# YOUNG American Studies 1 ACADEMICS

Leo Kempe

## **Fighting against AtroCITIES**

The Relational Triangle of Black Lives, Geography, and Democracy in the U.S.

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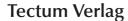
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With a Foreword by Prof. Dr. Ulrike Gerhard



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#### Foreword

Leo Kempe has developed a very strong argument in his thesis why black lives matter on a socio-spatial scale. By using the case studies of Washington, D.C., and Minneapolis he analyzes three different spaces of injustice in cities (racism, police violence and injustice, accessibility) to reflect upon the importance of the Black Lives Matter Movement as an urban social movement. With this he hypothesizes that racism is strongly related to urban space and urban development, while cities also open up new frameworks or pathways to overcome such discriminations in order to contribute to American democracy, best described in the theoretical concept of the Right to the City. With this strong argument, Leo Kempe has developed a very ambitious and sophisticated Bachelor thesis topic that lies at the crossroad of Urban Geography and American Studies.

Prof. Dr. Ulrike Gerhard Supervisor and First Reader

#### **Abstract**

Black lives are connected to geography and politics, particularly in the United States, its cities and neighborhoods. Often initiated by Whites, detrimental practices of racialization, alienation and opportunity deprivation can be observed on various scales. Importantly, these realities are connected to human rights and thus a fundament for democracy. This thesis uses a triangulation of the three variables Black lives, geography and democracy to answer the question of how the first two influence democratic stability in the United States. In the context of the Black Lives Matter Movement, it focuses on racism, police violence and accessibility problems for Black people, taking the cities of Minneapolis, Minnesota and Washington, D.C. as illustrations. These proved to be relevant because of the murder of George Floyd and the anti-discrimination White House protests, respectively. Theoretical orientations from Black Geographies and social justice activism facilitated assessing the two cities' contribution to democracy, and it is concluded that through relational analysis we can better understand the significance of the three interdependent variables for the country.

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#### List of Abbreviations

(Information: Only those used more than once are included).

ACLU American Civil Liberties Union
AJPH American Journal of Public Health

AP Associated Press BLM Black Lives Matter

BOP Body/Bodies Out of Place

BWC Body-Worn Camera
CRM Civil Rights Movement
DC District of Columbia

DLA Defense Logistics Agency
EIS Early Intervention System
HBC Historically Black Church

HCME Hennepin County Medical Examiner

HCSP Healthy Corner Store Program
LEO Law Enforcement Officer/Official
MHD Minneapolis Health Department
MPD Minneapolis Police Department

MSP Minnesota State Patrol

NAACP National Association for the Advancement of Colored People NHS School of Nursing and Health Studies (Georgetown University)

NYU New York University

PPP Public-Private-Partnership

SSRC Social Science Research Council

UMN University of Minnesota

US United States

WMPD Washington Metropolitan Police Department