geopolitical

interests in the region, at the same time that it exposes U.S. projections of *future* imperial influence in the island.

While the Compact's military dimension was not the sole factor driving its passage, a focus on military questions was pervasive in both the Compact and subsidiary agreements. This focus on military access is reinforced in a later Compact section, which clarifies key territorial terms used in the text.[34] Section 461(c) proclaims that "'[t]he Marshall Islands' and 'the Federated States of Micronesia' are used in a geographic sense and include the land and water areas to the outer limits of the territorial sea and the air space above such areas as now or hereafter recognized by the Government of the United States." The U.S. definition of the Marshall Islands as a geographic entity that includes the outer limits of sea and air space in addition to land indicates the expansive uses of space and territory imagined by the U.S. government and military at the time (Barnes & Farish, 2006; Elden, 2013). These imagined uses, if implemented, would potentially impinge upon the Marshall Islands' ability to self-govern fully. In this way, by linking the Marshall Islands' economic and political development to the U.S. military interests in the Pacific region, the Compact imposed structural limitations on the islands' sovereignty, as it upheld provisions for heavy U.S. political influence and enabled the expansion of U.S. empire there.

The Migration Provision

Among the central issues in Compact negotiations, especially for the island negotiators, were those of migration and citizenship for future citizens of the Freely Associated States, islands whose residents had held TTPI citizenship[35] since 1947. Negotiators on the island side were committed to incorporating provisions for Marshallese citizens to migrate to, and within, the U.S. territorial system

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[34] U.S.-RMI Compact of Free Association, 1986. Article VI, 'Definition of Terms.' Retrieved on June 1, 2016 from http://www.rmiembassyus.org
[35] During the TTPI (1947-1986), TTPI residents held citizenship status as such and traveled internationally under TTPI passports (interview, Sam McPhetres, Saipan, CNMI, August 2013). This status was recognized by the UN and the U.S.

(interviews, consular staff, Washington, D.C., August 2014, and Honolulu, HI, August 2013). These Compact negotiations over migration provisions, however, must be situated in the context of longer-standing migration patterns within the islands, patterns that, like many aspects of life in the Marshall Islands, had been shaped by U.S. military and economic factors.

The Compact's migration provision did not *create* Marshallese migration to the U.S. or the Marshallese diaspora: migration streams within and across the TTPI, and from the RMI and FSM to other U.S. territories and states, were well established prior to 1986 (Hezel & McGrath, 1989). In particular, Marshallese students had long been migrating—sometimes temporarily, sometimes permanently—to other U.S. locations for higher education (interviews, senior policy analyst, Washington, D.C., 2014, Sam McPhetres, Saipan, 2013; Mason, 1989; Hezel, 1989). Furthermore, *internal* migration within the Marshall Islands, from the outer islands to the TTPI-established district center of Majuro, had begun decades earlier (Hezel, 2013). This internal migration occurred partly due to the consolidation of U.S. federal funds, which pooled in the RMI capital of Majuro and in the U.S. military center of Kwajalein (Mason, 1989). As the islands' economy shifted toward these centers, residents of more distant atolls began to move close to Majuro and Kwajalein to seek livelihoods. One must also recall, though, the history of forced migration and displacement within the islands due to U.S. nuclear testing there, another aspect of Marshallese internal migration during the TTPI period. This internal migration is, thus, part of a long-standing connection between U.S. militarism and migration *within* the islands, one that preceded the Compact's passage altogether.

Nevertheless, the Compact inaugurated a new phase of Marshallese *emigration* by creating a new legal pathway for Marshallese citizens to immigrate to the U.S. Article IV of the U.S.-RMI Compact, titled "Immigration," Section 141, established the following:

> (a) Any person in the following categories may enter into, lawfully engage in occupations, and establish residence as a non-immigrant in the United States and its territories and possessions without regard to paragraphs (14), (20), and (26) of section 212(a) of the

Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. 1182(a) (14), (20), and (26).[36] (U.S.-RMI Compact of Free Association, 1986; U.S. Public Law 99-239)[37]

Equally important, Article IV also establishes RMI citizens' right to work in the U.S. and its territories. Under its provision, RMI and FSM citizens

> shall be considered to have the permission of the Attorney General of the United States to accept employment in the United States. (b) The right of such persons to establish habitual residence in a territory or possession of the United States may, however, be subjected to non-discriminatory limitations provided for: (1) in statutes or regulations of the United States; or (2) in those statutes or regulations of the territory or possession concerned which are authorized by the laws of the United States. (U.S. Public Law 99-239, Section 141, Art. IV)

This legal provision, however, is far from a pathway to citizenship, although its misinterpretation as such is common, particularly in communities receiving COFA migrants on the U.S. mainland (interviews, RMI and FSM consular staff, Honolulu, HI, 2013, Springdale, AR, 2014, Washington, D.C., 2014).[38] Section 141(a) does not provide any direct *or indirect* route to U.S. permanent residency, although it does not expressly *prevent* RMI and FSM citizens from acquiring U.S. permanent residency or citizenship (the latter generally comes by way of the former).[39] In the following subsection of the Compact, the law stipulates that Section 141(a)

> does not confer on a citizen of the Marshall Islands or the Federated States of Micronesia the right to establish the residence necessary for naturalization under the Immigration and Nationality Act… [H]owever, [Section 141(a)] shall not prevent a citizen of the Marshall Islands or the Federated States of Micronesia from otherwise acquiring such rights or lawful permanent resident alien status in the United States. (U.S. Public Law 99-239, Section 141(c), Art. IV)

The apparent simplicity of this text belies the contested and complex genealogy of the legal provision itself. Over the course of fieldwork, I had several discussions, in both formal interviews

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[36] In the subsequent subsections (a)1-4, the Compact stipulates the groups eligible for RMI citizenship. These include former TTPI citizens, for those born prior to the Compact's implementation; naturalized RMI citizens; and those able to establish lineal descent in the RMI vis-à-vis the Government of the Marshall Islands (U.S.-RMI Compact of Free Association, 1986).

[37] U.S.-RMI Compact of Free Association, 1986. Retrieved on June 1, 2016 from http://www.rmiembassyus.org. U.S. Public Law 99-239. Retrieved on June 2, 2016 from http://uscode.house.gov/statutes/pl/99/239.pdf

[38] In the Pacific region, by contrast, there tends to be a greater degree of awareness of the legal status of COFA migrants and residents (personal communications, Saipan, Guam, and Hawaii, 2013).

[39] COFA migrants' legal status and U.S. immigration law are addressed more fully in Chapter 5.

and informal conversations and correspondences, with politicians, policy-makers, and policy analysts from the U.S., RMI, FSM, CNMI, and Guam about the significance of the Compact's migration provision. Many of these discussions took place in Washington, D.C., where a great many of those involved with both the original and the amended Compacts now live. Most were either retired or employed in other U.S. federal government agencies or Pacific embassies and, thus, still involved with government service. I reached out to a number of these actors to glean their perspectives on the negotiation of the Compact's migration provision.

Consistently, interviewees conveyed that incorporation of the migration terms had been presumed from the beginning of negotiations (as they were demanded by FAS negotiators) and had not experienced much pushback from U.S. negotiators. According to a former U.S. ambassador to the RMI, the migration provision's inclusion in the Compact was "always on the table" during negotiations, and "it went without saying, almost" that a migration clause of some nature would be included in the final versions of the Compact with the FSM and RMI (interview, Washington, D.C., 2014). The FAS negotiators and attorneys with whom I spoke conveyed similar recollections that the migration provision had always been assumed as a given by both sides. As the FSM ambassador explained, "There wasn't really any push-back [from the U.S. side]. The basic principle [of the migration provision] was a given" (interview, FSM embassy, Washington, D.C., 2014). As several interviewees mentioned, and as scholars have also indicated (Underwood, 2003; Hills, 1984, 2004), the U.S. side was primarily concerned with military access provisions. Including the migration provisions, it was felt, allowed U.S. negotiators to move forward with their own priorities.

Another U.S. government representative familiar with the Compact reflected on the U.S. understanding of emigration itself as development:

> I do think that the background of this was that it was considered pro-development: you're giving people access to education, you're giving them access to job, and training experiences, and then they can go home and help build their economies. So I think it was viewed as a

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helpful thing to be beneficial to [the island populations]. (Interview, Washington, D.C., 2014)

Several interviewees also brought up the notion of migration as a "safety valve" for the FAS islands, whose populations had limited economic and educational opportunities (due in part, of course, to the devastation of several decades of colonization, military occupation, and nuclear testing, which wrought havoc on the local environment and food systems). This notion of the "safety valve" was linked in many U.S. actors' minds to the development logic, under which Marshall Islanders could leave the islands, study, and work in the U.S., eventually returning to the islands with skills, capital, and other resources (interviews, Washington, D.C., August 2014; GAO, 2011). U.S. actors' assumptions that Marshallese emigrants would eventually return to the islands, rather than resettle permanently in the U.S., may give some indication as to why U.S. negotiators were not concerned about the economic and political costs of granting visa-free migration.

Whatever the reasons for including the migration provision in the Compact, its inclusion did not appear to have troubled U.S. officials or negotiators at the time, and my research turned up little in the way of significant push-back to this provision. The significance of the migration provision would become more manifest in later years, however, as Marshall Islanders began to take advantage of it to leave the islands and resettle in the U.S. As Chapter 3 discusses, emigration to new resettlement sites, first in the Pacific and then in places like Arkansas, would only increase in the decades that followed, and U.S. negotiators' predictions about Marshallese emigrants' return migration proved false.

Post-Compact Implementation and the Amended Compact (1986-2003)

Since the Compact's passage in 1986, the Marshall Islands' economy has relied heavily on investments from private military contractors and U.S. government grants, some allocated as compensation for nuclear testing and the ongoing use of Kwajalein atoll, which hosts a U.S. ballistic

missile site (GAO, 2007). Paired with the expansion of U.S. militarism in the islands has been dramatic and steady increase in emigration, as Marshall Islanders have moved to the U.S. and its territories. These moves have come in three main waves: one immediately following the Compact's enactment, one in 1997, and one in the early 2000s (GAO, 2011). A number of factors have precipitated these waves. First, an increase in payouts made by the Nuclear Claims Tribunal for personal injuries related to U.S. nuclear testing in 2001 and 2002 led to a rapid migration to the U.S. by Marshallese payout beneficiaries, who now had the economic mobility to leave the islands (Graham, 2006). Second, certain Compact terms were set to expire in 2001, and many Marshallese residents worried that its immigration provisions would be retracted as well, thus leading large numbers to leave in the late 1990s (interviews, senior policy officials, Washington, D.C., 2014). As a result, emigration from the islands skyrocketed; in the words of one U.S. Compact negotiator, the RMI started "bleeding Marshallese" (interview, D.C., 2014). Third, Marshallese emigration accelerated because of ongoing factors like high unemployment, economic instability, and a severely stunted education system (Graham, 2006). For many, these factors made staying in the islands all but untenable.

In 1999, discussions around Compact renegotiation opened for initial consideration, as was stipulated in agreements between the U.S. and the FAS, since Compact renegotiation was slated to occur by 2001. In 2001, as renegotiations were still underway, a two-year extension was granted, through 2003, during which time the Marshall Islands would experience a great deal of uncertainty over the renegotiations' outcome (Stege, 2004). In 2003, however, after extended negotiations with Marshallese government representatives and the U.S. Departments of the Interior and Defense, the U.S. Congress passed an Amended Compact of Free Association. As Underwood (2003) points out, the entire Compact was not meant to be subject to renegotiation at this point; negotiations addressed primarily the Title II funding provisions and a few additional provisions. Nevertheless, the

possibility for amendment opened the door to renegotiation of key Compact terms, generating

tensions on both sides about what might be gained or lost.

The Amended Act of 2003 modified the original Compact in a few key ways. First, the while

original Compact negotiated terms of associated statehood jointly for the Marshall Islands and the

Federated States of Micronesia, the amended Compact separated these documents. In addition to

extending the U.S. provision of economic assistance to the Marshall Islands through 2023, the

amended Compact also authorized a "continue[d] defense relationship, including a new agreement

providing U.S. military access to Kwajalein Atoll in the RMI through 2086," according to a GAO

report reviewing progress toward the amendment's implementation (GAO, 2007). The renewed

centrality of U.S. military access to the RMI was in some ways indicative of larger geopolitical

dynamics underway in the early 2000s—namely, the intensification of U.S. military operations

worldwide under the "War on Terror" (Gregory, 2004; Amoore, 2006; Camacho, 2012; Coleman,

2007). These geopolitical dynamics, of course, were manifested in debates around both the military

and migration-related provisions in the 2003 Amended Compact.

The renewed focus on the Compact's terms leading up to 2003 highlights the Marshall

Islands' continued relevance to U.S. empire. Some have argued that this amended document marks

the beginning of a new era of U.S. territoriality in the Marshall Islands, one increasingly shaped by

the cartography of what Camacho (2012) has called "an empire of bases" or what Vine (2012)

describes as the "lily pad strategy," borrowing from U.S. military vernacular.[40] Military access,

though, was not the only sticking point for the renegotiated Compact in 2003. Its immigration and

citizenship provisions also came under greater scrutiny from the U.S. side (GAO, 2007). In the

immediate aftermath of 9/11, a number of structural and political changes took place in the U.S.

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[40] Vine (2012) identifies "lily pad" bases as "small, secretive, inaccessible facilities with limited numbers of troops, spartan amenities, and prepositioned weaponry and supplies" (n.p.), a base model increasingly used by the U.S. military in offshore operations.

federal government that had a significant impact on U.S. border management and securitization in the Pacific region (Camacho, 2012). Specifically, for Pacific Islands under U.S. political administration, such as Guam and the CNMI, or where U.S. immigration and visa-related regulations differed from federal norms, such as the Freely Associated States (RMI, FSM, and Palau), there were wide-spread changes in, and debates over, U.S. immigration laws and their implementation in U.S. territories following 9/11 (interviews from Island Detention Project; Mountz et al., 2012). As Coleman (2012), Winders (2007), and others have shown, federal changes to immigration policy and implementation at the time were often coupled with increasing militarization under the "War on Terror," which was playing out at a global scale. These dynamics informed negotiations for the 2003 Amended Compact as well.

In 2014, I interviewed two senior government officials directly involved with the 2003 Amended Compact negotiations. One official got "pulled back in," in his words, as Chief Negotiator on the U.S. side. As he described, the Compact's visa-free immigration provisions were under threat during the Amended Compact negotiations. "After 9/11," he said, "I had to go to the Assistant Attorney General and make the case [for continuing the Compact immigration provisions]. INS[41] and DOJ were going around with hatchets" (interview, Washington, D.C., 2014). As he emphasized, migration and citizenship provisions were no longer foregone conclusions for the Amended Compact on the U.S. side, as they had been in 1986: "It took a long time to formulate the citizenship and immigration provisions. When we finally got permission from INS, it was incredible!" (interview, Washington, D.C., 2014).

The Amended Compact also made changes that would affect Marshallese immigration to the U.S., including an added requirement that Marshall Islanders traveling to the U.S. hold a valid

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[41] Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) from 1933-2003, when the agency's functions were split between the newly formed U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), under the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

Marshallese passport. In the Marshall Islands, U.S. concerns about national security and border control were heightened in the early 2000s due to the Marshall Islands' "passport debacle," in which senior members of the RMI government were discovered to have been selling passports, primarily to Chinese and Taiwanese nationals (Hezel, 2006; interview, senior policy officials, Washington, D.C., 2014). These heightened concerns about immigration documentation and increased surveillance of U.S. border transit were simultaneously playing out at larger geographic scales (Lyon, 2005; Sparke, 2006; Amore, 2006; Gilmartin, 2008), as well as in other places in the Pacific like the CNMI, where the U.S. federal government increased its surveillance and militarization of U.S. borders (Camacho, 2012). In all these ways, the global U.S. geopolitical project of the "War on Terror" made its way into the details of the Compact negotiations.

Any evaluation of negotiations over the 2003 Amended Compact must recognize the extreme economic, political, and military disparities between the negotiating parties. By the early 2000s, the RMI economy and labor market were overwhelmingly dependent upon U.S. Compact funds, or U.S. federal funds granted to the Marshall Islands through the Compact, which in 2003 comprised 55 percent of the RMI's national government budget (Stege, 2004). After twenty-five years of virtually unfettered migration to the U.S., many Marshall Islanders were reluctant to jeopardize that provision, especially in the face of such strong economic dependency on the U.S. In a 2014 interview, the U.S. negotiator for the 2003 Amendment gestured to these power disparities, referring to the relationship between the U.S. and FAS as "like the giant and the pea." (He was mixing metaphors and fairy-tales, but it seemed an apt description nonetheless.) In his recollection, the 2003 process was less a negotiation and more a unilateral decision: "I spent much more time on the Hill than with Micronesians. We pretty much told them how it was going to be, more or less. This is what your tax dollars are doing!" (interviews, senior government official, D.C., 2014). This interviewee's comments again highlight the power disparities between the Compact's two

negotiating parties and the influence that the U.S. could exert on the Marshall Islands in setting Compact terms. Far from equal sovereign players in this bilateral agreement, the U.S. and the Marshall Islands continued to exhibit and reproduce long-standing colonial dynamics during negotiations.

As this interviewee and others conveyed, and as many scholars have argued (Underwood, 2003; Diaz, 2012; Hezel, 2003), the uneven power dynamics between Compact signatory parties, evident since the first negotiation phase starting in the 1970s, reveal the Compact to be more complicated than a simple bilateral agreement between sovereign states. Instead, each negotiation phase and the resulting agreements expose the contingent and unequal vantage positions held by the Freely Associated States in relation to the U.S. (Hezel, 2003). These contingencies on sovereignty were produced by coupling U.S. development aid, military defense, and migration provisions with the U.S. exclusive military access to the islands and waters, as the former fostered the islands' economic and political dependence upon the U.S., making leaders more amenable to the latter. Such contingencies, this chapter has argued, provide compelling evidence for interpreting the Compacts of Free Association as imperial agreements. Although these documents were ostensibly designed to mark the end of U.S. colonial control over the Marshall Islands, in practice, they upheld, rather than transformed or ended, U.S. imperial hegemony in the Marshall Islands and other Freely Associated States, establishing them as not entirely separate and not entirely sovereign.

Conclusion

As this chapter has shown, power disparities between the U.S. and the Marshall Islands were cultivated over several decades of U.S. military, economic, and political control over the islands and themselves built on and reworked much older and deeper colonial practices in the region. In this way, the *historical legacy* of U.S. imperialism in the Pacific is a crucial part of the story of the *ongoing* U.S. military presence there, as is the longer history of colonizing attempts in the region. Arguably,

nowhere in U.S. empire is Mills' "military definition of reality" more evident than in the former and current U.S. territories in the Pacific. The U.S. Pacific islands bear the greatest concentration of military bases in the world (Fujikane, 2012; Natividad & Kirk, 2010), some of the most intensive and invasive U.S. military training and testing (Lutz & Enloe, 2009; Davis, 2011), and among the highest military enlistment rates in the U.S., with some of the greatest environmental effects (Chanbonpin, 2003; Mitchell, 2012). These islands also have been the focal point of the U.S. military's strategic "pivot to Asia" in recent years (Clinton, 2011; Natividad & Kirk, 2010). Key imperial political formations like the TTPI and the Compact of Free Association, thus, laid the groundwork for ongoing and future U.S. hegemonic control of the Pacific, what U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton would herald in 2011 as "America's Pacific Century" (2011). The Compact of Free Association, it follows, is an *imperial* policy—one that exposes the U.S. as an *imperial* power or empire. Therefore, this chapter has argued, its migration provision created an *imperial* diaspora, establishing the legal conditions for Marshall Islanders, as *imperial* citizens, to leave the islands and resettle in sites throughout the U.S.

In the decades following the Compact's initial implementation, Marshall Islanders *did* leave in droves, their migration carving out new lines and sites in the Marshallese diaspora. I turn now to a key site in this diaspora, following Marshallese migration patterns from the Pacific to Northwest Arkansas and outlining factors that have shaped the Marshallese diaspora since the Compact's 1986 passage. In doing so, I offer a glimpse of how, over the course of two decades, Marshall Islanders spread to numerous new resettlement sites in diaspora, far beyond the Pacific Island and U.S. West Coast destinations originally anticipated by the Compact's creators.

CHAPTER 3: "Of All Places!": Springdale, Arkansas, as a New Destination of Empire

Introduction

Since 1986, and even prior to the Compact's passage, Marshall Islanders have resettled in the U.S. Pacific islands of the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), Guam, and Hawaii (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2009). In slightly smaller numbers, and in less geographically concentrated patterns, Marshallese and Micronesian immigrants have also resettled on the U.S. West Coast (Nero, Burton, & Hess, 2001). Marshallese and Micronesian migration, like other Pacific Islander migration, has long been shaped geographically by the territorial outlines of U.S. empire and legally by U.S. policy-making (Nero et al., 2010). Due to both Marshall Islanders' status as former colonial subjects of the U.S. and their liminal legal belonging to the U.S. as citizens of a state in "free association" with the U.S. (which grants them visa-free migration within the U.S. and its territories), they are legally able to migrate to the U.S. with greater mobility than many other immigrant groups.

While Marshallese migration within U.S. empire has long roots (Hezel, 1989, 2013), the migration of Marshallese and Micronesian communities to the U.S. Midwest and South is a more recent phenomenon (Winthrop Rockefeller, 2013). Although not unprecedented before the mid-1980s, Pacific Islander migration to the U.S. South has only materialized in sizeable and proportionally significant[42] communities within the past few decades (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010; Winthrop Rockefeller, 2013). Nevertheless, that population shift has been meteoric. Springdale, Arkansas, is now home to the single largest population of Marshallese living outside the Marshall Islands, having surpassed even Hawaii's Marshallese population in size,[43] despite Hawaii's geographic proximity to the Marshall Islands (interview, RMI embassy staff, Washington, D.C., August 2014).

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[42] Since both Marshallese and Micronesian migrants tend to settle in small towns or cities in the U.S. Midwest and South—largely due to the types of labor opportunities they pursue—their numbers have begun to appear as greater proportional to the overall populations of the receiving communities (interviews, Springdale, AR, April and May, 2014).
[43] Informed community estimates from the Consuls General of the Marshall Islands in Honolulu, Arkansas, and D.C. project that the size of Springdale's Marshallese community is larger than that of Honolulu.

The first wave of Marshallese migrants to Springdale traces back to the early 1980s (Froelich, 2014; Schulte, 2012; interviews, Springdale, AR, 2014). Collective Marshallese community knowledge locates the birth of Springdale's Marshallese population with the arrival of a Marshallese man, John Moody, who settled there as early as the late 1970s after attending college in Oklahoma (Craft, 2011; Schulte, 2012; fieldnotes, Springdale, AR, 2014).[44] While it may be rare for immigrant communities to trace their arrival to one individual or family, information travels quickly in the Marshallese diaspora, and many families know one another (interviews and personal communication, Marshallese community advocates, Springdale, AR, July 2013, May-June, 2014). The fact that this story persists as a dominant narrative of Marshallese resettlement to Arkansas is testament to the close connections between Marshallese families in Springdale and beyond. For example, I was told this story by Micronesians and Marshall Islanders in Hawaii, Guam, and Saipan while conducting preliminary research on the topic in 2012 and 2013. Such stories circulate throughout diaspora, carried by people on the move between sites or with extended family spread among different resettlement areas.

Anyone familiar with the economic landscape of Northwest Arkansas will know it as a region shaped in recent decades by the poultry industry, most notably by Tyson Foods, a multinational corporation headquartered in Springdale. As the world's largest producer of poultry, beef, and pork, Tyson has factories and farms throughout Northwest Arkansas and the rest of the Midwest and South (Leonard, 2014), employing an enormous and growing number of area residents, particularly immigrants, as scholars have examined (Striffler, 2002, 2009; Stuesse, 2008; Boyd & Watts, 1997). Indeed, many of Springdale's Marshallese residents initially came to work in Tyson plants, and many still do (interviews, Springdale, March-July 2014). The influence of Tyson and other poultry companies as local employers is, thus, a key factor in explaining recent migration to

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[44] Thus, Marshallese immigrants began to arrive in the region *before* the Compact's passage in 1986, according to community narratives.

Northwest Arkansas. However, other dynamics of migration to the area, such as the racial and imperial dimensions of migration and of long-term residents' reception of migrants, has been less well-developed in scholarly literatures yet are, I suggest, also important in understanding this site and its residents. Thus, this chapter aims to flesh out some of those dynamics to explore their implications for the town of Springdale.

To do so, this chapter brings together several complex histories to examine how Springdale, Arkansas, became a new immigrant destination for Marshall Islanders and, by extension, a new destination of empire. It takes as one of its key frameworks the notion of new immigrant destinations, defined most broadly as "places with little previous experience receiving immigrants" (Marrow, 2013, p. 107). While scholarship on new destinations is wide-ranging, addressing issues of immigrant integration and incorporation (Waters & Jiménez, 2005; Winders, 2012), residential patterns (Kandel & Cromartie, 2004), economic and labor opportunities (Johnson & Kasarda, 2009), shifting social and cultural identities (Massey, 2008; Winders, 2013), and sites of encounter (Ehrkamp & Nagel, 2012), this chapter focuses primarily on the significance of race, racial history, and racial formations in new immigrant destinations. More specifically, it examines how long-standing, place-specific discourses about race and racial difference in Springdale create the racialized conditions into which Marshallese immigrants arrive. In doing so, it situates Springdale within larger racialized processes of territorial dispossession, racial cleansing, and immigrant arrivals, all processes by which racial formations are historically and presently constructed (Smith, 2012, 2015; Omi & Winant, 1994).

While the city of Springdale and its population have experienced these phenomena in particular ways, such phenomena are by no means unique to Springdale. Rather, they have occurred and continue to play out—albeit in varied ways—across the U.S.: settler colonial expansion removed indigenous populations from almost every corner of the contemporary U.S. through genocide,

forced relocation, and containment (Smith, 2005; Wolfe, 2006), and Black populations, whose

enslaved and stolen labor built cities and towns across the U.S. mainland, have also been forcibly

removed, resettled, and contained (Gilmore, 2007; McKittrick, 2011; McKittrick & Woods, 2007).

These racialized spatial processes are foundational to U.S. empire (Kramer, 2006). Springdale, of all

places, is thus a site through which we can tell a key story about U.S. empire and racial formations

under racial capitalism (Robinson, 1983) because it was forged historically through the intersection

of these power structures *and* because those power structures still shape encounters between and

among Springdale residents today. The history of Springdale's racial formations form a necessary

precursor to understanding it as a "new destination of empire," revealing a number of key details

about the town's racial present and how it came to be.

To develop these ideas, the first section of this chapter explores Springdale's racialized

meanings, demographic shifts, and racial formations in the context of the Northwest Arkansas

region. This context is key to situating Springdale's racial identity, since Northwest Arkansas

residents' perceptions of Springdale, both as an "immigrant town" and as a "racist town," exist in

relation to other towns and cities in the region. This relationality also shows how Arkansas (and at a

larger scale, the U.S. South) is often framed within larger geographical imaginaries through an

assumed or explicit contrast with "everywhere else" in the U.S. (Winders, 2005; Greeson, 1999;

Jansson, 2007). Defining or depicting places as racist and "backwards," or conversely not racist and

progressive, informs understandings of racialized life, both from within and from outside sites like

Springdale. As such, places like Springdale, Arkansas, are understood as *exceptional* within, rather than

exemplary of, the U.S.[45]

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[45] Chapter 4 and 6 examine how narratives of U.S. exceptionalism obscure the U.S.'s role as an empire and how exceptionalism operates at various scales to absolve the U.S. of its oppressive tendencies, many of which are exemplified in the case of Marshallese imperial migration.

The chapter's second section delineates three historical processes by which Springdale was constructed as a "white town": indigenous dispossession, white settlement, and Black removal. As this section argues, local understandings about race and place in Springdale materialize even in the absence of (those marked as) people of color *and* by virtue of their historical exclusion. These racial histories, I suggest, are foundational to understanding the racialization of Marshallese residents in Springdale and the comparisons that local residents (and recent immigrants) draw between Marshall Islanders and other immigrant groups in the area. Drawing on U.S. ethnic studies scholarship on comparative racialization (Cacho, 2012; Cheng, 2013; Lowe, 2001), I argue that the *particular* dimensions of Marshall Islanders' racialization in Springdale emerge from both *local* understandings about racial identity and difference in which different racial groups are constructed against one another and *larger* historical structures of racial capitalism, imperialism, globalization, and militarism. Springdale, therefore, serves as a site where both local and larger dynamics of racialization can be examined as part and parcel of U.S. empire.

Finally, the chapter's third section outlines Springdale's recent transformation into an 'immigrant town.' It provides an historical overview of the Marshallese diaspora's extension to Arkansas and the related economic, political, and social factors that initially drew Marshall Islanders to Springdale. From there, it examines the dynamics of local reception of new immigrant populations, which in Springdale include Latinos (primarily from Mexico, El Salvador, and Guatemala) and Marshall Islanders. This section also builds upon previous sections to show how local reception of different immigrant groups, as well as local understandings about immigrants' racialization, draws on longer and broader histories of race relations in the area.

Ultimately, as this chapter argues, *where* in the diaspora immigrants resettle shapes a great deal: how they are categorized in racial terms, whom they are compared to, and as a result, what kind of social, cultural, and political purchase they have in their new homes. As migrants move from

former or current colonies to new sites in the U.S. mainland, they establish what I call *new destinations of empire*. In these sites, race matters profoundly. *How* it matters is complicated and place-specific, always changing, intersectionally determined, and always differentially legible to us depending on the methodologies we use and our own racialized positionalities. This chapter offers an analysis of processes of racialization in one site in empire, Springdale, while simultaneously listening for how such racialization reverberates at larger scales of empire.

Springdale within Northwest Arkansas

Northwest Arkansas as a region has a certain gravitational force that binds it together. For many Arkansas residents and visitors, it serves as a hub of cultural production, an economic engine for the state, and a dense population center that is markedly different from the rest of the state (Yee, 2015; Winthrop Rockefeller, 2013). Tourist websites tout Northwest Arkansas as a top destination for visitors and "one of the fastest growing and most dynamic regions in America" (Explore Northwest Arkansas, 2015). Officially known as the Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers Metropolitan Statistical Area, the region has four main cities: Bentonville, Rogers, Springdale, and Fayetteville. These cities line up on a map, connected by Interstate 49, known regionally as the "Northwest Corridor."

Figure 3: Map of Northwest Arkansas (Source: Joe Stoll, Syracuse University)

While in Arkansas in 2014, I made frequent drives to the Northwest Arkansas Regional

Airport, located curiously and inconspicuously in the middle of the countryside, several miles from

any major town. During these drives, I was granted the opportunity to reflect on the landscape and

speculate about the experiences of other new arrivals driving these roads away from the airport,

perhaps in Arkansas for the first time. My fieldnotes reflect those observations:

> The drive back from the airport: Out in the country, on the drive between the airport and I-
> 49, the landscape is filled with rural pastures and grazing livestock, tiny abandoned and
> decrepit houses, and curving fences running parallel to the winding road. Once I-49 South
> appears, the view becomes littered with hotels and signs for more hotels. Is everyone here a
> visitor? (Fieldnotes, Fayetteville, AR, April 2014)

At the time, this observation—that Northwest Arkansas would have so many visitors from outside

and thus a need for so many hotels—struck me as ironic, since Springdale had originally seemed like

a place where 'old-timers' were the vast majority. This was no doubt a naïve outsider's perception; I

soon realized that due to the influence of Warlmart's headquarters in Bentonville, people traveled to

the region in droves for business purposes (Moreton, 2006). The tension between the two dynamics

I was witnessing—the historical insularity of small towns *in* Northwest Arkansas and the region's

booming population growth from people's movement *into* Northwest Arkansas—has shaped this

part of Arkansas over the past thirty years in important ways (Yee, 2015; interviews, Springdale and

Fayetteville, AR, 2014).

Particularly noteworthy in this tension are the drastic historical differences between how

each city's population has been established. Just to the south of Springdale is Fayetteville, a city of

about 80,000 that houses the University of Arkansas and draws students and faculty from across

Arkansas, the surrounding states, and beyond. Rogers, a slightly smaller city of 60,000, is similar to

Springdale in its economic and demographic make-up and, as a result, is often held up for

comparison. Like Springdale, Rogers has received a large immigrant population in recent decades,

although predominantly Latino, with very few Marshallese families (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010;

interviews, Springdale and Fayetteville, March – July, 2014). Finally, furthest to the north, and about

a 35-minute drive north from Fayetteville, is Bentonville. Half a century ago, Bentonville was barely

a dot on the map, as interviews with long-time residents revealed. Now, however, the city is a

regional center for wealth as the headquarters of Walmart, home to the Walton family, and more

recently, home to the elite representatives of Walmart's corporate partners, such as Proctor &

Gamble (Moreton, 2006).

In local narratives, Springdale finds a foil in each of these towns and cities. In informal

conversations and interviews where I asked about racial relations and dynamics in the region, for

example, long-term residents frequently brought up Springdale's "small-town-ness" as compared to

the university town of Fayetteville or the up-and-coming business hub of Bentonville. One

interviewee originally from Springdale discussed it in this way:

> E.M.E.: Something that has caught my attention is that people will often talk about Springdale as an immigrant town now.
>
> Julie: Yes, definitely.
>
> E.M.E.: But in a way, Fayetteville has a lot more people from outside of Arkansas, so…Tell me a little bit about that, if you would: that comparison people [make] between the different towns in Northwest Arkansas.
>
> Julie: I think there has always been a stigma—I don't know if stigma's really the right word, about Springdale—but it's like, this has been the farming hub, I think. I don't know that it was ever necessarily smaller than Rogers, I don't really know about that. It always kind of seemed like they were the same size. And Bentonville was just sort of a non-entity until the Walmart thing. But I think there's always been an inferiority complex for Springdale people, and I think it has to do with the comparison to Fayetteville. That Fayetteville's more "up-town," that's where the smart people are, that's where the university is, that kind of thing. (Interview, Julie, Springdale, AR, May 2014)

Like this interviewee, many others drew comparisons between Springdale and surrounding towns

like Fayetteville and Bentonville, cities mobilized to highlight Springdale's provinciality. At times, I

solicited these comparisons (for example, "How would you describe Spring compared to other

towns in the area?"), but just as frequently, people made these juxtapositions on their own.

For long-term residents, Springdale's small size and racial homogeneity—that is, until the

recent immigration boom—also helped explain its historic stereotype as a "racist town." As one

white Springdale resident and city official reflected, "You have to understand, I mean, we probably

have to go back 30 years to say that this region, this entire part of the state was very, very white.

Anything outside of the city of Fayetteville, and that was because, you know, there was a university

there" (interview, Springdale, AR, June 2014).

For some interviewees, Springdale's racism was *due* to the historic lack of "minorities" or

people of color, while for others, the absence of racial diversity until the 1980s was counter-evidence

to claims that the town was racist (i.e., there were no people present to be racist *toward*). As one

interviewee described it, "It's very difficult to say that, you know, these cities in Northwest Arkansas had a racial problem, it's not worth worrying about, but I mean, there weren't any minorities to have any feelings of animosity about" (interview, Springdale, AR, June 2014). Another interviewee came to the topic of race in Springdale at the end of a long reflection on outsider stereotypes about Arkansas. Ruminating on the lack of racial or ethnic difference in the area when she was growing up, she concluded, "[M]ostly there was no talk about [race], because there was no *need* to talk about it" (interview, Springdale, AR, May 2014). These comments convey a shared perception among white long-term residents that overt racism, or "racial problems," could occur only when white people in the town were confronted by residents of color, who could then ostensibly be targets of racism. Such perceptions, of course, disregard or diminish the effects of larger discourses about race, racism, and racial difference, discourses that circulate even in sites that lack significant racial diversity.

A researcher based in Little Rock, Guy Lancaster,[46] countered this logic that racism required the physical presence of a population targeted by it:

> If that were true—"Oh, we just weren't exposed to those people, then once they came in, how were we supposed to react?"—then you'd have racist French in World War I France, rather than Black GIs realizing, "I can walk down the street to Paris and hang out with a French woman and no one's going to lynch me."…That's a fallacious argument. It's not just that they weren't familiar or that Black people weren't around. They were still imbibing broader American racist culture. (Personal communication, Little Rock, AR, July 2014)

Lancaster's comments—referring to the improved treatment some African-American soldiers experienced while stationed abroad in WWI, compared to their experiences of Jim Crow-era racial violence in the U.S.—gesture to the shifting meanings of race and racism as people move between sites, especially during wartime. They also speak, however, to the ways in which racial references from the past are called upon to make sense of the racial complexities of the present. As he implies, the absence of "people of color" from a site no more relieves a place of its racism than the presence of racial difference guarantees it.

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[46] Individual's real name, used with permission.

"Racist Places," Progressive Places: Nested Scales of Southern Exceptionalism

If long-term Springdale residents struggled to make sense of the town's shifting racial identity in the contemporary moment, it was a result not only of the town's history of exclusion and dispossession—which, to some degree, most neighboring towns share—but also of the significance and signifiers the town has obtained through locals', immigrants', and visitors' comparisons between Springdale and other towns in the region. This phenomenon played out in Northwest Arkansas at nested and overlapping geographical scales, upholding the good name of perceived "progressive" or "non-racist" spaces in one place by downgrading other places.

Such formulations about "racist" vs. "progressive" places surfaced regularly in fieldwork in Arkansas. In interviews and conversations about my research, I sometimes explicitly asked long-term residents to talk about race. For example, I might mention that I was studying the racial history of the area and its effect on immigrant reception, following up with a question about how interviewees would characterize Springdale's (or Northwest Arkansas's) racial dynamics. In some cases, depending on the context of the conversation, I pushed further, inquiring about the perceived racism of a place with which they identified. For example, if an interviewee offered that Springdale was known in the area as having problems with race or being unwelcoming to people of color, I would ask him or her to elaborate (fieldnotes, Springdale and Fayetteville, AR, 2013 and 2014). In many of these instances, people would admit to the presence of such tensions historically, then offer an example of another site whose racism was, by comparison, much more pernicious. If the discussion was on racism in Arkansas, one might place the blame for "the worst of it" on Southeast Arkansas (not incidentally, the only area in the state with a significant Black population) or on Harrison, a town in Boone County, where the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan have established their headquarters (Bella, 2014; Byng, 2013; Dentice, 2015).

Northwest Arkansas was often described as relatively progressive compared to the rest of the state, save Little Rock. "Once you leave Northwest Arkansas, you enter Arkansas proper," I was regularly told, and more than one person compared Fayetteville to Austin, an anomalous bastion of progressive politics in a red state. Even Arkansas itself, despite a mottled history of race relations, was often described as not truly part of the "Deep South," due to political differences between Arkansas and neighboring states (Blair & Barth, 2005). Similarly, in discussions with friends, family, and colleagues upon returning to New York, I often asked whether they considered Arkansas to be Southern. Most answered that they did, though many clarified that they did not consider it the Deep South (fieldnotes, 2014). Frequently, these explanations—that Arkansas was not the Deep South and that Northwest Arkansas was not representative of Arkansas as a whole—were used to shift or redirect conversations about racism when I brought them up, if not to absolve Springdale of its racism altogether.

Push conversations about racism a bit further in Northwest Arkansas, and, as alluded to above, you are likely to hear about Harrison. Even if you have never been to Arkansas, you may have read something about the town, as its association with the KKK has been well-documented (*Al Jazeera*, 2014; *Huffington Post*, 2013; *PBS*, 2014). Harrison, Arkansas, a town of a little over 13,000, has long attracted local and regional attention for hosting KKK members, including Thomas Robb, the national director of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. Robb, who lives just outside Harrison, has described immigration as "white genocide being committed against our people" (*Al Jazeera*, 2014, n.p.). Harrison's tumultuous history of racialized violence traces back to the Harrison "Race Riots" of 1905 and 1909, in which white mobs attacked Black residents, burned Black churches, and drove out all Black residents (Lancaster, 2014a). In late 2013, Harrison again attracted national scrutiny, this time for a billboard that declared: "Anti-Racist is a Code Word for Anti-White." In response to this event and to negative national media coverage of the town (*Al Jazeera*, 2014; *Huffington Post*,

2013; *PBS*, 2014), Harrison residents created the Harrison Community Task Force on Race Relations.[47] Actions like this, and the topic of Harrison's racism, surfaced regularly as a reference point when I asked interviewees about racism in the region, particularly in interviews and conversations with immigrants' rights and anti-racist activists. While Harrison was not invoked as an explicit denial of Springdale's racist history and present, it was sometimes offered as an example of more egregious racism in the region, deflecting conversations about racism in Springdale to other sites, like Harrison.

