RETAINING FAMILIES, RENEWING CITIES? THE PROMISES AND PITFALLS OF
URBAN UPPER-CLASS RETENTION POLICIES

by

Elizabeth Degi DuBois
A Dissertation
Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty
of
George Mason University
in Partial Fulfillment of
The Requirements for the Degree
of
Doctor of Philosophy
Conflict Analysis and Resolution

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                                             George Mason University
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by

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Master of Arts
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DEDICATION

For all the moms and dads raising kids in Baltimore City, especially Misty Keens, Celeste Perilla, and Eileen Wold. Without you, there would have been nothing to write about.

And for my dad, Dave Kroger, who proved you don't have to finish your dissertation to teach life's most important lessons.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABSTRACT

RETAINING FAMILIES, RENEWING CITIES? THE PROMISES AND PITFALLS OF URBAN UPPER-CLASS RETENTION POLICIES

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George Mason University, 5/28/19

Dissertation Director: Dr. Solon Simmons, Ph.D.

This dissertation critically considers the racial, gendered and classed implications of public policies aimed at retaining affluent families in urban centers. In recent decades, policy makers, economists, and urban developers alike have heralded the integration of middle and upper-class families as a panacea for rebuilding struggling cities; reversing decades of declining urban populations, bolstering tax bases insufficient to support city infrastructure and services, and pumping economic capital into lackluster consumer markets. These intended outcomes are built on the implicit proposition that an influx of affluent families will catalyze improvements to city services and infrastructure, leading to better quality of life for all. However, many privileged families have means to opt-out of public schools, transit, and recreation facilities. Far from achieving these policies' stated goals, retaining families who favor elite pay-to-play options further exacerbates structural violence and segregation.

Drawing from over two years of ethnographic fieldwork in Baltimore, MD, this dissertation empirically explores community mobilization efforts aimed at incentivizing

privileged families to enroll in public schools. Marrying theoretical insights on power with practical action, I consider the limitations and potentials of these initiatives as means of ameliorating sources of institutionalized racism, systemic poverty, and political marginalization. Original empirical findings from this fieldwork are brought into dialogue with findings from scholarship investigating similar policies in Philadelphia, Detroit, Chicago's east side, Seattle, and a handful of cities abroad all struggling with family retention. Based on analysis of these data, I argue making incremental improvements to failing urban schools and segregation through such efforts is possible, when such initiatives are undertaken concurrently with efforts to control for unintended consequences. When family retention initiatives are taken with critical attention to institutionalized structures of racial, socioeconomic and gendered disparities, these policies are powerful tools for upending the underlying social structures that propagate poverty and segregation.

PART I - WHAT TO DO WITH WHITENESS

WITH GREAT PRIVILEGE

"I'd love to know what you plan to do now that you understand your whiteness a little better, to dismantle it."
-DeRay McKesson on The Late Show, January 16, 2017

On the 2017 Martin Luther King Day episode of The Late Show with Stephen Colbert, Black Lives Matter leader DeRay McKesson and host Stephen Colbert tackled head on some of the reasons the U.S. continues to struggle to upend centuries of state sanctioned violence against black America: white society's discomfort, guilt and fear of openly acknowledging privilege. McKesson, a Baltimore native who rose to national prominence in the wake of civil unrest following the April 2015 death of Freddie Gray while in Baltimore police custody (Giroux 2016[1], NY Times 2015[2]), argued that whites' feelings of being the "bad guy" hinder efforts to address underlying social constructs that give rise to subjugation and structural violence. Privilege, DeRay insisted, can be leveraged to extend the dignity and power it affords. "It's about role, and it's about access — and what you can do is extend that privilege so that you can dismantle it. You create opportunity for people, you can amplify issues in ways that other people can't."

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[1] Giroux, Henry A. "Racism, Violence, and Militarized Terror in the Age of Disposability." In America's Addiction to Terrorism, 109-23. NYU Press, 2016. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/j.ctt15zc676.10.

[2] https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/12/us/freddie-gray-baltimore-police-federal-charges.html

This dissertation empirically explores practical tactics for putting this advice into action. How can CAR practitioners exploit privileges afforded them through access and education to deconstruct the social forces and structures that gave rise to such privilege? Drawing from nearly three years of field work at the helm of a Baltimore non-profit organization (NPO) dedicated to urban revitalization, and my ten years of work in international and domestic NPOs, I consider practical tactics and theoretical implications of leveraging privilege to draw attention to structural inequities. Is it possible to take advantage of the unearned social legitimacy afforded by race and class to improve public services and peace building tactics in a way that helps transform structurally violent social forces? How can elite actors move from a place of existential hand-wringing over unearned social status to a place of action to disassemble the building blocks of structural violence? What pragmatic approaches can be employed to leverage whiteness to transform apartheid education, housing and transit systems, and hold accountable political leaders complicit in the continuation of institutionalized racism?

At its core, this project has been an experiment in what it looks like to sit at the intersection of research, theory and practice. Using a "double loop" reflective practice model applied by earlier scholars studying urban education (Starr 2016[3]) partnered with adaptive management techniques (Fabricius and Cundill 2014[4]; Lorne, Marmorek,

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[3] Starr, Joshua P. "Strategic Thinking about Change." The Phi Delta Kappan 98, no. 1 (2016): 40-41. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/24893307.

[4] Fabricius, Christo, and Georgina Cundill. "Learning in Adaptive Management: Insights from Published Practice." Ecology and Society 19, no. 1 (2014). http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/26269492.

Murray, and Robinson[5]) widely employed by peacebuilding and conflict management

non-governmental organizations (Leach 2011[6]; Walkerden 2006[7]), I wrestle with these

questions in two empirical sections. The first is a case study on family retention in

Baltimore that delves into tactics and outcomes of swinging a primarily white,

predominantly affluent social organization into a politically salient NPO that effectively

contributed (Cohen 2017[8]) to a historically unprecedented commitment of $100M from

state and local leaders to close a massive budget gap that would have cost over 1,000

Baltimore City Public School (BCPS) teachers their jobs (Baltimore Sun December 14,

2016). The second empirical section dissects the strategies and decision-making tools

I've used to advance my career and grow NPOs, offering opportunities for other CAR

practitioners to leverage hard-won lessons as they navigate their own career choices, and

offering insight to NPO leaders and funders to exploit privilege within their

organizations. Throughout these two empirical sections, I discuss the theoretical

implications and power-laden pitfalls of exploiting privilege.