The distancing or displacing of local racism by whites is by no means unique to Arkansas (Nelson, 2014; Balibar, 2007), but it was manifested in and through particularly geographic terms that compelled me to give it further attention. I began to think of racism and representations of place as a sort of Russian-doll effect. Russian dolls contain within them small versions of themselves, replicas whose proportions adjust to accommodate the shape of the next-larger doll. After some thought, I realized that this was not the right metaphor. What was actually appearing was a discursive tactic that displaced 'racism' from the site in question to a distant—or, if not geographically distant, smaller or more spatially remote—site to which racism could be pinned. For example, two residents of Northwest Arkansas reflected in conversation that "Springdale's got its problems, but Harrison is *really* bad. In Harrison, though, it's not that the whole town is racist: really, the KKK are mostly out on the Zinc" (fieldnotes, Springdale, AR, March 2014), the Zinc being one zip code on the outskirts of Harrison itself.

I came to refer to this discursive tactic as nested scales of Southern exceptionalism. Southern exceptionalism has been understood as the framing of the U.S. South as inherently different or

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[47] In early April 2014, I attended a protest march and "funeral for racism" in Harrison, in which area residents, task-force members, Harrison political leaders, and visitors from other parts of the state came together to recognize Harrison's racialized past and articulate a more accepting, diverse, and anti-racist identity for the town. I made this trip with three local activists from Northwest Arkansas and spent time talking with them about their reflections on the region's racial history and ongoing struggles with racism.

separate from the rest of the nation (Smith & Cohn, 2004; Hobson, 1983; Winders, 2005) or, put

differently, "the belief that the South has 'possessed a separate and unique identity . . . which

appeared to be out of the mainstream of American experience' (Billington, 1978, cited in

McPherson, 2004, p. 1). Notions of Southern exceptionalism have long been leveraged by those

outside the U.S. South to "contain" the nation's racism (Hall, 1998), serving discursively to

exonerate the rest of the nation from its troubling racial past and present (Jansson, 2007). The

formulation of Southern exceptionalism that I describe above, thus, speaks back to a long history of

the South—or parts of it—being positioned as the nation's regional and internal Other (Lassiter &

Crespino, 2010; Greeson, 1999; Maxwell, 2014). As the next section discusses, another key aspect of

Arkansas's positioning vis-à-vis not only the nation but the South itself is its image as "backwards."

Arkansas and Its "Image Problem"

> [Arkansas is] a state almost fabulous. (Who, indeed, has ever been in it? I know New
> Yorkers who have been in Cochin China, Kafristan, Paraguay, Somaliland and West Virginia,
> but not one who has ever penetrated the miasmatic jungles of Arkansas.) (H.L. Mencken,
> 1921; cited in Friedlander, 1979)

In 1921, H.L. Mencken, a German-American author writing out of Baltimore, penned the above

lines in an article entitled "The South Begins to Mutter." The article in its entirety was a scathing

critique of southern cultural "backwardness." Although it dedicated very few lines to Arkansas

specifically, those brief lines spurred an immediate and bristling response from Arkansans, as they

dredged up long-standing resentment at stereotypes of cultural backwardness in Arkansas and the

Ozark region more broadly (Friedlander, 1979). In response to Mencken's attack, local Arkansan

newspapers published angry editorials, challenging his unflattering depiction of the state

(Friedlander, 1979; Schede, 1999).

Arkansas has long struggled with an external perception—coming from mainstream U.S.

media and often from academia—as backwards, if not fully Deep South (Perkins, 2014). Arkansas

historians and other social scientists have written extensively on this "image problem" (Schede, 1999; Blevins, 2002, 2009; Friedlander, 1979; Lisenby, 1971), which they describe as either a pervasively negative image (of Arkansas as "backwards," populated by hillbillies, etc.) or a lack of knowledge about Arkansas at all (in a sense, a *non-image* image problem). Schede (1999) describes how both problems manifested during Bill Clinton's time as Arkansas governor:

> In 1985, Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton spent $850,000 in state funds to run a series of advertisements in the New York *Wall Street Journal*. The ads presented Arkansas as a positive and exciting place for conducting business and informed business executives about the state's geographical and cultural environments. Clinton took this unusual measure after a survey study had indicated that few Northerners knew anything about Arkansas or even had an idea of where it actually was. At the same time, an interview study of several thousand Arkansas college freshmen brought out disturbing findings on how negatively young Arkansans thought about their state and how little they cared about its history and geography. (Schede, 1999, p. 477)

The image problems perturbing then governor Clinton—that Arkansas was invisible and/or backwards—were also articulated by Arkansans I met during fieldwork. Indeed, Arkansas's "inferiority complex" (interview, Springdale, AR, 2014) was a frequent topic of interviews, news articles, op-eds, community meetings, and historical archives. These two image problems also materialized through and alongside another pair of conflicting images: Arkansas as welcoming and Arkansas as racist. A promotional brochure for the Rogers Historical Museum, for example, celebrated the cultural diversity of Benton County ("By 1995, Rogers School District had 26 native-language backgrounds, including Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean, Laotian, German, and Urdu"). It also, however, conceded that "in Northwest Arkansas, warm personal relationships existed side by side with racism and nativism" (Rogers Historical Museum brochure, n.d.). Like this brochure, local news articles and op-eds from the early 1990s to the present frequently highlighted the progressive nature of some Ozarkians, while grappling with the co-existence of deep, racialized rifts that marked the area's history and present (Rushing, 1992; Morris, 2014; "Racist Anti-Obama Billboard in Ozarks," 2008). These materials speak to the conflicting sentiments of many long-term residents as

they, too, grappled to forge new racial relations and identities in their towns (fieldnotes, Fayetteville and Harrison, AR, 2014).

These conflicting sentiments also emerge in response to an uneasy tension between outsider perceptions of Arkansans as white *racists* (Harkins, 2003) and as white *hillbillies* who are provincial, backwards, and under-developed (Parker, 2011; Perkins, 2014). As Harkins (2003) writes, "Uniquely positioned as a white 'other,' a construction both within and beyond the confines of American 'whiteness,' the hillbilly has also been at the heart of struggles over American racial identity and hierarchy" (p. 4). The hillbilly figure and stereotype are central in notions of—and resistance to— Arkansan inferiority circulating within and beyond the state.

The Arkansas hillbilly stereotype in particular gained wide currency in popular media references throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Parker, 2011; Lancaster, 2015; Perkins, 2014; Williamson, 1995; Foster & Hummel, 1997). Popular 19th-century songs and folk tunes like "The Arkansas Traveler" and "The Ozarks Are Calling," for example, perpetuated images of the white Arkansan as "living in squalor" (Parker, 2011, n.p.). Early lyrics of "The Arkansas Traveler," eventually adopted as Arkansas's historical state song in 1947, described an easy-going, simple-minded Arkansan "squatter" who received a visit from a traveler:

> Far and far away down in Arkansas,
> There lived a squatter with a stubborn jaw.
> His nose was ruby red and his whiskers gray.
> And he would sit and fiddle all the night and all the day.
> Came a traveler down the valley, asked if he could find a bed.
> Yes, try the road, the kindly squatter said.
> Then, could you point me out the way to find a tavern or an Inn?
> Quite a little piece I reckon, tho I've never been!
>
> And, when the rain came down on the cabin floor,
> The squatter only fiddled all the more.
> Why don't you mend your roof, said the traveler bold.
> How can I mend my cabin when the rain is wet and cold?
> Squatter pick a sunny morning when the air is dry and nice,
> Patch up your cabin, that is my advice.

The squatter shook his hoary head, and answered with a stubborn air,
Cabin never leaks a drop when days are bright and fair! (Ware, 2015)

Such caricatures even colored national media representations of Bill Clinton during his presidential campaign and administration. Clinton, for example, was often, and pejoratively, referred to as "Bubba," presumed a slight on his Arkansas heritage (Muller, 2015). Despite the negative portrayal of Arkansans in these caricatures, their whiteness—a key feature of the hillbilly stereotype—was also often understood by public figures and agencies as a redeeming characteristic throughout the twentieth century (Perkins, 2014; Lancaster, 2015). As Perkins (2014) has written, educational reformers in the early 1900s leveraged discourses about Ozark hillbilly whiteness to advocate for rural Ozarkians' inherent potential for uplift (implicitly contrasted, one might argue, with poor Blacks, who were seen as unredeemable). Despite being geographically isolated, poor, and uneducated, reformers argued, mountain hillbillies were of "pure-blooded" and "lily-white" stock (p. 201) and, thus, capable of achieving great social progress.

These perspectives link class, race, and region in revealing ways. The well-known figure of the Arkansas Traveler, for example, draws together these contradictions: originating as a folk tune by the same name in the mid-1800s, the Arkansas Traveler later appeared in a painting, a newspaper column, and in numerous other venues since then (Worthen, 2016). In representations of the Arkansas Traveler, the figure almost always appears as a lanky white male who is barefoot, wears a straw hat, or hold a piece of grass in his mouth. The stereotype it embodied solidified a "rural or 'hillbilly' reputation" (Blevins, 2002, 2009) for Arkansas, one of "shiftlessness, indolence and improvidence" and one of which many interviewees were keenly aware (fieldnotes, Northwest Arkansas, 2014). While the figure is clearly portrayed as poor, rural, and unsophisticated, his depiction as a white male, a caricature of the 'quintessential Arkie,' can also leave others to conclude that Arkansans are racially and economically monolithic.

For one interviewee, a white long-term resident of Springdale, the hillbilly or "redneck"

stereotype explicitly targeted Springdale, rather than neighboring towns like Fayetteville:

E.M.E.: If you were trying to explain Springdale to someone—let's say, someone from New York, someone who's never been to Springdale before—what would you tell them about it?

Mr. Holland: Well, to somebody from New York, I would say it was very friendly, because I don't think they've got a very good reputation for being friendly.

E.M.E.: That's probably true.

Mr. Holland: We are more down-to-earth people, we are. I don't know whether you call them rednecks or what, but we border on being a little bit toward a redneck country.

E.M.E.: What makes someplace a redneck country?

Mr. Holland: I guess you can say not being real high-   falutin or something or just taking…not being, I don't know what words to put it in. It's just a state of mind, more or less, for people. They don't mind sitting on the ground or this tough stuff. They don't mind driving an old car or something like this compared to some people would never be caught [dead in]. They are not society-minded, in other words, I guess you would say. They are just not…we never did have a very big society-minded company here. It's almost something rural in Springdale, more so than Fayetteville. [People in Fayetteville have] a lot of opportunities to look down on people because of their education. They are not all that way, but lot of them [are]…They have a tendency to be a little know-it-all because of their education. They think the person without the education is not as smart and shouldn't be listened to as much…It's just that there weren't as many rural people in Fayetteville, where our school system [in Springdale] is much bigger than Fayetteville because we take in a lot of rural children. The school system is bigger [here], where Fayetteville is bounded by small towns almost on all sides.

For this long-term resident, Springdale was characterized in contrast to its neighboring town of

Fayetteville by being "down to earth," simple, not "high-falutin" or "society-minded." Although he

uses the term "redneck" rather than hillbilly to encapsulate this idea, his comments allude to many

of the characteristics associated with the figure of the hillbilly, such as being simple or

unsophisticated. More than that, however, they convey a humble sense of pride in the 'down-to-

earth-ness' of Springdale residents, positioning them as perhaps having lower levels of education or income than their counterparts in neighboring Fayetteville but also as salt-of-the-earth folks and grounded.

The image of the hillbilly, an arguably southern trope, also figures centrally in discussions of the geographic and socio-cultural borders of the South itself (Harkins, 2003; Roy, 2004; Blevins, 2002, 2009). Elsewhere in the country, deliberations over whether a place is Southern often turn on considerations of how racist and/or hillbilly the place is perceived to be, factors which many Northerners attached to Southernness itself (Mason, 2005; Blevins, 2002, 2009). Southern author Flannery O'Connor famously spoke to this tendency in a 1960 lecture, remarking that "anything that comes out of the South is going to be called grotesque by the Northern reader, unless it is grotesque, in which case it is going to be called realistic" (cited in Martin, 1994, p. 45). The approach O'Connor described pervaded my discussions with non-southerners about this research and has been well-documented by scholars of the U.S. South (Hobson, 1983; Greeson, 1999; Hall, 1998; Winders, 2005). Such discourses around Arkansas whiteness, hillbilly-ness, and racism profoundly shape racial formations in Springdale but do not work alone. It is to some of the other processes shaping these formations that I now turn.

Histories of Racial Formations in Springdale

We live in racial history. (Omi & Winant, 2014, p. 316)

Like all places, Springdale's contemporary racial dynamics rest on a particular set of historical conditions, political economic shifts, and territorial occupations. Omi and Winant (1994) refer to these dynamics as racial formations, which they define as historical, socially constructed, and changing structures of race and racialization (see also Haney-López, 1994). Racial formations are geographically and temporally contingent, emerging differently in different sites, even in adjacent towns like Springdale, Fayetteville, Rogers, and Bentonville. Nevertheless, processes of racialization

in these towns are also informed by racial discourses working at larger scales, regionally, nationally (Delaney, 2002; Jackson, 2003; Peake & Schein, 2000; Price, 2010), and transnationally (Aoki, 2010; Baldoz, 2004; Kim, 2008).[48] This section attends to racial formations manifested at the local scale, in Springdale, but also present at these larger scales, to examine their co-production.

Just as concepts of "racist places" are historically produced, so, too, is the concept of whiteness (Winant, 2004; Harris, 1993). As this section argues, racial categories must be disambiguated and analyzed for their genealogy and formation over time, in the context of larger political and social processes, to make sense of contemporary racial categories (Haney-López, 1994). Likewise, the racial logics Springdale residents use to organize their perceptions about, and interactions with, people they see as different from (or similar to) themselves are grounded in historical, social, and political structures and narratives that work across scales. This section maps out a history of Springdale's racial shifts, as well as the sociopolitical and economic structures that have undergirded them. In doing so, it provides a necessary historical context for the racial dynamics emerging in contemporary Springdale.

As this chapter aims to show, an examination of the historical acts of producing a white town reveals whiteness as something that *must be produced,* not only discursively through narratives of whiteness that often naturalize and dehistoricize it (Harris, 1993; Roediger, 1999, Winant, 2004) but also materially through physical acts of policing and (re)producing "white space" by expelling, dispossessing, or excluding people of color (Dwyer & Jones, 2000; Shaw, 2006). In a recent publication on racial cleansing in Arkansas, Guy Lancaster (2014b) calls for an analysis of Arkansas's historically constructed whiteness—in his words, "the creation of all-white space through violent

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[48] While this dissertation is not an ethnography of Marshall Islanders' experiences of race in diaspora, they, like other migrants moving and living in diaspora, navigate shifting contexts of race and are racialized differently in the various host communities where they resettle. Migrants also carry with them pre-existing frameworks of race and racial formations that inform their own perceptions about race as they move and resettle (McClain et al., 2006; Almaguér, 2012).

means" (p. 3)—using a lens of racial cleansing, rather than focusing exclusively on "sundown towns," which systematically excluded Black people from residing there and appeared throughout the country (Lancaster, 2014a, 2014b; Loewen, 2005). This section follows Lancaster's call to attend to various historical processes of racial cleansing in Northwest Arkansas, especially indigenous dispossession, the terrorizing and expulsion of Black populations, and the active solicitation of white workers from other regions. While not all of these processes were carried out through overt, physical violence against populations of color, they all served to (re)produce whiteness physically and spatially.

Indigeneity and the Trail of Tears

Springdale's construction as a historically white town was carried out through multiple strategies of dispossession and removal (Shiloh Museum of Ozark History, 2014; Brotherton, 2014). The first examined here is the removal of indigenous populations from the area. As I argue, indigenous removal from Northwest Arkansas and the surrounding regions, carried out over the course of more than 400 years (Sabo, 2014; Deloria, 2010), created the material conditions for white settlers from the Northeastern U.S. to move into the region and "settle" it. In the last several decades, regional and national discourses about indigeneity in Arkansas and the Ozarks have emerged which romanticize "Indian-ness" while relegating indigenous dispossession and genocide to the distant past (Wolfe, 2006; Smith, 2015). Such discourses, in obscuring the active process of white settler colonialism and in placing indigeneity at a far remove from contemporary Springdale and Northwest Arkansas, serve to naturalize whiteness and white claims to space in the region.

The dispossession of indigenous land and the removal of native populations originally residing in the Indian Territories date as far back as the mid-1500s, when Spanish colonizers in Hernando de Soto's army forcefully occupied what is now known as Arkansas, brutally displacing and/or killing many indigenous residents (Bolton, 1993; Hudson, 1998). This dispossession was

enacted over the following 400 years, gradually paring down—through genocide or removal—the region's indigenous population. By the 1800s, Quapaw, Caddo, Tunica, and Osage were the largest indigenous groups in the area, the latter of which was most heavily concentrated around the Missouri River and Ozark region in contemporary Northwest Arkansas. Osage Indians from present-day Missouri resided seasonally in what is now Northwest Arkansas but were forcibly removed from there and pushed into present-day Kansas by 1825 (Whayne, 2002).

From 1805 to 1812, the French established permanent colonial settlements in part of the Louisiana Territory, an organized incorporated territory from the original Louisiana Purchase from the French (Peterson, 2010). Once the area became Missouri Territory in 1812, the U.S. government, in a push to settle west of the Mississippi River, removed Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek (Muscogee), and Seminole Indians from their homes in the present-day Southeast U.S., pushing them westward (Akers, 1999). These populations were eventually forced into what is now western Arkansas, then into present-day Oklahoma and Kansas (Akers, 1999; Hershberger, 1999; Sturgis, 2007). Over a period of decades, this vast project of indigenous removal relocated virtually all of present-day Arkansas's indigenous populations.

The 1820s and 1830s were devastating decades for the region's indigenous populations. The Cherokee Treaty of 1828 gave white settlers permission to claim land in Northwest Arkansas, leading to an influx of settlers from the eastern U.S. (Bolton, 1993). During this time, it is believed that of the approximately 13,000 Native Americans[49] forcibly removed and resettled through the Trail of Tears, many passed through Northwest Arkansas on their way west, through what is now Fayetteville, on what would later become known as the Northern Route (Peterson, 2010).

These processes laid the groundwork for Springdale's creation as a 'white' town "settled" by "pioneers" throughout the 1830s (Key, 2000; McLoughlin, 2014; Brotherton, 2014). After the early

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[49] Almost exclusively Cherokee, from present-day Georgia and other East Coast regions.

establishment of an inn by a nearby spring, the area became a rest-stop for other white settlers passing through the Trail of Tears to Indian Territory, which lay beyond (Brotherton, 2014). The town of Shiloh, as it was then named, continued to be settled over the course of the next forty years (Brotherton, 2014). After surviving the Civil War, despite the burning of several buildings, the town was renamed Springdale in 1872 and eventually incorporated in 1878 (Brotherton, 2014). Since then, Springdale's white population has grown steadily, although slowly at times. The area's Native population, by contrast, is now exceedingly small, with recent census estimates setting it at about one percent of the city's total population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014).

At present, there are no federally recognized Indian tribes in the present-day state of Arkansas, as most indigenous peoples were forcibly relocated or fled by necessity to reservations in neighboring Oklahoma (Elkins Carter, 2014). This, of course, does not mean that Arkansas is without a Native American population—the 2010 U.S. Census showed Arkansas's Native American population at close to 30,000—but simply that the federal government does not formally recognize established Indian tribes within the state. Nevertheless, the presence of indigeneity materializes in Arkansas in a handful of ways and sites. For example, highway signs in the area created by the National Park Service mark the "Auto Tour Route," identifying a road route that approximates the layout of the Trail of Tears (National Park Service, 2016). Even the name of the state, Arkansas, is derived from indigenous languages: it is a French pronunciation of *akakaze*, a Sioux word meaning "South Wind People" (Whayne, 2002; Key, 2015).

Northwest Arkansas is also home to the Museum of Native American History, whose website invites museum guests to "[t]ake a 14,000 year journey through America's past" (Museum of Native American History, 2016).[50] I visited the museum once during fieldwork, spending an hour or two wandering between exhibits. Virtually the entire museum collection was composed of artifacts

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[50] Museum of Native American History website (2016). Museum description. Retrieved on April 14, 2016 from http://www.arkansas.com/attractions/detail/museum-of-native-american-history/92789

from a few hundred to several thousand years ago, such as arrowheads, headpieces and other attire, and pottery vessels, true to the museum's promotional materials that advertised "relics that date from over 14,000 years old to *historic* times" (Museum of Native American History, 2016, emphasis added). There was barely a mention, however, of *contemporary* Native or indigenous cultural life, and one could easily conclude from a visit to this museum that Indians were, indeed, a thing of the past. Even the museum website positioned Arkansas's indigenous populations as no longer in existence, reflecting wistfully, "Whether the first Americans originally entered the continent by land or by sea, evidence of their existence on the continent is found in the tools, weapons, and ornaments they left behind" (Museum of Native American History, 2016). Such evidence, like the populations whose historical presence it is meant to document, is thus anchored firmly in the distant past.

Presentations like those at the Native American History Museum offer a reading of indigeneity as ancient history but rarely speak fully to the contemporary experiences of Native Americans in the region or the contemporary consequences of their historic removal. Thus, in Northwest Arkansas, there remains a legacy of the Trail of Tears' narrative in examples like the Auto Tour Route, even in the name of the state itself. As in many places in the continental U.S., however, this legacy does not translate into a local awareness of or conversation about contemporary *living* Indians or the lingering effects of their absence.

With some digging, the violence of indigenous removal, dispossession, and genocide was visible in the archives I studied. In archival research at the Shiloh Museum, for example, I came across several folders and compilations of Native American history. In one page of fieldnotes, I wrote: "Shiloh Museum research today on the Trail of Tears. The archivist has gotten me a journal from Daniel S. Butrick, a white settler missionary who accompanied the Cherokee and Creek on the trail. His journal entries read like an obituary section, to those lost to dysentery, exhaustion, and 'bloody flux'" (fieldnotes, Springdale, AR, 2014). Echoed in this white missionary's journal were

themes of constant grief, death, and loss through dispossession, separation from family, and sickness

caused in large part by the violence of U.S. empire. Archival materials like these documented the

physical, emotional, and spiritual costs of empire for the region's indigenous populations. However,

these materials and the histories they documented were only accessible through intentional and

persistent searching.

Furthermore, references to this violent history of displacement and resettlement rarely came

up in conversations and interviews with long-term residents about Springdale's racial past[51] and how

it came to be an "all-white town," (although other processes, such as Black people's removal

through Springdale's sundown town policies, were referenced often). Instead, many long-term

Springdale residents talked about their familial heritage of pioneers, grandparents, and great-

grandparents who had "lived off the land" and "built something where there had been nothing"

(fieldnotes, Springdale, AR, Spring 2014). These kinds of comments reinforced the notion that white

pioneers were the first to populate the area, in effect erasing the historic (and ongoing) presence of

indigenous populations.

In Springdale, these narratives of what I am calling "settler romanticism" are intertwined

with notions of who belongs to a place—and *to whom* that place belongs—as well as the

romanticization of white settler types since then (Rothrock, 1957; Blevins, 2009). Stories of such

settler or pioneer types are sprinkled throughout the Shiloh Museum archives, appearing in

newspaper articles and written and oral histories about Ozarkian cultural life and history. One piece

printed in a local paper, the *Springdale News*, entitled "Ozark Pioneers Survived Adventures Livelier

Than Movie," for example, tells the story of a "German immigrant family, hostile Indians,

plundering troops of the Civil War, murder, robber, [and] incredible hardships" (Hughes, 1988). In

popular narratives such as this one, Indians either are absent altogether or appear as "hostile"

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[51] The absence of discussion about indigeneity in the context of race is not altogether unsurprising or unique to
Arkansas, since, as Smith (2012) has argued, race and indigeneity often work through different registers in the U.S.

aggressors to hard-working, well-meaning white settlers (who, in this case, are also immigrants). This absence in long-term residents' historical narratives about how Springdale came to be constitutes an erasure of white settler colonialism in narratives of Arkansas's settlement, which focus not on the white colonization of an already-peopled land but on the myth of white settlers as building where "nothing" had been. The "present absence" of Northwest Arkansas's indigenous population is thus significant for the construction of whiteness in the area, as narratives about the absence (or historical distancing) of Native presence in the region allow the arrival of white settlers to be the origin story for the region's development.

Springdale's indigenous history also matters for this research because its erasure is part of the larger erasure of U.S. imperialism and colonialism that this project is trying to combat. As Veracini (2013) has written, settler and pioneer narratives and romanticization have often been divorced from histories of colonization in settler societies like the U.S.—a dynamic I observed during fieldwork in Northwest Arkansas as well. One elderly long-term Northwest Arkansas resident, for example, told me his ancestors were "practically the first people in this area" (fieldnotes, Springdale, AR, 2014), and others shared nostalgic stories following a museum presentation about how white settler families from the Ozarks had "built something out of nothing" (fieldnotes, Springdale, AR, March 2014). U.S.-based critical whiteness studies in geography (Bonnett, 1997; Dwyer & Jones, 2000) rarely engage in any significant way with white settler colonialism or settler identities in the U.S. (for notable recent exceptions, see Bonds & Inwood, 2015; Inwood & Bonds, 2016), although critical whiteness studies from Australia and Canada address settler colonialism to a greater extent (Morgensen, 2011a, 2011b; Haggis, 2004). This gap is lamentable in that it marginalizes or invisibilizes indigenous existence and the histories of occupation and dispossession that made white space possible in the U.S. (see Dua, Razack, & Warner, 2005 for a critique of these processes in the Canadian context). Following Dua et al.'s call for greater

attention to ongoing settler colonialism in contemporary studies of race and empire, I argue that the

indigenous removal from and subsequent white settlement of Northwest Arkansas set the stage for

Springdale's (perceived) whiteness. It was the subsequent policing and enforcement of that

whiteness, once established, however, that cemented Springdale's racialized identity for much of the

twentieth century.

"Old-timey" Springdale: Settler Romanticism and Working-Class Whiteness

While Springdale's population is now more than one-third people of color (U.S Census,

2010), its multi-decade identity as a white town is reflected in the town's institutions—many of

which, including the Chamber of Commerce, the School Board, the City Council, and even the

Mayor's regular prayer breakfast,[52] are still almost exclusively white. It is also written into the

memory of many life-long residents, who describe the town as historically without racial diversity

(interviews, Springdale, 2014). Therefore, to reckon with Springdale as a new immigrant destination

is to reckon with its decades of pervasive whiteness.

Narratives promoting Springdale as a white town can be traced through the archives almost

to the town's inception. One promotional piece on the benefits of Springdale, published in a local

paper at the turn of the twentieth century, for instance, lauded the town's appeal and virtue as an all-

white town:

> Water is a pure freestone, unsurpassed in quality. The scenery is delightful; landscapes that
> delight the eye of the artist abound. And the people? *Straight American. Not an African; not an*
> *Asiatic; not even a Jew.* I make no suggestion as to whether these conditions are fortunate or
> unfortunate. But to give the lie to the assertion so often recklessly made that "It is a dead
> town where one does not find a Jew:" any traveling man who makes this territory will say
> that Springdale buys the most goods of the best quality of any town of its size or near its size
> in that trade territory. For proof of the truth of this assertion, ask any jobbing house in St.
> Louis, Springfield, or Forth [sic] Smith. Yes, *if straight-bred unhyphenated American stock is wanted,*
> *it is nearly 100% pure in the Springdale District.* (Bouton, Springdale promotional publication, ca.
> 1910, emphasis added)

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[52] Interview, Springdale resident, Springdale, AR, May 2014.

In this text, the author offers 'Straight American-ness' as a selling factor for would-be new residents and for potential developers and employers. The text never *explicitly* claims Springdale is an all-white town; indeed, the term 'white' does not appear at all. Nevertheless, the text, in lauding the town's population as "Straight American…[n]ot an African; not an Asiatic; not even a Jew," explicitly equates American-ness with the absence of people of color, and by implication, with whiteness. That whiteness appears only by inference, and is conveyed as yet another of the town's "delightful" qualities, along with idyllic scenery and pure water supply, highlights its naturalization as Springdale's defining trait, pairing it discursively with, if not as part of, the area's natural bounty.

Bouton also expounds on how Springdale's demographic make-up might prove beneficial for desirous capitalists, particularly those seeking new labor markets for manufacturing and other large-scale economic ventures. In doing so, this text reflects broader narratives of New South boosterism throughout the region in this era, which envisioned a regional economic recovery after Reconstruction premised upon white supremacy, either implicitly or explicitly (Ayers, 2007; Moneyhon, 1996). As many scholars have shown (Tait, 2005; Zinn, Frank, & Kelley, 2002), the promise of (white) regional recovery within New South discourses also relied upon a powerful anti-unionism that positioned white laborers as less troublesome than workers of color or immigrants. These anti-labor and racist discourses, while not always explicit in booster materials circulated in Arkansas, nonetheless appear in ways that contemporary readers would have understood. Under a section entitled "Labor supply and labor attitude," for example, Bouton wrote: "There are no mines or large mills, or large manufactories in this district. There is no organized labor. Labor there is self-respecting and demands respect. A fair and courteous employer will have little trouble with his laborers" (Bouton, ca. 1910). Here, Bouton positions this 'self-respecting' labor against presumably problematic labor organizers elsewhere.

The implied whiteness of Springdale's labor force—alluded to but rarely named in booster

materials—was also conveyed in advertisements, such as a 1947 ad in the *Fayetteville City Directory*:

"Ice Cream Manufacturers: Ward's Ice Cream. *Made in All White Plant*. 121 N. Block Ave.

(Fayetteville City Directory, 1947, emphasis added). Again, here, whiteness is conveyed as a positive

attribute of the local labor force and as hygienic. Statements about Springdale's 'self-respecting,'

'straight-bred,' and 'unhyphenated' labor in advertisements and city promotional materials like these,

thus, reflect active attempts to attract investors interested in a white labor force to Springdale in the

early-twentieth century. In these ways, these details offer additional insight into how Springdale was

actively made into and marketed as a 'white town.'

Also in the Shiloh Museum of Ozark History archives was an article from the early 1900s by

D.D. Deaver, published in a local Springdale paper, entitled "Know Your Home Town." In it,

Deaver echoed Bouton's sentiments about Springdale's "pure" "American" population, albeit

framing that population more explicitly in terms of whiteness:

> The growth and success of any area depends entirely on people. We are fortunate to live in
> an area that is dominated by the purest strain of Anglo Saxon blood to be found any where
> in the U.S.A. Our population is all white, native Americans, energetic, industrious, thrifty
> and endowed with a loyal community spirit. They are banded together in numerous civic
> organizations and are willing to work for what they want…*You just can't beat our kind of people.*
> *Aren't you glad you live here?* (Deaver, ca. 1910, emphasis added)

Whiteness here is discussed as beneficial for the local economy, particularly for potential employers

but also for current residents 'glad' to live there. In this text, the author drew an equivalence

between whiteness, that 'purest strain of Anglo Saxon blood,' and an industrious, hard-working

nature, people 'willing to work for what they want,' implicitly situating this promising workforce in

contrast to stereotypes of the lazy Black 'slacker' or the militant urban/ethnic labor organizer

(Roediger, 1999). In Springdale, this article promised, the population's industrious, all-American

whiteness was what enabled the town to grow and succeed. As such, it serves as yet another example

of how Springdale was constructed as a white town, both materially and discursively.

Academic scholarship on Northwest Arkansas's growth and development over the past century also documents the whiteness of Springdale, and beyond it, the Ozark region (Perkins, 2014; Jones, 1969; Hallett, 2012). During the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, in-migration into Arkansas was undertaken primarily, although not exclusively, by poor or working-class whites from other states. The 1920s, however, was also marked by white *out*-migration from Arkansas, with population losses close to 200,000—the largest out-migration the state had seen after the relocation of Arkansas's indigenous populations (Holley, 2005). Scholarship by Arkansas historians Holley (2005) and Bolton (2002) draws on U.S. census data to show the white flight out of Arkansas to other states, most frequently California and Texas, followed by neighboring states of Oklahoma and Missouri (Holley, 2005). The primary causes of this out-migration included drought-related crop failure in the state's upland areas, as well as the Depression's economic effects in the 1930s (Metzler, ca. 1940). Furthermore, many white settlers had come to Arkansas to hunt or fish, not to farm, and young people "had to join the strong westward movement to find homes in Oklahoma, Texas, or on the Pacific Coast" (Metzler, ca. 1940, p. 2; see also Bolton, 2002).

Despite this early out-migration, Arkansas continued to receive white migrants from other southern states in the same time period. By 1930, for example, census data showed that "more than one-fourth of the population in Arkansas in 1930 [had been] born outside the state, most frequently in one of the states to the southeast" (i.e. North Carolina, South Carolina, Alabama, or Mississippi) (Metzler, ca. 1940, p. 7). By the 1940s and 1950s, however, another wave of Arkansans fled the state, a trend that would not slow until the mid-1960s (Bolton, 2002; Holley, 2005). In the 1970s and early 1980s, in-migration to Arkansas picked up again, especially in the Northwest region (U.S. Census Bureau, 1970-1990). By this time, there had been a marked shift in population movement at the state level: more people were migrating into the state than leaving it (Bolton, 2002). Now, though, a large proportion of new arrivals were immigrants, coming either directly from their countries of origin or

from states on the West Coast or southern border, such as Texas (Bankston, 2007). Thus, by the late 1970s, there was a net population gain in Arkansas of foreign-born residents (U.S. Census Bureau, 1980).

These demographic data, paired with the stories that emerged occasionally in interviews and conversations with long-term residents, suggest that Springdale and its environs received 'outsiders' prior to the 1980s. When prompted about this matter, most people were able to recall at least one story of a family or population from outside Northwest Arkansas or the Ozarks. Nonetheless, there remained a persistent narrative about Springdale that everyone knew each other, or at least, that everyone did prior to the immigration boom in the 1980s and 1990s. One elderly white long-term resident described Springdale's population changes in this way:

> When I came to Springdale [as a teenager in 1958], they were bragging about reaching an 8,000 population, and now we're at 72,000, so it's changed a lot. You used to be able to leave your front door open and go all day to work and never lock your door. That's what I got here; that's what I came to. It was very rural thinking, very rural trust…The way country farmers used to trust each other. I'll bale your hay, you feed my horse on a handshake, and Springdale was very much that way when I got here. And it's changed; it's had to change. (Interview, Springdale, AR, June 2014)

Such perceptions about Springdale's historic small-town-ness speak to long-term residents' more recent experiences of a disrupted sense of place and collective belonging. These interviewees rarely articulated that collective belonging explicitly in terms of whiteness or racial homogeneity, even when I asked directly about how the town's population make-up had changed or about immigrant arrivals. This avoidance or reticence to phrase Springdale's population shifts in terms of race was shared by many white long-term residents, especially older ones (interviews, Springdale, AR, March-July 2014). In contrast, when I asked white long-term residents to talk about the town's racial *past*, they frequently turned to a discussion of Springdale's historic anti-Black racism, a (re)framing that tended to normalize Blackness as racial difference and anti-Black racism as prototypical racism, as the next section explores.

Sundown Town: Anti-Blackness as "Real" Racism

Whiteness in Springdale, originally constructed through white settler colonialism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, was also shored up through the implementation of "sundown" policies that all but eradicated Springdale's Black population. Some of these policies were formal; others were informal but no less systematically enforced (interviews and fieldnotes, Springdale, AR, 2014). Despite the absence of an actual Black population residing in Springdale for most of the twentieth century, the idea of Blackness and the specter of anti-Black racism loomed large (Hallett, 2012), weaving their ways through interviews and conversations with white long-term residents. Blackness, it could be argued, has been a present absence in Springdale, as it has been in predominantly white communities throughout the U.S. (Gates, 1983).

Blackness continues to permeate many long-term residents' reflections on the nature of race and racism, despite the virtual absence of a Black population in Springdale. This was evident from my first visit to the Shiloh Museum of Ozark History. When I mentioned that I was interested in studying the town's racial history, the museum staff took me to the archives storage in the basement to see the old "White Waiting Room" door from the Springdale's railroad station.[53] This artifact made no mention of Blackness or reference to a "Colored Waiting Room," though such signage was common in the U.S. South during the Jim Crow era (Abel, 1999) and likely existed in Springdale. Rather, it brought up associations of Blackness and racial difference by implicit exclusion. Nevertheless, in Springdale, it is almost impossible to talk about race or racism, and therefore impossible to talk about whiteness, without referencing Blackness, either explicitly or implicitly. Historically, Springdale's framing as an all-white town often meant implicitly or explicitly painting it

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[53] During my visit, this staffer very willingly showed me the "White Waiting Room" door and openly discussed other museum archives that documented Springdale's racial (and racist) past. Clearly, the museum staff had gone to great lengths to gather, preserve, and share these and other materials with the community and with museum visitors. As this staffer commented good-naturedly, "Sometimes, I think Springdale gets a reputation for being more racist historically because we do so much to showcase that history at the museum, compared to other towns." I include her point here to acknowledge the museum's effort to document Springdale's history in all its complexity and also to recognize that a relative *lack* of documentation of past racial strife in other towns does not mean that such racial strife did not occur.

as not "tainted" by Blackness (for example, in the booster materials previously discussed that celebrated Springdale as a town whose population contained "[n]ot an African; not an Asiatic, not even a Jew" (Bouton, ca. 1910)). Another promotional pamphlet distributed at the turn of the twentieth century in Northwest Arkansas lauded Springdale this way: "We don't have saloons, negroes, mosquitos, malaria, chills, bandy houses or other vices of this nature" (January 22, 1904, archives, Shiloh Museum). Texts such as these reveal early attempts in Springdale's (re)settlement to actively build and market a town without a resident Black population.

The term "sundown towns" refers to the thousands of towns across the U.S. that excluded Black people from residing there during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries (Lancaster, 2016; Loewen, 2005). These towns were referred to as such because of the signs that often marked their city limits, carrying messages that ominously warned Black people to leave by sundown. Recent scholarship on sundown towns has shed light on their geographic characteristics and significance for contemporary racial formations in the mainland U.S. (Loewen, 2005; McConnell & Miraftab, 2009; Lancaster, 2010; Jaspin, 2008). As this literature documents, "sundown towns" were prevalent across the U.S., despite the common perception that they were a historical anomaly or only existed in the Deep South (Loewen, 2005). McConnell and Miraftab (2009), for instance, estimate the number of sundown towns at "nearly 1,000 small towns, larger communities, and suburbs across the country" (p. 605). Loewen attests to the spread of sundown towns in Arkansas and Missouri, documenting the presence of sundown signs across the Ozarks by the 1920s. Partly due to sundown towns' signs and policies, and also due to the Great Migration (Harrison, 2012), the Ozarks' Black population dwindled to half its pre-Civil War total by 1930 (Loewen, 2014). Thus, Springdale, as one of many possible sundown towns in the region, was not unique in its exclusion of Black residents or intimidation of potential new Black visitors and residents. Nevertheless, this history formed and

continues to form a touchstone in white long-term residents' ruminations about race in Springdale itself.

In one recent study, McConnell and Miraftab (2009) examine racial dynamics in a Midwestern town that had recently become home to a sizable Mexican population and that, like Springdale, owed its historical whiteness in part to sundown town policies. McConnell and Miraftab call for greater recognition of historical racial formations in studies of new destinations, writing that

> [s]cholars investigating the contemporary processes of Latino population growth in "new" destinations, both in metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas, may want to explore the importance of sociohistorical considerations, particularly localities' racialized historical contexts before the arrival of Mexican and other Latino immigrants. (p. 607)

In this way, they highlight the "value of situating contemporary migration within a historical context marked by the centrality of race" (p. 607). Following their call, I locate Springdale's contemporary racial dynamics in a longer racial history that includes the enactment of sundown policies and strategies.