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[5] Greig, Lorne A., David R. Marmorek, Carol Murray, and Donald C. E. Robinson. "Insight into Enabling Adaptive Management." Ecology and Society 18, no. 3 (2013). http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/26269366.

[6] Leach, William D. "Building a Theory of Collaboration." In Community-Based Collaboration: Bridging Socio-Ecological Research and Practice, edited by Dukes E. Franklin, Firehock Karen E., and Birkhoff Juliana E., 146-88. CHARLOTTESVILLE; LONDON: University of Virginia Press, 2011. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/j.ctt6wrmzj.9.

[7] Walkerden, Greg. "Adaptive Management Planning Projects as Conflict Resolution Processes." Ecology and Society 11, no. 1 (2006). http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/26267822.

[8] Councilman Zeke Cohen, Letter to ACLU Board of Director President Dr. Coleman Bazelon. 2017

Reifying Paternalistic Condescension

There is a delicate balance between using the sociopolitical legitimacy whiteness affords to force recognition of marginalized voices, and inadvertently reifying the structures that led to such marginalization (Fernando 2011[9], Francis 2010[10], Richmond 2001[11]). White allies- or, better yet, co-agitators in black led advocacy efforts- must use privilege to elevate and amplify the voices of black and brown communities, not (intentionally or otherwise) claim moral authority to speak on their behalf (Shuman 2005). In previous work, I have argued that well-intended NPOs' work can backfire, and more deeply entrench sources of structural violence by implementing pro-forma 'solutions' out of synch (Srinivasan 1998[12]) with the gendered, racial, and sociocultural contexts in which they work (Mount 2013, 2016).

In this dissertation, I turn this critique towards my own work, analyzing the impact of my efforts serving as the executive director (ED) of a community-based non-profit organization (NPO). This critical reflection unpacks the power relationships at play

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[9] Fernando, Jude L. "The NGO Industrial Complex: Modernizing Postmodernity." In The Political Economy of NGOs: State Formation in Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, 232-81. London: Pluto Press, 2011. doi:10.2307/j.ctt183pdmm.9.

[10] Francis, Diana. "Dilemmas and Limitations." In From Pacification to Peacebuilding: A Call to Global Transformation, 38-70. London; New York, NY: Pluto Press, 2010. doi:10.2307/j.ctt183pd3v.7.

[11] Richmond, Oliver P. "A Genealogy of Peacemaking: The Creation and Re-Creation of Order." Alternatives: Global, Local, Political 26, no. 3 (2001): 317-48. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/40645022.

[12] Srinivasan, Krishnan. "What Are Commonwealth Values? Traditional Ones: Against Aggression and Authoritarianism." International Journal 53, no. 4 (1998): 622-33. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/40203718.

that influence the outcomes of my organization's work, considering how the ripple effects of urban revitalization efforts matter to scholastic understanding of power and privilege.

At the outset, I should state that my approach is not a plea for white, economically prosperous practitioners, NPOs or communities to "help" impoverished communities of color or politically marginalized groups. This dangerous narrative implicitly undergirds many well-intended conflict mitigation efforts (Edozie and Gottschalk 2014[13], Elinoff 2014[14], Routley 2012[15], Shuman 2005[16]), giving rise to the analysis that the growing network of peacebuilding consulting groups, graduate programs, and international crisis relief organizations are creating a non-profit industrial complex (Fernado 2011; Frazer[17])- or, more sardonically termed, a White Savior Industrial Complex (Hershey and Artime[18],

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[13] Edozie, Rita Kiki, and Keith Gottschalk. "Pan-Africanist Globalization and Cultural Politics: Promoting the African World View." In The African Union's Africa: New Pan-African Initiatives in Global Governance, 61-96. Michigan State University Press, 2014. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/10.14321/j.ctt9qf58g.9.

[14] ELINOFF, ELI. "Unmaking Civil Society: Activist Schisms and Autonomous Politics in Thailand." Contemporary Southeast Asia 36, no. 3 (2014): 356-85. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/43281301.

[15] Routley, Laura. "NGOs AND THE FORMATION OF THE PUBLIC: GREY PRACTICES AND ACCOUNTABILITY." African Affairs 111, no. 442 (2012): 116-34. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/41494468.

[16] Shuman, Amy. *Other Peoples' Stories: Entitlement Claims and the Critique of Empathy.* University of Illinois Press. 2005

[17] Frazer, Jendayi. "The African Crisis Response Initiative: Self-Interested Humanitarianism." The Brown Journal of World Affairs 4, no. 2 (1997): 103-18. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/24590021.

[18] Hershey, Megan, and Michael Artime. "Narratives of Africa in a Digital World: "Kony 2012" and Student Perceptions of Conflict and Agency in Sub-Saharan Africa." PS: Political Science and Politics 47, no. 3 (2014): 636-41. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/43284612.

Krabill 2012[19], Ray 2018[20])- that further entrenches the very social stratifications of power we are working to subvert (Richmond 2001[21]). The approach instead focuses on ways to leverage privilege in the common cause of social justice, fully acknowledging the risk of abuse that always accompanies privilege.

Despite this risk of condescension, the central conclusion I have drawn from my research is that striving to make incremental improvements through thoughtful practice is worth the risk. Efforts by those in privileged positions to end both the extreme and mundane ways poor, predominantly black and brown communities are excluded from institutional power and vulnerable to direct violence can be undertaken concurrently with efforts to upend the underlying social structures that propagate poverty and segregation. Moreover, CAR approaches can be employed to create safeguards against the abuse of privilege to avoid the well know unintentional consequences of humanitarian aid.

Based on data collected over the course of my field work, the central argument I make throughout this dissertation is that the social capital afforded by race, socioeconomic class and education can be leveraged to benefit marginalized

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[19] Krabill, Ron. "American Sentimentalism and the Production of Global Citizens." Contexts 11, no. 4 (2012): 52-54. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/41960876.

[20] RAY, SARAH JAQUETTE. "Coming of Age at the End of the World: The Affective Arc of Undergraduate Environmental Studies Curricula." In Affective Ecocriticism: Emotion, Embodiment, Environment, edited by Bladow Kyle and Ladino Jennifer, 299-320. LINCOLN; LONDON: University of Nebraska Press, 2018. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/j.ctv75d0g8.19.

[21] Richmond, Oliver P. "A Genealogy of Peacemaking: The Creation and Re-Creation of Order." Alternatives: Global, Local, Political 26, no. 3 (2001): 317-48. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/40645022.

communities, to highlight overtly hypocritical disparate treatment based on race or class, and to incrementally undermine historically rooted structures that give rise to privilege in the first place. Put a bit more concisely, explicitly acknowledging that race and class bestow unearned advantages and making a conscientious decision to use the power bestowed by structurally violent social stratifications can yield positive outcomes.

Significance

Among the many reasons S-CAR is unique is the fact that a large proportion of PhD alums have gone on to create or run NGOs. We're sending off people to both study conflicts *and* try to "interrupt cycles of violence" (SCAR 2018[22]) that perpetuate the conflicts we research. And this is exactly what we should be doing; not just as a school, but our entire field as well. Each CAR PhD has had the privilege of decades of advanced training and education; it's incumbent upon each of us to put our expertise to work in the service of ameliorating sources of violent conflict. This does not mean I advocate particular actions or interventions- as a field comprised of researchers, academics and activists from regions and circumstances throughout the globe, it would be ridiculous— and pragmatically impossible— to argue CAR professionals should approach their work with a unified set of techniques or goals. However, the training we undergo and the specialized lenses we develop through our studies give us expertise that can benefit those caught within the conflicts we study. We must take a brave leap from the safety of academic inquiry to the uncertainty of practical action.

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[22] scar.gmu.edu

This is the responsibility which comes with the opportunities our privilege has afforded; "It is one thing to critique the world, it's another thing to build the world. And while it's important to deconstruct and to understand at a deep level and to take apart, you do that so it sets you up to build again....the solution part of the work, the imagination part of the work is actually some of the core part of this work" (McKesson, Pod Save the People, May 30, 2017).

Grounding the Theoretical: Urban Renewal as a CAR Case Study

The empirical case study that grounds my argument focuses on the tactics and outcomes of exploiting whiteness and affluence as the head of a community non-profit in Baltimore, MD. Baltimore is one of a handful of cities attempting to leverage the socioeconomic clout of middle/upper class families to build stable consumer and tax base (Brophy 2014[23], Kroopnick 2008[24]), in turn drawing new industry and jobs (Thompson

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[23]Brophy, Paul C. "A Market-Oriented Approach to Neighborhoods." In Revitalizing American Cities, edited by Wachter Susan M. and Zeuli Kimberly A., 149-67. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/j.ctt5hjm5f.11.

[24]Kroopnick, Michael. "Affording Baltimore: Public-Private Approaches to Workforce Housing." The Urban Lawyer 40, no. 2 (2008): 331-73. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/23800787.

2013[25]), creating a "virtuous cycle" (Rydin 2014[26], Taylor and Lybbert 2015[27]). Starting

in the 1960s, policymakers in urban areas (Vinovskis 1999[28], Rossell and Hawley 1982[29])

launched a series of concerted efforts to retain young families through several public

initiatives. In Baltimore, these measures included incentivized home buying programs

and tax abatement options for renovating run-down historic homes (Brophy 2014[30],

Kroopnick 2008[31]), an influx of financial resources into the few majority white schools

(Baltimore Sun 2016[32], Rich 2009[33]), and a revitalization of the city's once seedy Inner

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[25] Thomson, Dale E. "Targeting Neighborhoods, Stimulating Markets: The Role of Political, Institutional, and Technical Factors in Three Cities." In The City After Abandonment, edited by DEWAR MARGARET and THOMAS JUNE MANNING, 104-32. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/j.ctt3fh93k.8.

[26] Rydin, Yvonne. "Communities, Networks and Social Capital." In Community Action and Planning: Contexts, Drivers and Outcomes, edited by Gallent Nick and Ciaffi Daniela, 21-40. Bristol: Bristol University Press, 2014. doi:10.2307/j.ctt1t89cwg.7.

[27] Taylor, J. Edward, and Travis J. Lybbert. "What Development Economics Is All About." In Essentials of Development Economics, 1-22. University of California Press, 2015. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/10.1525/j.ctt13x1gg1.6.

[28] Vinovskis, Maris A. "The Origins and Development of the Even Start Program." In History and Educational Policymaking, 115-42. Yale University Press, 1999. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/j.ctt32bv7f.9.

[29] Rossell, Christine H., and Willis D. Hawley. "Policy Alternatives for Minimizing White Flight." Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis 4, no. 2 (1982): 205-22. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/1164014.

[30]Brophy, Paul C. "A Market-Oriented Approach to Neighborhoods." In Revitalizing American Cities, edited by Wachter Susan M. and Zeuli Kimberly A., 149-67. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/j.ctt5hjm5f.11.

[31]Kroopnick, Michael. "Affording Baltimore: Public-Private Approaches to Workforce Housing." The Urban Lawyer 40, no. 2 (2008): 331-73. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/23800787.

[32] https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/opinion/oped/bs-ed-thomas-johnson-20161123-story.html

[33] Rich, Meghan Ashlin. ""It Depends on How You Define Integrated": Neighborhood Boundaries and Racial Integration in a Baltimore Neighborhood." Sociological Forum 24, no. 4 (2009): 828-53. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/40542598.Copy

Harbor (Weiner 2011[34]) into a Disneyfied entertainment district, complete with Ripley's Believe It or Not, a children's museum, a sciences center, a four-story Barnes and Noble, and the National Aquarium. Private developers have made huge investments in these improvements, spurned in part by the city's massive tax deferment programs for new infrastructure and industry to reinvigorate the city's moldering industrial districts and flagging job market. Drawn in part by the snazzy new developments, revitalized schools (Baltimore Sun 2014[35]), and the promise of hip urban living (Eff 2013[36]), more and more couples with young children are choosing to stay downtown, bucking the decades long trend of families with the means to do so fleeing the city the second they procreate (Boustan 2017[37], Rossell 1975[38]).