Due to the paucity of formal documentation or research about sundown towns, many local discussions about Springdale's sundown town status revolved around the sign that, according to local lore, had been posted at the entry to town, one that read, "N-----, don't let the sun go down on you in Springdale." This sign came up in numerous conversations about Springdale's history of racism—for example, when I asked long-term residents to describe race relations or racial dynamics in their town. I could find no photo documentation of the sign itself, despite concerted and ongoing efforts of many local historians and archivists. Nevertheless, most white long-term residents with whom I spoke recalled seeing the sign at the town's border, some dating its presence up to the 1970s. One interviewee who had attended high school in Springdale recalled taking a picture to submit to the yearbook committee in the late 1970s, but a review of local yearbooks from these years turned up nothing (interview, Springdale, AR, June 2014). Despite this lack of "official" evidence—or perhaps as a result of it—the history of Springdale's racism and sundown town status

was a vexing and consuming topic for many white long-term residents, given how frequently it was

brought up (mostly unsolicited on my part) when long-term residents talked about the town's racial

history. I examine one such conversation below.

In one interview, a white Springdale native and area resident reflected on Springdale's image

as a "racist town," the lore of the sign, and the informal enforcement of Springdale's "sundown

town" policy:

<blockquote>

E.M.E.: Something that I've noticed is that consistently, it's Springdale that people are saying is a 'racist town,' historically [compared to other neighboring towns].

Julie: That's always been the lore. Which is funny, because there were no Black people who lived in Rogers, either; there never were.

E.M.E.: Where do you think that [image of Springdale] comes from?

Julie: Well, you know, there's always been that story about there being a sign at the city limits, saying, you know…but I think nobody's actually been able to prove that that was there.

E.M.E.: But that story persists.

Julie: It does. And I'll tell you another story about this house we used to live in. So when we moved into this house, we didn't buy it from the Fulbrights; they had been a couple of owners before us. But the story that we were told by the guy who sold it to my family…So this was [U.S. Senator for Arkansas] J.W. Fulbright's summer home. And in the basement, there was a bedroom and a bathroom, and there was this buzzer system that was rigged through the house. And the story that we were told was that Fulbright had the buzzer system put in because he had a couple of Black maids, and that when he had a party on the weekend, in the evening, the rule was that Black people were supposed to be out of town by dusk. And so he would have them stay down in the basement, sort of hidden, and buzz them up when he needed them, so it wouldn't be known that they were actually here. Now, when I think about it now, I think, "Oh my God, that cannot actually be true." It just seems to me like that can't be true.

E.M.E.: Too ludicrous?

Julie: Yeah. But there was a buzzer system, and there was a maid's room, and…I mean, we called it the maid's room, because that's what we'd been told that *he* used it as. And it probably *was*! It probably always was, whether they were Black or not.

E.M.E.: Did you get the sense that was an enforced thing, that someone in the city would be watching and enforcing this thing?

</blockquote>

Julie: Yeah, yeah. I mean, I have no idea, because…I never saw a Black person here, *ever*.

E.M.E.:   Until very recently?

Julie: Until, like…So I moved back in '86, and probably then, I was aware of it either from something in the paper, or driving through town, that…*whoa*! And I really noticed it! You know, "Oh my gosh! You can actually live here, and you feel okay about this?" I really remember thinking that, "Oh, there's a Black family that moved in. God, how are their kids doing?" You know, I really worried about that. But I couldn't tell you that I was aware of an enforcement. I mean, as far as I knew, no one ever tested it. Now that may not be true, but that's all I ever knew.

E.M.E.:   I guess that'd be a clear, very threatening message.

Julie: To me, I always thought when I was younger, "Who would move somewhere where they're not wanted?" I wouldn't! I wouldn't be brave enough to do that.

In this conversation, Julie's uncertainty about the sign's existence is paired with her recollection of other practices, such as the rumored secretive employment of Black domestic workers, which might have reinforced local and regional perceptions of Springdale as a sundown town or at least a town where Black people were made to feel unwelcome. Whether such practices of Black exclusion and expulsion were formally enforced in Springdale, local white awareness of their implementation may have been sufficient to effect Black flight from, and avoidance of, the town. As such, Springdale's whiteness was constructed and reinforced through the paired expulsion and exclusion of Black residents and would-be residents.

As this interview suggests, while Springdale's sundown sign is the most infamous and oft-cited example of Springdale's racialized past, many more examples of this past exist, both mundane and spectacular. For example, archives from the Shiloh Museum include the already-mentioned "White Waiting Room" door from the Springdale train depot (photograph, 1923, Shiloh Museum of Ozark History), as well as an early twentieth-century article about a Black man discovered "skulking in the woods," who had been apprehended after "attempting to assault a white girl." The article concludes with the author's opinion that "[if] this negro is insane he ought to be placed in the

asylum. If sane he ought to be hung or placed in the penitentiary. Such brutes should not be allowed

to run at large" (archives, Shiloh Museum, ca. 1903). Together, historical details like these piece

together a partial picture of the practices that served to reinforce Springdale's sundown town status

shortly thereafter, although such occurrences were by no means limited to Springdale (Lancaster,

2010; Jaspin, 2008).

For many white long-term residents, the memory of Springdale's *historical* enmity to Black

people lingered into the present, translating into an understanding of their town as a place that was

still hostile to Black people. Fieldnotes from Springdale, for example, recount this conversation with

a local historian and area resident:

> We shift into a conversation about race. Cynthia said, "The other day, I saw a black man
> crossing the street in Springdale. And I was just so surprised! I mean, I know there's a Black
> population here, but imagine, just that growing up near Springdale, you never ever saw them.
> I mean, I grew up in Fayetteville, and it was like, 'Don't ever go there' [to Springdale, as a
> Black person]!" (Fieldnotes, Springdale, AR, March 2014)

In Cynthia's mind, Springdale had long been a place inhospitable to Black people ("Don't ever go

there!"), and her surprise at seeing a Black man in town dredged up this response. Perhaps as a result

of this lore's potency, many long-term residents with whom I spoke articulated anti-Black racism as

the "real" or "worst" racism. Often, this sentiment was conveyed in the context of immigrant

incorporation and local reception, as people expressed that racism was not so bad for immigrants as

they imagined it would be for Black people.[54] In interviews and conversations, white long-term

residents postulated that immigrants to Springdale would probably fare worse or face worse

treatment if they were Black (fieldnotes, Springdale, AR, 2014), despite the fact that, as many

residents were quick to point out, only recently have a few Black families chosen to settle in the area.

A closer look at the language of white long-term residents, however, shows that these interviewees

were not necessarily comparing Marshallese or Latino *people* with Black *people*. Instead, they

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[54] See Marrow (2009) for a discussion of the persistence of the Black-white racial binary in the rural U.S. South and its
implications for Latino or Hispanic immigrants.

compared *anti-immigrant* sentiments with *anti-Black* racism, concluding that anti-immigrant bias is not so virulent or racist as anti-Black racism. In other words, many white residents hesitated to categorize race-based prejudice against immigrants *as* racism.

This perspective was not exclusive to white residents. In one interview, a Japanese-American woman who was a long-term Springdale resident opined that her family's treatment by white long-term residents would have been worse if they had been Black, rather than Asian. As she explained, "[Springdale local residents] were so very welcoming, they really were! I think…if our skin color was different, I think it would be something really different" (interview, Springdale, AR, June 9, 2014). Here, she juxtaposed her family's treatment with what she believed a family whose skin color was different would have faced. As her statement implies, different (and perhaps darker) skin color would be an indicator of more meaningful racial difference in Springdale and, thus, more violent racial exclusion.

In Springdale, as in so many other sites of immigrant reception, Blackness served, at least discursively, as the ultimate racial bane, the bottom of the racial hierarchy (McClain et al., 2006; Lee & Bean, 2007; Alba & Nee, 1997). At the same time, anti-Black racism was often situated as "the worst," most extreme, or even *only* kind of racism. The logics that underpin these tendencies, while forged beyond Springdale, gain much of their potency through their historic link to the town's sundown status and through frequent reiterations of this history in narrations of Springdale's race relations.

To recap this section's main arguments, the history of Springdale's racial formations brings to bear a necessary context on the town's racial present, one that informs white long-term residents' perceptions about new immigrants. First, this history exposes the particular ways in which Springdale's whiteness was historically constructed, or "all-white by design" (Loewen, 2005). This process of constructing whiteness was carried out through the forcible relocation of the Ozarks'

indigenous peoples and subsequently through white settler colonialism in the area. In the process, narratives about Springdale's whiteness gloss over a violent history of indigenous dispossession, relocation, and genocide, allowing Springdale to be understood as an historically all-white place. Furthermore, the movement of whites both into and out of the state during the early twentieth century, as documented in census and other historical records, reveals Springdale's "all-white" population to be anything but static during this time. Nonetheless, this white movement does not register as a fundamental demographic shift in the town, due in large part to its perceived racial homogeneity.

Finally, both the town's demographic whiteness and many of its residents' understandings of the town's racism come from Springdale's history as a sundown town. That history is present in the minds of many long-term residents, as well as the residents of surrounding towns. In conclusion, then, the racialized history of Springdale's construction as an all-white town, prior to the influx of immigrant groups from the 1980s on, reveals the resilience of the Black/non-Black "color line" (Du Bois, 1903) over time, despite the absence of virtually any Black residents. Springdale became all-white through indigenous exclusions forgotten and erased over time and through Black exclusions told and re-told to the point that they became the sole reason for Springdale's whiteness. These discursive and material productions of Springdale as a white town set the racialized conditions into which immigrants arrived in the 1980s.

Becoming an "Immigrant Town": Latino and Marshallese Arrival

Due to significant waves of immigration since the early 1980s, Springdale's population grew 133% between 1990 and 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau, 1990-2010). According to a 2014 announcement by the Springdale Chamber of Commerce, the Northwest Arkansas region "gains about 23 people a day," and Springdale had the region's fastest growth rate at that point, adding an average of four people every day to its population (Springdale Chamber of Commerce, 2014). As the local paper

reported, between the 1990 and 2000 census, the foreign-born population in Benton and

Washington Counties—Northwest Arkansas's two most populous counties—increased from 3,065

to 21,562, a growth rate of 603 percent (*Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, ca. 1995).[55] The exponential and

rapid growth of the region's immigrant population in recent decades has arguably qualified

Springdale (along with neighboring towns like Rogers) as a new immigrant destination (Yee, 2015;

Winthrop Rockefeller, 2013).

Following a pattern seen in many new immigrant destinations, both rural and urban (Wang

& Li, 2007; Engstrom, 2001; Griffith, 2005), Latino immigration to Springdale, and to other nearby

towns like Rogers, was underway in the early 1980s, if in relatively small numbers. Within a short

time, Marshallese migrants were also coming to Springdale, arriving on the heels of Latino

immigrants and making broad-brush claims about the town's foreign-born residents more

complicated. Together, these two migrant groups now officially constitute more than 35 percent of

Springdale's population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010), even more according to community estimates

(interviews, Springdale, AR, July 2013, March – July 2014). Latino and Marshallese resettlement in

the town has, thus, engendered a massive demographic shift in a short period of time.

Although Marshallese and Latino communities in Springdale began to develop almost

simultaneously, they experienced different proportions and growth rates. Due largely to the rise of

the region's poultry and trucking industries, Latino immigration to Springdale skyrocketed in the

1990s, tripling between 1990 and 1995 (Capps et al., 2007). As a result of this immigration,

Springdale has boasted a population growth rate of more than 50 percent for each of the past two

census periods (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). In recent decades, the arrival of Latino immigrants,

predominantly from Mexico and El Salvador, was echoed at the state level: between 1990 and 2000,

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[55] The actual size of Northwest Arkansas's immigrant populations is assumed to be much greater, since a large proportion of these groups are undocumented or, in the case of Marshallese immigrants, have Compact-provisioned legal status, making them difficult to count accurately.

Arkansas's immigration population grew 196 percent, the country's fourth fastest growth rate (Capps et al., 2007). Due to this rapid regional growth of immigrant populations, largely to small towns, long-term residents, policy-makers, and community leaders suddenly face dramatically changing towns and communities (interviews, senior government officials, Springdale, AR, May-July 2014).

The migration geographies that now include Springdale stretch into transnational connections from Latin America to the Pacific and also map onto larger shifts in immigrant resettlement within the U.S. mainland itself. In particular, Latino, especially Mexican and Central American, migration patterns have stretched beyond popular destinations on the West and East Coasts to reach new sites in the Midwest and South, such as cities like Nashville (Winders, 2013), Atlanta (Wang & Li, 2007), Georgia (Engstrom, 2001), North Carolina (Griffith, 2005), and Missouri (Culver, 2004). The existing literature on new immigrant destinations traces these trends, expanding attention beyond immigrant gateway cities (Clark & Blue, 2004; Odem & Lacy, 2009; Lichter & Johnson, 2009). This shift in the geographies of immigration has created opportunities for new ways of understanding immigrant incorporation by focusing on how the effects on labor and economic structures (Striffler, 2009; Kandel & Parrado, 2005), public institutions, such as schools and churches (Kandel & Parrado, 2006; Odem, 2004), and racial frameworks and formations (Winders, 2005; Marrow, 2009) might compare to or be different from what is seen in traditional immigrant gateways.

In many ways, Springdale fits the description of sites examined in the new immigrant destinations literature (Massey, 2008; Zúñiga & Hernández-León, 2005; Odem & Lacy, 2009), which defines a new immigrant destination by the historical absence of large-scale immigration (Marrow, 2011). Much of this scholarship attends to the ways in which arriving immigrant groups, particularly Latinos, disrupt pre-existing racial dynamics in places of resettlement. As Marrow (2009), Stuesse

(2009) and Winders (2005) have written, Latino immigrants arriving to sites in the U.S. South frequently encounter a historical Black/white color line, a binary racial structure in which Latinos of many ethnic and racial backgrounds are not immediately classifiable. Often, in new immigrant destinations, there exists a shared narrative about how communities came to be populated by white people (or rather, by "people who believe themselves to be white," per Coates, 2015, p. 97). Contending with that whiteness and its place-specific genealogies is thus germane to the examination of new destinations (Marrow, 2009; Schmid, 2003; Nelson & Hiemstra, 2008; see also Leitner, 2011, on "small-town" white identities).

Although less frequently studied, the growth of Pacific Islander communities is also occurring elsewhere in the South, arguably constituting new destinations of some sort that have yet to receive sustained attention. While the U.S. Northwest is home to the largest *percentage* of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders (NHPIs) in the continental U.S., the South has seen the fastest *growth* of these populations in the past decade (Reeves & Bennett, 2002; Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, 2013). In 2010, Washington County, where Springdale is located, was one of only six counties in the continental U.S. whose Pacific Islander population exceeded five percent of the total population (Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, 2013). Such exponential growth of Pacific Islander communities in the South warrants further study within the new immigrant destinations literature, raising key questions about the entanglement of migration and empire.

If the first Marshallese and Micronesian migrants to the South and Midwest came for educational opportunities—as was the case for many other new Compact migrant destinations previously (Hezel, 1989, 2013)—the fast growth of Springdale's Marshallese population came as a result of the town's economic conditions, especially its low-wage employment opportunities and low cost of living (interviews and personal communication, Marshallese residents, Springdale, AR). An ongoing factor drawing both Marshallese and Latino migrants has been the availability of jobs in the

poultry industry. Springdale is the headquarters of Tyson Foods, the world's largest meat producer, and has been officially dubbed "the Poultry capital of the world" (AR Senate Bill No. 949, 2013). Here, Marshall Islanders with low levels of formal education and limited English proficiency are able to find employment (Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, 2013). While it is important to mention that many Marshallese residents now hold professional positions within Springdale, a large proportion of the population initially filled manual labor posts, with some Tyson factories employing enough Marshallese to fill an entire work shift (personal communication, community organizers, Springdale, AR, July 2014). The region's expanding commercial trucking industry also accounted for a significant proportion of residents' initial employment, although this was, and continues to be, more common among Latino or Hispanic residents than among Marshallese people (interviews, Springdale, AR, May-July, 2014).

The concentration of immigrant employment in poultry in Northwest Arkansas mirrors regional and national trends of poultry farming and the "rural industrialization strategy" of many corporations (Stull et al., 1995; McConnell & Miraftab, 2009; Striffler, 2007, 2009; Cravey, 1997). Steve Striffler (2007), whose research on Mexican labor migration is based in Northwest Arkansas, speaks to the poultry industry's impact on immigration and labor in the U.S. South in this way:

> In short, poultry did for the South what meatpacking has done for the Midwest. It not only brought foreign workers…into the heartland but it also made permanent settlement in the United States possible, attractive, and in some cases almost unavoidable for a growing number of migrants. (p. 677)

Other studies of Latino immigration to new destinations have also shown how employers, often meat- or poultry-processing plants, draw immigrant populations and, thus, heavily influence the re-racialization of small towns and mid-sized cities like Springdale in the South and Midwest (McConnell & Miraftab, 2009; Kandel & Parrado, 2005; Stull et al., 1995). The arrival of large numbers of immigrants to small towns like Springdale is arguably more noticeable for long-term residents than it is in larger urban centers, as new immigrants' proportional impact on local

demographics may be greater and more visible to non-immigrant residents on a day-to-day basis than in larger cities (Nelson & Hiemstra, 2008; Lichter, 2012). Large cities also tend to see different residential patterns of immigrants than do small towns, with immigrant residents residing in a few neighborhoods that long-term residents might never pass through (Winders, 2011). Conversely, in smaller cities and towns like Springdale, there are more *shared* sites of encounter (schools, grocery stores, public agencies, etc.) where older and newer residents are likely to meet.

Local Reception

As Marshallese and Latino immigrants resettled in Springdale in the late 1980s, both groups arrived to a town that largely saw itself as white and struggled to understand what it meant when immigrants began to appear in those shared sites of encounter—classrooms, grocery stores, health centers, and workplaces (interviews, Springdale, 2014; Winthrop Rockefeller, 2013; Schwartz, 2015). As in many new destinations (Marrow, 2005; Cornelius, 2008; Kandel & Parrado, 2006), the dramatic and fairly rapid change in Springdale's make-up met with varied reactions from long-term residents. These mixed reactions were also reflected in media coverage at the time and emerged during interviews and informal conversations when I asked about this period of the town's demographic transition.

As research in the archives revealed, area news media in the 1990s was characterized by extensive, almost constant coverage of the region's growth and changes. As early as 1993, before immigration to Northwest Arkansas had peaked, a local writer summed up sentiments in this way: "If long-time Northwest Arkansas residents think the population influx and accompanying economic growth of the past decade have been mind-boggling…well, hang on, we're in for an even wilder ride" (*Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, 1993). Another article described the population growth "explosion," writing that "[i]n Northwest Arkansas, some people think the wheels are coming off the wagon" (Steward, 1995). These types of articles, which increased in frequency in the 1990s,

demonstrate the growing attention to immigrant arrival, resettlement, and integration that Northwest Arkansas experienced in this period.

This process, of course, was not confined to Arkansas; it played out at a larger scale as well. As immigrants arrived to numerous new destinations in the 1990s, initial media coverage was often characterized by panic and fear-mongering about the surging influx of undocumented or so-called "illegal" immigrants (Pantoja, 2006; Valentino, Brader, & Jardina, 2013). As Valentina et al. (2013), Pantoja (2006), and others show, this coverage tended to be negative, often correlating with an increase in non-immigrant individuals' support for more restrictive immigration policies such as increased deportations and the expansion of a U.S.-Mexico border wall. Even news coverage that was less vitriolic utilized the term "illegal" for undocumented immigrants, as was common in U.S. media journalism until the mid-2010s (Guskin, 2013). Many articles on Latino or Hispanic immigrants in Northwest Arkansas, for instance, despite expressing support for immigrants' rights, display headlines such as "Illegal immigrant steps out: Guzman tired of 'living in the shadows,' takes part in forum" (Hernandez, 2011). Another article from the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* included a list of terms, entitled "Definitions of immigrant status;" the first of four terms given is "illegal alien," defined as "a person who has no valid immigration document that allows him to live or work in the United States" (*Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, ca. 1992). By reproducing terms like "illegal alien"— which, notably, was and still remains an official legal categorization (IRS, 2016)[56]—such media representations circulated discourses of immigrants as either "illegal" or, by contrast, "legal."

Jones-Correa and de Graauw (2013) name this discursive framing of immigrants the "illegality trap," or "single-minded focus on undocumented immigration in the contemporary immigration debate, and the inability to shift this focus" (p. 186). The illegality trap that

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[56] The IRS defines "illegal alien" as follows: "Also known as an 'Undocumented Alien,' [an illegal alien] is an alien who has entered the United States illegally and is deportable if apprehended, or an alien who entered the United States legally but who has fallen 'out of status' and is deportable." Retrieved on June 8, 2016 from https://www.irs.gov/individuals/international-taxpayers/immigration-terms-and-definitions-involving-aliens

characterized national news coverage on immigration also appeared in local media, obscuring the particular legal status of Marshallese immigrants in Springdale. In news articles on Marshall Islanders, for example, local journalists struggled to find a vocabulary with which to describe their status in Arkansas or "pathway to citizenship." This is because Marshallese immigrants, as "lawfully present" "habitual residents" or "non-immigrants" under the Compact agreements are not easily legible within a "legal"/"illegal" binary and, thus, hard to place in or describe through dominant discourses on immigration like the illegality trap.[57]

During the 1990s and 2000s, however, some local news coverage of Springdale's immigrants also focused on the region's "melting pot" and the new doors and pathways opening for immigrants and their second-generation children. One 1993 article, for example, featured a Laotian immigrant in Springdale who taught Laotian to immigrant children at a local Catholic Church (Robinson, 1993). Another profile from 2003, entitled "Long Ride to Work," celebrated the economic contributions and personal sacrifices of Latino immigrants to the area, declaring that "[u]nskilled Hispanic workers are essential to the Northwest Arkansas boom" (Walter, 2003, p. 12). Many news articles after 2000 also focused on youth integration, the development of language and cultural programs in the public school systems, and the adjustments and assimilation processes of immigrant business owners and workers who had, by this time, weathered their first decade in the region (Gambrell, 2008). Such coverage showed processes of local and regional sense-making about immigrants' new presence in the community and about their role in the region's changing social, cultural, and economic landscape (Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, 2013).

This period, though, was not without tensions. Existing alongside this trend toward incorporation and assimilation was visible resistance to immigration in Springdale and other towns in the area, as many immigrants' rights advocates also mentioned in interviews (interviews,

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[57] I return to this concept in Chapter 5 to discuss how this trap also renders Marshall Islanders with COFA status illegible to public officials and political actors.

Springdale and Fayetteville, AR, July 2014; fieldnotes, Spring 2014). This resistance was evident in an increase in policing, such as the adoption of 287(g), a federal measure issued in 1996[58] and strengthened in 2009 in which local law enforcement agencies could opt to create a formal partnership with the Department of Homeland Security and ICE through memoranda of agreements between the two agencies (for critiques of 287(g), see Ridgley, 2008; Wong, 2012). This policy was implemented in Springdale and nearby Rogers in 2007. As other scholars have documented, the trend to implement 287(g) and other immigrant criminalization measures also played out at the regional and national scales (Coleman, 2012; Wong; 2012; Walker & Leitner, 2011), reshaping relationships between local law enforcement and immigrant populations in communities across the country. These changing relationships impacted relationships between community organizations and immigrants' rights activists locally, in some cases prompting changes in their organizing strategies, as I discuss further in Chapter 5.

When I brought up immigration in interviews with white long-term residents, asking how, if at all, recent population shifts had changed Springdale, their feelings ranged from ambivalence and frustration to acceptance and enthusiasm. One long-term resident, an elderly white woman, said,

> [Immigration] has changed the way neighbors communicate or don't. It's changed the way people trust other people. It's changed the way business is done. It irritates me to go to bank and have it say, "Do you want your information in Spanish or English?" That irritates me. [Because] this is America. It's English. That's just me. (Interview, Springdale, AR, June 2014)

For this resident, immigration to Springdale affected her everyday interactions with others in her town in ways she found disruptive and frustrating, from how people conducted business to how neighbors conversed and the languages in which they did so. Another long-time white resident in his nineties reflected, "Well, the change that hits me, I used to think I knew everybody in town and I definitely knew everybody in my church. Now I don't know a tenth of the people in my church"

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[58] Originally, Section 287(g) appeared in the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA).

(interview, Springdale, AR, May 2014). For Springdale residents like these, the town's population shift signified the introduction of unfamiliar faces and cultural practices, making them feel estranged from the intimate familiarity that once characterized the town for them.

These interview excerpts show how Springdale's reception of immigrants has been more complicated and uneven than outright xenophobic, a dynamic also explored in other new immigrant destinations (Marrow, 2011). As scholarship on new immigrant destinations has documented, rapid immigration and demographic shifts in "chicken towns" like Springdale are sometimes accompanied by tense or conflicting responses from receiving communities (Zuñiga & Hernández-León, 2005; Winders, 2005; Smith & Winders, 2008). Similarly, long-term Springdale residents' reception of immigrants was mixed and at times tentative, and these tendencies came forth in conversations throughout fieldwork.

As Springdale's immigrant population grew in numbers during the 1990s, other changes to the local community also materialized. Over time, Springdale saw the proliferation of cultural centers, as well as small non-profit and community-based organizations established to serve immigrant newcomers, along with an expanded offering of Spanish-language resources. New multicultural programs and centers also addressed concerns about social and cultural integration and shifts (Yee, 2015; interview, Guadalupe Suárez, July 2014). In the mid-1990s, the Multi-Cultural Center of Northwest Arkansas described Springdale's socio-cultural transition in its brochure in this way:

> The challenges of change are also great. First, both populations, the new and the old, must get to know one another. Their cultures are different. Language barriers are immense. The infrastructure is stretched to its limits: schools, housing, medical services, transportation, legal system, and recreational facilities…Without an already existing, indigenous, bilingual, bicultural Hispanic community in Northwest Arkansas, the language barriers are huge. Bilingual interpreters and translators are needed desperately. Hospitals, schools, police departments, city and state agencies all need people who can comfortably and competently speak both languages. The Hispanic population is not the only immigrant group. There are Laotians, Marshallese, and Vietnamese, to name a few, who are part of the new in-migration. (Organizational brochure, ca. 1995)

This brochure addressed the multiple social, economic, and policy issues Springdale faced as a result of immigration and the town's changing demographics. As its text highlights, language barriers and lack of language-appropriate services for new immigrants posed one of the major structural and organizational challenges for a new immigrant destination like Springdale, making it difficult for immigrants to receive the social and public services they needed. Underlying the focus on language, however, is an emphasis on the cultural challenges confronted between 'new' and 'old' populations who were unfamiliar with one another. Organizations like this one, which began to appear in Springdale in the early- to mid-1990s, positioned themselves as bridging what they saw as a cultural communication gap between different populations (interviews, community organization leaders, Springdale and Bentonville, AR, July 2014). In an interview, the leader of a local immigrant-serving organization summarized the need for her organization's work in the mid-1990s in this way:

> I moved here in 1996, and there were very few Latinos working in different areas. Most of the Latino population were in the poultry industry or the construction. There were not that many people working in other areas. We were encountering some women who were also working and teaching, but they were the only Latinos in the workplace. Sometimes, it was hard to just have the support system or for the people to understand certain things, the way we dress, the way we speak, the way we interact with each other. Sometimes, we have no other ways. We didn't have a support system or ways to vent some of the frustrations sometimes. When we were encountering other people in the community of church or at the library, that's where I started meeting other women and start befriending with them. Then, one of them suggested that we should join and have an organization. (Interview, Springdale, AR, July 2014)

As this interviewee points out, and as is reflected in the brochure previously discussed, immigrant-serving organizations established in the early stages of Springdale's demographic transformation worked on two fronts: providing connections and support to new immigrants and addressing challenges to immigrant reception among Springdale's non-immigrant residents. Both fronts are key to immigrant incorporation. In the new destinations literature, and within the town of Springdale, much attention has been given to "modes of incorporation," which Morrow (2005) defines as

government policy toward immigrants, particularly state-defined immigrant categories used as the basis for granting benefits; civic society and public opinion toward immigrants, defined as prejudice toward immigrant groups; and the presence, size, and organization of the coethnic community. (p. 783)

Immigrant-serving organizations in Springdale, thus, aimed to shape immigrant reception and incorporation, as did local media and other public actors, if sometimes in competing ways. In Chapter 5, I return to a discussion of immigrant reception by public actors, advocacy groups, and immigrant rights organizations. For now, though, I turn to two vignettes of social events in Northwest Arkansas to examine what they show about community belonging and social space, especially the way that social dynamics between groups get inscribed into and are shaped by both the local landscape and local histories.

Race, Nation, and Belonging: Two Acts

On the 4th of July, 2014, I attended two social events in and around Springdale that together point to the social separation of Marshallese, Latino, and white residents in the area. The first was a 4th of July Rodeo of the Ozarks, an event hosted annually in Springdale. The second was a Marshallese softball game, the opening game for the *Namdrik Joor* league (*Namdrik Joor* is the Marshallese Memorial Day). Looked at side by side, these two events reveal a great deal about national identity and pride (both U.S. and Marshallese), community belonging, and the racialization of collective social space in the area.

Rodeo of the Ozarks

The afternoon of July 4th, 2014, I drove with my partner to Springdale for the annual Rodeo of the Ozarks. This event, which Springdale has hosted since 1944, regularly draws hundreds of people from across Northwest Arkansas. My fieldnotes from that day tried to make sense of this event and its racial and cultural overtones.

Several hundred people here, mostly white and some Hispanic (Central American and Mexican?), many people in cowboy gear: plaid shirts, cowboy boots, and hats. Once we are seated in the bleachers, the national anthem plays. Everyone in the stadium stands and removes their hats, puts their hand over their heart. In a bizarre spectacle, the specter of Ronald Reagan appears on the video jumbotron. In this footage, which I assume to be taken from a presidential speech in the late 1980s, Reagan lauds American freedom and those working to build the American dream, recognizing the high price paid by the military to ensure that freedom and to bring it to the rest of the world. People take their hats off while Reagan speaks, putting their hands over their hearts. No one says a word.

Once the video ends, the announcer gives a short speech, reminding the crowd: "People in Saudi Arabia can't enjoy freedom. In the United States, we have freedom." People clap and cheer. "Where are my people [guests in the crowd] from India?" No answer. "I was told there would be a group here from India. Maybe they don't speak English." (He repeats this joke a couple of times, and each time I feel it like a punch in the gut.) "How about from China? From England? Australia?" There's one Asian family sitting a few rows ahead of us, a mom and dad with two or three small children. Otherwise, there were none that we could see, aside from my partner, who is Korean. Not a single (discernible) Marshallese person there. (Fieldnotes, Springdale, AR, July 4, 2014)

At this rodeo, Springdale's largest annual event, narratives about U.S. patriotism were interwoven with a clear articulation of local belonging and American-ness as whiteness. Foreign tourists—or those *assumed* to be foreign by the announcer because of their race or ethnicity—were called attention to, even though—or perhaps because—the crowd in attendance was overwhelmingly white. Whiteness and American-ness were thus simultaneously naturalized in this space through the announcer's narration. The virtual absence of Latinos and Marshall Islanders, populations who make up almost 40 percent of Springdale's population, also spoke to the racial and ethnic separation of social spaces in Springdale, further enabling the construction of the space as white and American.

Equally important, the lauding of U.S. military intervention abroad, through the honoring of Reagan's military appeals and the comment about Saudi Arabia, directly tied the local celebration of this rodeo, through U.S. patriotism, to U.S. militarism. In this way, the event linked a place-specific cultural event, the Rodeo of the Ozarks, to larger discourses about U.S. national, military, and imperial projects such as the Iraq wars and U.S. military presence in the Middle East. Just as Springdale's racial identity has been constructed discursively and materially through key absences

(indigenous and Black), notions of American-ness, grounded in militarism and military service, are

manifest in this rodeo as a public event.

Namdrik Joor Day: Marshallese Softball Tournament

Earlier that same day, I attended the *Namdrik Joor* Day softball games at a public park outside

central Fayetteville, about eight miles from the Rodeo of the Ozarks site in Springdale. My fieldnotes

describe the event in detail:

> There are around two hundred Marshallese people at the park when I get there. Some people
> are just arriving, while others are settled into their bleachers. I am there for almost an hour
> before Jeannette, a white advocate who works with the Marshallese population, comes, so I
> have some time to watch. Lots of young families with small kids—running everywhere!—
> and not a single non-Marshallese person that I can tell, aside from myself. Everyone's
> speaking Marshallese to each other with a few words of encouragement shouted out in
> English every few minutes ("One more! Good job! I got it!").
>> The park has four baseball diamonds altogether, so I sit by the men's game for a
> while and then walk around. The teams have had t-shirts made for them. I spot Joran and
> then Marleen, two Marshallese community advocates, separately, but see them from afar and
> decide not to call them over (I don't know if they would remember me, and I also don't
> want to draw attention to myself). I suddenly feel very conspicuous—I can feel people
> watching me as I walk through. This is the first entirely Marshallese event I've been at since
> I've been here, and I feel like a voyeur. I consider taking pictures of the event—I take one
> on my cell phone—but then feel that it's inappropriate and put my phone away. I suppose
> people would think I was a reporter, I think to myself, but then I don't want that role
> assigned to me either, although people might see a reporter with a camera as more legitimate.
>> Jeannette arrives finally and tells me she's sorry for being late. She ran into Dexter,
> an older Marshallese man, she says (I think his name has come up in conversation before.)
> She knew he had moved out to Washington state and thought he was coming back after
> three months, but it turns out he's there for good. It reminds me of a comment that [a local
> Marshallese officer] made yesterday, that many Marshallese people are moving to
> Washington state because the benefits are better (medical? housing? He also mentioned food
> stamps, but perhaps there are others).
>> Jeannette tells me that she attended the opening ceremony of *Namdrik Joor* at the
> Jones Center last night. She showed up at 7 p.m., about an hour after it was officially
> scheduled to start—"just the right time," she says—but there weren't as many people there
> as last time. We chat for a minute, and then I head to the refreshments stand to buy a bottle
> of water. I'm waiting in line with a ton of young kids and a young woman in a chartreuse t-
> shirt that says "Spokane." After a couple of minutes, I make small talk: "Really hot out
> today, huh?" "Yeah," she says, "and I'm from Spokane, so I'm not used to this heat and
> humidity at all. It makes my curly hair go crazy." I'd guess she's in her mid-twenties, petite,
> speaks English fluently and with an American accent I can discern (I'd heard her talking to
> the little girls, asking after their father, seemed to know them). I laugh and say I'm from New
> York, so I can sympathize; I'm not used to the heat either. She asks if I knew about this

event before, or if I was just driving by and decided to check it out. I think she must be wondering how I, one of perhaps two or three white people at this event, ended up here. I pause for a minute— how to explain my presence?—and tell her that I'm meeting a friend, Jeannette. "What about you?" I say. "Well, I'm from Spokane," she repeats, "so I came from there." Oh, I respond, realizing she came all the way for this. She says that she had a wedding to come for, too, so she stretched out her trip (and decided to fly instead) but that many of her teammates drove, a trip that took two days. There were about twenty of them altogether, she says, both men and women. "It's a long drive. But the prize money is good!," she laughs. I ask how much it is. "I think it's a Jeep," she responds.

Shortly thereafter I find Jeannette sitting with her friend Mercy, a Marshallese or Marshallese-American woman in her mid-thirties, with two young daughters. She's on the board of a Marshallese-serving organization, and she and her family moved to Springdale in December from Springfield, Missouri, where she says she lived all her life. It's not far, maybe an hour's drive. I ask how she likes it here so far. She hems and haws, finally says, "It's alright." In Springfield, there were maybe a hundred Marshallese people, she says. Her husband's family is here, she says, so he wanted to move back. She says that she doesn't really have a lot of close friends here. "I mean, there's a lot…a lot of us here," she said, "but I'm not close with them the way I was back home." In passing, Jeannette comments that a team has come from California as well and that she's hoping to meet some of them while they're in Arkansas. (Fieldnotes, Fayetteville, AR, July 4, 2014)

My notes from this event offer a glimpse into the diasporic encounters taking place in a new destination of empire like Springdale (and, by extension, in neighboring Fayetteville), bringing together Marshall Islanders and Marshallese-Americans from resettlement sites across the U.S. Event-goers like Mercy and the young woman at the snack bar shared reflections on other places they had lived, comparing them with Springdale and discussing the connections between these sites. Others, like Dexter, had lived in Springdale for many years but had relocated to another city or state, seeking better government benefits or closer proximity to extended family. Conversations at the *Namdrik Joor* games spoke to the heightened mobility of people moving between sites in the Marshallese diaspora, as well as the connectedness between them. This human movement and flux, and the connections they forged between diasporic sites, are part and parcel of new destinations of empire, as they bring broader transnational histories and contemporary lived experiences to sites of resettlement.

There is also much to be gleaned from a comparison between the *Namdrik Joor* day event and the Rodeo of the Ozarks. In many ways, the contrast between these two events, held on the

same day only a few miles apart, is great. In the second, Marshallese residents of Springdale were joined by Marshallese groups from across the diaspora to celebrate a major annual event, one that barely appeared on the radar of white long-term residents. In the first event, the rodeo embodied a performance of American-ness as whiteness, despite the handful of Latinos or Hispanics in attendance, and of "freedom," along with the heavy-handed symbolism of the American flag, national anthem, and President Reagan.[59] Yet these parallel events, which seemed so divergent at first, both offer insights into the experiences of a new destination of empire: first, narratives of the town as a node in a broader diasporic network and second, narratives of the town as historically white with virtually no immigrant presence. More than that, though, these events also call up different notions of community—one deeply place-based and grounded in a local history ("70 Years of History," 2016) while celebrating a national history as well, and the other diasporic, given meaning not (only) by the particular site of Northwest Arkansas but also by the convergence of Marshall Islanders from across diasporic sites in the U.S. brought together to celebrate a shared cultural event.

These conflicting performances and imaginings of the nation-state and of local identity are evidence of what Behdad (1997) describes as "[t]he insurmountable difference between America as an immigrant heaven and America as a 'pure' nation" (p. 158). In a sense, the two events analyzed here each speak to part of this equation: in *Namdrik Joor* day, we see America as an "immigrant heaven," whereas the Rodeo of the Ozarks event produces America as a "pure" nation. While these two events did not necessarily pose an "insurmountable difference" in their constitution, as Behdad might argue, they clearly present divergent experiences and understandings of collective social life in

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[59] A side note on the omnipresence of Reagan in Northwest Arkansas: Anti-welfare attitudes seemed to run deep in much of Arkansas (Limbert & Bullock, 2005), and anti-welfare attitudes in this country owe a strong inheritance to the anti-Black welfare narratives from the Reagan administration (Loyd, 2011), as well as the Clinton administration, another local political darling. Reagan's influence appeared in multiple sites: his photo was even framed and hung on the wall of a local Springdale restaurant.

Springdale. As such, they offer a glimpse into the conflicting performances and narrations of place and nation that appear in a new destination of empire.

Conclusion

The two vignettes just analyzed are examples of the ways in which racialized experiences of belonging play out in Springdale, often in close proximity but in very different ways. I close the chapter with them because they speak to the broader themes it addressed; namely, the construction of Springdale's racial identity, its changing face through recent immigration, and the social dynamics that have materialized through these changes. If we take seriously the claim that race and racialization pervade all of our collective social life (Razack, 2002; Omi & Winant, 1994, 2014)—our ideological and discursive formations, the material world, and spaces and places of all permutations—then these events must also be understood as racialized expressions of place and belonging.