Concurrent to efforts spearheaded by the city and the private sector, in the fall of 2007, a PhD candidate and mother of two living in Butcher's Hill/Upper Fells Point - one of the hyper-segregated city's more socioeconomically and racially diverse areas (Eff

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[34] Weiner, Deborah R. "Pivot in Perception: The Impact of the 1968 Riots on Three Baltimore Business Districts." In Baltimore '68: Riots and Rebirth in an American City, edited by Nix Elizabeth M., Elfenbein Jessica I., and Hollowak Thomas L., 180-207. Temple University Press, 2011. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/j.ctt14bt6jv.16.

[35] https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/baltimore-city/bs-md-school-family-fair-20141108-story.html

[36] Eff, Elaine. "POST-MILLENNIAL EAST BALTIMORE." In The Painted Screens of Baltimore: An Urban Folk Art Revealed, 214-27. University Press of Mississippi, 2013. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/j.ctt2tvp8w.16.

[37] Boustan, Leah Platt. "Black Migration, White Flight." In Competition in the Promised Land: Black Migrants in Northern Cities and Labor Markets, 93-121. Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2017. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/j.ctt1q1xrc2.8.

[38] Rossell, Christine H. "School Desegregation and White Flight." Political Science Quarterly 90, no. 4 (1975): 675-95. doi:10.2307/2148750.

2013)- began assembling other parents to create an organization that would serve as a voice for the growing number of people who were choosing to raise families in downtown Baltimore. Transplanted to Baltimore for her husband's residency at The Johns Hopkins Hospital in 2004, she was an active community volunteer, helping to found one of the city's most in demand charter school and facilitating the SEBaltCityKids parent network, an online group that served as a hub for learning what was happening across the city that impacted kids and parents. Through this work, she recognized the need for a single cohesive group representing downtown families' interests, and reached out to two other locally active moms engaged in similar work in other parts of the city to join the effort (DBFA Founding Documents 2007).

In 2007, the three pulled together a founding Board of Directors (BOD) and formally incorporated the Downtown Baltimore Family Alliance (DBFA) as a 501c3 organization. DBFA's original mission was to "foster and promote family life in Baltimore's city center" to "cultivate community by connecting families with one another and with the resources to take full advantage of life in downtown Baltimore." The group would work towards this mission by "partner[ing] with local government, business and nonprofit organizations to develop family-wise programs and policies, including initiatives for strong public schools and early childhood programs, enhanced public safety and environmental quality, and expanded recreational and cultural opportunities" (DBFA Founding Documents, 2007).

Immediate Job Opening, Politically Innocuous Do-Gooders Encouraged to Apply

In summer of 2015, I was approached by a member of the BOD about DBFA's

opening for their executive director role. After eight years of operation, the group had

amassed a membership base of nearly 3,000 families, had worked to increase enrollment

in three public schools that had transformed into some of the district's most sought after

options, and had helped found the Baltimore Education Coalition (BEC), with whom

DBFA had successfully advocated to garner over $1B in state funding for Baltimore City

Public Schools (BCPS). While the positive impact of the group's work was impressive,

their communications outreach and messaging were discordant with the lived realities of

the bulk of city parents.

Their stated goal to reach "families of choice"— families with means to live

outside the city but chose to stay— to glamorize city living through boozy moms' night

outs, partnered with haphazard engagement of fellow BEC member groups including the

ACLU and BCPS, was off-putting to the point of offense to many parents of color who

had been involved with the organization's founding. The overarching guiding principle of

the group was that "as the tide comes in, all the ships will rise." In keeping with urban

retention initiatives touting the promise of economic revitalization (Brophy 2014[39],

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[39]Brophy, Paul C. "A Market-Oriented Approach to Neighborhoods." In Revitalizing American Cities, edited by Wachter Susan M. and Zeuli Kimberly A., 149-67. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/j.ctt5hjm5f.11.

Kroopnick 2008[40], Thompson 2013[41]) retaining families of choice committed to urban living would translate to a better city for all.

From my vantage point as an outsider to the NPO and a recent transplant to Baltimore, this philosophy had echoes of Reagan's trickle down economics, and neocolonialist overtones; centuries of institutionalized racism and poverty could be overcome if only Baltimore could hold on to families with social capital and higher-education. Sprinkle a little white wealthy pixie dust and - *voila!* - a city renewed!

When I sat down to discuss the opportunity with the then-executive director, Dr. John Bullock, a black political science professor and dad of two, we talked openly about the reputation these tactics had led to even though DBFA was being led by a black father living in a neighborhood in predominantly black, overwhelmingly poor West Baltimore. He and I spoke of the opportunity I would have to steer the organization to a more explicit agenda around antiracist work. As a white mom in an affluent area, I would be seen as a politically innocuous do-gooder, rather than an aggrieved activist who would make trouble for the mayor and private sector developers (the fun coda to this story is that Dr. Bullock now serves in the City Council, and sits on DBFA's boards, so we get to have fun making trouble for private sector developers and the mayor together!).

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[40]Kroopnick, Michael. "Affording Baltimore: Public-Private Approaches to Workforce Housing." The Urban Lawyer 40, no. 2 (2008): 331-73. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/ 23800787.

[41] Thomson, Dale E. "Targeting Neighborhoods, Stimulating Markets: The Role of Political, Institutional, and Technical Factors in Three Cities." In The City After Abandonment, edited by DEWAR MARGARET and THOMAS JUNE MANNING, 104-32. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/j.ctt3fh93k.8.

My privilege, partnered with sexism about the political acumen and efficacy of women- mothers especially- gave me a platform to say and do things he could not. I could exploit my privilege and position to move forward an agenda that had the potential to mobilize other socioeconomically privileged white families to address longstanding sources of institutionalized racism and systemic poverty.

Worth the Risk?