Such questions of nationhood, identity, and belonging are also called up in the conversations Springdale residents have about race, racism, and racial identity. Whether lamenting Springdale's history of Black expulsion, implicitly calling up whiteness through settler romanticism, or ruminating on the effects of becoming an immigrant town, long-term residents are thinking and talking about Springdale's racial formations in a multitude of ways. In sites with changing racial dynamics, notions of belonging have often been grounded in racialized and racist notions of who is (un)assimilable—generally, into whiteness (Alba & Nee, 1997). In recent years, however, some immigration scholars have attempted to expand assimilation and integration studies by engaging with critical race theories (Behdad, 1997; Bean, Lee & Bachmeier, 2013), looking specifically at how immigration affects Du Bois's question of "the color line" (1903). Immigration and the shifting color line by nature call up questions of nationhood, identity, and belonging (Ong et al., 1996; Gilroy, 2000; Lee & Bean, 2010). Behdad describes immigration as "both a necessary mechanism of social control in the formation of

the state apparatus and an essential cultural contribution to the formation of national identity"

(1997, p. 155). This chapter has drawn on these concepts to reveal how Marshallese and Latino

immigration to Springdale, while having profound demographic and economic (and in some cases,

social and cultural) impacts on the town, has not fundamentally moved its color line or disrupted

long-standing narratives around whiteness and Blackness. Due to the persistence of these enduring

racial logics, white long-term residents often struggle to fully grasp, or make sense of, the changing

racial dynamics that animate their town's emerging identity.

Finally, while official narratives and statistical reports portray Springdale as a town without

outsiders prior to 1980 (Winthrop Rockefeller, 2013), census records, archival materials, and

conversations and interviews with long-term residents reveal a contradiction to that story: the first

half of the twentieth century saw quite a bit of white movement both into and out of Springdale and

the Northwest Arkansas area. Nonetheless, the narrative of Springdale's historic static whiteness

continues to inform local discourses about the town prior to immigrant arrival in the 1980s.

Whether portraying immigrants as demographic disruptions to an historically white town or

juxtaposing immigrants' experience of racism against the experiences of Black Arkansans, long-term

residents make sense of the presence of new immigrant groups with an eye to the past, using

frameworks and language particular to the history of the town and region (Winders, 2013). In the

next chapter, I look to the longer histories of empire that have brought outsiders into Arkansas,

specifically vis-à-vis U.S. war-making projects during the mid- to late-twentieth century, to trace the

historical co-production of militarism, empire, and migration in the state.

CHAPTER 4: "We Are Here Because You Were There": War, Migration, and Empire in the Natural State

Introduction

U.S. empire and its many incarnations—military occupations, resource transfers, diplomatic accords, citizenship and migration provisions, and more—play a central role in generating new migration streams, sometimes to unexpected places like Springdale, Arkansas (Lipman, 2014, 2015; Hein, 1995). In the sites where those migration streams land, new types of social relations are constructed, and different histories of empire come together in intriguing ways (Hansen & Stepputat, 2009; Mains et al., 2013; Yeoh, 2003). In that sense, new destinations of empire are places where the seemingly distant and disparate points of empire are drawn together, as migrants from former and current U.S. territories settle, bringing with them, and bringing to the fore, different regional histories of empire. As this chapter argues, migration between sites like Arkansas and the Marshall Islands exposes these places as central to the workings of empire, rather than as "remote," a common framing of both Arkansas and the Marshall Islands in mainland U.S. discourses (Blevins, 2003; Davis, 2015; Friedlander, 1979; Mountz & Loyd, 2014). Portrayals of these sites as remote, peripheral, or isolated serve to uphold narratives of U.S. progress and exceptionalism. Their actual embeddedness in empire, however, demonstrates an uncomfortable truth: the U.S. colonial present (Gregory, 2004) is itself present, even in Arkansas, of all places.

As this chapter shows, Arkansas has *long* received migrant populations as a result of U.S. foreign military intervention. Subsequently, long-term Arkansas residents have developed both understandings about U.S. empire and blind spots to it through their encounters with and perceptions of these migrant populations. As such, this chapter is concerned not only with Springdale as a site produced by U.S. imperialism—what I am calling a new destination of empire—but more broadly with the *empire* part of intra-empire migration: migration streams that connect sites

of the devastation wrought by U.S. military interventions and occupations abroad back to the U.S. mainland, in the process channeling their populations into prisons, work camps, factories, and sometimes, with varying degrees of reception, local communities. U.S. war-making and imperialism abroad have always played a heavy hand in the generation of new labor pools in the mainland U.S. (Fujita-Rony, 2003; Bender & Lipman, 2015), leading to the common refrain of imperial migrants worldwide: "We are here because you were there."

This chapter shows how an historical analysis of U.S. militarism, colonialism, and imperialism can reveal new logics of Asian and Pacific Islander migration to Arkansas. Such an analysis, however, requires that we understand U.S. war-making and land-taking as more than push factors for potential migrants abroad. We must also understand these factors as being deeply entrenched in the U.S. mainland itself. What happens, this chapter asks, if we broaden our definition of U.S. war-making and conceptualize the impact and scope of U.S. militarism as more pervasive than formally declared war? Drawing on Nixon's (2011) concept of "slow violence" and following Stoler's ideas of ruination (Stoler, 2013; Loyd, Mitchell-Eaton, & Mountz, 2016; Pearson, 2012), this chapter suggests that migrant groups are often products of U.S. military and political intervention in sending countries, whether as refugees produced by U.S.-led wars (Loyd et al., 2016), economic migrants fleeing countries whose economies have been rendered unlivable by globalization and neoliberalism (Fernández-Kelly & Massey, 2007), or "foreign combatants" and "national security threats" detained in U.S. prisons both onshore and offshore (Kaplan, 2005; J. N. Gregory, 2006; Minca, 2005, 2015). The presence of these migrant groups on U.S. territory offers a reminder of the machinations of U.S. military imperialism globally.

To develop these ideas, this chapter's first section details the history of World War II as it molded the image some Arkansans held of themselves and of their country. Looking at the formation of imperialist sentiment during WWII and Arkansas's wartime economic development, it

then turns to Springdale WWII veterans' narratives about the Pacific islands and their sense-making about the U.S. military's role in the Pacific, examining how narratives about U.S. empire have been sustained or reworked in these veterans' memories. The chapter's second and third sections turn to three recent periods in Arkansas's history to examine how the arrival (and in some cases, detention) of "outsiders" has produced Arkansas as a destination of empire: 1) Japanese and Japanese-American internees and German prisoners of war (POWs) during WWII; 2) Vietnamese and Indochinese refugees after the Vietnam War; and 3) Cuban *Marielitos* and Haitian refugees in the 1980s and 1990s. As this chapter shows, U.S. military interventions abroad have served as the genesis or trigger for the arrival of many refugee and migrant groups to Arkansas (Lipman, 2014; Smith, 1994; Fernández, 2007), where they received contrasting receptions from local, predominantly white, Arkansan communities. Each of these groups, this chapter argues, in some way reproduced Arkansas as a destination of empire.

World War II and Arkansas

This chapter was born in a roundabout way during fieldwork in Northwest Arkansas. After two months of interviews, archival research, and explorations of Springdale and surrounding Washington County, I felt I had hit an impasse. The impetus for my research had somehow become both more focused and broader: I wanted to document the interwoven histories of Arkansas and the Pacific Islands, revealing how key forces shaping these two different regions within U.S. empire—militarism, evolving global capitalism, and the particular social and racial formations forged through the first two forces—brought them closer together than they might initially appear. This research question expanded and contracted like a hot air balloon, always hovering tantalizingly above me and eluding its own grounding in empirical data. Which research methods would adequately document such ubiquitous, yet obscured, phenomena and linkages?

Trying to forge these connections in the archives, before I really knew what I was looking for, was a challenge. The always-patient and accommodating (as well as expert) archival staff at the Shiloh Museum in Springdale met this challenge enthusiastically, however, accommodating my strange archival requests. From my fieldnotes:

> [The museum archivist] says, "Wow, you're really looking into everything!" I try to explain: I'm trying to keep an open mind to themes that might connect this part of Arkansas to the Marshall Islands, overlaps in the narrative, in historical structures and experiences, things that counter the tendency to think: "But those two places have nothing in common!" and "What two places could be more different?" (Fieldnotes, Springdale, AR, April 2014)

The more I delved into this topic, the more I found material that helped me make those links between the political and economic history of 20th-century Arkansas and the history of the Pacific *as sites in U.S. empire.* This section grew out of such material. My interest here is to document and examine World War II's impact on both Arkansas's economic development, labor, and immigration histories and on long-time Springdale residents' narratives and notions about the Pacific Islands. I do so through an analysis of interviews and news articles on WWII in the Pacific. Just as WWII was a pivotal time in the Pacific Islands, insofar as it soldered together U.S. imperial ambitions with the landscape and peoples of the Marshall Islands and beyond, it also had profound effects on the political, social, and economic landscape of Arkansas and its residents.

Economic Development and Arkansan Poverty

While the rest of the U.S. was gearing up for World War II, Arkansas was still reeling from the effects of the Great Depression (Bolton, 2002; Murray, 1970; Watkins, 2011). As Chapter 3 detailed, the 1930s were economically devastating for the state, which had historically struggled compared to neighboring states and was especially hard hit by the economic collapse of the 1920s (Blair & Barth, 2005; Johnson, 2014). As a result, poor Arkansans, unable to make a living, left the state in droves (Gregory, 1991). The late 1930s and early 1940s also marked a shift in the state's economic make-up, from predominantly agricultural and based in small farms to mechanized agro-

business and dominated by the poultry industry, as well as trucking (Schwartz, 2010). These economic changes set the stage for out-migration from the state, establishing new industries and labor needs that would be met by immigrants later in the century.

The out-migration of poor and working-class white Arkansans from the state—primarily to California—sparked debate about interstate migration in other parts of the U.S. (Gregory, 1991; Weber, 1994).[60] In California, which received high numbers of Dust Bowl migrants, for example, Arkies often faced resistance to their arrival from both legislators and long-term residents (Gregory, 1991). Despite this pushback, many Arkansans took their chances and fled in record numbers: between 1940 and 1943, in fact, nearly ten percent of Arkansas's population left the state (Halevy, 2014). As a result of Arkansas's relative poverty, local and state debates over the country's entrance into WWII were heavily influenced by the war's potential to bring federal investment and jobs into Arkansas (Smith, 1986; Bolton, 2002). Arkansas historian C. Calvin Smith's key text, *War and Wartime Changes: The Transformation of Arkansas, 1940-1945*, documents debates over U.S. involvement in the war in a number of Arkansas's public institutions, including the University of Arkansas. As Smith recounts,

> J. William Fulbright,[61] who was then the president of the University of Arkansas, warned that if America failed "to give immediate assistance to England by sending our naval and military planes, and the British Empire is destroyed…the only hope for this nation is to consolidate the Western Hemisphere under our control." (1986, p. 5)

In this quote, Fulbright tied the future of the U.S. as a nation to its ability to leverage imperial and military control at a hemispheric and global scale. His thinking, evidenced in this quote, is just one example of the presence of U.S. imperialistic and militaristic discourses in Arkansas. In other words,

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[60]At the time, much of the resistance to Arkansan Dust Bowl migrants in states where they headed was articulated as anti-poor sentiment, framing Dust Bowl migrants as "white trash" who would usurp government benefits and pose a burden on receiving states (Newitz & Wray, 2013). These debates made their way to Congress in 1940, when the U.S. House of Representatives deliberated over the various opportunities and impacts of interstate movement in the Interstate Migration hearings (U.S. House of Representatives, 1940).

[61] The same J.W. Fulbright who later became a U.S. senator for Arkansas and who owned a summer home in Springdale that purportedly employed Black workers. See reference in Chapter 3.

far from being remote from discussions of U.S. military and geopolitical hegemony, actors in Arkansas were directly encountering and engaging in such discussions.

By some measures, Arkansas's economic development during WWII was astronomical. Altogether, more than $340 million in federal funds were spent on defense build-up and the establishment of military bases in Arkansas (Halevy, 2014). In military base and camp towns across the state, defense-related employment opportunities grew, and the arrival of new investors provided a cash injection into local economies for a time (Johnson, 2014; Bolton, 2002). Another source of jobs was Arkansas's ordnance plants, which grew to provide work for as many as 25,000 workers who produced war explosives, chemicals, and other defense technology (Halevy, 2014). Many Arkansas communities, left impoverished and underemployed by the Great Depression, were particularly in need of these war-related jobs provided by federal funding. More than just recipients of federal aid, however, Arkansans were also central in the nation's ability to continue its involvement in the war. As Halevy (2014) notes, Arkansas came in twelfth overall in terms of war bond money raised within the continental U.S. As a state, thus, Arkansas generated significant economic and material contributions to the war effort, despite its meager means (Halevy, 2014; Blair & Barth, 2005).

The economic effects of WWII were unevenly spread across Arkansas and its people. Some towns thrived on federal wartime investments, benefitting from a surge in employment opportunities and infrastructural development (Bolton, 2002; Smith, 1986). Other areas, however, were nearly emptied as residents abandoned their lands and farms, heading westward to California or elsewhere (Gregory, 1991; Stanley, 2014). Of course, there was also a war going on. Hundreds of thousands of Arkansans were on their way to serve in the military, with many of them headed to the Pacific (Arkansas Educational Television Network, 2016).

Going to War: Arkies in the War Effort, Home Fires Burning

Only a decade past the Dust Bowl exodus from Arkansas and neighboring Oklahoma in the early 1940s, the nation was on the cusp of war. Compared to residents of other states, Arkansans did not enlist in the military in great proportions. As Johnson (2014) writes, **"**[p]oor health and inadequate education meant fewer Arkansans were pressed into military service during WWII. About 195,000 men served in the armed forces, although the forty-three percent rejection rate of the state's inductees was the second highest in the nation" (n.p.). Despite this relatively high rejection rate from military service, Arkansans were drawn into the war effort in other ways. Many who had left the state during the previous decade, for example, sought employment in the defense industry in places like California and Washington state (Johnson, 2014). In a variety of ways, then, Arkansans both in the state and elsewhere were bound up in the machinations of the war.

Back in Arkansas, the war colored the pages of local newspapers, as it did in small towns across the country. Among the clippings of WWII news articles and photographs grouped in the Shiloh Museum's vertical files was a photocopy of a poem. The poem's author remains anonymous, simply signed, "Another Okie." Its words, however, encapsulate the link between "Arkies and Okies" and the larger projects of U.S. military empire, especially involvement in WWII:

Arkies and Okies

Sure, we took California without losing a man,
We Arkies and Okies could still take Japan,
But while we'd fight the dad burned foe,
Who'd build the ships? We'd like to know.

If we swam the ocean put the Japs to flight,
We'd have to swim back and work all night,
To supply ourselves and the allied nations,
With sufficient arms and ammunitions.

We Okies and Arkies are among the best,
We knew how to work before taking the test.
Our forces combined, we aid Uncle Sam,
So squawk all you please, we've taken our stand.

We're not ashamed of the old home state,
In face, we are proud—we think it is great.
And when this war's over and you Callies are safe,
We'll gladly return to that wide open space.

–"Another Okie" (Shiloh Museum, ca. 1944)

This poem conveys both the patriotic bravado of wartime boosterism and a wounded resilience to the rejection and belittlement that some Arkansans felt at the hands of their country. It also gestures to the sense of white supremacy as a driving logic of the U.S. national project, with reference to "put[ting] the Japs to flight." As Aoki (1996) and Moon (2003) have written, anti-Japanese sentiment during and after WWII often manifested as explicit racism in popular poetry and music, and the use of the term "Japs" was a common racial epithet (Burkholder, 2010; Moon, 2003). Defeating the wartime enemy, thus, was articulated in overtly racialized and Orientalist terms, framing the Japanese as the military opponent. In other words, defeating Japan was not only a military but also a racial project, a framing with vast and damaging implications for Japanese and Japanese-Americans in Arkansas during and after the war.

The poem also conveys that the U.S. potential to carry out military projects *abroad* was made possible by Arkie involvement in the war at *home* ("our forces combined, we aid Uncle Sam," the poem reminds readers). Military service here is a source of pride, something Arkansans could contribute to the national wartime effort without leaving the U.S. even in the face of scorn and mockery of Arkies for many decades. "Squawk all you like," the poem goads imagined readers, but you cannot deny that Arkansans were a vital part of the U.S. military endeavors abroad by working at home.

Smith (1986) details the disdain that Arkansans confronted regularly outside the state during the 1930s and 1940s, a disdain also voiced by the nation's political and economic leaders at the time (U.S. House of Representatives, 1940; J. N. Gregory, 2006) and alluded to in archival material like

the "Arkies and Okies" poem.[62] This disdain, Smith argues, was often articulated as a mockery of an

Arkansas hillbilly trope, which after the Arkies' exodus to California had acquired particular potency

and circulation:

> Nationally, Arkansas were identified with "watermelons, the unshaven Arkie, the
> moonshiner, slow trains, malnutrition, mental debility, hookworms, hogs, the big fat lie,
> shoelessness, illiteracy, windy politicians, and hillbillies with paddlefeet who could not
> pronounce correctly the name of their state." (Newson, 1954, cited in Smith, 1986, p. 20)

Mockery of Arkansan hillbillies, as discussed in Chapter 3, often centered around stereotypes of

Arkansans as poor, dirty, uneducated, unsophisticated, but above all, white (Blevins, 2002). In the

face of these stereotypes, military service and other contributions to the U.S. war effort served as a

source of pride to some Arkansans and a way to resist their diminishment in the national image.

In addition to this work supporting the war from home, communities across Arkansas also

sent their young men to war, often first to Texas, California, and even Alaska[63] for basic training

(interviews, Springdale, AR, 2014; Halevy, 2014). From there, many men went to the innumerable

aircraft carriers, man-of-war ships, and base installations that by that point dotted the Pacific Ocean

(Fujitani, White, & Yoneyama, 2001). Back home in Arkansas, local newspapers lauded these young

men's efforts and sacrifices, drumming up both moral and material support for their military service.

I discovered a selection of such texts in archival research in Northwest Arkansas. The Shiloh

Museum's WWII folder contained a number of newspaper clippings from local and regional

newspapers at the time. Their tone is assertively proud and resolute:

> Salute to Fayetteville and Washington County's Own Heroes: The American soldier is a
> symbol of the Freedom our men are so courageously fighting to preserve. Washington
> County boys, in the Pacific, in the Aleutians, North Africa, and over Europe, know that we
> on the home front will not let them down. And we'll keep right on plugging for them until

---

[62] While white Dust Bowl migrants experienced some rejection in states where they resettled, they were often more
warmly received by local populations than were migrants and workers of color, particularly Mexicans and Filipinos
(DeWitt, 1979; Menchaca, 1995). They also frequently replaced immigrant workers in sites of resettlement.
[63] Sites named by interviewees, Shiloh Museum archival materials, and the Arkansas Educational Television Network
(AETN) project "In Their Own Words" include Camp Decatur (CA), San Francisco, San Diego (boot camp), and
Oakland, among others.

our own heroes come victoriously home. (Newspaper ad posted by the University of Arkansas Cafe, 400 West Dickson, ca. 1943)

A similar local pride in Arkansans' wartime service was reflected in this article published in a Northwest Arkansas paper in 1940:

Calling all Patriots: We have the finest little city in Arkansas…this Rogers, Arkansas, and won't we all be proud when we can see the name "Rogers, Arkansas" embossed on the side of a warplane, a weapon of vengeance and reprisal that will, we hope, take a heavy toll among the death-dealing war machines of our enemies. We Can Do It!, Rogers…Let's do like we always have done, do more than our share and put our city among the leaders in the national war effort. Remember the American Legion Bond Pie Supper. (On the Homefront: Rogers' News from World War II, 1940)

In this short piece, small-town pride for "the finest little city in Arkansas" is linked to pride in military service for the nation, much as it was in the "Arkies and Okies" poem. Here, the author's enthusiasm for the war effort took on a particularly menacing tone, calling for "a weapon of vengeance and reprisal" that would "take a heavy toll among…our enemies." The text ends with a call for the people of Rogers to "do like we always have done, do more than our share," again conveying the notion of small-town Arkansans' oversized contribution to the nation. In these ways, this passage speaks to the war's role in bringing Arkansans into U.S. military projects at a larger scale and into projects of U.S. nationalism, at the same time that it gestures to the effect this participation had on local discourses around Arkansan identities.

Arkansas also expressed its support for the war effort by making its mark on the machinery of warfare itself, including paintings on planes, bombers, and other military equipment. The images below were taken from the popular website "Arkansas Traveler,"[64] a site whose content is mainly user-generated by local residents and amateur historians.

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[64] Fincher, J. O. (1944, October 12). Arkansas traveler images on WWII planes [Online image]. Retrieved from http://www.arkansawtraveler.com

Figure 4: Arkansas traveler images on WWII planes (Source: First Lt. James O. Fincher)

These images reproduce the trope of the "Arkansas traveler," bringing this icon to the far-flung sites

of U.S. war-making during WWII. In the photo on the left, the Arkansas Razorback, mascot for the

University of Arkansas since 1910, hauls a wheelbarrow with ammunition in the direction of Berlin.

The hog wears an aggressive expression, conveying the bellicose nature of its task. In the photo on

the right, the side of the plane features an image of the "Arkansas hillbilly" or traveler, complete

with a bindle or "hobo sack," pipe, and bare feet (Friedlander, 1979; Smith, 1986). The Arkansas

traveler depicted in the second image is walking toward home, as indicated by a pointed sign that

states "U.S.A." Here, the hillbilly appears as an itinerant wanderer, an image presumably carried to

the far sites of U.S. war-making on the side of this plane. These images visually mirrored narratives

in archives from Northwest Arkansas during the war, narratives that extolled the nationalistic,

hardworking, and patriotic virtues of small-town Arkansans. As in the "Arkies and Okies" poem,

these images present Arkansans as contributing their efforts to U.S. military empire during the war,

through symbols historically used to demean them. As it turned out, however, military service, in

addition to creating opportunities to tout Arkansans' role in U.S. military endeavors at home and

abroad, also offered some Arkansans firsthand experiences with the people and places of the Pacific,

as the next section details.

Remembering the War, (Re)Writing the Narratives

The potency of World War II's legacy in Arkansas is visible in the recollections of Arkansas's war veterans, as well as the occasional commemorations of wartime sacrifices covered in local media. Furthermore, World War II itself serves as an historical linkage between Arkansas and the Pacific region as the pretext under which some Arkansans went to the Pacific, thus providing the context through which they came to understand the region and the U.S. military presence there. As I discovered during fieldwork in Springdale, I had a wealth of information and reflections on the Pacific: a handful of elderly World War II veterans who had grown up in Arkansas and had firsthand experience in the Pacific Islands as young men. The Shiloh Museum also maintains a rich set of archival materials on World War II, including newspaper articles, op-eds by veterans and their family members, war ads, calls for contributions to the war effort, and more. These materials helped flesh out a picture of how the war became the lens and filter through which some local residents learned about U.S. empire and particular migrant and refugee "sending" countries.

While in Springdale, I interviewed three World War II veterans, all of whom were born in Arkansas and had spent most of their adult lives in Springdale. These men were in their late 80s and early 90s; as such, they were among the last of their generation of surviving WWII veterans. Through our conversations, and in these veterans' recollections of their time in the Pacific, I trace key links between Arkansas and the Pacific, as materialized in their memories. In the two[65] vignettes presented below, I am most interested in drawing out the interviewees' memories of the Pacific islands, as well as their interpretations of the U.S. military's role in the Pacific. This was significant to my project, as WWII veterans are some of the only non-Marshallese people from Springdale that have ever been to the Pacific region or to the Marshall Islands in particular.

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[65] I also interviewed a third WWII veteran while in Springdale. However, our interview did not touch much on his wartime experiences. He had been home on short leave, pending orders to go to Okinawa, when the war was declared over.

My first interview with a WWII veteran was with a long-term Springdale resident named John Spade. Mr. Spade's interview took place in his living room, where we had a long discussion of his military service in the Pacific Islands. As it turned out, the Marshall Islands was Mr. Spade's unit's second engagement, which he recalled this way: "Well, now Enewetak and Kwajalein, they were shot up pretty bad. Majuro, I don't think—best I remember, it didn't take much gunfire. But Kwajalein and Enewetak, there was quite a few land battles on that. And shelling from the naval and bombs from the air, just took all the palm trees off." After talking at length about Mr. Spade's military experiences in the Pacific region, I asked a few questions about the Marshallese presence in Springdale. In these excerpts, Mr. Spade made sense of the Marshallese arrival to Springdale through his familiarity with U.S. military history in the islands, many of which he had visited:

> Mr. Spade: Well, I don't know why [the Marshallese] are here now, I assume it's just because—a lot of it is because they used one of those islands. And now I forget which one, what the name of it was.
>
> E.M.E.:   Oh, Bikini?
>
> Mr. Spade: Yeah, Bikini, Bikini Atoll. And I know that that's the reason they came in. And I don't know that they came to this area, specifically, but they came to the United States because it just…it just run 'em all off of those islands.

In these comments, Mr. Spade drew a causal link between nuclear testing on Bikini Atoll and the exodus of Marshall Islanders to the U.S. His interpretation of these factors is not entirely inaccurate—the U.S. military nuclear testing in the Marshall Islands did *precede* the Compact's negotiation, though the testing was not a central reason for its visa-free migration provision, as was discussed in Chapter 2. Nevertheless, emigration from the Marshall Islands has been tied to nuclear testing, as well as to other long-term economic, social, and environmental effects of the U.S. military presence in the Marshall Islands (Hezel, 2013; GAO, 2011; Underwood, 2003). Thus, Mr. Spade was at least partially right. Furthermore, his comment indicates a clear understanding that the history of

the U.S. military presence in the Marshall Islands, which included both WWII occupation and

subsequent nuclear testing, was in some way connected to the Marshallese presence in the U.S.

Later in the interview, we began to talk about the Compact of Free Association and the

Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, as I attempted to explain the focus of my research:

E.M.E.: So, after the war, the Marshall Islands became part of the Trust Territory, right?

Mr. Spade: Yeah, yep.

E.M.E.: And when the Trust Territory kind of concluded, or started to break up, they negotiated an agreement with the U.S. that they could—[well, it had] lots of different parts—but one part was that [Marshall Islanders] could immigrate to the U.S. without a visa. Which is very rare!

Mr. Spade: Yeah, it is! Yeah, it is, but I guess that was their way of thanking them for getting to use their islands down there to test all those A-bombs.

Here again, Mr. Spade connected U.S. nuclear testing in the islands and the Compact's visa-free

migration provision for Marshall Islanders. While in some ways this claim echoed his first comment,

it also introduced the concept of the visa-free migration provision as *retroactive compensation or*

reparations—a "thanking" of sorts—for nuclear testing. As I discuss further in Chapter 6, this link is

significant, as it provides an explanation for Marshallese migration to the U.S. that upholds U.S.

benevolence and ability to right its own historical wrongs.

For Mr. Spade, WWII was also a time when he, like other Arkansans fighting abroad,

developed wartime ideas about Japanese people (as soldiers, as "sneaky," as devious, etc.):

Mr. Spade: I remember when we was there…I didn't see it happen, but I just heard it. There was a ship docked just off Saipan there, it was anchored out there, and a Japanese climbed the anchor! Climbed the anchor chain and was trying to get on the ship! And the guard shot him, shot him right off the anchor chain [laughs].

As Mr. Spade mentioned during the interview, the war was the first time he encountered Japanese

people, and, as this was in the context of war, they were seen as foreign combatants. Between Mr.

Spade's service during WWII and subsequently in the Korean War, he spent almost four years in the

Asia-Pacific region as part of U.S. military engagements. Mr. Spade's military service in the Pacific Islands and subsequent return to Arkansas, thus, constituted a human connection between the two sites, a connection fundamentally shaped by U.S. imperialism and militarism abroad.

The second WWII veteran I interviewed was Roger Thomas, a long-term Springdale resident like Mr. Spade. Mr. Thomas came to me as an interviewee by way of the Shiloh Museum, whose staff recommended him as a very knowledgeable and engaged Springdale resident. In addition to serving in WWII, Mr. Thomas was an active member of a Springdale veterans' group. At 92 years old, his memory of wartime service was impressively sharp. A self-trained archivist, he came to our interview well prepared, carrying with him personal photos, notes, and annotated maps from his time in the Philippines. In this sense, he was a dream interviewee. Early in the interview, we talked about his prior unfamiliarity with the Philippines and the Pacific region in general.

> E.M.E.:   What did you know about the Philippines?
>
> Mr. Thomas: I didn't know anything! Hadn't even heard about them. [laughs]
>
> E.M.E.:   Did you have any images in mind, from what people had told you?
>
> Mr. Thomas: Nope. None whatsoever.

Mr. Thomas received his printed orders to attend Officer Candidate School in New Jersey. From there, he was sent to a radio factory transmitter school in Long Island, where he got orders to go west. He was first stationed in a camp in Sacramento, California, then was put on a river steamer, the *Delta Queen*, headed for Oakland. From Oakland, he immediately boarded a ship going to the Pacific, a ride that would last thirty days.

> Mr. Thomas: Incidentally, on the boat was the traveling troupe for *Oklahoma* [the musical].
>   And they would rehearse on topside every night. And so I got to hear
>   *Oklahoma* for about thirty days! [laughs] I met all the cast. It was just really
>   nice.
>
> E.M.E.:   So you had a little bit of the Midwest with you, on the ship.
>
> Mr. Thomas: Yep [laughs].

Later, Mr. Thomas spoke about the troops' collective lack of geographic knowledge of the Pacific region prior to their service:

E.M.E.: Did you have any further thoughts or conversation with your fellow servicemen about where you were going?

Mr. Thomas: No. None whatever. Of course, we didn't—no one knew, none of us knew where we were going.

Mr. Thomas's familiarity with the Philippines developed over the year or so that he spent in Manila in the military. Among the personal archives he brought to the interview was a map entitled, "City of Manila," printed by Air Forces Pacific (AFPAC), U.S. Army in August 1945. In precise, carefully drawn letters, all caps, Mr. Thomas had marked the spots relevant to his work sites, including "small ships radio," "office," and "quarters." These details, and the various material artifacts that Mr. Thomas had kept, constituted a time capsule of his experiences in the Pacific during WWII, a miniature archive of U.S. military presence at the time. Like his memories of wartime service, such small items formed a material link between the wartime Pacific and Arkansas in the present.

Experiences like those of Mr. Thomas and Mr. Spade about completing military service in the Pacific have been well documented in the numerous WWII oral history projects dedicated to veterans' memories of wartime, such as the National WWII Museum,[66] the Veterans' History Project at the Library of Congress,[67] and the Rutgers Oral History Project.[68] In Arkansas, archives like the Arkansas Educational Television Network's WII Oral History Project[69] and the World War II Veterans History Project at the Fort Smith Historical Society[70] compile the narratives of Arkansas veterans, many of whom left Arkansas for the first time when they joined the service. Some

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[66] Resources from these oral history projects were accessed online. National WWII Museum, retrieved on June 2, 2016, from http://www.nationalww2museum.org/see-hear/collections/oral-histories/
[67] Veterans' History Project at the Library of Congress. Retrieved on June 2, 2016, from https://www.loc.gov/vets/
[68] Rutgers Oral History Project. Retrieved on June 2, 2016, from http://oralhistory.rutgers.edu/
[69] Arkansas Educational Television Network's WII Oral History Project. Retrieved on June 2, 2016, from http://www.aetn.org/oralhistory
[70] World War II Veterans History Project. Fort Smith Historical Society. Retrieved on June 2, 2016, from http://www.fortsmithhistory.org/Oral%20History/WW2project.html

interviewees from these collections shared detailed memories of their battles in the Pacific. One

WWII veteran, Charles Alley, for example, said,

> [I]t was the big battle in the Pacific against the Japanese. And we were in all the island-hopping, we called it, with that big fleet. And Saipan was one of our biggest battles and we killed 7,500 Japanese by count. And I think it was about 5,000 Americans also lost in the Battle of Saipan. But that was the beginning of our jumping from island to island, on up to where we got to Japan. (Interview with Charles Alley, Fort Smith Historical Society, ca. 2010)

For Mr. Alley, who traveled to the Pacific (and out of the country) for the first time during World

War II, the "island-hopping" he experienced through military service gave him his first image of the

region—an image, he later reflected, which stayed with him for several decades. Another veteran

interviewed, Thurman Odell Jordan, reflected on hearing about Pearl Harbor while back home in

Arkansas:

> On December 7th, 1941, our time, we came down off of Rich Mountain and the fire tower; and at our home, we had a battery-operated radio. The announcement of the Pearl Harbor attack had been going on. And so a lot of people in our community hadn't known a thing about Pearl Harbor. But we had a neighbor boy, Riley Hibbs, who was in the Navy and he'd been home on leave from Pearl Harbor and had told us about Hawaii. So we at least knew where Pearl Harbor was located. (Interview with Thurman Odell Jordan, Fort Smith Historical Society, ca. 2010)

For Mr. Jordan and his neighbors in Rich Mountain, Arkansas, military service (in this case, of the

"neighbor boy") made the geography of those Pacific sites familiar, visible, and knowable to a local

population. Hawai'i, and by extension Pearl Harbor, came into legibility for them through the lens of

war. For a third Arkansan veteran interviewed in this series, military service in the Pacific also

presented local men with an exciting opportunity to see the world:

> [W]hile we were [stationed in Tennessee], they told us we were going to the Philippines when we got back to Little Rock. Well, being a bunch of old country boys, that just thrilled us to no end, [to] get to go to the Philippines. (Interview with R.C. Goodman, Fort Smith Historical Society, ca. 2010)

Although Mr. Goodman ended up being sent to Alaska instead, his excitement at the possibility of seeing the Philippines stayed with him as he recalled the memory he shared with his peers, "a bunch of old country boys," as they awaited deployment to somewhere far beyond Arkansas.

Narratives like these paint almost nostalgic wartime recollections of the Pacific and were echoed in many local Northwest Arkansas newspaper articles published at the time. At the Shiloh Museum and the University of Arkansas, for instance, archived news articles featured titles like "Local POWS Remembered," "Local Men Served, Sacrificed in WWII," and "Okinawa Invasion Recollection," with many published since the early 1990s. These articles recall the Pacific while simultaneously celebrating local veterans' sacrifices and selfless servitude as particularly Arkansan qualities. In an article from a local paper entitled "At home and abroad, war touches everyone," the author reviews a book compiling interviews with Arkansan WWII vets and published concurrently with the launch of an exhibition at the Shiloh Museum, "Over Here and Over There: Northwest Arkansas and WWII" (Harington, 1995). The article's author, who grew up in Little Rock, reflected upon WWII's enduring influence on local residents' memories:

> Of all our country's wars, it was the Second World War, whose conclusion 50 years ago is being observed lately in so many commemorations such as this book, which looms largest in terms of its excitement, of the way that all of us who lived through it were caught up in it, of the many opportunities it offered us to demonstrate our strength and cooperation and passion…Like everyone else, I knew the experiences of collecting flattened tin cans, saving grease and buying 10-cent stamps to fill a War Bond book. Like almost everyone else…I followed the daily progress of the armies as they moved across Europe and deeper into the Pacific, shown by maps and arrows that showed the excitement of victory. (Harington, 1995)

This nostalgic look to the past, published as a commemoration of the wartime era, holds up WWII as an event that "looms large" in the memories of those who experienced it, even from Arkansas. It also speaks to the impression the war (and media coverage of it) had on the minds of Arkansans and the Pacific's appearance in "maps and arrows that showed the excitement of victory." Such images may well have been the first representations of the Pacific that many Arkansans encountered during the time, as they were for this author, a nine-year old boy at the war's end.

In addition to local media's celebration of WWII servicemen and local contributions, many local news articles published during the war also extolled it for what it offered young Arkansan servicemen: namely, a way out of Arkansas. In a wartime publication of the *Arkansas Times* in Fayetteville, in a section called "Keep 'Em Flying," one article caught my attention. Entitled "They Are More Travelled," it describes the worldliness acquired by young soldiers embarking upon their military service:

> The service man of today has a lot more savvy than we had 25 years ago. Before he starts to fight for his country he gets to know it by seeing a considerable chunk of it, and in the process sheds his prejudices and provincialism. That's Americanism at its best. (*Arkansas Times*, ca. 1944)

This excerpt frames Arkansans' military service as an opportunity to shed provincialism, escape small-town life, and see the world. Military service, the text implies, offers the young "service man of today" savvy worldliness. Through military enlistment and military-enabled mobility, the service man comes to embody "Americanism at its best" by traveling far beyond the confines of home. Below this excerpt in the newspaper, the next ad says, in bold caps, "BUY WAR BONDS," reminding local residents of their patriotic duties to contribute financially to the ongoing war effort.

During the era of WWII, these narratives about war were among the only contexts in which the Pacific Islands appeared in local newspapers. For area residents who had not traveled there, such images and stories were perhaps the only images of the Pacific region they encountered. Both during the war and after, Arkansan WWII vets formed a human connection to the Pacific and to the history and present of U.S. military imperialism there, both for themselves, through their own experiences, and for those in their local communities who learned about the Pacific through these veterans' presence there. This link in Springdale (and in small towns across the U.S.) served as a reminder that Springdale was not a remote, isolated small town untouched by empire. Instead, it had and has an historical legacy that implicates it in war and empire and that ties it historically to the Pacific. These veterans are one piece of that legacy.

Freedom Seekers, Internees, Enemy Combatants, and Refugees: U.S. Wars and Immigration

War not only remade Arkansas economically and infrastructurally, sending some Arkansans abroad for the first time. It also transplanted people from the far corners of the globe—spaces which had themselves been remade by U.S. military interventions and occupations—to camp towns, factories, and communities across Arkansas. As this section argues, U.S. wars abroad have been central motors in bringing "outsiders" to Arkansas since WWII. Since the 1940s, the state has witnessed the forced internment of Japanese and Japanese-Americans and German prisoners of war (POWs) during WWII; the post-Vietnam War detention and resettlement of Vietnamese and Indochinese refugees in the 1970s; and the arrival and detention of Haitians and Cuban asylum-seekers during the 1980s. Each of these arrivals reveals in different ways that empire and imperial migration to Arkansas are not new phenomena. Rather, the Natural State has been a long-standing destination of empire.

WWII: Japanese Internees and German POWs

On the heels of the Arkie out-migration to California during the 1920s and 1930s, a massive counter-movement of people *into* Arkansas was taking place by the end of the 1930s and early 1940s: thousands of Japanese and Japanese-Americans were being forcibly relocated from their home communities in California and other West Coast states to the Natural State. As many as 16,000 of these U.S. residents were sent to army camps functioning as Japanese internment camps in Arkansas between 1942 and 1945 (Halevy, 2014): Rohwer and Jerome (Figure 5).
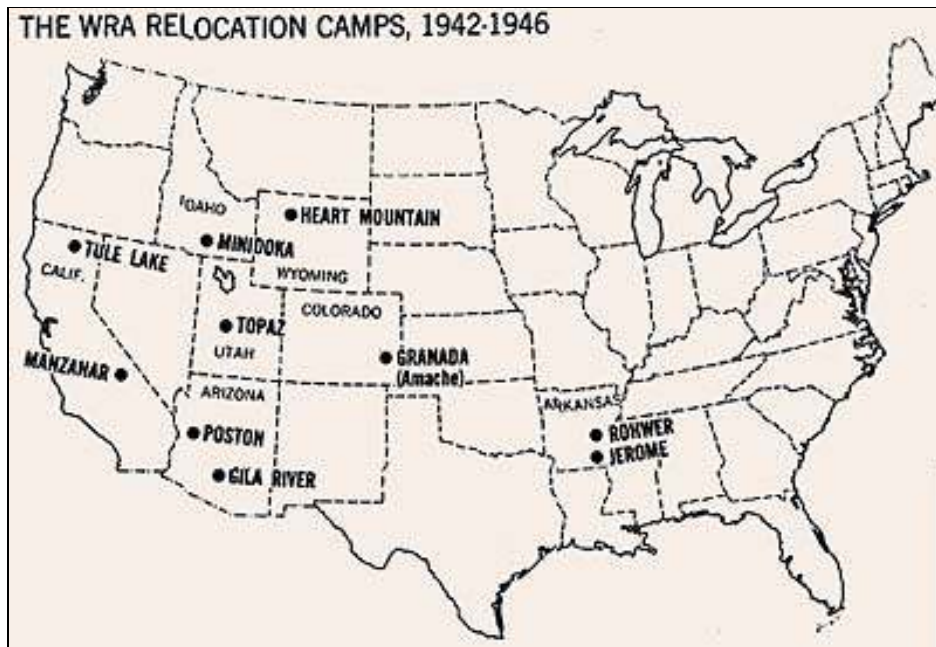
Figure 5: Map of War Relocation Authority (WRA) relocation camps, 1942-1946
(Source: Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture)

Recent scholarship on militarism and asylum has examined how wartime infrastructures are used repeatedly over time to detain displaced peoples and how the very existence of that infrastructural capacity to detain has been levied as a justification to incarcerate displaced and vulnerable migrant populations (Stoler, 2013; Loyd et al., 2016, Lipman, 2014). This scholarship demonstrates the critical link between military infrastructure and asylum and migration management in sites like military forts, camps, and bases, which are often repurposed as immigrant detention facilities. In Arkansas, several military installations, including Fort Rohwer, Fort Jerome (both featured in Figure 5), and Fort Chaffee (Figure 6), have served repeatedly as detention or internment facilities since the mid-twentieth century. The first such detentions took place at the start of WWII with Japanese and Japanese-American internees (Bearden, 2015).