While I was skeptical of the efficacy and motives of retaining "families of choice," it was hard to argue that any and all creative tactics for addressing Baltimore's critically dropping population should be on the table. As cities like Cleveland, Detroit, and Baltimore continue to flounder (Biles 2018[42]) in the aftermath of America's industrial decline (James 1995[43], Sugrue 1993[44]), the need for effective urban revitalization efforts has reached a crisis point. The racial, economic, and gendered fallout of urban decay in post-industrial cities have spawned disastrous consequences for public safety, education, and neighborhood cohesion that disproportionately harm minority communities.

In recent decades, policy makers, economists, and urban developers alike have heralded the integration of middle and upper-class families as a panacea for building

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[42] BILES, ROGER. "The Decline of Decatur." In Illinois History: A Reader, edited by HUBBARD MARK, 281-305. University of Illinois Press, 2018. doi:10.5406/j.ctv80cbdt.17.

[43] James, Franklin J. "Urban Economies: Trends, Forces, and Implications for the President's National Urban Policy." Cityscape 1, no. 2 (1995): 67-123. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/20868381.

[44] Sugrue, Thomas J. "The Structures of Urban Poverty: The Reorganization of Space and Work in Three Periods of American History." In The "Underclass" Debate: Views from History, edited by Katz Michael B., 85-117. PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY: Princeton University Press, 1993. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/j.ctv301fg8.7

better cities (Brophy 2014[45], Kroopnick 2008[46], Thompson 2013[47], Rich 2009[48]);

reversing decades of declining urban populations, bolstering tax bases insufficient to

support city infrastructure and services, and pumping economic capital into lackluster

consumer markets. These intended outcomes are built on the implicit proposition that an

influx of affluent families will catalyze improvements to city services and infrastructure,

leading to better quality of life for all.

But initiatives working to build critical mass of city dwelling families (not-so)

tacitly communicate that long-time city residents of color raising children are politically

expendable- after all, families already *do* comprise a large swath of urban dwellers. These

families, however, are overwhelmingly economically disadvantaged, black, and- in the

age of mass incarceration- headed by single women. The theory that retaining "top

20%" (Reeves 2017) families will revitalize city resources- rather than displacing those

most dependent on city services- rests on the questionable presumption that upper/middle

class families will choose to utilize public services. Upper/middle-class (and thus also

[45]Brophy, Paul C. "A Market-Oriented Approach to Neighborhoods." In Revitalizing American Cities, edited by Wachter Susan M. and Zeuli Kimberly A., 149-67. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/j.ctt5hjm5f.11.

[46]Kroopnick, Michael. "Affording Baltimore: Public-Private Approaches to Workforce Housing." The Urban Lawyer 40, no. 2 (2008): 331-73. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/23800787.

[47] Thomson, Dale E. "Targeting Neighborhoods, Stimulating Markets: The Role of Political, Institutional, and Technical Factors in Three Cities." In The City After Abandonment, edited by DEWAR MARGARET and THOMAS JUNE MANNING, 104-32. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/j.ctt3fh93k.8.

[48] Rich, Meghan Ashlin. ""It Depends on How You Define Integrated": Neighborhood Boundaries and Racial Integration in a Baltimore Neighborhood." Sociological Forum 24, no. 4 (2009): 828-53. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/40542598.Copy

predominantly white, given the intrinsic relationship between race and class in U.S.

cities) integration in public schools, pools, parks and transit services translates to more

money and social capital in these systems. But many privileged families have means to

opt-out: they can send their children to private schools, pay for members-only

recreational facilities, and eschew neighborhoods riddled with drug related violent crime,

reinforcing divides between the haves and have-nots. Rather than improving public

resources by pouring time and social capital into schools, transit, and neighborhoods,

retaining families who favor elite pay-to-play options further exacerbates sources of

structural violence and segregation.

What Would It Mean to Do It Well?

While mulling over whether the risks of engaging in family retention was

problematic to the point of declining the job, a colleague posed a question that ultimately

led to me accepting the position: If retention work done poorly can lead to harmful

outcomes, what was the transformative potential of doing it well? What could the

organization's impact look like if they undertook their work with critical attention to

power, and sought opportunities for exploiting sociopolitical privilege to change the city?

"Families of choice" might be a stand in to skirt uncomfortable acknowledgement of race

and wealth, but middle-class and white flight are real, and are central factors in

Baltimore's hyper-segregation and concentrated poverty (Boustan[49], Eff 2013,

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[49] Boustan, Leah Platt. "Black Migration, White Flight." In Competition in the Promised Land: Black Migrants in Northern Cities and Labor Markets, 93-121. Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2017. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/j.ctt1q1xrc2.8.

Frey 2018[50], Rich and Stoker 2014[51]). What if retention was no longer viewed as an end in and of itself, but rather a means to a larger end of radically reshaping the resources that prompt families to consider relocating in the first place? Might it be possible to leverage these families' privilege to uplift the city resources for families of all backgrounds?

Having now served in the executive director role for more than two years, I've seen evidence that it's possible both to harness unearned sociopolitical clout whiteness and wealth affords. I've watched this play out in many small ways- at a town hall where the police commissioner being compelled to answer the question of a black town hall attendee who he'd shut down when the white, socially connected and politically influential board president of my organization pushed the commissioner to address the man's question- and through one very large public policy win to that forced the governor, mayor, and state legislator to provide an additional $100M in funding to cover a structural deficit facing the critically underfunded BCPS.

Into Action

In mid-December 2016, BCPS CEO Dr. Sonja Santelises announced a $129M funding shortfall that would lead to over 1,000 teacher layoffs (Baltimore Sun 2016).

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[50] FREY, WILLIAM H. "Melting Pot Cities and Suburbs." In Diversity Explosion: How New Racial Demographics Are Remaking America, 149-66. WASHINGTON, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2018. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/10.7864/j.ctt1vjqnns.12.

[51] Rich, Michael J., and Robert P. Stoker. "BALTIMORE'S EMPOWERMENT ZONE." In Collaborative Governance for Urban Revitalization: Lessons from Empowerment Zones, 164-97. ITHACA; LONDON: Cornell University Press, 2014. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/10.7591/j.ctt5hh1bt.11.