Soon after the arrival of Japanese internees in the early 1940s, Arkansas also became a temporary detention site for as many as 23,000 German and Italian POWs in army camps around the state (Halevy, 2014; Pritchett & Shea, 1978; Lipman, 2014). These camps included Camp

Robinson, Camp Dermott (previously named Jerome Relocation Center, where Japanese internees were imprisoned), and Camp Chaffee, also known as Fort Chaffee (Figure 6), a facility which would feature in subsequent refugee and migrant detainee stories later in the century. Michael Bowman (2013) notes that Camp Dermott's "remote locality…made it the perfect site to house German officers," presumably a characteristic that also made it appealing to state officials detaining Japanese internees a few years earlier.[71] It is important to note that military and federal investments in the state enabled ongoing detention efforts, both during and after the war. The federal and state governments, for example, also made use of existing Civilian Conservation Corps, a New Deal public work relief program, throughout the state to serve as barracks for POWs (Reiss, 2005). Infrastructural developments during the time included the ordnances and factories described earlier in the chapter, as well as a number of army camps constructed or augmented during the war. In these ways, Arkansas's infrastructural capacity to detain people had roots in U.S. militarism: most of the federal funds injected into the state were funneled directly into war-related infrastructural investments during the 1940s (Bolton, 2002; Smith, 1986), making WWII pivotal in Arkansas's economic development (Tooke, 2001) and in its production as a site where imperial migrants could be detained, processed, used for their labor, and resettled.

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[71] For a more critical take on the concept of "remoteness," see the work of geographers on immigrant detention and incarceration (Coddington et al., 2012; Mountz et al., 2013; Martin & Mitchelson, 2009; Loyd, Mitchelson, & Burridge, 2013).
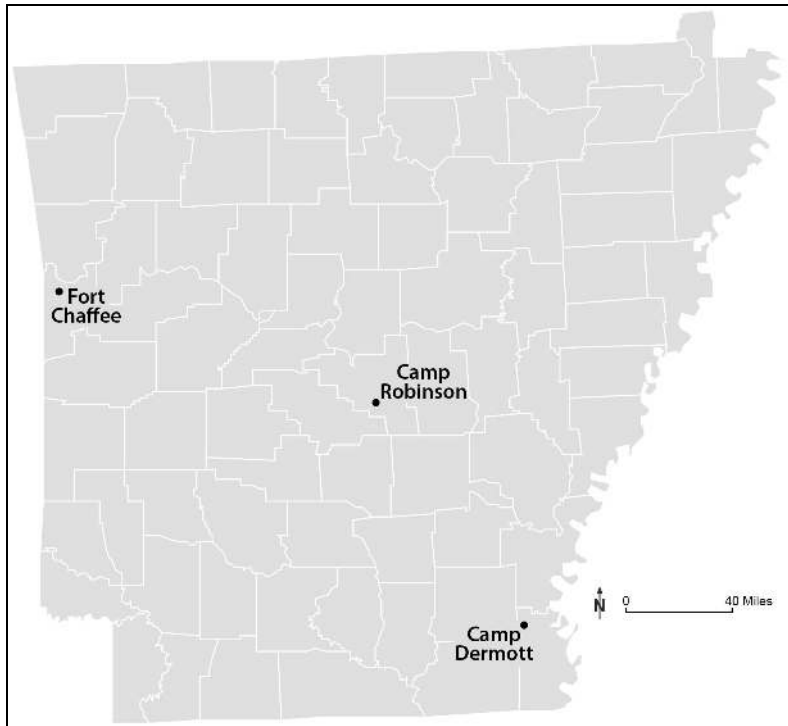
Figure 6. Map of Fort Chaffee, Camp Dermott, and Camp Robinson (Source: Joe Stoll, Syracuse University)

The arrival of Japanese, Japanese-American, and German POW populations to Arkansas, and their contrasting reception by long-term residents, exposes the racialized nature of assimilation and integration of "foreigners" during wartime, as well as the Orientalist roots of U.S. depictions of wartime threats. What follows gives an overview of these contrasts as they appear in the existing scholarly literature, as well as in my own fieldwork. First, however, it bears mentioning that none of the Japanese-Americans interned in Arkansas during WWII were documented as having any involvement supporting Japan or the Axis powers during the war and that in fact, many Japanese-Americans registered to serve on the U.S. side to demonstrate loyalty (Smith, 1986; Lipman, 2014). On the other hand, German and Italian POWs detained in Arkansas were enlisted soldiers captured during battle. Despite this fact, Germans and Italians often received better treatment by local

residents than did relocated Japanese-Americans (Smith, 1986, 1994), the former frequently building close working and social relationships with local long-term residents (Bowman, 2016).[72]

I emphasize this point not to naturalize or justify the legal or extrajudicial detainment of any group on the pretense of wartime necessity—ample scholarship has shown that to be problematic (see Gregory, 2004, 2006; Kaplan, 2005; Minca, 2005 for geographic analyses of spaces of exception, particularly at Guantánamo). Instead, I call attention to the racialized scrutiny of Japanese and Japanese-American subjects, most of whom were U.S. citizens or permanent residents during wartime, and the questioning of their dedication to the nation and ability to assimilate to full cultural citizenship (Berlant, 2014). Many historians of U.S. racial formations have examined the production of Asian immigrants' "unassimilability" through the perpetuation of xenophobic stereotypes (Sandmeyer, 1991; Ngai, 1998), racialized fear-mongering during wartime (Aoki, 1996; Smith 1986), and legal constructions of Asians and Asian-Americans as inherently and irresolvably alien to the U.S. (Ngai, 2004; Chang, 1993; Cheng, 2013). For Japanese and Japanese-Americans interned in Arkansas during the war, many of these concepts shaped their reception by white Arkansans.

While the majority of German POWS were kept in barracks in and around camp towns, others were sent to small towns to perform labor in agriculture and factories (Pritchett & Shea, 1978; Ward, 2007). Archival research at the Shiloh Museum of Ozark History revealed that many German POWs were sent to Springdale to work in Welch Grape Juice plants, processing fruit products. Archived news articles reflect a cheery and warm receptive environment for German POWs, as has been reported in other places as well (Reiss, 2005; Doyle, 1991). One article, "Personnel Changes at German War Prison Camp," describes the 120 German prisoners in the local Welch Grape Juice plant as working "under contract with the government" (*Springdale News*, 1944). This news article makes even greater use of euphemism in the following paragraph: "The men all volunteered for the

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[72] See Heisler (2007) for a discussion of German POWs' treatment in U.S. Southern and Midwestern towns in contrast to that of Mexican *braceros*.

work here which was necessary because of shortage of male help at the Welch Plant which processes food for the government" (*Springdale News*, 1944).[73] Another article, "Labor Problem Aided by German War Prisoners" (S*pringdale News*, 1944), describes the Welch's grape juice camp in Springdale at a plant operational from 1923 to 1978. During the time when German POWs were employed there, the article states, local female workers on bathroom breaks were accompanied by armed guards, presumably to protect them from the Germans. Nevertheless, news coverage generally conveyed a conflict-free and amicable co-existence between German POWs and local residents.

An article entitled "Prison Labor Necessary Says Welch Head" (*Springdale News*, 1944) offers some insight into local sense-making of the use of POW labor. At a Rotarian luncheon in Springdale, Kenneth Watkins, Superintendent of the Welch Grape Juice Company, explained the justification behind using German POWs to work the Springdale grape crops:

> At no time was there any trouble with the prisoners—these men were captured July 3 in Normandy and were working in Springdale July 21—they seemed to realize the war was over for them, their cause lost and glad to be here in America. They respected the rank of our officers in command and during their stay only 2 or 3 were sent back to camp and they begged to be allowed to come back to town to work. Without their help we could not have gotten the crop run. (*Springdale News*, 1944)

In Mr. Watkins's recounting of the plant's encounters with German POWs, the experience of both the "officers in command" at the POW camps and the POWs is overwhelmingly positive, almost glowing. Not only was there "[no] trouble with the prisoners," the company's superintendent lauded them for their respect, comportment, and contribution to the company's efforts.

In contrast to many German POWs' experiences in Arkansas, Japanese-Americans' reception by local receiving communities was decidedly less sunny (Smith, 1994; Anderson, 1964). While Japanese and Japanese-American internees were never detained in Arkansas's northwest

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[73] German POWs may in fact have volunteered for this work, as the alternative presented to them was often to remain in confinement. Working in local factories and worksites afforded some POWs the ability to interact and move about, in a limited way, in the community where they were being held.

corner, Springdale and nearby towns like Rogers did receive a small number of Japanese-American families during the 1940s and 1950s who came for a different purpose (and of their own volition): to work as chicken sexers[74] in local poultry plants (interviews, Springdale, AR, 2014). This topic came up in a few interviews and conversations, two of which I excerpt below.

The first interview I draw on was conducted with a long-term Springdale resident named Lana Fischer, a Japanese-American woman in her early 60s. Lana, a U.S. citizen by birth, moved to Springdale in 1959 with her parents and siblings when she was about eight years old. Lana's father had been trained as a chicken sexer in Japan and had arrived to the Midwest by way of Stockton, California, at the behest of an American poultry company. Her mother had been in an internment camp in Poston, Arizona. In her interview, Lana described the contrast between her parents' experiences in the U.S.:

> Lana: So the interesting thing about those times was that my mother's family, all the children were first-generation.[75] Well—I'm trying to think, are they? You know, I honestly don't remember. But I think that they had to be. I was thinking that my great-grandparents migrated over here. But in all of that internment, they lost their farm. Mother was probably not quite a teenager, maybe twelve years old at that time. She and her brother, maybe the youngest brothers, were in camp, incarcerated in Poston, Arizona. I guess the oldest brothers that were old enough to fight in the war, fought in the war. So when they came home, they came home…*to camp*. On furlough, or whatever.

> E.M.E.: Wow.

> Lana: Yeah, is that not just crazy? Being citizens and natural-born. I mean, they were *born* in the United States. So, [it's] interesting. But all that to say that during the war time, when Mother's family was incarcerated, Daddy's chicken-sexing [work] was so important that there were different times in the Midwest that he actually had Secret Service to protect him, because of the chicken industry. Isn't that something?

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[74] Chicken sexing, also referred to as chick sexing, poultry handling, or poultry sorting, is the method of hand-sorting young chickens by sex, a practice commonly used in large-scale commercial hatcheries.

[75] The term "first-generation" is used to describe immigrants born in another country, while second-generation refers to the children of those immigrants, although there is some ambiguity and inconsistency in the application of these terms (Sharpton, 2011). In Lana's case, her mother fell into the second category and would more commonly be understood as "second-generation."

E.M.E.:   So your father was never incarcerated?

Lana: No. And he says it's because they needed this work, it was the economics part of it. So, there were…you know, I can't remember…he tells the story of…[pause]…there was a lot of discrimination. So having the Secret Service was sometimes very comforting.

This dramatic juxtaposition of Lana's family's experience of wartime U.S., as Japanese immigrants and Japanese-American U.S. citizens, reveals a broader tension and paradox of U.S. dependence on wartime labor that is actually foreign or immigrant or racially scripted as such. This also includes second- and third-generation immigrants (for example, Japanese-Americans, and later Marshall Islanders and Latinos) who may have been read by white locals as racially Other and thus perpetually marked as outsiders (for an analysis of Asians as "perpetual foreigners," see Ngai, 2004; Ong, 1999; and Gee, 1998). Lana's family's experience of racist treatment, discussed below, speaks to anti-Japanese and anti-Asian racism both in Arkansas and at the national scale, which took on a particularly virulent form after Pearl Harbor and during WWII.

The topic of Japanese chicken sexers also came up in interviews with older white Springdale residents, specifically when I inquired about immigrant communities they remembered. In my fieldnotes, I have written:

> Mr. Ottman, an elderly white long-term resident of Springdale, mentioned Japanese chicken sexers in our interview this morning, and I brought it up with [an archivist] afterward. "Yes, that's right—we might have something on it under the Poultry files. I guess they were being used because people thought they had small hands, so they were considered better for the job. And they got a reputation for being hard workers." (Conversation with Springdale resident, Springdale, AR, May 2014)

In Mr. Ottman's interview, he expounded on the role of Japanese families in Springdale:

Mr. Ottman: When the Japanese chicken sexers came here, they integrated into the community in a hurry, because they were interested in educating their children, and they were good citizens.

E.M.E.:   In what sense, good citizens?

Mr. Ottman: Well, they participated in civic activities.

E.M.E.: Like church groups? Or school?

Mr. Ottman: Well, they were interested in the schools, primarily.

E.M.E.: I'm curious about that question, about what makes someone a good citizen, and especially a newcomer group.

Mr. Ottman: Well, first off, they have to realize the customs of the community. They have to obey the laws. And they have to be willing to contribute to the community.

Mr. Ottman's description transmits his perception that Japanese families integrated quickly and relatively successfully, conveying successful integration as participation in civic activities and engagement in the schools. Here, he is speaking to citizenship at the local scale, understood as local incorporation and belonging (Villazor, 2010). While this may have been the case, such markers of Japanese families' "successful integration" in Springdale were not always accompanied by favorable treatment by white residents, as reflected in Lana's comments on the treatment she and her family received upon arrival:

> I can remember one time, it was Mother's Day, or close to Mother's Day, and my mother had given us some money to run into the Piggly Wiggly, right there across from the school administration [building] on the corner of 71 and Huntsville. There used to be a Piggly Wiggly there. I remember going in there, and I was standing at the Golden Book rack, looking at books, and this little girl came up, and…apparently I looked like a little China doll, that's what everyone would say. Because my hair was short and I had real black hair, that sometimes when you looked at it in the sun, it kind of looked blue. So I was always used to people coming and petting my hair [laughs]. But I do remember this girl—I was so small, and this girl came up and just, she was just enthralled by me. And she just, I can remember her talking to me and petting my hair. But I remember that her mother came and just jerked her away from me. And she said something along the lines of, "Don't touch her! She killed your uncle," or something like that. And so, things like that. (Interview, Lana Fischer, Springdale, AR, June 2014)

Lana's story echoes the racism and xenophobia faced by many Japanese families in Arkansas, both during internment and after the war, as has been detailed in other studies (Smith, 1994; Okihiro, 1996). These two histories—of Japanese-American internees and German prisoners of war—offer insights into the contrasting experiences and local reception of those constructed as "outsiders," whether internees forcibly relocated from the West Coast or soldiers captured as prisoners of war.

Refugees at Fort Chaffee: Vietnamese, Haitians, and Cubans as Imperial Migrants

While the forced resettlement of Japanese internees and German POWs into Arkansas during WWII were among the first examples of imperial migration into the state—following, of course, the arrival of white settlers in the nineteenth century—they were not the last. In the 1970s and 1980s, racialized tensions began to manifest in many of Arkansas's "base communities," or the areas surrounding the camps detaining POWs and Japanese-Americans during World War II. Such tensions were most notable around Fort Chaffee in Fort Smith, Arkansas (Lipman, 2014). Operational as a military camp since the beginning of WWII (Radcliff, 2016), Fort Chaffee became a destination of empire for foreign arrivals—refugees and other entrants—beginning in the mid-1970s, when over 50,000 Vietnamese and Indochinese[76] refugees from the Vietnam War were detained and processed there (Radcliff, 2016; Lipman, 2014; Hein, 1995; Hmong National Development, 2013). This group, after being evacuated from Vietnam and transferred through (and often detained on) U.S. Pacific Island territories and base sites like Guam, Wake Island, and the Philippines, was finally sent to sites in the mainland U.S., including Fort Chaffee. There, they continued the long and arduous process of waiting for U.S. bureaucratic paperwork to release them from the camp (interviews, Island Detention Project, 2011-2012; Loyd et al., 2016; Lipman, 2012, 2014; Nguyen, 2012). This Vietnamese presence in Arkansas once again served as a reminder to local populations of U.S. military engagements abroad, as the human effects of those military interventions came home to roost.[77]

Jana Lipman (2014) describes how Fort Chaffee, through its use in detaining multiple refugee groups during the mid- to late-twentieth century, "became a 'nerve center,' or perhaps, in more loaded language, 'a kind of Ellis Island'" (p. 81). In this way, it served as a destination of

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[76] Indochinese refugee populations included Hmong, Laotians, and Cambodians, as well as Vietnamese (Maher, 2015; Potts, 2011).

[77] Vietnamese refugees were also detained in New Jersey, Florida, Pennsylvania, and California, as well as in U.S. offshore territories including Guam and Wake Island (Lipman, 2014; Loyd et al., 2016).

empire, albeit a different kind from that of Springdale, funneling the human products of the U.S.-led war in Vietnam into new sites in the U.S. mainland. Lipman's (2014) carefully researched work on Fort Chaffee examines how media coverage in the state often circulated discourses that celebrated the U.S. military's role in the refugee crisis, lauding the military as a humanitarian force in refugee resettlement. Through detailed analysis of local Arkansan newspapers' coverage of the Vietnamese arrival at Fort Chaffee, she shows how media images featured young children and women aided by military officers and Arkansas politicians greeting refugees, thus presenting the U.S. as a benevolent protector to a local readership in Arkansas (2014, 2015).

Joining Lipman, Vietnam War historians Heather Marie Stur (2014) and others (Le Espiritu, 2006a, 2006b; Lipman, 2012; Sahara, 2012) have written about the "rescue narrative" that framed Vietnamese refugees as war survivors or victims rescued by the U.S. military, rather than victims *produced* by U.S. military interventions. Such discourses, Lipman writes, "enabled [the U.S.] to rhetorically claim a 'win,' which had been so elusive in Vietnam" (2014, p. 62). Le Espiritu refers to this approach as a "we-win-even-when-we-lose syndrome" (2006a). As these scholars document, the rescue narrative concerning Vietnamese refugees positioned the U.S. as a compassionate savior of the same refugee populations it had played a large part in creating.

Archival research at the University of Arkansas Special Collections turned up materials with similar framings of U.S. military benevolence in its assumed role as humanitarian refugee resettlement agency. One such article, "The Light at the End of the Tunnel," ran in the University of Arkansas campus paper, *The Grapevine* (Calhoun, 1975), and featured a story about a local Vietnam veteran who decided to sponsor three adult Vietnamese refugees at Fort Chaffee and bring them to Fayetteville. The article opens with a sentence setting up a romantic image of a virtuous veteran assisting refugees in his home state: "Imagine yourself as a Vietnam veteran who, after watching the chaotic fall of South Vietnam and the near-debacle of refugee removal, decides to help ease the

refugees' plight by offering sponsorship to some of them" (n.p.). The piece goes on to highlight the generous efforts of the veteran assisting the Vietnamese refugees in their relocation. This feature is but one example of the ways in which the Vietnamese rescue narrative, closely related to narratives of U.S. exceptionalism, was articulated in local Arkansan media (*Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, 1975). In particular, this narrative helped to make U.S. military losses in Southeast Asia more politically palatable in their aftermath (Stur, 2015; Sahara, 2012). It also reinforced discourses of U.S. exceptionalism by emphasizing the U.S. military as a positive influence abroad, a logic I will return to in Chapter 6.

While a fairly small percentage of Vietnamese and Indochinese refugees ultimately resettled in Arkansas, their presence in the state in the mid- to late-1970s sparked the appearance of key discourses on imperial migration in Arkansas media, such as the rescue narrative described above. Vietnamese and other Indochinese refugees are, thus, part of the state's history of imperial migration, as the U.S. military was deeply entrenched, both politically and military, in the "sending" countries of Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, and Vietnam (Guerrero, 2010). These groups can therefore be considered imperial migrants, as their forced departure from their homelands, as well as their resettlement in the U.S., were shaped by U.S. military imperialism in Southeast Asia (Hein, 1995; Freeman, Nguyen, & Nguyen, 2003).

In the decades following the Vietnamese and Indochinese arrival to Arkansas, two additional groups of migrants arrived at Fort Chaffee: Haitian and Cuban refugees. Both groups of refugees or asylum-seekers fled their island homes by the thousands, many heading for Florida to make claims for protection by the U.S. government (Fernández, 2007; Lipman, 2014). In 1980, an estimated 125,000 Cuban refugees arrived to the U.S. during the Mariel boatlift (Lipman, 2014; Simon, 1998). Over the course of six months, 19,048 of them passed through Fort Chaffee, once again bringing the human effects of U.S. Cold War policies abroad to Arkansas (Lipman, 2014; Copeland, 1983).

As many scholars have documented, Cubans entering the U.S. during this period faced intense hostility and scrutiny from U.S. media (Lipman, 2014; Fernández, 2007; Borneman, 1986; Aguirre, 1994). In contrast to media coverage of previous waves of Cuban émigrés, often framed as "anti-communist freedom-seekers" (Lipman, 2014, p. 71), the *Marielitos* were demonized in the U.S. press as racialized criminals and homosexuals and, thus, threats to the nation (Loyd et al., 2016). Local media coverage of the refugees detained at Fort Chaffee at the time revealed a tense and conflicting set of messages about these imperial migrants, whose arrival to and detention in the U.S. (specifically, in Arkansas) raised questions about U.S. geopolitical involvement abroad in the Caribbean. In a *New York Times* article entitled "Pickets Add to Problems for Refugees in Arkansas," for example, the author described the situation at Fort Chaffee after the first wave of Cuban refugees or "boat people" arrived in 1980, conveying the tense and combative energy manifesting in the surrounding areas:

> By tomorrow there will likely be 5,000 in the temporary encampment of freedom seekers, political prisoners, and almost certainly, criminals. By Wednesday the settlement at this Army post outside the town of Fort Smith is to have grown to 10,000 people; and by the following Sunday, to 20,000. (Stevens, 1980)

The article also called up Fort Chaffee's history of refugee and migrant detention, recalling the temporary holding of about 50,000 Vietnamese refugees in 1975. As of 1980, Stevens noted, about 2,600 Vietnamese people were still in Arkansas, constituting an ongoing reminder of the war and the refugee flows it generated.

> "What are they going to do now—relocate us Americans?" Sign carried by a young unemployed mother from Fort Smith, who was protesting the detention of the Cubans near their town. "I have compassion for the Cubans," she said. "I feel for them. But there's children here who need food, and men and women needing jobs, and Arkansas doesn't have them." While she spoke, a cry of "Send 'em home!" came from a passing car. (Stevens, 1980)

As this excerpt indicates, in the 1980s, resentment toward Cuban arrivals started to build in communities surrounding the base, sometimes articulated through concerns that refugees (in this case, Cubans) would resettle locally and take much-needed jobs (Maher, 2015).

When Haitians arrived at Fort Chaffee in the 1990s, their presence again cemented Fort Chaffee, and Arkansas, as destinations of empire. Their arrival to Arkansas would also again inflame controversy, locally and nationally. As in earlier decades, the arrival of Haitians to the U.S., and specifically to Arkansas, was connected to U.S. imperial and military actions abroad. In 1990 and 1991, the Bush administration came under scrutiny for its treatment of Haitian asylum-seekers fleeing the dictatorial regime in Haiti of "Papa Doc" Duvalier and the *Tonton Macoutes* (Crossette, 1991). In 1994, then President Clinton, who lost his bid for governor of Arkansas over the so-called "rioting" of Cubans at Fort Chaffee, threatened Haiti with U.S. invasion, before pushing for UN sanctions and organizing a multinational invasion that forced the hand of the Haitian government (see Girard, 2004). In these ways, Haitian exodus from the Caribbean was directly, if not exclusively, linked to U.S. military, economic, and political influence exerted on Haiti and other Caribbean nations (Girard, 2004; Renda, 2001).

In some cases, Haitian arrivals became the target of local anger and racism (Villiers, 1994; Stepick, 1992; Lennox, 1993). In Arkansas, local and regional resistance to Haitians' presence at Fort Chaffee appeared in news coverage, as well as in constituent letters to the state's political leadership. At the Special Collections archive at the University of Arkansas, for example, the papers of Arkansas Senator Dale Bumpers contained about a hundred letters from Arkansans on a range of issues. In one such letter from Jonesboro, Arkansas, a man wrote these pleas:

> First, Please do not permit any more Haitian immigrants to land in this country, to stay in this country, to migrate to this country. Secondly, if at all possible—bring as many G.I.s home from Korea as is politically feasible. I was stationed there ('65-'66) for (397) days. We accomplished nothing but giving that country our money, our time, our energy. I understand we are 33,000 Americans strong there. We need to cut that [number] drastically. (Special Collections, University of Arkansas, 1991)

This man's letter gestures to a connection, if a tenuous one, between the arrival of Haitians and the investments of U.S. military and troops abroad—a Haitian presence here precipitates concerns for an American presence there. While he draws no direct link between the costs of U.S. military

engagements abroad and the (implied) costs of hosting Haitian immigrants in the U.S. mainland, the author reveals both issues to be of importance to him by mentioning them together in his letter. Furthermore, his failure to connect the dots—the arrival of Haitian refugees and the deployment of U.S. troops abroad—constitutes a blind spot to the interrelated workings of U.S. military empire, one that obscures the central role that U.S. military interventions abroad play in *creating* migrant and refugee streams to the U.S.

Another more strongly worded appeal was sent to Senator Bumpers at his Washington, D.C. office from a constituent in Newport, Arkansas. Entitled "Re: Haitians," it is steeped in xenophobic racism and white supremacy:

> Dear Senator Bumpers, Is our goal for the United States to become a teeming mass of people like Pakistan? How stupid can we get? We do not want a single Haitian, shoot them if you have to but don't let them in. Sincerely, Joe Harris. (Special Collections, University of Arkansas, 1991)

In this letter, the author operationalizes xenophobic and Orientalist notions of overpopulation elsewhere (the "teeming masses in Pakistan"), leveraging that logic in the service of nativist, anti-immigrant resistance to the arrival of Haitians. His letter reveals how new arrivals to the state were made sense of through larger discourses about the U.S. in relation to "elsewhere" and even speaks to the U.S. potential to remove or detain foreign entrants militarily, if necessary. His imperative to "shoot them if you have to" uncannily echoes the central role the U.S. military had played in migrant and refugee management in the decades since Vietnam War (Loyd et al., 2016). Indeed, the operationalization of Fort Chaffee and other military bases for "migration management" and detention purposes was characteristic of a process being carried out in countless other U.S. military bases as well (Loyd et al., 2016; Mountz & Loyd, 2014). Thus, in Arkansas, as in other sites in U.S. empire, migration has not just been *caused* by U.S. militarism but has also increasingly been *managed militarily* over the second half of the twentieth century.

In the 1970s and 1980s, as in the 1940s and 1950s, then, Arkansas witnessed the arrival of various migrant or refugee "benefactors" of U.S. foreign policy, imperial migrants whose presence in the state made the human effects of U.S. militarism abroad visible at home, through war. That link persisted even if it was not always, or often, articulated by long-term residents. These migrants' arrival to Arkansas brought national media discourses to the state, generating narratives that grappled with complex and tense political dynamics: namely, how to represent refugees that U.S. militarism had *produced*, while simultaneously representing the U.S. as benevolent in *providing* for these refugees through resettlement. These media discourses were only able to imperfectly uphold notions of U.S. exceptionalism, as they also revealed its instability.

Conclusion

The dynamics and histories detailed in this chapter deal with the co-production of migration, militarism, and empire in the context of Arkansas, histories which reveal the state's longtime implication in the machinations of U.S. empire. As the first section showed, wartime provided an opportunity for Arkansans to travel beyond Arkansas, often to the Pacific, through military service (Fort Smith Historical Society, 2016; interviews, Springdale, AR, 2014). Through that service, Arkansan WWII veterans often experienced the Pacific and the effects of U.S. military imperialism there firsthand, bringing back to Arkansas detailed memories of those encounters. Their memories, stories, and the material archives they carry (in maps, notebooks, photographs, and other mementos) create lived links between the Pacific and Arkansas that persist today.

As this chapter has also argued, however, U.S. militarism and imperialism in the second half of the twentieth century shaped the discourses through which new arrivals themselves were framed, such as the rescue narrative for refugees of war or narratives about Japanese as foreign combatants. These discourses surfaced most frequently during and after periods of war, when refugee and internee arrivals peaked. The construction of these respective populations as refugees, prisoners of

war, foreign combatants, or displaced persons were likewise shaped by wartime logics, framing certain groups (like the Vietnamese) as deserving victims and others (such as the Haitians and Japanese) as threats or burdens to the nation. Critically, such notions are also products of U.S. *military* empire, as the effects of its brutality abroad create often equally brutal refashioning of sites 'at home' in the U.S. mainland.

Finally, the migration or relocation of outsiders to Arkansas during wartime also reveals how central the state has been in the wartime military management of foreign populations since WWII. Repeated arrivals of refugees, immigrants, internees, and POWs—arrivals which number in the hundreds of thousands, collectively—counter notions of Arkansas as "remote" within the U.S. or separate from the geographies of U.S. empire. Rather, Arkansas has been central to the military management of wartime outsiders and, thus, pivotal in the workings of empire. Such dynamics, however, are only visible through an historical analysis of U.S. militarism and its effects on migration, both during and outside formal war. These histories matter to this dissertation because they add another dimension to Arkansas's long-standing history as a destination of empire. In the chapter that follows, I explore what contemporary encounters in a new destination of empire, Springdale, can tell us about the production of Marshall Islanders as imperial citizens.

CHAPTER 5: "No Such Thing as an Illegal Marshallese": COFA Status as Imperial Citizenship

Introduction

There is nothing quite like Compact of Free Association (COFA) status in contemporary U.S. immigration law. Established by bilateral agreement between the U.S. and the Marshall Islands, the Compact's migration provision grants the option to live, work, and attend school in the U.S. without a visa to hundreds of thousands of people. Compact migration thus constitutes an anomaly in U.S. immigration law, although, as this chapter will argue, COFA status is in fact quite consistent with the types of provisional legal status historically granted to the U.S.'s imperial subjects (Ngai, 2004; Perez, 2008; Lee & Pratt, 2012; De Genova & Ramos-Zayas, 2003; Kerber, 1997). In Arkansas, the peculiarity of COFA status plays out in both quotidian and dramatic ways in sites of Marshallese resettlement, shaping Marshall Islanders' eligibility for social programs, community advocacy efforts, administrative and bureaucratic encounters, and legal interventions made by state actors at a number of scales. COFA status—and local actors' often misinformed or partial perceptions of it—also shapes the kinds of activist allegiances that emerge in the context of (and in resistance to) existing policy and legal constructs.

This chapter looks at the Compact's migration provisions in order to ask a set of questions: What kind of legal status(es), subjectivities, and citizenship does the Compact produce? How do its effects morph when it "lands" in particular sites, such as Springdale? What kinds of colonial subjects does the Compact produce in its "beneficiaries," a group which includes COFA migrants (Marshall Islanders, Micronesians, and Palauans), as well as would-be migrants, family members, and others living in the COFA diasporas? Finally, how do residents of new destinations of empire like Springdale make sense of the *existence* of COFA status and Compact migration provisions? As I came to understand during fieldwork, answering these questions is only possible by looking through

the lens of the complex histories and political dynamics that gave rise to the Compact and that have modulated its impacts in various sites.

Understanding Marshall Islanders as imperial subjects, this chapter argues, requires a thorough examination of the Compact's effects, but not an exclusive focus on the Compact itself, since its effects are not produced in isolation. Rather, COFA status is (re)produced in Marshall Islanders' encounters with local actors in sites of resettlement, as much as it is produced through the Compact provisions. These encounters not only shape perceptions of COFA status in host communities but in fact *constitute* COFA status itself, giving it form and meaning. In other words, to comprehend how the Compact works on the ground, we must look to the subjects who carry its effects in their immigration status and the actors who work with them to obtain services of various sorts.

This chapter focuses primarily on the iterations of COFA status I observed for Marshall Islanders in Arkansas. It is imperative to mention that COFA status materializes somewhat differently in different sites, due to state- and territory-specific legislation that determines access to certain benefits (McElfish, Hallgren, & Yamada, 2015; Chiu, 2014). Because COFA migrants' legal status is co-produced by a number of other policy interactions, their experiences with the law may vary widely across states. For example, COFA migrants in some states may be eligible for different public benefits and experience different kinds of encounters with the police, immigration officers, and other state actors. The nuances of COFA status, therefore, are not entirely generalizable across sites. For this reason, I limit my analysis to the context of Springdale and Northwest Arkansas. Moreover, and perhaps more importantly, such discrepancies or variations in the law reveal the complicated policy and legal landscapes which COFA migrants—and those who work with them in various capacities—negotiate as they move between sites in the wider diaspora.

To expand upon these ideas, this chapter works in two main parts. The first offers a theoretical grounding for the legal status engineered by the Compact of Free Association. It also introduces key scholarly literatures on citizenship and legal status within geography, sociology, migration studies, and cultural studies during the past two decades. The chapter then develops and argues for the concept of *imperial citizenship*, drawing from literatures in critical legal studies and American Studies that look at the various partial, temporary, and liminal legal statuses created for residents of U.S. territories. Finally, this section situates my study of COFA status within those literatures, placing it on the spectrum of imperial citizenship that other scholars have examined in the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and elsewhere in U.S. empire.

The chapter's second section turns to the production of COFA status on the ground in Arkansas, looking at three groups: 1) legal and policy actors, 2) social-service providers and advocates, and 3) activists. In particular, it examines those who encounter COFA status in their work with Marshall Islanders, drawing on field interviews, participant observation, and informal meetings with social-service providers, policy-makers, legal representatives, and others whose professions put them in contact with the particularities of COFA legal status and its operationalization. This section also looks at the ways immigrant rights activists in Arkansas understood, and organized their activism around, the question of legal status. In Arkansas, as in many sites in the Marshallese diaspora, Marshall Islanders exist alongside other immigrant groups who have a range of legal statuses, experiences with law, policy, and the actors who enforce them, and histories of negotiating and resisting the confines of the law (Benjamin-Alvarado, DeSipio, & Montoya, 2009; Guerrero, 2014). The significance of legal status in these contexts is thus defined and given meaning in relational fashion. This section argues that each of these three contexts—legal and law enforcement, advocacy and benefits, and activism and social justice—offers actors a different vantage point on understanding COFA status and thus presents valuable insights on how

COFA is interpreted "on the ground" in Arkansas. Yet each of these three contexts also prevents

actors from seeing certain dimensions of COFA status—most significantly, its production through

colonial and imperial histories and policies between the U.S. and the Marshall Islands. As a result,

COFA status as an *imperial* legal status often remains illegible to those in new destinations of empire

like Springdale.

To summarize, this chapter presents Marshallese COFA status as imperial citizenship by

showing: 1) *what* it is (in the law and in theory); and 2) what people on the ground in Arkansas *think*

it is (in Chapter 6, I explore *why* people in Arkansas think it exists). By pairing a reading of the

COFA's legal production (on paper) with its social production through migrants' encounters with

state and public actors and through the logics residents in host communities derive from it, this

chapter aims to show not only how COFA migrants' legal status as imperial citizenship manifests in

a particular new destination site but also how the *imperial* nature of that citizenship is obscured.

COFA Status in the Law

Toward a Theory of Imperial Citizenship

Citizenship and legal status have played crucial roles in the management of imperial

populations and empires since the creation of the modern nation-state (Cowen & Gilbert, 2008;

Joseph & Rosenberg, 2001). As many postcolonial scholars have argued (Behdad, 1997; Mongia,

1999; Hansen & Stepputat, 2009), one must look to the production of the nation-state through the

figures of the immigrant, foreigner, and colonial subject because such interstitial figures who are

neither fully inside nor fully outside the nation reveal the nation's tenuous boundaries (Behdad,

1997). For immigrants from colonial, occupied, or non-sovereign sites in an empire, their efforts to

migrate to the mainland or imperial metropole often reproduce them as second-class subjects of the

nation-state, with limited political, economic, and mobility-based rights (Baldoz, 2011; Poblete,

2014). Scholars have examined this phenomenon in the context of other empires, especially the

British and Dutch empires (Dawson, 2007; Mongia, 1999; Van Amersfoort & Van Niekerk, 2006). The experience of Marshallese migrants traveling under COFA status, however, presents another opportunity to explore such phenomena in the context of U.S. empire, extending an analysis of imperial citizenship's role in provisioning mobility, rights, and benefits to those who hold it, while simultaneously producing a precarious, conditional, and exceptional inclusion into U.S. empire. What follows provides an overview of key literatures that contribute to a theorization of imperial citizenship. As I argue, each literature adds something important to this theorization, but most fail to fully capture the totality of imperial citizenship, especially its relevance to the study of Marshall Islander migration.

In recent years, scholars in geography and elsewhere have turned a critical gaze to the role of empires and global war-making in the production of citizenship, revealing militarism in particular to be a key facet of imperial citizenship (Cowen & Gilbert, 2008). For example, individuals' military service is often linked to provisional citizenship or legal belonging (Lee & Pratt, 2012), and U.S. territories whose populations hold some form of U.S. citizenship or legal recognition have historically been heavily militarized through base expansion, military training exercises, and military political leadership (Bevacqua, 2010; McCaffrey, 2002, 2006; Johnson, 1982). Many scholars have also examined the ways in which war is constitutive of, and productive for, citizenship, exploring the changing role of citizen (and non-citizen) soldiers (Cowen & Gilbert, 2008; Flint, 2008) and the linking of citizenship rights to military service for immigrant soldiers, foreign interpreters, and others (Lee & Pratt, 2012; Rafael, 2007). Less attention, however, has been given to the provisioning of U.S. legal status to residents of occupied and colonized territories in exchange for, or as an appeasement of, the U.S. military's use of these territories' lands, waters, and natural or human resources. Yet historically, residents of U.S. non-sovereign territories have often been offered just

such "exchanges" by the U.S. federal government under terms fraught with unequal power dynamics and, occasionally, coercion or violence (Go, 2000).

Studies of imperial citizenship (Gorman, 2002, 2010; Kim, 2008; Banerjee, 2010) have also been advanced by scholars in critical legal studies, who have used the concept of "second-class citizenship" to examine the colonial modes of partial, conditional, or statutory citizenship for residents of U.S. territories (Perez, 2008; Ramos, 1996). While almost all residents born in U.S. territories[78] possess nominal U.S. citizenship at birth, the full benefits ostensibly proffered by U.S. citizenship are not uniformly granted to residents of U.S. insular areas, which the U.S. Department of Interior defines as jurisdictions that are "neither a part of one of the several States nor a Federal district" (Department of Interior, 2016).[79] Upon close inspection, it is clear that among the various sites in U.S. empire, there exists a sort of "graduated citizenship," per Ong's notion of graduated sovereignty (2000).

In tracing the contours of such "graduated citizenship" among U.S. imperial subjects, scholars have looked at the legal development of Puerto Ricans' statutory citizenship which, they argue, is made precarious because Congress could revoke it at any point (Perez, 2008; Ramos, 1996). In American Samoa, residents are U.S. nationals but not U.S. citizens by birth (Laughlin, 1979). Native-born residents of Guam and the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) are granted U.S. citizenship at birth and can vote in general presidential elections if living in the U.S. mainland but not while residing in their home islands (Bevacqua, 2010; Levine & Roberts, 2005; Van Dyke, Amore-Siah, & Berkley-Coats, 1996). What these variations of imperial citizenship share are their limitations: they are legally provisional—in other words, revocable through amendment or

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[78] With the exception of American Samoans, who are U.S. nationals but not U.S. citizens by birth.
[79] The Department of Interior (DOI) definition of U.S. insular areas also adds the following clarification: "[U.S. insular area] is the current generic term to refer to any commonwealth, freely associated state, possession or territory or Territory and from July 18, 1947, until October 1, 1994, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. Unmodified, it may refer not only to a jurisdiction which is under United States sovereignty but also to one which is not, *i.e.*, a freely associated state or, 1947-94, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands or one of the districts of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands" (U.S. Department of Interior, 2016).

legislation—and tend to impose restrictions on their holders—for example, on the right to vote, travel freely across U.S. borders, or pursue education or employment in other sites of U.S. empire (Joseph & Rosenberg, 2001; Poblete, 2014; Mongia, 1999). Residents of non-sovereign U.S. territories thus do not enjoy the full range of legal benefits associated with formal U.S. citizenship.

Theories of imperial citizenship have been strengthened by scholarship on historically racialized immigrant classifications that have been applied not only to migrants from U.S. territories but more broadly to other would-be immigrants, particularly Asians (Ngai, 1999; Lee, 2002; Lowe, 1996). In part, this literature engages how racial categorization has been used to justify limiting immigrants' access to U.S. citizenship (Chang, 1993; Perez, 2008). This work has examined U.S. immigration law's constructions of certain races and nationalities as "ineligible for citizenship," most commonly in the context of the Chinese Exclusion Act (Ngai, 1999, 2004).[80] Particularly informative here is Ong's (1996) work on cultural citizenship, which she defines as the processes by which subjects are made in cultural, racial, and political registers and in relation to both nation-states and transnational systems and networks. Through their inclusions and exclusions in the nation-state and in civil society, Ong argues, immigrants are differentially racialized and, thus, marked as eligible or ineligible for inclusion as subjects. In effect, Ong and others (Go, 2004; Briggs, 2002) show, race, racial categorizations, and racial inclusions and exclusions from formal legal citizenship are central aspects of imperial citizenship (Torruella, 2007).

Imperial citizenship theories also have a firm foundation to stand on in scholarship on colonial and postcolonial migrants in U.S. empire (Duany, 2003; Baldoz, 2011; Perez, 2002). This body of work explores how migration from the colonies to the mainland places in conflict the imperial desires of U.S. policy abroad and the white supremacist, xenophobic impulses of domestic

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[80] Notably, Filipinos—one of the only populations categorized as "Asian" under U.S. colonial control at the time of the Chinese Exclusion Act (1882-1943)—were the only Asian immigrant group for whom the Chinese Exclusion Act was not enforced (Baldoz, 2011; Kramer, 2006).

policy-making in the U.S. mainland, particularly in the area of citizenship (Jacobson, 2001; Ngai, 2004; Briggs, 2002). Imperial or (post)colonial migrants expose the tension between these two tendencies, caught, as they are, between the foreign and the domestic, and often cause profound irritation for local and federal policy-makers who might prefer to keep "over there" over there. Such frustrations are evident, for example, in contemporary political debates about "Compact Impact" in Hawaii and other U.S. states that have received large COFA migrant populations (GAO, 2011).

These tendencies are explored in depth in the rich literature on Filipino migration, diaspora, and citizenship (Baldoz, 2011; Go, 1999, 2004; Manalansan, 2003; Le Espiritu, 2003; Parreñas, 2001; Pratt, 1999). For Ngai (2004), Filipino migrants to the U.S. during the first half of the twentieth century embodied the "corporeality of contradictions that existed in American colonial policy and practice" (p. 97): they were beneficiaries of the U.S. "benevolent assimilation" approach that informed U.S. policy-making in the Philippines yet undesirables relegated to second-class status once they attempted to enter the U.S. mainland and labor market.

Literatures on Filipino/a and other Pacific Islander migration, diasporas, and citizenship, I argue, are enriched by engagement with two final concepts that help us understand COFA status as imperial citizenship: flexible citizenship and transnational citizenship. While each of these concepts speaks to some aspect of imperial citizenship, neither fully captures the legal, political, and historical conditions that shape it. I discuss both concepts here to extract what is useful for a theorization of imperial citizenship and what such a concept can help us to see about COFA status.

The first, flexible citizenship (Ong, 1999; Appiah, 1998), theorizes citizenship as extending beyond political participation or inclusion and emphasizes the centrality of global economic factors in shaping people's experiences of—and their actions to pursue—different types of citizenship. While this concept introduces a crucial consideration of globalization and capitalism in contemporary migration scholarship, scholarship on flexible citizenship (Frey, 2003; Fox, 2005)

tends to focus on the experiences of wealthy elite immigrants, whose economic position provides them with greater agency and mobility through which to "choose" new forms of citizenship (Ong, 1999). In the case of COFA migrants, the flexibility and mobility COFA status offers is counter-balanced by the economic and political precarity of both being contingent upon the Compact's renewal and lacking a clear path to legal permanent residency (LPR) status (a green card) or U.S. citizenship. Flexible citizenship, then, while it speaks to COFA migrants' increased mobility due to the Compact migration provision, is limited in its application to COFA migrants' legal and economic positioning.

The second concept is that of transnational or postnational citizenship (Behdad, 1997; for a critique, see Gordon & Lenhardt, 2006). In contrast to flexible citizenship, theories of transnational citizenship are more attendant to the legal and economic precarity that defines many migrants' status (Itzigsohn, 1999; Striffler, 2007; Winders & Smith, 2012), as well as to class differences among migrants. While intensifying border control practices and immigration regulations throughout the U.S., Canada, and Europe make arguments for postnational citizenship premature (Tambini, 2010), the concept of transnational citizenship bears relevance in the context of postcolonial migrations and imperial subjects, a concept to which I return later in this chapter. Nevertheless, transnational citizenship also falls short in characterizing COFA migrants' status, as it theorizes migration *between nations*, but not *within empires.* In the case of Marshallese migrants, their movements are both *trans*-national—occurring between the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the U.S.—and *intra*-imperial, moving within the geographic entity of U.S. empire.

The definitions of citizenship discussed above contribute important components for theorizing imperial citizenship, including a focus on belonging and exclusion, the production of immigrants' legality and illegality (Luibhéid, 2008; Jones-Correa and de Graauw, 2013; De Genova, 2002), and the long, troubling history of U.S. citizenship as a tool for policing racialized, classed, and

gendered notions of who should form part of the U.S. national body (Stoler, 2006; Sharpe, 1995; Ngai, 2004). At the same time, imperial citizenship, as I define the concept, extends beyond these characteristics. Imperial citizenship, rather than being one fixed status or category, is made up of a range of legal statuses held by subjects in an empire who reside in, were born in, or are otherwise legally affiliated with a current *or former* semi-sovereign or non-sovereign territory within that empire. I use the term *imperial citizenship*, as opposed to colonial or postcolonial citizenship, to incorporate the wide range of territories that might fall under an empire (their citizens or denizens thus categorizable as "imperial subjects"), even territories that are not now, and perhaps never were, *formal* colonies or territories of that empire. In the case of U.S. empire, such sites include places like the Republic of the Marshall Islands, an independent republic recognized by the UN as sovereign and yet so closely bound to the U.S. through legal and policy mechanisms—primarily, the Compact—that it continues to be held in the grips of U.S. imperial power. Simply put, the Marshall Islands and its citizens form part of U.S. empire, an argument for which Chapter 2 laid the groundwork. As such, Marshall Islanders are U.S. imperial citizens, and the conditions of that citizenship can be theorized, and thus revealed, through a lens of imperial citizenship.

As this chapter argues, imperial citizens are included partially, contingently, and often temporarily in the nation (for the purposes of this dissertation, in the U.S. national body). Such inclusion can occur through the piecemeal construction of imperial legal statuses, through treaties, bilateral agreements, special provisions, and other *exceptions* to standard citizenship, and through immigrant laws and policies (Ngai, 1999, 2004). This exceptional inclusion—by way of special migration provisions, eligibility for certain benefits and programs, and the right to live and work in the nation in question—may look like preferential treatment compared to other immigrant groups (interviews, Springdale, AR, May-July, 2014). Indeed, imperial citizens may garner a greater number of rights and benefits than certain other immigrant groups in an imperial metropole. Most notably,

perhaps, imperial citizens often benefit from a heightened mobility due to their legal status or documentation, as long as they are moving within the empire in question. As we can see in the case of Marshall Islanders and many other imperial citizens, of course, the violence of empire can also necessitate such mobility or exodus (Barker, 2004). Mobility for imperial migrants is thus more than simply a *benefit* of provisional inclusion into U.S. immigration law and policy; it can also be a *cost* of their subjugation by empire.

Despite the rights and benefits that may accompany imperial citizenship, its partial, contingent, and revocable nature constitutes a kind of rightlessness that produces precarity for those who hold that status. In that sense, imperial citizenship shares qualities with second-class citizenship, as described earlier in this section. Second-class citizenship is a kind of structured rightlessness, a "rightlessness by design" held not only by non-citizens but also by *nominal* full citizens who are denied the full rights of citizenship due to exclusions based on race, class, gender, sexual identity/orientation, (dis)ability, and a range of other factors (Berlant, 2014). The following sections draw together these characteristics of imperial citizenship to examine how they manifest in the law and on the ground for Marshallese COFA migrants in Arkansas.

COFA Status as Imperial Citizenship

Not withstanding the literature on the Philippines and Puerto Rico, scholarship on citizenship regimes and categories in U.S. territories is woefully sparse.[81] As limited as these scholarly theorizations on U.S. imperial citizenship are, however, the scholarship on the myriad provisional legal statuses afforded to, negotiated for, or "bestowed" upon residents of sites that are not *presently* formal U.S. territories is even more limited. This latter category includes residents of former

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[81] Some of its most robust iterations can be found in critical legal studies in the areas of citizenship, immigration, and U.S. insular law (Perez, 2008; Ramos, 1996; Santiago & Charles, 2006; Statham, 1998; Torruella, 2007). Here, it bears mentioning that each of these areas of legal studies overlaps in some instances with international law; colonial law and subjects reside in and on the (largely false) division between the domestic and the international.

territories, unofficially occupied sites and zones, military bases, and other spaces which might fall under the categorization of what Gregory (2006) and others have termed "spaces of exception" (from Agamben's "state of exception;" see Agamben, 2005). While political geographers and other scholars have examined the proliferation of such spaces under U.S. empire, particularly under the ongoing War on Terror (Minca, 2005; Belcher, Martin, Secor, Simon, & Wilson, 2008; D. Gregory, 2006), their scholarship has often overlooked the implications of these processes for questions of citizenship, with a few noteworthy exceptions (e.g., Pratt, 2005; Sparke, 2006; Mountz, 2011). Even these texts, though, rarely deal with semi- or non-citizenship in the context of U.S. territories, leaving unexamined a set of experiences and sites ripe for analysis of imperial citizenship.

What explains this gap in scholarly attention to imperial citizenship? Arguably, some of these overlooked sites are home to relatively small populations, as compared to Puerto Rico or the Philippines, and therefore perhaps less pressing for scholars and policy-makers. Nonetheless, COFA status is a liminal legal status that shares key features with other types of imperial citizenship, making it important to study for a number of reasons. For one, COFA status can tell us much about the production of U.S. citizenship on the margins of empire, where legal restrictions on full U.S. citizenship expose U.S. federal anxieties about opening the door too fully to U.S. colonial subjects. Second, examination of COFA status can show that those margins—between metropole and colony, foreigner and citizen—become both clarified and blurred in law and policy across scales, as well as how that blurring impacts migrants in diaspora and residents in the communities where those migrants resettle. Theories of imperial citizenship, I suggest, can offer a clearer view of how COFA status—as a legal, political, and social category of imperial subjects who are also immigrants— manifests on the ground, providing insight into the lived experiences of imperial subjects and their encounters with receiving communities in the U.S. "metropole." Before discussing these encounters,

however, I turn first to an analysis of how COFA status was enshrined into law through the Compact of Free Association.

The Legal Production of COFA Status

With the passage of the original Compact of Free Association in 1986, the U.S. government created a new category of legal status for residents of the Freely Associated States in the imperial diaspora: the Compact migrant. The in-between-ness of this legal entity is what Baldoz (2011) refers to as "taxonomic liminality" (p. 74). Although Baldoz uses the term to describe Filipinos' legal precarity in the category of U.S. national, it also fittingly describes the liminality of Compact migrants, categorically "in-between," neither fully and formally part of the U.S. nation-state and its citizenry nor fully outside it. Just as it had done for Filipinos some 75 years earlier, with the invention of the "U.S. national" category (Ngai, 2004, p. 100), the U.S. federal government, through negotiations with the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), the Federated States of Micronesia (FMS), and Palau, devised a new type of legal entity for immigrants from these former U.S. territories.[82]

It is important to note that COFA or Compact status—a shorthand for the status created by the Compact of Free Association and held by migrants who travel under its migration provisions—has been produced at a number of different legal scales and vis-à-vis various legal and policy documents, as Chapter 2 discussed in detail. Together, these forms, documents, and policy statements create a paper trail that meanders unpredictably, winding back on itself and taking innumerable tangents. In my own research, I often found myself chasing from one source to another, searching in vain for one central, definitive, or authoritative definition of COFA status.

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[82] Filipinos' status as 'U.S. nationals' was established by the Insular Cases, *Downes v. Bidwell*, while Marshall Islanders' migration permissions and nationality were hammered out in the Compact of Free Association and reaffirmed, via trickle-down policy effects, in the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) and other U.S. federal and state policy contexts (Levinson, 2000; Underwood, 2003; Riklon et al., 2010).

However, no such document presented itself. Instead, documents on the legal status of Compact migrants, when read collectively, offer a kind of partial, jigsaw-like view of the status in law. Like other legal constructions of imperial subjectivity or citizenship, such as Puerto Ricans' statutory citizenship (Roman, 1997), COFA status is provisional and conditional, containing many restrictions that *may* be triggered, many situations that *may* trigger its revocation and the partial benefits it proffers. It is precisely that conditionality, I argue, that produces the instability and partiality characteristic of imperial citizenship.

Let's begin with a close look at the 1986 Compact of Free Association, as approved by negotiating parties on the U.S. and RMI sides, which is the original source document for this status.[83] Article IV, Section 141 (a) of the 1986 Compact states that "Any person in the following categories may enter into, lawfully engage in occupations, and establish residence as a non-immigrant in the United States and its territories and possessions."[84] From there, it enumerates categories of individuals to whom those benefits extend, including former citizens of the Trust Territory who became citizens of the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) or the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) with the Compact's passage, among others.[85] Such individuals, the Compact stipulates, "shall be considered to have the permission of the Attorney General of the United States to accept employment in the United States" and the "right…to establish habitual residence in a

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[83] Previous to the Compact's passage, under the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, or TTPI (1947-1986), Marshall Islanders and other Trust Territory residents traveled on a TTPI passport. See Chapter 2.

[84] U.S.-RMI Compact of Free Association. Retrieved on June 1, 2016 from http://www.rmiembassyus.org

[85] Eligibility for employment and residence in the U.S. territories and possessions is restricted to the following in the original Compact: "(1) A person who, on the day preceding the effective date of this Compact, is a citizen of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, as defined in Title 53 of the Trust Territory Code in force on January 1, 1979, and has become a citizen of the Marshall Islands or the Federated States of Micronesia; (2) A person who acquires the citizenship of the Marshall Islands or the Federated States of Micronesia at birth, on or after the effective date of the respective Constitution; (3) A naturalized citizen of the Marshall Islands or the Federated States of Micronesia who has been an actual resident there for not less than five years after attaining such naturalization and who holds a certificate of actual residence; or (4) A person entitled to citizenship in the Marshall Islands by lineal descent whose name is included in a list to be furnished by the Government of the Marshall Islands to the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service and any descendants of such persons, provided that such person holds a certificate of lineal descent issued by the Government of the Marshall Islands."

territory or possession of the United States" (Compact of Free Association, 1986).[86] This language

lays out the foundational right of U.S. residence to Marshallese citizens.

It is relevant to mention that this section of the Compact does not constitute any direct

pathway to U.S. permanent residency or citizenship or to a visa that might open the door to the

former. As it specifies, Section 141(a)

> does not confer on a citizen of the Marshall Islands or the Federated States of Micronesia
> the right to establish the residence necessary for naturalization under the Immigration and
> Nationality Act, or to petition for benefits for alien relatives under that Act. Section 141(a),
> however, shall not prevent a citizen of the Marshall Islands or the Federated States of
> Micronesia from otherwise acquiring such rights or lawful permanent resident alien status in
> the United States. (Compact of Free Association, 1986)

If one were unaccustomed to deciphering legal language in policy documents, the significance of this

short paragraph might go unnoticed. Yet the premise established here is a potent one, with vast

ramifications for COFA migrants and their families living in the diaspora. This portion of the

Compact establishes that COFA migrants categorically have no direct legal recourse for achieving a

more stable legal status, although it does not prevent them from pursuing permanent residency or

citizenship by one of the standard legal routes laid out by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

(USCIS) and open to immigrants from other countries.[87] In a sense, the text above solidifies COFA

migrants' status as provisional, liminal, and categorically unresolvable in and of itself—an

irresolvability with significant repercussions for COFA migrants seeking public benefits and access

to institutions in the U.S.

While the Compact is the original or source legal document for Freely Associated States

(FAS) citizens' U.S. legal or immigration status, it is given weight, meaning, and teeth by a set of

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[86] NB: In the subsequent section, the Compact grants the same privileges of employment and residence *quid pro quo* to
U.S. citizens wishing to reside in the Marshall Islands and Micronesia.
[87] The most common such routes are marriage to a U.S. citizen, petition by another (non-spouse) family member, or
sponsorship by an employer, although the latter two are difficult. Petition by a non-spouse family member can take years
or decades, and sponsorship by an employer is much rarer, generally limited to "high-skilled workers" in professional
fields requiring an advanced degree.

other policy and legal documents that buttress it in the U.S. One such document is a U.S.

Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) fact sheet entitled "Status of Citizens of the Freely

Associated States of the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands." It

has been updated repeatedly in the last decade, most recently in November 2015. The fact sheet first

briefly outlines the Compact's background, before specifying that "[c]itizens of the RMI or FSM are

not citizens or nationals of the United States" (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2015).[88]

From there, the document delineates the various permissions, privileges, and conditions

attendant to Compact status. The first of these is travel permissions; RMI and FSM citizens have the

right "to travel and apply for admission to the United States as nonimmigrants without visas,"

although the sheet clarifies that "admission is not guaranteed." The document also outlines the

terms and conditions of admission and deportability. Specifically, it indicates that

> [p]eople who, following admission to the United States under the Compacts, cannot show
> that they have sufficient means of support in the United States may be deportable. Other
> grounds of deportability, such as conviction for an aggravated felony, also apply to persons
> admitted under the Compacts. (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2015)

Again, here is a provision mentioned only fleetingly but which is deeply significant: not only are

Compact migrants legally susceptible to deportation (despite a common misperception among

residents of Northwest Arkansas), they are also technically subject to a kind of means test and could

be deported from the U.S. if they become indigent or lack financial means to support themselves.

To my knowledge, this provision has not been implemented; COFA migrants have not yet been

deported from the U.S. based on poverty or income level. However, the option remains open in the

law, and policy-makers, policy analysts, and local and state actors have considered it (interview,

senior policy official, Washington, D.C., August 2014). Whether this provision is activated in any

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[88] U.S. Department of Homeland Security: U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. (2015, November 3). *Status of citizens of the Freely Associated States of the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands.* Washington, D.C. Retrieved on June 2, 2016 from http://www.uscis.gov

given context, the fact of its existence and *potential* implementation creates an additional layer of precarity for COFA migrants.

This fact sheet is the type of document that might commonly be referenced by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), or Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officials, immigration attorneys, and others whose work requires that they interpret and/or apply U.S. immigration law. I encountered an earlier version of this document at the RMI consulate in Honolulu in 2013 and also received it from an interviewee in D.C. In Arkansas, I was not able to track down many attorneys, in either immigration or criminal law, who needed to go into the particulars of COFA status for clients, despite several phone calls to local lawyers and a brief conversation with the public defender. However, in my previous experience as a paralegal in an immigration law firm, documents like this USCIS fact sheet were frequently referenced by both attorneys and paralegals and sometimes by USCIS adjudications officers working with immigrant groups with specialized or uncommon legal status.

To understand more about the legal construction of COFA status, beyond the information deemed necessary for immigration law practitioners on a day-to-day basis, a little more digging is required. In that digging, one might stumble upon, as I did, a Department of Justice ruling issued in the Federal Register, "Habitual Residence in the Territories and Possessions of the United States"[89] (2000), which offers further clarification on the derivation and legal significance of the term "habitual resident," one of many legal terms used to describe Compact migrants' status under U.S. immigration law. As this document reveals, the designation of Compact migrants as "habitual residents" creates further stipulations and contingencies for migrants' legal status:

> "Habitual resident" refers to an individual who is an FAS citizen who has been admitted to a
> territory or possession of the United States (except the Commonwealth of the Northern

[89] U.S. Federal Register (2000). Habitual residence in the territories and possessions of the United States. Retrieved from https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/1998/06/04/98-14656/habitual-residence-in-the-territories-and-possessions-of-the-united-states on July 16, 2016.

Mariana Islands or American Samoa as long as the Act has not been made applicable there) pursuant to section 141(a) of the Compacts, and who occupies in such territory or possession a habitual residence as that term is defined in section 461 of the Compacts, namely, a place of general abode or a principal, actual dwelling place of a continuing or lasting nature, including physical presence for a cumulative total of at least 365 days, and who is not a: (1) Full-time student under the Compact provisions; or a (2) dependent of a resident representative as described in section 152 of the Compacts. Since the term "habitual resident" requires that the person have entered the United States pursuant to section 141(a) of the Compacts, the term does not apply to FAS citizens whose presence in the territories or possessions is based on an authority other than section 141(a), such as members of the Armed Forces of the United States described in 8 CFR Sec. 235.1(c), persons lawfully admitted for permanent residence in the United States, or persons having nonimmigrant status whose entry into the United States is based on provisions of the Compacts or the Act other than section 141(a) of the Compacts. (Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service, 2000)

As this ruling makes somewhat clear, not all FAS citizens—citizens of the RMI, FSM, and Palau—are considered "habitual residents" when living in the U.S., and some (but not all) of its territories. Therefore, not all FAS citizens traveling to the U.S. are categorized as COFA migrants, though virtually all FAS citizens *qualify* for COFA status.[90] Habitual residency appears here as a criterion for the rights and benefits proffered by COFA status, although those rights are not enumerated. Furthermore, the stipulations of "habitual residency" for COFA migrants do not appear consistently in other legal and policy documents regarding COFA status. This ruling, thus, adds another layer of conditionality to the legal constitution of COFA status, exacerbating COFA migrants' legal precarity and tenuousness of status, conditions which, I argue, are characteristic of imperial citizenship more broadly.

COFA Status "On the Ground"

While this chapter's focus has been on the kind of legal status that the Compact produces for Marshall Islanders, its analysis extends beyond an exclusive focus on the technical, formal, or legal production of this status. As it shows, COFA status is also produced through the Compact's intersection with other laws and policies, which give specificity and form to its terms pertaining to

[90] Under the terms of the 2003 Amended Compact, FAS citizens convicted of certain crimes are inadmissible to the U.S.

migration and citizenship. Furthermore, COFA status is given meaning through the application of these policies, laws, and programs to Marshall Islanders by key actors involved in these spheres, often in inconsistent ways. As I argue, such sense-making shapes the particularities of COFA status as much as does the formal legal definition of the status.

Legal Status and the Local State: The "Il/Legality Trap"

Many scholars have examined the legal interpretations and actions of immigration officials and policy-makers, whose work places them formally in the realm of immigration law and policy (Coleman, 2012; Varsanyi, 2010; Winders, 2007; Wong, 2012). Other scholars have turned attention toward local state actors, such as public employees, local political leaders, and law enforcement, who also confront the issue of immigrants' legal status in their work (Marrow, 2011; Ridgley, 2008; Rodríguez, 2008). As this scholarship shows, local state actors must often make sense of complex and shifting immigration laws and policies (Hiemstra, 2010).

In interviews, many local legal, political, and law enforcement actors in Northwest Arkansas struggled to articulate how COFA status worked in the law and where it sat on a spectrum of "legality" to "illegality." In one such encounter, a city official working in a legal capacity explained to me what he understood about (non-U.S.-born) Marshall Islanders' legal status:

E.M.E.: I just want to go back to something we touched on earlier, which is the Marshallese legal status, the immigration status that they have while they're here. What do you know about that?

Attorney Dole: I don't know anything other than—I've just been told they're legal. And I've also been told—and I think maybe it was [the Marshallese court interpreter based in Springdale] that told me—that they can get deported, though, still. If they act up, you know. I think she told me that while they're technically here, technically they're here legally. "Legally" [*makes finger quotes*] whatever that means—which means they can get a driver's license, they can, you know, work, they can do all these things—but, that, but it's also easy for them to get sent back. By their own—not by…ICE, but by their own…government, if that makes sense.

Attorney Dole then went on to elaborate his understanding of Marshallese deportation proceedings

under U.S. immigration law:

> Attorney Dole: Because, I just told [the Marshallese court interpreter], just in having discussions, she's like, "Well, you know that the Marshallese people, even though they're here legally, they…kind of police themselves," is kind of the way it was described to me. You know, ICE checks our jail every day. If they see someone in our jail that they think, "Oh, we're not sure who they are," they'll run their fingerprints through the FBI database, whatever. And they'll put a detainer on them sometimes, they'll put an ICE detainer.[91] Whereas they don't really do that with the Marshallese; it's more Hispanics that they do that with. [The Marshallese court interpreter] kind of explained that, "Well, they kind of do it on their own." I don't know what that means, but…[laughs]

> E.M.E.: So, for example, ICE wouldn't come in and put a hold on a Marshallese person who's detained?

> Attorney Dole: I don't think that I've ever seen that happen. You know, when [the Marshallese court interpreter] talks about it, she says, "Yeah, they can be deported just as easily as Hispanics can," but she made it sound like it wasn't because of ICE coming and doing it, it was because of the Marshallese doing it themselves. Does that make any sense?

In explaining the concept of legality, or "being here [in the U.S.] legally," Attorney Dole upheld and

reproduced a legal/illegal binary, wherein immigrants fell into one category or the other. He situated

Marshallese immigrants as legal, given the information provided to him by his contact, while

simultaneously highlighting the ambiguity of that legality—"*technically*, [Marshall Islanders] are here

legally—'legally,' [makes finger quotes] *whatever that means*." This statement, as well as his hesitation

when describing the nuances and particularities of COFA status, indicates some sense that Marshall

Islanders with COFA status fall between dominant notions of legality and illegality. Yet the legal

framework in which he and other legal actors worked made it difficult to understand anything

outside these binary definitions of legal status.

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[91] An ICE detainer or "hold" refers to a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement detainer. When an immigrant is detained by law enforcement for a non-immigration-related legal violation or charge, ICE officials may submit a written request to the local jail or law enforcement agency to hold that individual for an additional 48 hours after his or her release date to give ICE the option of transferring him or her into federal custody for deportation and removal proceedings (American Civil Liberties Union, 2015).

The concept of legality as a proxy term for immigration status came up frequently in discussions with local state actors in Springdale. In an interview with two senior representatives of the police department, for instance, the theme of il/legality and the complex legal status of Marshall Islanders arose:

E.M.E.: One of the things that I've been really curious to learn from you, again going back to that legal status issue, is how much of an issue that is.

Officer McKenzie: Well, I think even for us, because that question will get asked by [the RMI Consul General in Springdale] on numerous occasions, she may have a concern that somebody has been deported. Well, they don't have to have a visa to come in, or they don't have to have a passport—they have to have a visa to come into the country—which is it? *[Turns to colleague to clarify; colleague shakes head and shrugs in response.]* They can pretty well come and go. Now, there are some limitations, and I'm going to give you the name of an ICE officer who can help with this, because even for us, understanding some of those legal standards is somewhat difficult. I know if—I believe this to be correct—that if they have been convicted of two or more offenses that they can be deported back.

2nd Officer: I think it's just also one domestic situation if it's a domestic battery.

Officer McKenzie: It's a precarious situation for us as well, because let's just say—certainly with our population, we have a need to have Hispanic officers. But they're not U.S. citizens. And you have to be a U.S. citizen to be a police officer. And their path to citizenship is, what's a good word— complicated. Because [the Marshall Islands are] a protectorate and not a foreign country. I don't know that we have a clear understanding, and sometimes I'm not sure, because they're not a problematic community. They're not here illegally. So they don't create those kinds of concerns for agencies that would be looking for those kinds of violations.

Officer McKenzie's description of Marshall Islanders' legal status issues reveals a complex range of conceptualizations of legality: legality as *not needing* certain documentation like a visa or passport (as opposed to *having* such documentation, which is a more common definition of legal immigration status); legality as smooth entry or mobility across U.S. borders or the ability to "come and go as they please;" and finally, legality as not-criminality, in other words, as not "problematic" for law enforcement. Like Attorney Dole, Officer McKenzie admitted that her understanding of COFA status was incomplete, and she referred me to another source who she believed would be more

knowledgeable on the topic. Her response constituted a deferral of this knowledge and responsibility that, presumably, she felt her position did not require her to have, or perhaps that her position never provided in the first place.

Furthermore, Officer McKenzie conveyed a perception that COFA status is not quite a "free pass" to live in the U.S. without conditions. As she attempted to explain, Marshall Islanders' "path to citizenship is complicated" because the Marshall Islands was "a [U.S.] protectorate, not a foreign country." While this statement is not fully accurate, it does convey her perception of the Marshall Islands' semi- or neo-colonial status in relation to the U.S., a perception that appeared frequently in interviews and encounters in Arkansas. This is a kind of imperial sense-making to which I return in the final chapter.

Despite Officer McKenzie's recognition that COFA status was not equivalent to full, unrestricted, or irrevocable legal status and despite her awareness that Marshall Islanders with COFA status were legally deportable under certain circumstances, she eventually returned to a conclusion that Marshall Islanders with COFA status were "not here illegally" and, therefore, "not a problematic community." Simply put, Marshallese immigrants were not a concern for agencies dealing with "those kinds of violations," presumably referring to violations of unlawful presence in the U.S. While COFA status was admittedly ambiguous, the presence of immigrants with COFA status did not warrant surveillance or intervention from a law enforcement and/or immigration enforcement perspective *in relation to Latinos/Hispanics.* Therefore, the Marshallese population was not of major concern to her legally.

Some of the legal actors I interviewed—like Attorney Dole and, to a lesser degree, Officer McKenzie and her colleague—held professions that put them into regular contact with Marshall Islanders but did not require them to delve into the particulars of COFA status. Nonetheless, due to their agencies' partnerships with ICE, these interviewees still needed some basic understanding of

immigration status and law, even on a superficial or perfunctory level. An interview with one senior legal official began when he explained that he did not deal at all with Marshallese clients' "legal status issue." However, he clearly had a working understanding of ICE operations and of how deportability functioned as a legal condition, particularly how certain crimes made one vulnerable or subject to deportation.

> E.M.E.: What do you know about [the unique legal status of Marshall Islanders], and how does that come into play [in your work]?
>
> Legal official: It does not come into play at all with me. Because I don't ask them their status or anything. But I know from dealings, I understand that they've got a visa, they can get a driver's license, I mean a passport, and they can get a driver's license, and everything.
>
> E.M.E.: For Latino immigrants, or Hispanic immigrants, does their status come up in the courtroom?
>
> Legal official: No, no, I never get into that. Well, it might if they say—well, today, a Spanish-speaking prisoner said, "I'm just ready to get deported." And so, I asked if there was a hold, and there's a hold on him. But, I mean, if they bring it up—I don't get into that. It means nothing to me at all. I'm going to treat them the same way regardless. But the Marshallese are all pretty well the same status, is what I've always heard.

Despite the fact that this legal official did not routinely ask individuals in court proceedings their immigration status, he was clearly aware that for undocumented or "out of status" immigrants with criminal charges, it would be common for ICE to place a hold on them in order to begin deportation proceedings after the criminal charges had been addressed. He also conveyed a familiarity with Marshallese legal status, albeit a vague one ("pretty well all the same status"). This legal official's vague familiarity with COFA status, despite his professional capacity as a local legal official with a high level of authority, was reflective of several interviews with legal actors and political officials. As these interviews revealed, even actors working closely with immigration law had a superficial, and often incorrect, understanding of the legal particulars of COFA status.

In Arkansas, I had two field encounters with Department of Homeland Security (DHS) immigration officers, one a formal interview and one an informal meeting. In the interview with Officer Anderson, a Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) officer, our discussion of Marshall Islanders' legal status and immigration issues was brief, for the reason given in his response:

E.M.E.: I wanted to get an idea of how much you work with the Marshallese population and what kind of dynamics you are seeing there in terms of legal status, relations with other immigrants groups, that kind of thing.

Officer Anderson: I had limited [contact with that community] for the most part, because the Marshallese, because of the agreements, they kind of—well, they aren't given a green card, [but] they're pretty much looked at like immigrants, or having full immigration status, when they come in here, what with being able to work and everything, without any issues. So unless they committed a serious offense, then we really didn't have that many dealings with them.

In this interview, Officer Anderson used the phrase "having full immigration status" in the same way that other interviewees used the term "legal." As in previous examples, he articulated full legal immigration status as being tied to a broader range of benefits, such as employment—"[the ability] to work and everything." Furthermore, his statement conveys the sense that due to their legal status, Marshallese immigrants as a group were not a population of concern from a federal law enforcement perspective, unless they committed a crime that presumably would place them at risk of deportation. In this final point, Officer Anderson again echoed a common understanding that Marshallese immigrants' legality not only *translated into* but in fact *originated from* their non-criminality as immigrants.

In interviews with law enforcement, immigration officers, public officials, and other local state actors, many struggled to define the il/legality of Marshall Islanders with COFA status. Quite frequently, these actors, upon assuming that Marshallese immigrants were not "illegal," assumed that they were therefore fully "legal," having full rights of a U.S. citizen or permanent resident. Such assumptions obscured or precluded these actors' recognition of the legal liminality of Marshallese

(COFA) migrants and the restrictions on their rights and access to benefits. In this way, they shaped these actors' engagement with Marshallese immigrants in a professional capacity. As Nicholas De Genova (2002) has argued, the discursive and representational production of illegality creates a "frail ideological dichotomy of 'exclusion' and 'inclusion'" (p. 1181). This dichotomous framing also characterized understandings of COFA status held by many law enforcement agents and policy and legal actors in Springdale.

I incorporate a focus on il/legality here because Marshall Islanders, as COFA migrants, fall between "legal" and "illegal" immigrant categories, and critiques of the il/legality dichotomy or trap can offer insights on how that trap renders COFA status illegible for certain actors. Such critiques of il/legality are numerous: Hiemstra (2010), for example, examines illegality as a tool of neoliberal governmentality enacted or performed at the local level, whereas Jones-Correa and de Graauw (2013) critique the analytical trap of approaching immigrant status as primarily a problem of illegality. While Jones-Correa and de Graauw are principally concerned with the policy implications of the "illegality trap," their framework can be used to examine how illegality is historically constructed, always shifting, intensely racialized, and non-binary, despite binary representations in popular discourse. Following their claim that a narrow focus on "legality" obscures liminal, semi-legal, or contingently legal immigrant statuses, I argue that imperial subjects have always been produced in the legal space between legal and illegal. Put differently, the relative "legality" of imperial or (post)colonial subjects in the U.S. mainland—whether classified as immigrants, non-immigrants, permanent residents, or citizens—is deeply rooted in historical debates over the legal liminality of colonial subjects (Joseph & Rosenberg, 2001). However, these discourses about imperial migrants' legality do not always come to bear in debates over immigration status in places like Arkansas, which historically lack large populations of migrants from former or current U.S. territories. As a result, legal actors often fail to recognize COFA status as explicitly *imperial*, or as

produced by a (post)colonial, neo-colonial, or imperial political relationship between the U.S. and the Marshall Islands. I flag this point in passing here to return to it in Chapter 6, where I discuss how the obscuring of U.S. empire renders Marshall Islanders as imperial citizens illegible, and vice versa.

As many scholars have argued (Hallett, 2012; Hiemstra, 2010; Ngai, 2003, 2004; De Genova, 2002; Chavez, 2007), discourses of legality and illegality fundamentally frame the legal positioning of immigrant groups in their encounters with the law. However, Marshallese immigrants, rendered illegible within a legal/illegal binary, are often assumed to be fully legal and, thus, not posing a law enforcement problem, despite the fact that on paper, that legal status is precarious and conditional in all sorts of ways. In Springdale, this assumption often led legal actors to disregard Marshall Islanders as potentially "unlawfully present" and to let them be in terms of immigration enforcement. This response may have in turn disincentivized these actors from looking more closely into COFA status's construction and particular legal characteristics and to look more harshly at Latino immigrants *in relation to* Marshall Islanders. In all these ways, legal and policy actors' interpretation and implementation of COFA status on the ground give new substance and form to categories of legal/illegal, potentially affecting the ways in which these actors chose to police (or not), monitor (or not), and respond to legal and policy issues posed by Marshall Islanders and other immigrant groups living in their town. These actors may be ignorant of the full historical context of the law's promulgation—indeed, familiarity with such context is rare even among the best-informed state actors. Their encounters, however, with COFA migrants profoundly shape the lived meaning of that status, even as law and policy actors' assumptions about COFA migrants' legality obscure the *imperial* nature of the COFA status, which is by nature liminal and incomplete.

Advocacy: Social Service Provision and COFA Status

While the legal and law enforcement actors I interviewed focused heavily on the definition of immigrant il/legality, advocates working with Marshall Islanders in social-service contexts tended to understand COFA status in markedly different terms. For social-service providers, Marshallese immigrants' liminal legal status manifested less in ideological terms (i.e., as a challenge to existing legal and ideological categories like legal and illegal) and more as a result of the specific policy challenges that Compact status produced. As a result, key actors involved in health, education, and other advocacy fields tended to have a more nuanced and thorough understanding of the social implications of Compact status than did the law enforcement agents, policy-makers, and even immigration agents I interviewed (Marrow, 2011).

This discrepancy in interpretations of COFA status is likely due in large part to the different mandates of these actors' respective professions (Marrow, 2011). Social-service providers generally do not work in law enforcement, although they may collaborate with different legal actors. Thus, their work does not compel them to focus on legal status within the context or framework of illegality. Rather, advocates' professional, and often personal, imperative is to provide outreach, services, and support to various beneficiary groups, which include Marshall Islanders and other immigrant groups (Marrow, 2011). To do this, advocates and social-service providers must ascertain what kinds of limitations COFA status places on individuals seeking benefits and, in many instances, find creative workarounds to these limitations.[92] This focus on benefits eligibility and social services led these actors to understand COFA status in terms of social citizenship, which "involves entitlements such as provisions for health, housing and education" (see Mann, 1987, p. 339; Marshall & Bottomore, 1992, cited in Mitchell, 2009). This social citizenship framework enabled advocates to see the limitations that COFA status imposed on Marshall Islanders' access to benefits and services,

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[92]Compared to the status of other immigrant groups to whom these actors provide services, COFA status likely looks comparatively generous, as it may establish eligibility for a greater range of benefits.

limitations that are characteristic of imperial citizenship more broadly. For Marshall Islanders, as for many other U.S. imperial or colonial subjects, the full range of public benefits at least nominally provided to U.S. citizens is often kept out of reach through exclusionary policies at the federal and state levels (Riklon et al., 2010).

Among the advocates and social-service providers I interviewed in Arkansas, health care comprised the largest focus of their work. The network of health care advocates in Northwest Arkansas, composed mainly of white women from Arkansas, was the most organized and visible advocacy network for the Marshallese population. As a collective, this group constituted a wealth of knowledge about, and experience with, COFA issues as pertaining health care. My encounters with them included several one-on-one interviews with health care providers, community outreach coordinators, nurses, and policy specialists, as well as attendance at monthly meetings of the Northwest Arkansas-based group, Gaps in Services to Marshallese Task Force, "Gaps" for short. While the Gaps group is not exclusively focused on health care, many of its participants work in some capacity with health care and/or the medical sector. Thus, this group was a rich source of information on the topic.