Recognizing the strong potential that these layoffs would be the final straw for upper/
middle-class parents already leery of the long term sustainability and quality of the public
schools, my staff and board got out in front of the issue quickly to mobilize parents, using
the opportunity to empower them to make change as a way of getting them to increase
their emotional ties to the city. If parents were personally invested in the success of the
schools, we thought, they would be less likely to leave over concerns of school quality.
We needed this emotional investment not just from the standpoint of our mission to retain
families. This was a system-wide financial sustainability issue as well, given that state
funding was allocated on a per-pupil basis. For every student that left the system, the
district lost between $8,000-$19,000 in state funding (Department of Legislative Services
2018[52]), depending on the poverty level of the student who un-enrolled. The 950 students
who left the system in AY2015-2016 (Maryland State Department of Education 2016[53]),
the year following the riots surrounding Freddie Gray's death, had translated into a $27M
loss in state funding (ACLU 2016).

DBFA launched our funding initiatives while working with our partners in the
BEC to create a city-wide initiative, which increased the impact of our work while
simultaneously demonstrating that we had our s*&t together to big league players like
ACLU. Our successful mobilization efforts turned out over 1,000 parents, teachers,
students and elected officials for a rally at the Inner Harbor, providing a powerful visual

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[52]http://dls.maryland.gov/pubs/prod/Educ/OverviewOfEducationFundingInMaryland.pdf

[53] http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/Documents/adequacystudy/
AdequacyStudyReportFinal112016.pdf

of a majority white group of citizens painted against the backdrop of the gleaming skyscrapers that housed corporations that drive the entire economy of Maryland.

We followed the rally with a barrage of phone calls to the mayor, the governor, city council members, and any media organization with a public phone number or email. We deployed small groups- each with at least one black and one white member- to visit every member of the State Senate Budget and Taxation Committee and House Appropriations Committee, illustrating the financial impact the gap would have statewide. As we increased our mobilization efforts, we drew more and more families of color to join the alliance, once again demonstrating that our focus on social justice would not only move the needle on the actual issue but help overcome the public perception that we were only concerned with issues impacting wealthy white families.

Once all the dust settled, DBFA helped the broader coalition of education advocates to secure $100M in funding- a historically unprecedented assistance package, made all the more impressive because Gov. Larry Hogan (Hogan) framed the deficit as a result of fiscal mismanagement, rather than structural inequity. During a radio interview on February 18, 2017, Hogan said, "It's simply a gap between what they'd love to have and what the legislature says they're supposed to get," before calling "the school district's financial situation an "absolute disaster." Hogan explained during his interview that, "There's just no fiscal accountability and we want to help the city in every way we can, but we're not just going to write blank checks," (WBAL 2017).

Our advocacy ran counter to this framing, instead positioning the gap within the larger context of legislative changes to the funding formula. The challenge we—- along with every other education advocacy group in Baltimore—- faced was messaging a very nuanced legislative change *vis-a-vis* Hogan's simple message that Baltimore City couldn't manage its finances.

The legislative gap to which Hogan alluded was the result of a change in the state's funding formula during the global financial crisis in 2008 (Maryland State Education Association 2008). Prior to 2008, the state funding formula paced legislative appropriations with the rate of inflation, with various "weights"— the legislative formula's terminology for additional financial allocations—-per pupil based on poverty and special needs (Scafidi 2008). The Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act of 2002 established this formula, known in shorthand as the "Thornton Formula" for Dr. Alvin Thornton, who headed the state's commission to establish the legislative recommendations which were then adopted by Maryland state legislature (Maryland Department of Legislative Services 2008). The commission and resulting Thornton Formula were created in response to a 1994 ACLU lawsuit (*Bradford vs. Maryland State Board of Education*) brought forward on behalf of students in Baltimore City (Court of Appeals of Maryland, No. 85, Sept. Term, 2004). The massive time gap between the 1994 lawsuit and the adoption of Thornton Formula in 2002 speaks to the complexity of the legislative matters that led to the $129M shortfall.

Playing off Hogan's messaging that the city was a "disaster" provided us an out

for having to explain the legislative complexity, a feat that would complicate efforts to

mobilize community members. Instead of unpacking the financial data that showed the

gap was not a result of mismanagement (a finding concluded by a 2016 independent audit

that concluded the district's books were in order (BCPS Audited Financial Statement

2016)), we appealed to parents' emotional connections to their children's schools. DBFA

parents rallied around the "disaster" message, taking personal umbrage with the framing

that they would involve their children in an education system that was not up to snuff.

Parents took to social media with pictures of smiling white children in sunny classrooms,

posting photos with the hashtag #notadisaster.

We flagrantly exploited the fact that the majority of our members were white,

active voters and donors, and mobilized families to pester the crap out of the Baltimore

City Mayor, as well as State Delegates and Senators. We held a rally, *We March 4th*, that

drew nearly 1,000 predominantly white parents, teachers and students and called on

elected officials to step in and provide a supplemental budget (Baltimore Sun March 4,

2017). We held our rally in the Inner Harbor, which is home to some of the largest

corporations that comprise Maryland's economy (MD Department of Business and

Economic Development 2013[54]). During the rally, news crews and our own PR team

captured images of hundreds of white, affluent families protesting, with dozens of

downtown high-rise offices that comprise the state of Maryland's financial center in the

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[54] http://baltimorewaterfront.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Economic-Impact-Study.pdf

background. We took biracial teams of parents to the State House and met with legislators to talk about how the gap would impact families on a personal level. We explicitly focused on mobilizing white, affluent parents to highlight inequities that would disproportionately impact communities of color. As a result, we played a "pivotal role closing a historically unprecedented funding gap" (Cohen 2017). I lament the fact that leveraging whiteness was a key element of getting traction, but damn if it didn't work.

The Bigger Picture – CAR Praxis in the Age of Trump

Throughout the primary season, I was focused on increasing DBFA's sociopolitical clout and tracking our work in daily field diaries, and mostly writing off any possibility of a Trump presidency as a joke. The election was mostly something I was having fun with, in both my personal and professional life. I'd gleefully listen to conservative wonk Mike Murphy's podcast, laughing while he droned on about the "Orange Menace" (Murphy 2015[55]) I'd trade one-liners with colleagues at the ACLU and lobbying shops about how we needed to really "grab opportunities to expand women's healthcare" while grotesquely mimicking grabbing a woman's genitals, a la' Donald Trump's pronouncement that his fame afforded him the privilege to molest and assault women.

The evening of the election I packed up my toddler and headed to DC to watch the returns, having taken said toddler to the polls with me that afternoon and blubbered to my confused two-year-old that I was so proud to show him that a woman could be

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[55] https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/radio-free-gop-with-mike-murphy/id1127692601?mt=2

president. Around 11PM, we again packed the kid back into the car and headed home to Baltimore. My husband pointed out that if the city broke into riots once the election was called for Trump, we needed to be safe in the house before "shit starts to go down". He was not being dramatic- during the riots following Freddie Gray's death while in BPD custody, the National Guard had been using the stadiums as a muster point (WSJ 2015[56]). My home in Baltimore was about 1,500 meters from home plate at Camden Yards. This was hitting close to home.

I fell into a fitful sleep around midnight, having brought my kid into my bed. I wanted to be close to him and feel the safety of knowing that some things would stay constant. Around 2:30am I sleepily checked 538's blog on my phone and fell back to sleep realizing I lived in a very different country than I had thought I did just a few hours earlier. My fellow countrymen had put a racist rapist into the most powerful position in the world. A dog named Donald Trump had just caught a mail truck called the American Presidency.

The people who seemed to grapple most with the upset victory were Trump's inner circle and the President-Elect. Wild announcements of senior staff were announced to make clear that there were grown-ups in the room- Look! We found an openly avowed white nationalist to be Senior Advisor! All of a sudden, my carefully crafted idea of documenting 'theory informed practice,' analyzing my actions to understand how the

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[56] https://www.wsj.com/articles/national-guard-deployed-in-baltimore-amid-riots-after-freddie-grays-funeral-1430218096

implications of my work and refining tactics in real time based on this analysis, went out the window.

Reflection be damned, I wanted action. Seeing dozens of social media posts by my organization's members, I quickly threw together a "community conversation" for the evening of November 9th, for our membership to come together to discuss how to talk to our kids. In preparation to facilitate this discussion without losing my shit, I was on the phone with colleagues for several hours that morning. When shock gave way to exhaustion, I went home and took a 30 minute nap, asking my brain and any heavenly deities who might be listening to move me past sadness and shock, to a place of productive grief. I woke up pissed and ready to roll. My husband turned on the theme song to Tombstone, while I ran through the house, shouting to "tell Trump I'm coming, and hell's coming with me!"

On November 8th and all the months prior from the time I started my job in September 2015, my work had felt meaningful, but not urgent. My NPO was doing good work, but, as I told my staff often, we weren't the University of Maryland Shock Trauma Center just down the street from our office, which, coincidentally, was the place where Freddie Gray died from the injuries he sustained at the hands of the Baltimore Police Department a year prior.

The morning of November 9th, the work suddenly felt urgent.

Since the election, there have been glaring, emotionally charged intersections of my work in Baltimore, the theoretical implications of exploiting whiteness to transform

structural violence, and the national climate. Less than twenty-four hours after Heather

Heyer was mowed down by a white supremacist who plowed his car into a crowd of

counter protesters gathered to oppose a rally of white nationalists, Nazis, and KKK

members following the Alt-Right demonstration in Charlottesville, VA, the playground at

Baltimore City Public School Commodore John Rogers Elementary was set on fire and

burned to the ground. The school serves 707 students. All but 32 of whom are black.

Quite candidly, I'm furious. I feel compelled to include even a brief analytical

framing to firmly plant this dissertation within the context of CAR scholarship. In my

dissertation research proposal, I poured over other scholars' work on white flight and

school funding, concluding my literature review by saying, "*While the pervasiveness of*

direct violence against Blacks within the U.S., such as lynching, has obviously declined in

the decades following the Civil Rights movement, structural violence continues to limit

many Blacks access to the same opportunities as Whites."

I felt a physical sense of grief re-reading this sentence while pulling together the

final notes for this introduction. I wrote the bulk of my proposal in January and February

of 2016; the idea of a Trump Presidency was still a hilarious cocktail party talking point

amongst my social crowd. At the time, it felt necessary to go into a detailed explanation

that positioned a dissertation exploring root causes of institutionalized racism in

American cities as "real" conflict. This no longer feels necessary.

The Monday following the domestic terrorist incident in Charlottesville, former President Obama aide Jon Lovett said, "The most dangerous force in American history is violent racism with tacit permission from the government" (Pod Save America, 8/14/17).

And yet….

A quick review of dissertations produced in the past decade by top CAR programs suggests 'conflict' exists primarily in regions not native to scholars in the Global North. Studies are grounded in geographical contexts around the globe- with the notable exception of the United States, Canada, and Western Europe. This lack of focus on structural conflict is curious, given the earliest scholarly works of the CAR field are rooted in a commitment to query systems of power and how they operate to exclude some and privilege others (Burton 1979; Galtung 1969). Careful attention to the "'little' violences produced in the structures of everyday life" (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois 2004:19) illuminates power and privilege, making visible other forms of violence- poverty, disenfranchisement, hunger- that tend to be classified as 'not conflict' in CAR scholarship.

Avruch (2013) points out that the CAR field has nebulous boundaries; our strength as a field draws from our willingness to leverage research findings from myriad scholarly disciplines, as well as pragmatic lessons learned from attempts to ameliorate social malaise through public policies, international coalitions, and grassroots activism, no name just a few of the approaches CAR practitioners employ. This strength of our

field comes with a challenging flipside when attempting to delineate what characterizes a CAR dissertation.

Structural violence provides a conceptual framework for recognizing violence as an operational system that constrains individuals' abilities to survive. Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois (2004) argue that violence cannot be understood as an "it" that can be "readily objectified and quantified so that a 'check list' can be drawn up with positive criteria for defining any particular act as violence" (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois 2004:2). Violence, they assert, must rather be understood as complex social processes that limit individuals' safety and autonomy, as well as physical violence committed against an individual by either another individual or as a result of geopolitical conflict that endangers individuals' physical, emotional and psychological well-being.