This strong focus on health care in local advocacy for Marshall Islanders is evident in other sites in the Marshallese diaspora as well (Lyons & Tengan, 2015; Diaz, 2012). Health care advocacy, in fact, has arguably forged some of the strongest institutional and organizational connections *between* different Marshallese communities in the U.S. mainland, Hawaii, U.S. Pacific Island territories like Guam and the CNMI, and the Marshall Islands themselves (McElfish et al., 2015). Not surprisingly, then, the literature on Marshallese and Micronesian public health topics is extensive (Choi, 2008; Pobutsky, Buenconsejo-Lum, Chow, Palafox & Maskarinec, 2005; Williams & Hampton, 2005). It focuses primarily on medical issues tied to nuclear testing, such as thyroid and other cancers; diabetes and dietary issues; and communicable diseases like Hansen's disease (colloquially, leprosy)

and tuberculosis. A thread connecting these areas of scholarship, however, is the issue of COFA migrants' ineligibility for Medicaid, a restriction put into place during the Clinton administration under H.R. 3734, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (Viladrich, 2012).[93]

My interest in health care is in the eligibility issues posed by COFA status and the challenges it presents to different actors engaged with the Marshallese population in Arkansas. In particular, COFA migrants' Medicaid ineligibility, and the resulting restrictions on Marshallese migrants' access to health care, exacerbates other health concerns for Marshall Islanders and for community advocates. As fieldwork revealed, health care constitutes a main arena in which non-Marshallese local actors in resettlement sites gain familiarity with the intricacies of the Compact legal status, particularly its social effects. One older Marshallese community leader summarized these encounters in this way:

Mr. Rondan: They don't even know where the Marshall Islands are. Unless they come and start Googling the Marshall Islands, then they would know. But these people in the hospital, they would know because—

E.M.E.: Sure, because they're working with health issues?

Mr. Rondan: And [they treat] many Marshallese. "Hey, where are these sick people coming from?"

E.M.E.: That's something I've noticed at the Gaps meetings too, that a lot of the locals who work with Marshallese communities are in medical fields.

Mr. Rondan: Well, medical and education. And chicken.

As community advocates, health care workers, and others try to secure access to health care and benefits for Marshallese clients or beneficiaries, they may also learn about the Marshallese population, and the Marshall Islands, for the first time. At the same time, they must also navigate a

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[93] While Marshallese and Micronesian immigrants to the U.S. were granted Medicaid eligibility by the original 1986 Compact of Free Association, this eligibility was removed by the 1996 PRWORA legislation, which also stripped Medicaid eligibility for many other immigrant groups and categories.

complex and shifting policy landscape in their efforts to provide affordable health care to

Marshallese patients, who fit only partially into dominant understandings of legality and benefits.

Such navigations are made more difficult by the uncommon legal status possessed by COFA

migrants.

The complexity of the Medicaid ineligibility issue was heightened by the 2014

implementation of the major features of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). While in some contexts,

the ACA expanded coverage for previously ineligible groups (Artiga, Damico, Young, Cornachione,

& Garfield, 2016), including many immigrant and low-income groups, it also created a new policy

language to be interpreted. This in turn posed administrative challenges for health care providers

and for populations seeking coverage. Practitioners, advocates, and community members, for

example, spent much energy and focus on determining Marshallese COFA migrants' eligibility for

coverage under the new regulations (interviews, Springdale, AR, May-July 2014). Their encounters

with these issues came up frequently in interviews, conversations, and organizing meetings during

fieldwork.

At one meeting of the Gaps Taskforce, for instance, participants discussed strategies for

addressing health care issues (fieldnotes, Springdale, AR, April 2014). Three group members,

including the Task Force's founder and a Marshallese community activist and court interpreter had

just been brought on as Marshallese community liaisons for the Arkansas Minority Health

Commission. They emphasized the need to advocate for Marshallese health outreach at the state

level and to make the Marshallese population visible to Arkansas state legislators. The conversation

then turned to issues with the ACA health plan, Medicaid, and Marshallese enrollment. One group

member mentioned that some Marshallese people with COFA status had applied for Medicaid and

been "accidentally" accepted, while others were still being rejected. According to another health care

provider, her agency, along with six Marshallese bilingual outreach workers, had managed to get at least 325 Marshallese residents of Washington County enrolled in the health plan.

Another group member, a Marshallese community leader, mentioned that she had talked to an Independent Practice Association (IPA) representative in Little Rock, who said she was able to register about a hundred Marshallese people for Medicaid. "Obviously, [the IPA representative] had no idea what their status and eligibility was. She categorized the COFA migrants as refugees; that's probably why they qualified. They'll probably get a letter revoking those benefits later," she said, and another group member agreed. A third individual chimed in: "Well, I think it was a real mistake that those benefits got taken away in 1996, that COFA residents were excluded. If we are going to raise awareness of this injustice, then we have to work with people at the federal level—who are willing and listening—to try to get them some kind of coverage." The first group member responded, "The thing is, there is some person punching the button down here who doesn't have any idea what people qualify for." As these advocates statements indicate, even experts in health services and health care eligibility were often unfamiliar with COFA status, whose illegibility had at times made it difficult for COFA migrants to receive services (although, as one advocate pointed out, Marshall Islanders' misclassification as "refugees" could also grant them access to health care benefits for which they normally would not qualify). Thus, while COFA status did not always block COFA migrants' access to certain benefits, it often had the effect of *complicating* that access.

In separate interviews with three other health care providers in Springdale,[94] the difficulty of getting medical coverage and care for Marshall Islanders and of helping them navigate the health care system was reiterated. Two interviewees expressed frustration that Marshallese youth with COFA status were not covered under ARKids, the Arkansas state Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). One interviewee pointed out that other immigrant children—"for example,

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[94] Interviews with health care providers and health care policy analyst, Springdale, AR, April-July 2014.

someone from Mexico or El Salvador"—would qualify for the program after having a green card for five years. However, these benefits would not extend to undocumented children.[95] Another advocate mentioned that despite COFA migrants' ineligibility for some health programs in Arkansas (most significantly, Medicaid and ARKids), the Affordable Care Act allowed them access to certain coverage. Due to the vague wording of coverage rejection letters, she worried that many Marshall Islanders might reasonably assume that they were not eligible for *any* health care coverage:

> So, if I got a letter like that—and I wasn't super-fluent in English, and hadn't lived here for very long, and already didn't understand what was going on with the health care system, and didn't have health insurance, and just wasn't literate in all of that bureaucracy—if I got that letter, then I'd just think, "Well, that's it, I'm just not a person who gets anything with the Affordable Care Act. Obamacare is not for me." And that would be the end of that. And so we were really concerned about [that]. (Interview, Springdale, AR, July 2014)

These conversations reveal practitioners' confusion over what COFA status means in practice. Many Marshallese community advocates I interviewed expressed similar concerns about coverage issues, frequently highlighting the economic and social costs migrants bore to maximize health care and affordability in a health care system that was legally restrictive and financially prohibitive. Such frustration, I argue, was largely born out of the illegibility of COFA status to advocates and policy representatives and the limitations it imposed on their eligibility for health care benefits.

In a meeting with Marshallese English as a Second Language (ESL) liaisons for the Springdale Public School system, for example, one administrator mentioned that many Marshallese people traveled from the RMI to Hawaii for medical treatment, including radiation, chemotherapy, and dialysis (cancer and diabetes being two primary health care issues for Marshall Islanders). I commented that I had been in Hawaii and had met with the medical referral staff. Evangeline mentioned that she knew it was very overpopulated there, with so many Marshallese people going to Hawaii for medical treatment, and that the state had a difficult time meeting the Marshallese

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[95] This interviewee's impressions about eligibility were accurate; undocumented children are not eligible for ARKids, and legal permanent residents or "green-card holders" must hold that status for five years before becoming eligible for the program. However, children of undocumented immigrants *are* eligible for ARKids.

population's health care needs. The Marshall Islands used to have a dialysis machine, Evangeline said, but they sold it to a neighboring island. A brief discussion ensued of which benefits COFA migrants get: free school lunches, but not Medicaid or ARKids. "You know," Evangeline said, "before the amendment, we could get all that stuff, Medicaid. Now you have to live here five years, or something like that. So many things happened that we didn't realize were going to take place when the original Compact was approved." This interviewee's comment echoed the frustrations of many Marshall Islanders with whom I spoke, who felt that the provisions originally put in place by (or concurrent to) the Compact had been eroded in the years since. Their perceptions speak again to the liminal and restrictive nature of COFA status as it has emerged in law since 1986, a nature characteristic of imperial citizenship.

As many interviewees lamented, even the official benefits of COFA status that have been retained are not always readily available to COFA migrants in practice. While in some instances, traveling toward the mainland—moving geographically, for example, from Guam and the CNMI to Hawaii then to the U.S. mainland—enables Marshall Islanders to obtain necessary health care treatments, the rising costs of travel to and living expenses in the U.S. and Medicaid ineligibility often limit or negate this access. One health care advocate mentioned that Marshallese pastors in Springdale had told her that they had advised people to have any needed dental work done in the Marshall Islands before migrating to the mainland because the cost was so prohibitive in the U.S. (fieldnotes, Gaps meeting, Springdale, AR, March 26, 2014). Another Marshallese advocate working in legal services reflected on the health care issue in the context of the Compact in this way, weighing the pros and cons of having migration access to the U.S.:

> I mean, I thank God that we can come to the United States and get a better life, but we were better off on our islands. But we come to the United States, and the thing that is the most vital to our life is our health! And we still cannot have any access to any health care or anything that they can help with, like diabetes. You have to understand that diabetes started after we were introduced to Spam, to all those canned foods, canned vegetables, canned

meats, canned fruits. And who introduced those to us? The Americans! [laughs]. (Interview, Marshallese community advocate, Springdale, AR, July 2014)

While many interviews with community advocates centered around health care, I also interviewed a number of advocates working in education, housing, legal services, and translation. For advocates working on issues of higher-education access, the challenges for Marshallese youth with COFA status ranged from the cultural to the economic. Many Marshallese students at the local community college were first-generation college students and qualified as low-income; thus, they might have difficulty pursuing higher education instead of working for an income that would support other family members. Educators and higher-education advocates also pointed to the financial constraints imposed on Marshallese youth with COFA status as a result of their ineligibility for certain federal benefits. Although Marshallese citizens are eligible for federal student financial aid (FAFSA) through the Compact, they are ineligible for certain loans, making college very difficult to afford (interview, educational advocate, Bentonville, AR, July 2014). This ineligibility points to another aspect of COFA migrants' liminal citizenship status: while Marshall Islanders are legally able to attend college or university in the U.S., their status restricts them from accessing the full economic support needed to do so.

At least two interviewees highlighted the additional logistical challenge of attending Northwest Arkansas Community College (NWACC) posed by the lack of sufficient public transportation between its main campus in Bentonville and Springdale, about 15 miles to the south, where most Marshallese students lived with their families. One NWACC employee said that she had known a few Marshallese students to take a taxi to class when they lacked other transportation options, but the cost quickly become prohibitive, and the students eventually dropped out. In this instance, Marshallese students' financial challenges to accessing higher education were compounded by access issues related to distance and transportation, a problem several school administrators were anxious to resolve (interviews, Bentonville, AR, July 2014). Again here, larger economic and

structural issues intersected with COFA status limitations on financial aid to further limit

educational access for Marshallese youth with COFA status.

Marshall Islanders' challenges in obtaining benefits were also tied to service providers'

unfamiliarity with COFA status itself. The people I interviewed were often the most knowledgeable

about COFA status and its attendant benefits and restrictions, with many working tirelessly in their

communities to educate others on these issues. However, COFA migrants encounter many other

types of providers associated with housing or food assistance, for example, who are still unaware of

what COFA status entails. One advocate and activist elaborated upon this challenge:

> The Marshallese are so different because of their legal status; people don't understand that. [Marshall Islanders] are frustrated at places of employment because their employer wants their I-94. They may have in their hand a social security card, but that employer wants that I-94, because *they're looking at them as an immigrant and they don't realize that they're non-immigrants; they're here legally.* So it shouldn't be that big of an issue, [but] someone in an HR department in a company is not going to know those details. But again, that's something we want to help them understand, is *the Marshallese are different.* They're here legally; they can come and go. There are no—I hate to say absolutes, I'd have to ask [the Consul] this—but *I don't think there are any illegal Marshallese in the United States. I don't think that's a legal possibility.* I think people who've committed crimes have been deported but, and if one of those [people] came back, I suppose that would be illegal, but those are so few and far between it's not even worth talking about. (Interview, Springdale, AR, July 2014)

While this interviewee touched upon the challenges for obtaining benefits for COFA migrants, she

also spoke to notions of Marshall Islanders as fundamentally different from other immigrants. For

her, the difference that marked Marshall Islanders, as compared to other immigrant groups, was

their legal presence; moreover, their categorical *impossibility* of being "illegal." In framing them this

way, she conflated immigrants with those who are present *illegally*. For this speaker, being an

immigrant meant possibly being "illegal." Being Marshallese, on the other hand, meant being

different in an unclear register. In a sense, she was correct: categorically, as foreign entrants

designated "non-immigrants" under U.S. immigration law, COFA migrants are indeed different in

key ways from other immigrant groups, such as the Latino/Hispanic immigrants to Northwest

Arkansas against whom Marshall Islanders are often compared (in this example, by potential

employers). Nevertheless, the *imperial* nature of the difference between these groups—in other words, the imperial histories that bind Marshall Islanders to the U.S. through immigration law while maintaining a separation from other immigrant-sending countries like Mexico or El Salvador—is not readily intelligible to advocates.

In summary, then, while some social-service providers' work with Marshallese clients gave them a detailed understanding of COFA status and its associated benefits and restrictions, other public service providers, particularly those with limited or infrequent contact with Marshall Islanders, were often in the dark about the peculiarities of COFA status as an immigrant category. Although some local actors were able to see the restrictions or limitations of COFA status, which are a key component of imperial citizenship, this did not translate to an understanding of COFA status as imperial citizenship or of COFA migrants as imperial migrants. These actors' engagement with legal status and citizenship through a framework of *benefits and access* enabled them to observe the partial rightlessness produced by COFA status. This framework did not, however, account, or make room, for an analysis of the historical imperial power relations that produced such rightlessness in the first place. I now turn to a final group of actors, immigrants' rights activists, whose own framework for interpreting legal status enabled them to see other aspects of this rightlessness, while still producing blind spots to U.S. imperialism.

Activism: Legal Status and Citizenship in Immigrants' Rights Organizing

The first two parts of this section examined the sense-making logics of law enforcement/legal actors and advocates in social-service professions to understand how their encounters with Marshall Islanders shaped their interpretations of COFA status. In this final part, I turn to a third group—immigrants' rights activists—to examine how they understood COFA status, its characteristics, and its political significance. As I argue, activists interpreted and made sense of legal status through a *rights* framework, which enabled them to see certain dimensions of COFA

status, particularly its rights-based limitations and larger political significance. Nevertheless, dominant frameworks in U.S. mainland immigrants' rights organizing, which focus on the legal-status-based rightlessness as experienced by fully undocumented immigrants (Flores, 2003; Carrasco & Seif, 2014), do not tend to engage with *other kinds* of legal-status-based rightlessness such as those carried by immigrants from non-sovereign U.S. territories. As a result, immigrants' rights organizers and activists in Arkansas generally missed the *imperial* dimensions of COFA status and the limitations that status poses on COFA migrants' rights.

To make these arguments, this section draws on interviews with activists and community organizers, participant observation at coalition meetings and social justice events, and informational materials produced by these groups to examine how COFA status was understood and operationalized in activist strategies. These community leaders were predominantly Latino and primarily served Latino communities in Springdale and the larger Northwest Arkansas area, although some also targeted their activism to state or federal policies. Although some activists interviewed were Marshallese, the organizations I focused on were not Marshallese-led. There were some Marshallese-led activist groups in formation while I was in Arkansas, and several immigrants' rights organizations in Northwest Arkansas worked in coalitional models or were pursuing organizational coalitions strategically in some way. My conversations with organizers, activists, and community leaders in Arkansas covered a seemingly limitless breadth of topics. I cannot do justice to all of those conversations here. Instead, my intent is to focus on a narrow slice of them, looking specifically at questions of citizenship and legal status and how they played out in organizing efforts among Northwest Arkansas immigrants' rights groups.

The activists I interviewed highlighted the diverse strategies undertaken by their groups. Although most focused on immigrants' rights issues broadly, their missions often overlapped with other issues or frameworks: labor and workers' rights; racial justice and civil rights; voter

engagement and civic participation; gender and women's rights; and economic development, among others. As a result, organizations' tactics and programming varied in their efforts to meet the needs of constituents and link issues of immigrants' rights to other topics central to their missions.

Questions of legal or immigration status weaved their way through the work of these activists. As many made clear, their organizations' focus on undocumented immigrants' issues emerged as a response to the precarity and vulnerability to violence produced by undocumented status, a precarity whose impact was amplified by recent increases in immigration raids. Furthermore, many community activists were undocumented themselves, or had been undocumented at some point in their lives, and many had family members who were undocumented. These activists' work was thus directly shaped by their personal experiences of living "without papers," as well as by the complexities of living in "mixed-status" families wherein family members experienced legal vulnerability differentially. In my observations, these experiences brought a rich sensitivity, emotional complexity, and deep integrity to these activists' work with immigrant communities on questions of legal status. Many interviewees also expressed a nuanced understanding of legal status as more complex than a legal/illegal dichotomy articulated by other groups interviewed. Especially for interviewees who had experienced undocumented status or some limited or conditional form of legal recognition in the U.S., they were more likely to understand the complexities of COFA status as something beyond and between legal and illegal.

Many activists interviewed felt that the question of legal status was most significant in their work in situations when immigrants' status, particularly precarious or undocumented legal status, was used by the state to justify violence against them. This violence, or threat of such violence, materialized in innumerable daily instances, large and small, from the fear of racially motivated traffic stops to the threat of being deported to life-threatening conditions in another country and being separated from families (interviews, community activists, Springdale and Fayetteville, AR,

May-July 2014). Thus, discussions of legal status often revolved around painful or traumatic personal events, exposing the violent nature of the exclusions perpetuated by (lack of) formal legal status.

Additionally, several interviewees felt that state actors targeted their communities for their actual or perceived undocumented status, resulting in fear, mistrust, and racism. In response, these organizations resisted measures that deprived undocumented immigrants of livelihoods and well-being, and this resistance gave further political meaning to legal status and citizenship. As one organizer put it, after I asked about the challenges of organizing within undocumented communities: "[A precarious legal status] keeps us under control, or in control. It keeps us, you know, on our toes, feeling, 'I don't have the liberty to get a DUI, or I don't have the liberty to speak up about certain things. I don't have the liberty to organize'" (interview, Springdale, AR, July 2014). Her comment reflects a common analysis among interviewees of the ways that legal status was used to police immigrant communities and keep them "in check," especially to dissuade undocumented immigrants from unionizing or organizing.

As this interviewee and others articulated, liminal or restricted immigration status was significant in how it made organizing for collective rights more difficult, both for Latinos and for Marshall Islanders. At the same time, legal status had became a focal point around which immigrants with very different statuses could organize and articulate resistance to rightlessness based on legal status. For example, immigrants' rights activism brought COFA migrants together with undocumented immigrants and recipients of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), a 2012 provision from the Department of Homeland Security that allows some individuals who arrived to the U.S. without documentation as children to defer removal, or deportation, action

temporarily. The law also permits DACA recipients, also known as DREAMers,[96] to apply for a

work permit and receive certain educational opportunities, such as in-state tuition.

Nevertheless, there were sometimes differences among activists in approaches to legal status

and citizenship issues. In my fieldnotes, I reflected on a discussion from a local coalition meeting:

> Tonight, there was a conversation between two members about their mothers—both green card holders—not being inclined to apply for U.S. citizenship. Enrique says people should do it if they want to live in this country, and because there are so many other people here who wish they could. "I mean, I understand that people feel like they want to hold onto their Mexican culture, and everything, but it's not like you lose that." Nicole, who is undocumented, jumps in: "You don't actually lose your culture if you do that! And you can keep both Mexican and U.S. citizenship, you can be both." Joaquín says his mother doesn't want to vote, she doesn't think politically, so she doesn't think there's any reason to become a citizen. "And she always says, 'Well, I'm not going to break any laws, so I'm not going to get deported.'" Doug mentions that you don't always have to break a law to get arrested; you could still be accused of something. "That's true," the three others nod, pensively.

This exchange articulated various notions of citizenship, including citizenship as having cultural

dimensions and as tied to voting rights. Group members also spoke to the threat of deportation as

imposing a certain precarity on immigrants' lives. Several organizers expressed tension, uncertainty,

or conflicting positions about the strategies their organizations should take to protect community

members from legal vulnerability. Such debates often emerged in the context of how (or whether) to

work in tandem with law enforcement and how to advocate for immigrants' rights through

discussions of legal status. As many interviewees made clear, the stakes of these projects were

different for different community members, depending on legal status. Some interviewees expressed

concern that certain organizational strategies would exacerbate, or had exacerbated in the past, risks

for the most legally vulnerable among their communities, in particular, for those immigrants marked

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[96] The term DREAMers comes from the name of the policy provision, the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act. The DREAM Act is a legislative proposal at the U.S. federal level that would grant conditional residency and possibly permanent residency to certain qualified groups of undocumented immigrants. First introduced to the U.S. Senate in 2001, the DREAM Act has failed to pass, despite being reintroduced several times, most recently in 2010. Although DACA and the DREAM Act are often used interchangeably, DACA refers to an Executive Order signed by President Obama in June 2012, while the DREAM Act was the potential federal legislation (Olivas, 2012). In June 2016, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld a preliminary injunction against President Obama's executive order (United States v. Texas, 2016).

as illegal, "criminal," or unemployed. One activist made explicit the connections between these

different kinds of marginalization, linking the subjugation and criminalization of immigrants with

that of laborers and the poor. When I asked him to describe his intersectional approach to

organizing and the connections he saw between racial justice, workers' rights, and immigrants' rights,

he responded this way:

> I think workers' rights and immigrants' rights go hand in hand, especially in an area with a big immigrant population, since undocumented immigrants are probably the most vulnerable, or one of the most vulnerable, sectors of the working class. And the employers know this: the reason they hire undocumented immigrants is that they can be exploited. They can steal their wages, or they can make them work harder and longer. And even in Washington, D.C. with the immigration bill that passed the Senate, it didn't really include protections for workers' rights. And in my opinion, it would've opened it up to [make] more room for exploitation of immigrants. It basically said, "If you're unemployed for more than 60 consecutive days, you're *out*," which—undocumented workers are just going to go through hell if they need to get documents. (Interview, Fayetteville, AR, July 2014)

Several activists also discussed their work organizing in support of DACA. Almost all the activists I

interviewed extolled DACA's virtues and recognized it as an advance for many members of their

communities and families, and even themselves in some cases. At the same time, many interviewees

also recognized DACA's limitations, including what scholars have critiqued as its limited terms of

eligibility that render many undocumented youth ineligible (Anguiano & Nájera, 2015; Bono, 2014).

One advocate for undocumented students ruminated on these limitations in the context of higher

education:

> There are some kids who don't qualify for DACA, right? There are some *outstanding* students who don't qualify for DACA. So the DREAM Act is not going to help them. Even if there were some miracle and the state legislature suddenly allowed in-state tuition. You know? A couple of students who were just right at the top, with their GPAs and their student involvement, they're still going to be paying out-of-state tuition. And it breaks my heart! (Interview, educational advocate, Bentonville, AR, June 2014)

Given DACA's eligibility restrictions, some activists felt that organizing efforts should be focused

less on achieving federal legislation such as the DREAM Act, which they saw as requiring too many

concessions to be politically palatable, and more on immediate and urgent issues, such as

deportations, raids, and the expansion of immigrant detention regionally and nationally. As these

interviewees contended, detention and deportation constituted the most pressing concerns because

they affected the most legally and economically vulnerable immigrants. Again, these concerns

coalesced around the question of legal status and the precariousness it produced in the lives of many

immigrants. The issue of legal status thus posed a potential opportunity for immigrants' rights

activists to understand COFA status as an imperial legal status. As I discuss shortly, however, an

awareness of COFA status as *imperial* did not often emerge from these encounters.

Such concerns were perhaps clearest in discussions of the policy known as 287(g), an

immigration policy first discussed in Chapter 3 in which local law enforcement partnered with

federal immigration agencies. While 287(g) was eventually phased out in Springdale, its effects were

still on the minds of many community organizers and activists, who felt that local police continued

to follow the mandates 287(g) had laid out. According to many interviewees, when 287(g) began to

be implemented in 2007 and 2008, it had a fracturing effect on immigrant-led organizations in

Northwest Arkansas. Some groups opposed 287(g), arguing that it would increase anti-immigrant

surveillance and racial profiling. Other groups eventually supported the measure, agreeing to work

with law enforcement to convey the policy to their members and larger communities. These

dynamics and debates came up frequently in conversations with Latino immigrant rights organizers

and occasionally in coalitional meetings with Latino and Marshall Islander activists.

After attending regular immigrant rights organizing meetings throughout the five months of

fieldwork in Arkansas, I reached out to a number of organizers and activists in the final month to

conduct one-on-one interviews. In these interviews, I asked several open-ended questions about

their priorities, challenges, and successes in organizing work, as well as about key issues that had

come up during the previous months. One such issue was the local implementation of 287(g).

Activists from two different Northwest Arkansas-based immigrants' rights organizations spoke

about their concerns regarding 287(g)'s implementation in the area and the divisions it produced in

their communities:

> I was against 287(g). I spoke with the chief of police. I spoke with the mayor. I went to speak to Washington about that with the director of immigration services. There's not too many people who have done that. Yes, I wrote letters to ICE questioning their decision to allow an area like [Northwest Arkansas] with racial profiling, with a lot of tension in their relations to implement 287(g), especially when the city of Rogers had been sued for racial profiling. I said, "I have the right [to challenge this measure]. I'm a citizen, and I have the right to question the decisions and why those things are happening." Some local people, again, they were saying that [these measures] were for the good of the community. They were after the criminals. Then, some Marshallese and some Latinos came together to support the implementation of 287(g). (Interview, immigrant community organization leader, Springdale, AR, July 2014)

> And then you've got 287(g) and that just opens it up to racial profiling, "driving while brown" [laughs]. I wasn't there at the first talks of 287(g), but I have heard that some Latino organizations were supporting 287(g); maybe others were pushing against it as well. Because the police were saying, "There's not gonna be racial profiling, we're just going to go after the drug dealers and the gangs," but… (Interview, activist, Fayetteville, AR, July 2014)

The contentious and controversial split over how to address 287(g), several activists commented,

ruptured relations between community groups, eroding the trust and goodwill they had established.

Many agreed that trust had been difficult to rebuild. The 287(g) controversy also led many activists

to be cautious about forming partnerships with law enforcement, seeing such partnerships as a

double-edged sword that might heighten the vulnerability for certain community members. One

activist brought up 287(g) and its implementation in Springdale and nearby Rogers after I asked

about watershed or pivotal moments in his recent activism. After he mentioned 287(g), I asked him

to talk more about its significance and his involvement:

> [My participation [in the 287(g) controversy] was mostly going to town halls, where I think it was the Chamber of Commerce that invited the community, the community invited the police department to talk. But the police department was saying, "Aw, y'all can trust us, undocumented residents should feel free to contact us, this and that." But they weren't really giving any concrete ideas on how they were going to change what the community thinks of them. And they weren't really saying, "Okay, we're not going to do this, we're not going to do that." It was just like, "Aw, y'all need to trust us, we're here to protect y'all and not to

arrest y'all," and it was just frustrating, seeing that. And I don't know if it was just to say, "All right, y'all need to calm down and just go back to the community and tell them that everything's all right," but that's what it felt like to me. (Interview, Fayetteville, AR, July 2014)

This comment reveals some of the emotional, ethical, and political complexities activists face in decisions about how, or whether, to partner with local law enforcement in their efforts to procure greater safety, well-being, and more secure livelihoods for their constituent communities. As Steusse and Coleman (2014) have documented, recent years have seen a proliferation of partnerships between federal immigration enforcement and local and state law enforcement agencies, a pattern about which several interviewees expressed concern. Animating their comments was a concern for the most legally vulnerable members of their communities, as well as a skepticism of policies and law enforcement measures that would create schisms between immigrants designated as good vs. bad, deserving vs. undeserving, and law-abiding vs. criminal.

Legal considerations, including issues related to legal status and engagements with law enforcement, not only created schisms among immigrant-serving communities; they also served as openings for Latino and Marshallese community activists to come together. While most organizations I observed were Latino-led and had largely Latino constituents, their organizational missions were to address immigrants' social integration, service provision, legal protection, and rights in general. Many activists, thus, felt that it was key for Latinos and Marshall Islanders to work together on these issues. A number of organizations had Marshallese employees (at least one or two) and were working with these activists as community liaisons to build outreach efforts. (Often, the same person served in multiple capacities across organizations, whether as an employee, volunteer, or board member.) One particularly noteworthy example of cross-community organizing was underway at the Northwest Arkansas Workers' Justice Center during 2014, when the center's staff began to form a working group composed of Latino and Marshallese organizers and community leaders.

For all activists I spoke with, legal status was most significant when it was tied to circumstances that either restricted or made possible the material conditions of being: the pursuit a livelihood, safety, stability, and general well-being for immigrants and their families. When activists saw that a particular legal status was used as a measure to impinge upon these pursuits, in ways ranging from merely irritating to structurally violent, they were more likely to articulate their organizing tactics explicitly around legal status and citizenship. In many instances, this approach meant that Latino and other non-Marshallese activists gained an intimate familiarity with the "pain points" of COFA status—the conditions and terms that created the most anguish and injustice for its holders—through their coalitional activism with Marshall Islanders. Thus, non-Marshallese activists' understanding of citizenship for COFA status was closely bound up with these kinds of encounters and, as a result, framed as an issue of social (in)justice.

In several interviews, organizers talked about the challenges and opportunities they saw in building links between Springdale's largest immigrant communities. As a few admitted, misconceptions between Latinos and Marshall Islanders about the range of legal statuses experienced by each group sometimes created tensions, most frequently over employment and access to benefits. One organizer who had been involved in cross-community organizing summarized those tensions in this way:

> I think the main misconception that there is that Marshallese people just get a lot of money from the government. They have everything handed to them. Latinos don't have a whole lot of things handed to them, or pretty much nothing, because of being undocumented. I think [Latinos] have that, I guess, resentment that [Marshall Islanders] got it made. "They have papers. They get money, and I don't. I work hard," is their mentality. "Why should they and not me?" Once you start talking to [Latinos] about how the U.S. experimented on their islands and all this stuff, really put it to them in perspective, they're like, "Oh, okay. I see." (Interview, Springdale, AR, July 2014)

This activist's comments touched upon a recurrent theme in conversations with activists and other Springdale residents: the mutual stereotyping that occurred between Latino and Marshallese communities, resulting in divisions between them. At closer glance, however, these comments are

not just about stereotypes, but about misperceptions concerning comparative legal statuses between

two groups of immigrants disenfranchised due to their legal status: undocumented immigrants and

COFA migrants. In the same way that long-term residents often compared anti-Black racism and

anti-immigrant sentiments, activists suggested, many immigrants compared undocumented legal

status with COFA status.

Another Latino immigrants' right activist wanted to push back against what he saw as a

common stereotype of Marshall Islanders as lazy or complacent. He reoriented the conversation

about stereotypes around the legal rights and benefits tied to COFA status, many of which were

denied to undocumented immigrants. Nevertheless, while seeking common ground between

Marshall Islanders with COFA status and undocumented Latinos, he inadvertently reproduced a

(false) assumption that Marshallese immigrants all receive full benefits and have less incentive to

organize, a position countered by many other interviewees:

> It's hard…What comes to your head about what we can do to bring Marshallese people and
> Hispanics together? It's hard to come up with something right away. The thing is that
> Marshallese people—I don't think they're too lazy to do it. I just feel like they're satisfied
> with what they have. All of them get benefits…With undocumented folks, they have to fight
> for more because they have to pay out-of-state tuition. They can't go to Mexico. They can't
> go to El Salvador. They can't go Guatemala…What do you say to Marshallese people? They
> get money from the government. They're not suffering now. Why would they want to fight if
> they have nothing to really fight for? (Interview, Fayetteville, AR, July 2014)

Despite persistent misperceptions and tensions over questions of legal status between Springdale's

Latino and Marshall Islander communities, many activists expressed a strong belief that the

possibilities for organizing across communities and for creating solidarity between Latinos and

Marshall Islanders were potent, if not yet actualized. In elaborating upon this theme, interviewees

pointed to the shared experiences of labor abuses, particularly at the poultry plants, similar racial

profiling and targeting by law enforcement around traffic, noise violations, and other city

ordinances, and a shared vulnerability to law enforcement, based on precarious legal status (whether

the absence of legal documentation or temporary, partial, or conditional legal status, such as DACA

or Compact status). As one interviewee reflected:

> I think that the concept of immigration is very present for both [the Latino and Marshallese] communities. I mean, even within the Latino community, you see that rivalry as well, documented vs. undocumented. We see here in the organization, workers saying, "I'm documented and I got fired, but they're keeping all the undocumented workers in the company. That's unfair. Can I call ICE?" And we're like, "No!" We don't want to compromise all these families [who are] also working. And so we're trying to help people understand that it's not about community-to-community [divisions], it's about employer-to-employee relationships, the issues that are arising. But we also have to address what the community sentiment may be. Now, with the Latino and the Marshallese community in terms of immigration, I do think that [immigration] is still a strong hold for both communities. Both communities are fearful of having the little things that they have made here be stripped away, whether it's a work permit, whether for the Salvadorian, or for other communities, like the Latin American community, people are here with the temporary status. And so there's a big kind of fear of, "If I get pulled over and the cop says I was drunk even though I wasn't, how do I fight back against this authority?" (Interview, community organization leader and activist, Springdale, AR, June 2014)

A colleague of this activist agreed, saying that he thought that all immigrant groups, regardless of

legal status, are afraid to lose whatever status they have. They do not want to put themselves at risk,

he emphasized, and are afraid of repercussions. This activist explained that he had been working

with the Arkansas Workers Compensation Commission and that in Arkansas, regardless of

immigration status, everyone was entitled to workers' comp if he or she had been injured on the job.

"Now, at the end of the process," he conceded, "what they actually get [as compensation] may

differ—if the person is undocumented, they won't get that lifetime annual payout, but they might

get, for example, a $10,000 settlement all at once." The real issue, he said, was workers' fear of

retaliation. This fear often prevented workers, both documented and undocumented, from speaking

up about labor abuses such as employers' withholding of wages, factory line safety, workplace health

hazards, and other concerns.

Another Latino activist lamented that the divisiveness that sometimes occurred between

Latinos and Marshall Islanders was fostered by local authorities and only served to weaken the

respective communities and their potential for building solidarity. He discussed the after-effects of

the 287(g) program in this way:

> Our community doesn't see it that keeping us divided is what the city wants. It's what the government wants. They don't want us together! If we unite and we really use our power and our voice, then they're out of a job. Keeping us like this, I could even see strategically—we talk about this at the Civil Rights Roundtable[97] with the city ordinances possibly going to our neighborhood and picking only on the Marshallese people or picking on the Latino people and not picking on the Marshallese people. What are the Latinos going to think? The city's picking on Marshallese people. Marshallese people are going to think they're only picking on us. (Interview, Springdale, AR, July 2014)

The 287(g) program and its reverberating effects, even after its conclusion, were understood here as

creating ongoing schisms and mistrust between immigrant groups, ruptures that made coalitional

organizing between and across immigrant communities difficult.

As this section has shown, the activists I interviewed pursued a range of programs, strategies,

and tactics to advance immigrants' rights, many of which focused either explicitly or implicitly on

questions of legal status. Non-Marshallese activists, however, had varying degrees of familiarity with

the particulars of COFA status—its provisions, limitations, and process of acquisition by

Marshallese migrants. This in some ways limited the coalitional strategies that different immigrant

groups pursued around legal status. Furthermore, because non-Marshallese immigrants' rights

activists were often unfamiliar with history of U.S. colonial occupation of the islands (although they

knew of the nuclear testing), they were generally unable to theorize COFA status as *imperial*

citizenship, missing an opportunity to conceptualize status-based rightlessness as part of a U.S.

imperial strategy implemented beyond the U.S. mainland. In this way, immigrants' rights activists

engaged a framework of *rights* for understanding COFA status, as compared to the frameworks of

law enforcement and benefits/access engaged by the groups discussed in previous sections. This

rights framework enabled Arkansas-based immigrants' rights organizers to see the rightlessness

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[97] The Civil Rights Roundtable was a recently formed coalition group of social justice activists and interested community members, whose work focused on immigrants' rights issues. This group met twice a month during my fieldwork in Arkansas in 2014, and I attended these meetings regularly.

produced by COFA status. It left them, however, largely unable to see that rightlessness as produced by U.S. imperialism.

Conclusion

Citizenship has been richly and diversely theorized by scholars in recent decades, variously defined as social entitlements (Mann, 1987), rights and responsibilities (Dagger, 1997), political membership and participation (Dalton, 2008), and increasingly, as linked to military service and militarism, forged in the crucible of seemingly endless war in contemporary U.S. geopolitical hegemony (Lee & Pratt, 2012; Cowen & Gilbert, 2008; Cowen, 2008). As this chapter has argued, citizenship and legal status take on particular forms for subjects of U.S. empire, especially for those who fall outside the formal protections of full legal citizenship, such as Compact migrants. In this way, Compact migrants from the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and Palau, in their "taxonomic liminality" (Baldoz, 2011, p. 74), join residents of other current and former U.S. territories who have been brought into U.S. legal status conditionally, partially, and sometimes temporarily. These groups' liminal status has historically been provisioned either by virtue of their birth in the territories or vis-à-vis their migration to the U.S. Collectively, they embody the "second-class" nature of U.S. imperial citizenship.

Among the factors that give COFA status its meaning on the ground are the range of benefits and obligations that the status carries and the legal and material conditions that coalesce around it. Together, such details form a constellation of rights and rightlessness, materialized through everyday encounters with different actors in resettlement communities like Springdale. These details and encounters with local actors constitute a small part of the lived reality of COFA status. While such details—eligibility or ineligibility for a particular public benefit or a certain form required for U.S. border-crossing—may seem like mundane administrative details that are clearly given in the law or by policy measures, their provision is not cut-and-dry. Rather, the meting out of

rights and restrictions to COFA migrants is performed by individuals in receiving communities, who act in various professional, personal, and political capacities (Marrow, 2011). Each of the groups I examine here—law and policy actors, social-service providers, and activists—had a different understanding of the legal technicalities and material realities of COFA status. None of the groups, however, conveyed an understanding of COFA status as *imperial* or as resulting from the imperial relationship between the U.S. and the Marshall Islands, a point to which I return in Chapter 6.

Finally, these encounters between local actors and Marshallese immigrants help generate local residents' ideas about the relative legality of Marshallese immigrants as compared to other immigrant groups, specifically Latinos. These ideas do not emerge out of thin air, however. Rather, local actors' sense-making of COFA status as a legal category is informed and structured by their previous encounters with immigration law, immigrant communities, and discourses about immigrant legality and illegality, discourses which are reflected in the way these actors discuss Marshallese migrants' legal status. By drawing on interviews and fieldwork with Latino activists as well as Marshallese activists, I have aimed to show how they understand questions of legal status— particularly the legal/illegal binary often applied by law enforcement—within their own communities and in relation to one another. To conclude this dissertation, I now circle back to the implications of imperial citizenship and imperial migration for larger questions about U.S. empire, presenting in summary the contributions that this work makes for studies of empire more widely.

CHAPTER 6: Conclusion

"You Lost Them at Imperial": Imperial Sense-Making and COFA Status

In my observations from fieldwork, existing narratives about immigration to the U.S. generally lacked a connection between U.S. military and imperial or colonial presence "abroad" and immigration to the U.S. mainland. Therefore, the presence of imperial subjects like Marshall Islanders in Springdale could only do so much to broaden long-term residents' perceptions of the links between U.S. empire and (im)migration. To conclude this dissertation, this chapter begins with an analysis of what I call "*imperial sense-making*," situations in which Northwest Arkansans attempted to make sense of a Marshallese presence in their area and of larger connections to U.S. military imperialism in the Pacific. Here, I look at how long-term residents of Springdale, as well as those in Northwest Arkansas and Little Rock, made sense of *why* COFA migrants have the status they have or *why* the Marshallese have the right of visa-free migration to the U.S. Looking to the explanations that long-term residents gave for this unique and anomalous legal provision and status, it examines whether those explanations include the rationale of empire.

In field interviews, I tried to excavate and draw out this kind of sense-making, seeking participants' explanations for the oddities of territory, citizenship, war-making, and population mobilities that U.S. empire plays a central role in generating. This section discusses those efforts, shifting its analytic gaze from long-term residents' sense-making about what COFA status *is*—detailed in the last chapter—to their sense-making about *why it exists*. As it shows, these explanations reveal the persistence of key narratives concerning the U.S. role in the world, narratives that occlude an understanding of the U.S. as an imperial power, in the past or the present.

The sense-making moments I analyze here include long-term Arkansans' speculations on Compact migrants' legal status, (mis)understandings about the U.S. political relationship with the Marshall Islands, and ways of narrating the historical U.S. military presence in the Marshall Islands,

particularly nuclear testing. My objective in these interviews was not to seek an "accurate" description of facts (e.g., the precise political status of the Republic of the Marshall Islands or the "true" chain of historical events soldering the Marshall Islands to the U.S. during the second half of the 20th century). Fully accurate accounts of these details were rare among interviewees, and moreover, I wanted to resist the notion of one true, accurate accounting of history and leave room for subjective knowledges and partial narrations of a messy political reality. Instead, I found interviewees' hesitant and incomplete explanations for the Marshall Islanders' presence in Arkansas to be much more revealing of the logics of and justifications for empire, of the frameworks of understanding other immigrants' legal status, and so on. In that sense, these moments of imperial sense-making are examined for the (admittedly partial) narratives they offer, not as simple proof of the unawareness of empire held by many mainland U.S. residents.

As this section shows, long-term Arkansan residents commonly understood Marshall Islanders' visa-free migration permission in one of two ways: first, as a kind of *reparation* for nuclear testing (in other words, as retroactive compensation for the testing's effects) or second, as *refugees*, who were relocated, resettled, and/or given sanctuary by the U.S. Both of these explanations upheld logics of U.S. exceptionalism, framing the U.S. as a democratic, just, and humanitarian country (these logics were first discussed in Chapter 4). Neither of these two explanations, however, conveyed an understanding of the U.S. as an *imperial* power that continues to exert political, military, and economic influence over the Marshall Islands and other Pacific Islands. Put more directly, local residents often failed to see Marshallese COFA migrants as *imperial migrants* or *imperial citizens* because they failed to (or could not) see the U.S. as an empire. Although the presence of Marshall Islanders in Springdale had heightened awareness among non-Marshallese residents about nuclear testing, it did not fundamentally challenge narratives of U.S. exceptionalism or generate much discussion

among long-term residents about the Marshall Islands' *territorial status* as a former U.S. colony and a

site still heavily under U.S. jurisdiction and political influence.

If Chapters 2 and 3 answered the question, "Why are there Marshall Islanders in *Springdale*?,"

this section responds to the question, "What mechanism *enables* Marshall Islanders to migrate to the

U.S.?" These are slightly different wordings of the question, "Why are they here?," so in

conversations and interviews, I frequently had to reword my phrasing of it to get at the different

types of logics in which I was interested. Below, I draw from interviewees' reflections on these

questions to make sense of their own sense-making of Marshallese migration in the context of U.S.

empire.

Answers to this question—"Why are they here?"—varied based on respondents' degree of

contact with Marshall Islanders and with the nature of that contact. Long-term residents who

worked as public officials or social-service providers, and whose encounters with the Marshallese

population were shaped by policy, for example, were more likely to be familiar with the Compact. I

rarely initiated discussion of it in interviews, but if respondents mentioned the Compact, I asked

about their understandings. Often, those explanations linked the Compact's existence to U.S.

nuclear testing in the Marshall Islands (much as WWII veterans' explanations did, as discussed in

Chapter 3). In an interview with one Springdale public official, for example, I followed up his

mention that he had done "a bit of research" on the Compact:

> E.M.E.: So, what was the logic that you were able to discern from [your research on the Compact]?
>
> Public official: Well, it was…A treaty may not be the right word, but it was a diplomatic solution that was reached by the two governments, based upon our nuclear [testing].

For this interviewee, the Compact was an agreement born out of U.S. nuclear testing in the Marshall

Islands, although his statement left unclear whether he interpreted its provisions as an exchange for

testing or as reparations conveyed retroactively. Another interviewee, a health care provider in

Springdale, spoke to the Compact's longer history as she tried to make sense of the stripping of

Marshall Islanders' health benefits:

Sue: Well, like you, I have followed the Compact. And I've been real interested in who sold it down the river. It seems awful.

E.M.E.: Let's talk about the Compact then: What have you learned?

Sue: Well, 15 years ago, they had insurance cards, many of the Marshallese did. It was the Bikini Atoll card, and that went away with the provisions in the Compact. And I would think, because we bombed their allies repeatedly, with such strong bombs, that there really wouldn't be an expiration clause to that. Especially when you know how many times greater those bombs were than in Hiroshima. Just amazing.

E.M.E.: So did you read up on this? How did you learn about it?

Sue: Oh, I read every book that there is out, by everybody that I could find.

This interviewee's expertise in the medical and public health fields gave her a particular vantage

point on the health-related policy issues faced by Marshall Islanders, and she had a detailed working

knowledge of the policy limitations on COFA migrants' health care access. Like many others in the

advocacy group (Chapter 5), she had become familiar with the Compact, and with the larger U.S.-

RMI history, through encounters with Marshall Islanders as patients in Springdale. In that sense, for

this interviewee, the Marshallese presence in Springdale generated new knowledge of some aspects

of U.S. imperial history in the Marshall Islands.

Actors involved with the Marshallese population through their work occasionally also had

knowledge about Compact Impact funding, or federal U.S. funds allocated (exclusively) to COFA

migrant-receiving sites of Guam, the CNMI, and Hawaii to offset the costs of hosting Compact

migrants. Because of early stipulations built into the funding, no additional resettlement sites beyond

these three are currently eligible to receive this federal funding. Many social-service providers in

Arkansas bemoaned the lack of federal funding to cover state costs of serving Marshall Islanders

living in the state. For example, one public official in housing remarked that "It's interesting in that

Hawaii gets a large amount [of funding] for their Marshallese population, yet we have a high

concentration, but we don't seem to get anything" (interview, public housing official, Springdale, AR, June 2014). Despite these actors' intimate knowledge of the Compact's provisions and restrictions of rights and benefits for COFA migrants, virtually no interviewees conveyed any knowledge that the Compact emerged from a period of formal U.S. territorial administration (i.e. colonialism) of the islands. In other words, despite directly encountering the human evidence of U.S. imperialism in the Marshall Islands—namely, Marshallese migrants in Arkansas—advocates and administrators often failed to see Marshallese COFA status as an explicitly *imperial* legal status. The refrain—"We are here because you were there"—was never placed in the context of U.S. empire and likely never heard at all.

For other interviewees, a Marshallese presence in Arkansas had heightened their knowledge or familiarity with the history of U.S. nuclear testing in the islands, as briefly discussed in Chapter 5. One interviewee mentioned that she "didn't know much" about the Marshall Islands before the Marshallese began arriving in Springdale, other than that "[it] was a testing area" (interview, public official, Springdale, AR, June 2014). Another high-level public official in Springdale said that Marshallese resettlement allowed her to link the U.S. atomic testing to the Marshall Islands: "I started [in this position] a little over eight years ago, so before that I was pretty clueless of the Marshall Islands itself. I remember stories of the atomic testing, but I guess I just didn't ever really connect the two as being the same" (interview, Springdale, AR, May 2014). Her realization that nuclear testing was carried out in the *particular* site of the Marshall Islands was only made possible through her encounter with Marshall Islanders in her hometown.

As interviews and other encounters in the field revealed, most non-Marshallese residents who knew about a Marshallese presence in Springdale were familiar with the U.S. nuclear legacy in the Marshall Islands. Nuclear testing was a common topic of conversation related to the Marshallese presence in the area, and many field contacts brought it up without my asking about it. When

nuclear testing came up in the context of Marshallese migration, respondents frequently connected

the two phenomena using either the *refugee* logic or the *reparations* logic, first described in Chapter 4.

The first logic, which assumes that visa-free migration was a kind of reparations given to Marshall

Islanders by the U.S. government, was articulated frequently by interviewees, especially those with

some knowledge of U.S. nuclear testing and military presence in the islands. As one state-level

politician put it:

> It's my understanding that it's very easy or much easier anyway for the Marshallese to come
> and go to the U.S. because of arrangements we have with them. That's also my
> understanding, we did it as a way to make up for the fact that we bombed their islands like
> crazy back in the '40s and '50s. (Interview, state political representative, Little Rock, AR,
> June 2014)

Another interviewee, a public health worker, shared a similar perception. When I asked her, "Why

do you think that the Compact included the migration clause?" she responded, "Our way to make

up for what we did, is what I think. Retribution."[98] This speaker's choice of wording here, while

likely a slip—she may have meant to say "restitution"—was unintentionally poignant: "retribution"

has a double meaning, interpretable both as reward and punishment, "especially in the hereafter"

(Merriam-Webster, 2016). Indeed, COFA status, with its attendant restrictions, as well as the military

costs tied to it in the Compact's other provisions, could easily be interpreted as both a punishment

and a reward for the Marshall Islands' subsumption under U.S. empire.

Second, interviewees and field contacts often assumed that the federal government had

relocated the Marshallese population to Springdale. One elderly man, a WWII veteran who was quite

well-educated and had held many leadership positions in the local community, said in an interview,

"I have no idea *why the government brought them here*" (interview, Springdale, AR, 2014, emphasis added).

His statement indicates a perception that the federal government actively relocated the Marshallese

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[98] The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines retribution as "punishment for doing something wrong; the dispensing or receiving of reward or punishment especially in the hereafter; something given or exacted in recompense." Merriam-Webster Dictionary. Retrieved on June 9, 2016 from http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/retribution

population to Springdale, a perception present in many other conversations with long-term residents (fieldnotes, Springdale, 2015). Another interviewee, a policy expert and academic based in Little Rock, asked about his own understanding of Marshallese status during our interview: "Am I correct? The Marshallese because of their *re-location* have insurance? Am I correct on that one?" (interview, Little Rock, AR, June 23, 2014). This logic here was that the U.S. had relocated Marshall Islanders to the U.S., accepting them as refugees and providing benefits and visa-free residency as part of that offer. While this perception was common among interviewees, they virtually never drew a connection between Marshall Islanders and previous refugee groups in Arkansas, although the history of those refugee arrivals was widely known (fieldnotes, Northwest Arkansas, March-July 2014). The fact that long-term residents did *not* connect these dots, despite readily available histories of mass immigrant or refugee arrival prompted by U.S. militarism, speaks again to the occlusion of U.S. empire. Instead of seeing both past and present migrant streams into Arkansas as *produced* by U.S. militarism, long-term residents continued to return to the U.S. exceptionalist "rescue narrative" that positions the U.S. as a provider for refugees and migrants.

While these two narratives about Marshall Islanders' visa-free migration option—Marshall Islanders as recipients of U.S. reparations or Marshall Islanders as refugees taken in by the U.S.— may appear quite different, they rely on similar foundations. Primarily, they uphold notions of U.S. exceptionalism by framing the U.S. as a uniquely democratic, just, and benevolent nation. In the reparations logic, the U.S. has made good for its past failures (the nuclear testing), while in the refugee logic, the U.S. provides shelter and a new life for struggling denizens of other parts of the globe. The second logic in particular fails to understand the U.S. as an *imperial* power that created many of the conditions that necessitated Marshallese emigration in the first place and whose granting of the visa-free migration through the Compact served to uphold and safeguard U.S. military and imperial power in the Pacific for the foreseeable future.

Once in a great while during fieldwork, I encountered people who were familiar with the issue of Marshallese migration and brought a critical understanding of how that migration was shaped by U.S. imperial interests. One such conversation took place during my first month in Arkansas, with a law professor at the University of Arkansas. I have included a narrative of our encounter below, taken from fieldnotes:

> We segue into a discussion of the Compact. "The Compact is like a gentleman's agreement," she says. I smile—this is a term I have used before, but I remember describing it as "a gentlemen's agreement between thieves." I tell her that that's how I saw it at first, but that after learning more about the labor situation, I thought it might have more to do with generating cheap labor for the U.S. without the political hassle of the immigration documentation issue. She says, "Well, that's what I mean by gentleman's agreement: it was like: 'We're sorry we bombed your islands.' But then, we end up getting way more out of it than they do. And they don't want to ask for anything, don't want to demand more; I don't know why."
>
> I offer that maybe Compact status feels too precarious for those holding it: perhaps Marshall Islanders don't want to lose that "special status," or it's hard to ask for more when most other immigrant groups don't have what they have. Maybe it's like that old phrase, "Don't look a gift horse in the mouth," I offer. That might be the case, she agrees. There just isn't really an immigration issue there. What about the deportations? I suggest. There's a fairly small number of deportations, she says.
>
> "That's one of the interesting things about this. I mean, I was at a conference in Puerto Rico last year, and I realized—we're an imperial country! We just don't think of ourselves as an imperial country. For example, when people talk about traveling on vacation to Puerto Rico, they'll say, 'It's such a nice country, it's a foreign country!' Well, no, it's not." I laugh and explain that that was what fascinated me so much about this topic, and tell her about discussing it with my advisor—I thought that maybe when local residents meet Marshall Islanders, it might present a potential learning experience about the U.S. role as an imperial power. And my advisor had said, "How are you going to get at that? What are you going to ask them: 'When did you realize that the U.S. was imperial?' They're not going to get that." She and I both laugh. "Yeah," she says, "it's like, *you lost them at imperial*." She continues: "I think if you ask local residents something like that, about the Marshallese, they'll probably know about the history of the nuclear testing and WWII, and then say how nice it is what we're doing for them now." (Fieldnotes, Fayetteville, Arkansas, March 2014)

I include this conversation because it summarizes many of the contradictions often conveyed in imperial sense-making. As this section has attempted to show, these contradictions arise when local residents are presented with clear evidence of U.S. empire—namely, the presence of imperial migrants from the Marshall Islands—and yet, due to the occlusion of the U.S. imperial role in discourses around migration and the U.S. presence abroad, are unable to see that presence as

evidence of empire. Instead, Marshall Islanders' presence, and the fact of their visa-free migration, gets reworked into narratives that bulwark notions of U.S. exceptionalism.

U.S. Empire: Three Frames

The foundational question that undergirds this dissertation is one that has preoccupied geopolitical theorists (Hudson, 1977; Murphy, 1990; Painter & Jeffrey, 2009), policy wonks (Ignatieff, 2003, 2009; Wolfowitz, 2000, 2009), historians (Fukuyama, 1989; Ferguson, 2012), government officials (Rumsfeld, 2003, cited in Burbach & Tarbell, 2004), and left-leaning scholar-activists (Roy, 2006; Chomsky, 2013) for years: is the United States an empire? To answer this question, scholars have looked to various indicators, among them the global span of the U.S. military base network and militarized occupations abroad (Davis, 2011; Vine, 2011; Bhungalia, 2010; Petersen-Smith, 2012; Farish & Vitale, 2011), the hegemonic influence of U.S.-led capitalism in foreign markets and would-be markets (Flint & Taylor, 2007; Sparke, 2003, 2004), and the U.S. possession of overseas or offshore territories that hold semi-sovereign or non-sovereign political status (Aguon, 2008a, 2010; Bevacqua, 2010; Joseph & Rosenberg, 2001), to say nothing of the active and ongoing U.S. occupation of stolen indigenous lands in the U.S. mainland (Byrd, 2011; Smith, 2012; Morgensen, 2011).

Within geography, scholars grappling with the question of U.S. empire have largely done so by analyzing U.S. political, economic, and territorial dimensions at macro scales and by looking at state-craft, military strategy, and policy-making conducted from the seats of power, in many cases through rigorous theoretical and historical work (Smith, 2003a, 2003b; Harvey, 2003; Hannah, 2000). Others have approached the topic comparatively, contrasting U.S. practices with those of other empires, most notably the British empire, which becomes the template against which other empires are measured (Dalby, 2008; Domosh, 2004). Collectively, this work has helped us analyze empire's

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territorial and political complexity, while also broadening the terms through which it is defined. In the process, the identification of empire becomes even more uncertain and vexing.

This dissertation, while drawing heavily upon the scholarship summarized above, wrestles with the question of U.S. empire through a different set of lenses, ones not so frequently employed in that scholarship. It asks—and answers, in the affirmative—whether the U.S. is an empire through three new lenses or frames: through an *imperial* policy, the Compact of Free Association; an *imperial* diaspora, the Marshall Islander diaspora; and a *new destination of empire*, Springdale, Arkansas. Each of these frames, this dissertation has argued, offers complex and compelling insights into how empire works, where it works, and what effects it has on its subjects. As I have tried to show, each of these concepts and lenses must be historicized in order to see the relations and dynamics that brought it into its current configuration. In other words, each of these three objects of analysis—the Compact, the Marshallese diaspora, and the town of Springdale—has a history and a geography. Through those histories and geographies can be told different aspects of U.S. imperial power, as well as imperial subjects' negotiation with, and resistance to, those power structures. By telling these histories together, I argue, we are able to see more clearly how sites in empire—even those commonly understood as remote or distant from the center of U.S. power, such as Arkansas and the Marshall Islands—are in fact *central* to U.S. empire and, moreover, often deeply intertwined with one another. As WWII veterans' interviews and oral histories in Chapter 3 revealed, linkages between sites in empire are often long-standing. Such linkages can thus be explored through attention to military imperial encounters of the past.

Where does each of these analytical frameworks bring us? Let me begin with the Compact, a policy elaborated between the U.S. and its former territory, now an independent, sovereign republic. In Chapter 2, and throughout the dissertation, I have defined the Compact as an imperial policy. What makes the Compact an imperial policy? Simply put, imperial policy-making doesn't look the

way it used to. As a result, we must look at new and emerging forms of global policy-making—bilateral agreements and military accords as just two examples—to ask how they reentrench long-standing relations of colonial and imperial power. This dissertation has argued that analysis of the Compact reveals the long-standing colonial, military, political, and economic dynamics that bind places like the U.S. and the Marshall Islands together, even when the contemporary policies that maintain those binds are not immediately legible as imperial. While international and supranational governmental agencies lauded colonialism's formal end in the second half of the twentieth century (see Aguon, 2010), many critical scholars have been more wary, urging us to look at the way colonialism, imperialism, and global hegemonic power change form over time, yet fail to fall away (Hall, 1996; Shohat, 1992). Postcolonial and decolonial scholars (Stoler, 2006, 2013; Spivak, 1988; Mignolo, 2012), as well as indigenous activists and allies in occupied lands (Shigematsu & Camacho, 2012; Fujikane, 2012; Coombes, Johnson, & Howitt, 2012), have emphasized that the "post" in postcolonial is not a temporal marker of the end of global colonial power structures. Instead, they argue, the postcolonial serves as a critical analytic through which we must continue to examine and resist ongoing occupations and limitations on self-determination. This dissertation heeds their calls by bringing postcolonial and decolonial critiques into critical policy analysis.

Just as U.S. empire can be analyzed through a number of lenses, the story of the Compact of Free Association can itself be told from countless different angles. In kaleidoscopic fashion, each turn produces new configurations of the contents within, new assemblages of power, resistance, mobility, and containment. The image changes, even as the pieces remain the same. As the Compact's legal effects touch the ground in different legal jurisdictions and sites, they morph in almost innumerable ways. Thus, discussions about the Compact's impact, different modes of legal and political belonging, and many of its logics play out in different ways in the places affected by Compact migration: the resettlement sites that collectively make up the Marshallese diaspora.

In one sense, this dissertation has been an ethnography of an imperial policy (Dubois, 2009; Temenos & McCann, 2013; Peck & Theodore, 2012). It has mapped out some of the subjectivities the Compact creates, the mobilities it enables or impairs, and the ripple effects it has on communities throughout the Marshallese diaspora. An ethnography of a policy, however, must be more than a study of the policy's creation, objectives, and language. Policies have lives—and geographies—of their own, ones that extend far beyond the original intentions and spaces of the policy-makers. Policy effects often outlive, reformulate, and sometimes even undermine the political incentives or objectives that first motivated the policy's creation (interview, senior policy official, Washington, D.C., August 2014). As interviews with the Compact's negotiators revealed (Chapter 2), the magnitude and geographic scale of Compact migration far exceeded the original expectations of policy-makers in both the U.S. and Freely Associated States, posing new considerations for political actors, community leaders and advocates, and service providers in communities that now host Compact migrants.

Chapter 1 flagged two questions that birthed and drove this research: Why does the Compact's migration provision exist? Whose interests was it meant to serve? Throughout the planning, conducting, and writing of this research, these two questions doggedly propelled this work. As an anomaly in U.S. immigration law and policy, the Compact's migration provision called out to be scrutinized. I was convinced of the existence of some Machiavellian machination of colonial administrators that would reveal the true workings of U.S. empire, a logic that could be known, unknotted, and laid out clean. As Timothy Mitchell warns, however, "[t]he scholarly analysis of the state is liable to reproduce in its own analytical tidiness this imaginary coherence and misrepresent the incoherence of state practice" (1999, p. 169). Only after much reflection and hundreds of conversations on the topic did I relinquish myself to this fact: To the questions of why the Compact migration provision exists and how it came to be, there are no singular answers. While the questions

of *why* and *for what* (which purpose or in exchange for what) drove my research, what I discovered was a proliferation of explanations and rationales, several of which this dissertation has explored.

After much scrutiny, this question of why revealed itself to be of less primary significance. As one senior policy analyst familiar with the Compact negotiations put it, the migration provision was viewed, at least by the U.S. side, as "relatively minor in the grand scheme of things" (interview, senior policy official, Washington, D.C., August 2014). Its original inclusion in the Compact was not particularly contentious (interviews, U.S. and Freely Associated States (FAS) Compact negotiators and policy analysts, D.C., August 2014) and was at times overshadowed by negotiation of other Compact provisions, such as the nuclear compensations addressed under Section 177 (Simon & Graham, 1997). Yet this question—Why does the Compact's migration provision exist?—led to other, more generative questions that fundamentally shaped this research. How was this policy feat (of Marshall Islanders' visa-free immigration to the U.S.) accomplished? What effects has the Compact had in the site where its migrants travel in greatest numbers? What sense has been made of the migration provision and the larger Compact by those who created it and those who interpret it on the ground? What can all this tell us about U.S. empire? These questions formed the foundation of this dissertation, compelling me to look closely at the policy's histories and its manifestations in the present.

Policies also have geographies, as recent geographic scholarship on policy mobilities has demonstrated (Peck, 2011; Cochrane & Ward, 2012). As this research documents, the Compact's geography spans numerous sites and scales. Compact negotiations ground the policy's inception in the Pacific, through almost two decades of negotiations (in sites including Honolulu, Saipan, and Majuro), as well as in Washington, D.C., where U.S. negotiators, congressional representatives, and other state actors deliberated anxiously over the future of the U.S. presence in the Pacific islands (Leibowitz, 1976; Hills, 2004; Armstrong & Hills, 1984). The direct spatial impacts of the Compact

migration provision are undeniable: this policy birthed a Marshallese diaspora that now stretches geographically to the U.S. West, the Midwest, and even the South. In that way, the Compact's geography has expanded exponentially; its effects have traveled to multiple new destinations throughout the U.S., embodied in thousands of Marshallese migrants who have taken advantage of the migration provision.

The Compact's geographical effects, in other words, now stretch to a vast range of sites. They touch the multiple sites of resettlement like Springdale, whose social, economic, and political fabric are being rewoven, sometimes in small ways, sometimes in larger ways. In those sites, long-term residents, as well as migrants, also navigate the shifting dimensions of racial identity, often relying on older racial frameworks to make sense of new immigrant arrivals. At the same time, Compact has (re)produced new geographies through the transformation of sending communities in the Marshall Islands, as those who remain in the islands mitigate the exodus of family and community members, the encroaching and sustained effects of militarism re-entrenched through the Compact, and the impact of U.S. federal funds and accompanying strings and restrictions it brings with it (Underwood, 2003). Finally, the Compact, along with its policy corollaries in receiving states, has generated new geographical circuits *within* diaspora, as Marshall Islanders move between resettlement sites—for example, from Honolulu to Springdale or Springdale to Salem, Oregon—to seek better employment, lower costs of living, or more extensive health benefits. By "following the policy" as a method (Peck & Theodore, 2012), therefore, this dissertation has aimed to reveal some of the complex and overlapping geographies the Compact has produced.

As this dissertation has shown, study of the Compact reveals myriad explanations and interpretations of its components and migration provisions. These interpretations are examples of imperial sense-making, shaped and conditioned by the respective positionality of the interpreter, the vantage point s/he holds on the policy's history and life-span, and the particular facets of the policy

that affect, or do not affect, that person's life. Why certain actors advocated for the Compact's migration provision is but one factor. Why others agreed to it, or opposed it, is another. Put simply, the Compact's function as a policy—a burden, a liability, a relic, or a gift— depends on whom you ask and where you look. These interpretations matter. Implicit in them are notions of fairness and retribution, power and powerlessness, rights and debts, all part of the algorithms of empire.

Diaspora, the second lens through which this dissertation has engaged U.S. empire, is a framework that theorists of migration, transnationalism, globalization, and identity have utilized to great effect in recent years (Hall, 1990; Axel, 2001; Brubaker, 2005; Braziel & Mannur, 2003). Collectively, studies of diaspora have broadened the geographic scope of migration scholarship to look at networks and nodes of migrants' social collectivity between and across resettlement sites and homeland(s) or places of origin (Brah, 2005; Blunt, 2007). These studies examine diasporic experiences at a range of geographic scales, from the local to the national to the transnational, offering a richly theorized understanding of spatialities of diaspora: the homeland (Patterson, 2006), social spaces (Manalansan, 2003), diaspora as "third space" (Carter, 2005), the body (Dunn, 2010), and even the Internet (Axel, 2005; Tyner & Kuhlke, 2000).

This dissertation has aimed to show that diaspora and migration studies can benefit from increased attention to the workings of *imperial* diasporas, in other words, global migrant networks whose contours are shaped by the legal and territorial confines of empire. As the case of the Marshallese diaspora indicates, and as I have argued, such migrants need not be formal legal subjects of that empire in order to be imperial migrants. Rather, Marshall Islanders move within U.S. empire as liminal legal figures holding a kind of imperial citizenship, inhabiting both a time period (the early twenty-first century) and a geographical space (the Marshall Islands and the U.S.) presumed to be beyond colonialism. Just as political geographers and geopolitical scholars must look beyond formal colonial policies to find U.S. empire, however, postcolonial migration scholars cannot restrict their

analytic gaze to places and people formally under U.S. control. They must look also to new configurations of transnational and intra-empire citizenship, belonging, and exclusion.

Through the third lens, this dissertation has been a story of a particular new destination where that diaspora has touched down: Springdale, Arkansas. In new destinations such as Springdale, receiving or host communities often encounter Marshall Islanders, and perhaps Pacific Islanders, for the first time. Furthermore, the arrival of these imperial migrants, citizens of former or current U.S. territories, often constitutes long-term residents' first in-person encounters with the histories of U.S. colonial, imperial, and military presence in the Pacific Islands. Such encounters have the potential to generate new awareness about that history and the political, economic, and social formations that link Springdale to the Marshall Islands, creating, in a sense, a "New Pacific" in Arkansas.

Of course, new awareness about imperial migrants in sites like Springdale does not always engender a dramatic shift in local residents' and policy-makers' understandings about U.S. empire, nor do new immigrant arrivals necessarily transform existing racial formations in resettlement sites. Chapter 3 showed how long-standing racial formations and discourses, specifically around indigenous dispossession, white settlement, and Black exclusion, have largely endured despite the town's massive racial and ethnic transformation in recent years. The endurance of these racial narratives in the face of change speaks to the lack of readily available narratives with which long-term residents can make sense of immigrant arrivals, much less *imperial* migrant arrivals. As a result, new immigrant groups in these sites are often hard to place in existing narratives of race, and imperial migrants further confound these narratives.

As Chapter 5 discusses, however, new destinations of empire also offer immense *potential*, if not yet much movement on the ground, for coalitional activism between imperial immigrants and other immigrant groups, as evidenced in the nascent but growing immigrant activist networks in

Northwest Arkansas. The potential solidarities there between Latino and Marshallese activists and community organizers—around issues of precarious legal status, labor rights, law enforcement and immigration encounters, and other social justice issues—might create the conditions in which immigrants can collectively improve their communities' living and working conditions. Furthermore, because immigrants' rights activists approach legal status issues from a rights-based perspective, they are more likely to understand the rightlessness produced by COFA status (or imperial citizenship) as an effect of U.S. empire, although admittedly, that understanding remains limited in its reach. As a result, activism between immigrant groups in new destinations of empire has the potential to generate consciousness around the factors that created a need to emigrate in the first place as well as the conditions on the ground in sites where migrants resettle. Intersectional and coalitional immigrants' rights activism in new destinations thus presents an *opportunity* for the exposure of, and resistance to, empire, although presently activists do not always take advantage of this opportunity.

Finally, as Chapter 4 revealed by drawing out a more extended history of outsider arrivals to the state, U.S. imperialism and war-making abroad have long triggered population movements to Arkansas. This dynamic underscores two key points central to understanding imperial migration and new destinations of empire. The first is that U.S. policies often *create* the conditions that compel, or force, people to leave their homes, whether as migrants, refugees, asylum-seekers, or internally displaced internees (in the case of Japanese-Americans during WWII, for example) (Loyd et al., 2016; Jabary Salamanca, 2013; Lipman, 2012). This fact stands counter to framings of U.S. as simply an immigrant receiving site, a benevolent provider of respite and humanitarian assistance to forlorn exiles seeking a better life (for critiques of U.S. humanitarianism, see Bhungalia, 2015; Essex, 2013). In places like the Marshall Islands, long-term militarization has been compounded with the protracted effects of nuclear testing on the islands' environment, livelihoods, and physical and mental health, creating conditions that render many livelihoods unsustainable or even untenable. For

Marshallese migrants, therefore, their desire (or necessity) for mobility is also often a strategy to resist the "slow violence" (Nixon, 2011) produced by the U.S. militarization of their islands.

Second, I have argued that an historical account of the role U.S. empire has played in generating migrant streams to the U.S. mainland, often through intense and sustained violence and environmental and social degradation in sending sites, reveals distinctions between abroad and home or foreign and domestic to be blurry. In other words, just as the first point troubles a neat separation of immigrant sending and receiving countries, this second point challenges the home/away binary in geographical notions of empire. As I have attempted to show, *new destinations of empire* like Springdale are generative sites of inquiry for these dynamics of empire, militarism, and migration, not because these places are newly implicated in empire's workings, but because they bring imperial dynamics together in new ways, rendering visible the intimate connections between imperial sites both at home and abroad. Encounters in these new destinations of empire, thus, give meaning and form to the refrain, "We are here because you were there."

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PUBLICATIONS

PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES

2016. Loyd, J., **Mitchell-Eaton, E.,** and Mountz, A. The militarization of islands and migration control: Tracing American empire through bases in the Caribbean and the Pacific. *Political Geography.*

2012. Coddington, K., Mountz, A., Loyd, J., Catania, T., and **Mitchell-Eaton, E**. Embodied Possibilities, Sovereign Geographies, and Island Detention: Negotiating the 'right to have rights' on Guam, Lampedusa, and Christmas Island. *Shima: The International Journal of Research into Island Cultures*, *6*(2), 27-48.

BOOK REVIEWS

2016. **Mitchell-Eaton, E.** Review of Immigrant protest: politics, aesthetics, and everyday dissent. Edited by Marciniak, K., & Tyler, I. SUNY Press, 2014. *H-Net.*

2013. **Mitchell-Eaton, E.** Review of Illicit Flirtations: Labor, Migration, and Sex Trafficking in Tokyo. By Rhacel Salazar Parreñas. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011. *International Migration Review,* 47(4), 1042-1043.

AWARDS and RECOGNITION

2016. Political Geography Specialty Group Travel Award, American Association of Geographers, *$200*

2014. Moynihan Dissertation Challenge Award, Moynihan Institute of Global Affairs, SU, *$4,500*

2014-15. Summer Research Award, Department of Geography, SU, *$6,050 total* (2014-2015)

2014-15. Travel Grant, Women & Gender Studies Program, SU, *$325*

2012. Roscoe-Martin Dissertation Award, Maxwell School, SU, *$1,000*

2012. David E. Sopher Memorial Award, Department of Geography, SU, *$1,800*

2011-2014. Graduate Assistantship, Department of Geography, SU, *$50,000 total*

2012-15. Travel Grants, Graduate Student Organization, SU, *$950 total*

2010-11. Graduate Assistantship, Department of Public Administration, SU, *$11,000 total*

2006. Phi Beta Kappa and Cum Laude with Institutional Honors, Smith College

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

2014-15. **Researcher,** "Birth Tourism Panic: Chinese Transnational Citizenship in 'America's Pacific Century.'" Collaboration with Sean Wang, Syracuse University, Geography Department. Funded by the Moynihan Dissertation Challenge, Moynihan Institute of Global Affairs, SU.

2011-13. **Investigator,** NSF CAREER Grant, "Geographies of Sovereignty: Global Migration, Legality, and the Island Index." Qualitative and archival fieldwork in Guam, and Saipan and Tinian, CNMI. Data analysis in Atlas.ti. Award # 0847133, PI: Dr. Alison Mountz.

2013. **Assisting Scholar,** compilation and digitization of personal archives of Samuel McPhetres, former Coordinator for International Organizations for the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands and UN liaison. Project funded by the Northern Marianas Humanities Council, Saipan, CNMI.

2010-11. **Research Assistant** to Endowed Chair and Professor of Public Administration, Dr. Rosemary O'Leary. Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University.

PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS

PAPERS

2016. (forthcoming.) "Grieving from a distance: Death and loss in the Marshall Islander diaspora." For presentation at the *American Studies Association Annual Meeting*, Denver, CO, Nov 17-20.

2015. "Nuclear assemblages: Bodies, bombs, and the necropolitics of resistance." For presentation at the *Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting*, San Francisco, CA, Mar 29-Apr 2.

2015. **Mitchell-Eaton, E.** "We Are Here Because You Were There": Race, Labor, and War in the Natural State. Presented at the *Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting*, Chicago, IL, April 21-25.

2014. **Mitchell-Eaton, E.** "Habitually Imperial: Marshallese Migrants As 'Habitual Residents' and Exceptional Immigrant Status in the U.S. South." Presented at the *American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting*, Washington, D.C., December 3-7.

2014. **Mitchell-Eaton, E.** "Racial Formations, Empire, and Intersectional Immigrant Justice in the New Pacific Diaspora." Presenter in session, "Powerful Histories," at the *21st Annual Critical Geography Conference*, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA, November 7-9.

2013. **Mitchell-Eaton, E.** "Marshallese Migration: Cartographies of Diaspora in the U.S. Colonial Present." Presented at *Asia Pacific Worlds in Motion V: Migration Beyond Borders*, St. John's College, Vancouver, BC, Canada. May 30-31.

2012. **Mitchell-Eaton, E.**, Loyd, J. "Where is Remote? Domestic Boundaries of Empire." *American Studies Association Annual Meeting*, San Juan, Puerto Rico.

2012. **Mitchell-Eaton, E.** "In-Between Spaces: Liminal Territories and Queer Theory in Feminist Migration Studies." *Gendered Borders and Queer Frontiers* Conference, Program in Gender and Women's History, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

2012. "The Militarization of US Immigrant Detention: Islands, Power and Push-back." Presented with J. Loyd at *Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting*, New York City, NY. February 24.

PANELS

2016 (forthcoming). **E. Mitchell-Eaton.** "Profiling, b/ordering, and the political work of pedagogy." *Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting*, San Francisco, CA, March 28-April 2.

2015. E. Kaufman, D. Meyer, **E. Mitchell-Eaton**, Y. Hashimoto, T. Wall. "State Violence: Policing and Insurgency." 22nd Annual Conference on Critical Geography, University of KY, Lexington, KY.

2013. D. Mitchell, **E. Mitchell-Eaton**, M. Huber, L. Morton, E. Schell. "The Crisis of Academic Labor: Grad Students, Adjuncts and the Making of the Low-Wage University." Syracuse University.

2013. **Mitchell-Eaton, E.** "Institutional Spaces of Pain, Suffering, and Trauma (Part II): Exploring island detention centers as the demonic, the irrational, and the political in struggles over asylum and migration on the edges of sovereign territory." *Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting*, Los Angeles, CA.

2012. **Mitchell-Eaton, E.** "The Militarization of US Immigrant Detention: Islands, Power and Pushback." *Canadian Association of Geography Annual Meeting,* Waterloo, Ontario, Canada.

CONFERENCE AND EVENT LEADERSHIP

2014. Organizer and Panelist. **E. Mitchell-Eaton**, S. Davis, K. Kajihiro, K. Petersen-Smith. "The Pacific Pivot and Military Colonialism in the Pacific." *Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting*, Tampa, FL.

2013. Co-Organizer and Discussant, four paper sessions and one panel discussion, with Sean Hsiu-En Wang. "Queer(ing) Geographies." *Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting*, Los Angeles, CA.

2011. Co-Organizer and Discussant. "Perspectives on Immigration Reform and Associated Public Management Challenges." *Inclusive Governance Conference*, Coalition of Multicultural Public Affairs Students (COMPAS), Syracuse University.

INVITED LECTURES AND TALKS

2016 (forthcoming). Shiloh Museum of Ozark History, research talk. November 16.

2015. Syracuse University, Geography Department colloquium series, research talk. September 11.

2013. KSPN2, Saipan: Television interview on doctoral research. Saipan, CNMI, August 23.

2013. Rotary Club of Saipan. Presentation of doctoral research. Saipan, CNMI, August 6.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

COURSES

2016. Teaching Assistant, **Feminist Disability Studies***,* Syracuse University (undergraduate)

2015. Instructor of Record, **Introduction to Women's Studies**, Syracuse University (undergraduate)

2015. Teaching Assistant, **Transnational Feminist Studies**, Syracuse University (undergraduate)

2014, 2015. Teaching Assistant, **Introduction to Women's Studies**, Syracuse University (undergraduate)

2013. Teaching Assistant, **Political Geography**, Syracuse University (undergraduate)

2013. Teaching Assistant, **World Political Economy**, Syracuse University (undergraduate)

2012. Teaching Assistant, **World Cultures**, Syracuse University (undergraduate)

2011, 2012. Teaching Assistant, **Introduction to Human Geography**, Syracuse University (undergraduate)

INVITED GUEST LECTURES

2015. "Militarism and Gender in the U.S. Territories." In Transnational Feminist Studies. March 23.

2013. Political Geography lectures. In Political Geography. Oct. 1, 3, and 8.

2013. "Remapping 'the Urban' in the Pacific Islands." In Urban Geography. April 25.

2012. "Where is the (U.S.) Border?" In World Cultures. Sept. 26.

2011. "Gender-based Violence in Immigration Law." In Migration Geographies. Nov. 16.

RECOGNITION

2016. Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award, Syracuse University (nominated by Women's & Gender Studies department).

RELEVANT WORK APPOINTMENTS

2009-10. Immigration Paralegal, Ganjoo Law Office, San Francisco, CA.

2009-10. Bilingual Domestic Violence Crisis Counselor, Women Organized to Make Abuse Nonexistent, Inc. (W.O.M.A.N., Inc.), San Francisco, CA

2006-2007. Assistant to the Regional Director, Latin America & Caribbean Program, American Friends Service Committee, Philadelphia, PA.

UNIVERSITY AND ORGANIZATIONAL SERVICE

2012-13. Future Professoriate Program, Departmental graduate leader, Syracuse University.

2011-present. Future Professoriate Program member, Syracuse University.

2011-12. Political Geography Faculty search committee member, Syracuse University.

LANGUAGES

Spanish   Fluency in reading, speaking, and writing

Portuguese Proficiency in reading, speaking, and writing

French   Limited proficiency in reading, speaking, and writing

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

2012-present. American Studies Association (ASA)

2011-present. Association of American Geographers (AAG)

2014-present. Association for Asian American Studies (AAAS)

2012-present. National Women's Studies Association (NWSA)

2013-present. Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations (SHAFR)

2006-present. Phi Beta Kappa Society