Conceptualizing violence in this way makes visible the ways urban planning policies have subjugated, marginalized, or fostered physical violence against racial minorities and women headed households. Growing public outcries to address the pernicious effects of structural racism in the US has prompted a sense of urgency among urban policy makers to counteract decades- centuries, in Baltimore's case— of urban development policies that have reified racist sentiments into entrenched racial disparities

(O'Connor 2015[57], Matthew, Bowen, Reeves, Rodrigue 2017[58]). The history of cities'

development in the US is, in many ways, a history of bigotry and racism made incarnate

in crumbling infrastructure, failing schools and paternalistic aid programs that propagate

racial and gender disparities. The lingering effects of 'block busting', white flight and

explicit segregation policies is evident in cities across the United States (Boston 2017[59],

Camp, Pulido and Clyde 2017[60], Coates[61], Orser 1994[62]).

The cumulative effects of these informal practices and formalized policies- which

themselves are relatively benign in the more-than-three-century span of Baltimore's

violence against black men and women- incalculably inform everyday life in Baltimore.

There was never a day, neither in my tenure as DBFA's executive director, nor as a

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[57] O'Connor, Alice. "People and Places: Neighborhood as a Strategy of Urban Development from the Progressive Era to Today." In The Return of the Neighborhood as an Urban Strategy, edited by PAGANO MICHAEL A., 69-102. University of Illinois Press, 2015. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/10.5406/j.ctt174d27j.7.

[58] Matthew, Dayna Bowen, Richard V. Reeves, and Edward Rodrigue. "Time for Justice: Tackling Race Inequalities in Health and Housing." In Brookings Big Ideas for America, edited by O'HANLON MICHAEL E., 28-46. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2017. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/10.7864/j.ctt1kk66tr.7.

[59] Boustan, Leah Platt. "Black Migration, White Flight." In Competition in the Promised Land: Black Migrants in Northern Cities and Labor Markets, 93-121. Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2017. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/j.ctt1q1xrc2.8.

[60] "CONCLUSION: The Cornerstone of a Third Reconstruction." In Development Drowned and Reborn: The Blues and Bourbon Restorations in Post-Katrina New Orleans, edited by Camp Jordan T. and Pulido, Laura, by Woods, Clyde, 291-98. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2017. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/j.ctt1g2km6t.17.

[61] Coates, Ta-Nehisi. "The Case for Reparations." In The Best American Magazine Writing 2015, edited by Sid Holt for the American Society of Magazine Editors, 3-49. Columbia University Press, 2015. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/10.7312/asme16959.5.

[62] Orser, W. Edward. "The Legacy of Blockbusting." In Blockbusting in Baltimore: The Edmondson Village Story, 160-81. University Press of Kentucky, 1994. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/j.ctt130hvjg.10.

relatively affluent white mom living in a predominantly black, predominantly impoverished city, that I did not think about race. It was a heavy feeling of physical weight, one that informs every professional email I write and every conversation-personal or work related- I have, be it with a store clerk or a corporate executive. Efforts to retain upper/middle-class families are playing out against the backdrop of generations of "invisible genocides," difficult to perceive because they are "right before our eyes and therefore simply taken for granted" (Scheper-Hughes 1996). To conceive of this work as separate from conflict resolution is to render invisible 300-plus years of violence against black men and women who have passed through Baltimore, be it as slaves sold further south, or students sold short by a failing school system.

Methods and Methodology

Baltimore is not unique in its efforts to retain upper/middle-class families (Bloomfield Cucchiara 2013, Woldoff 2011[63]), prompted by the assumption that as the tide comes in, all the ships will rise, as these families contribute to a strong consumer class and talented workforce that may spur greater economic stability for the city overall. Sociologist Maia Bloomfield Cucchiara (2013) critically examines the outcomes of efforts similar to DBFA in Philadelphia's Center City, basing her analysis on a two-year ethnography of a school where savvy customer-service focused outreach by the school principal to middle-class parents turned a floundering 'inner-city' school into a highly

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[63] Woldoff, Rachael A. "CONCLUSIONS: Understanding the Cultural Dynamics of Neighborhood Change." In White Flight/Black Flight: The Dynamics of Racial Change in an American Neighborhood, 213-30. ITHACA; LONDON: Cornell University Press, 2011. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/10.7591/j.ctt7zhhw.13.

desirable 'public' school. In the process, Cucchiara argued, middle-class families' values

and assumptions of what a 'good' school looks like ran roughshod over the wants and

opinions of families who had long been served by the school. Her work raised

uncomfortable questions about citizenship and worth, about whose voices matter and

whose don't, and the tie between market-driven solutions to social problems and

socioeconomic segregation.

Cucchiara's evidence-based critiques echo the gut reactions I had when I was first

approached by my org to apply for the executive director role in which I now serve. The

idea that middle-class involvement would yield benefits for all, rather than simply push

out lower-income families (often headed by single black women, raising further questions

about the role of gender as a mechanism for stratifying social privilege) immediately

struck me as suspect. But traditional ethnography left me with few useful tools to revisit

my colleague's question- what would it mean to do this well- as my work unfolded. After

all, how do you do a critical ethnography of your own organization?

My methodological quandary prompted further questions: How do you conduct

research when you are viewed as practitioner first, researcher second? What does it mean

to take feminist critiques about bias and subjectivity and apply them in real time?

Wrestling with what reflective practice means when representing an organization with

limited credibility to spear social justice efforts is confusing, and scary. I needed to

approach the work with critical attention to my own positionally (Andrews 2005[64],

Danelo[65], Ricker 2018[66]) and awareness of how my efforts would be viewed by black and

brown parents who had been justifiably offended by DBFA's prior outreach efforts.

Luker (2010) points out that most social science fields deify "'unbiased' empirical

work as the gold standard of research, positing that divorcing researchers' habitus from

their paradigmatic schema is something that is both possible and desirable. Setting aside

feminist critiques (Cobb 2013; DeVault 1999; Dwyer 2011; Du Bois 1983; Harding 1986;

Lorber 2010; Lott 1981; Reinharz 1992) of research methods that attempt to accomplish

this disconnect in the service of presumed impartiality, I contend that what makes CAR

research more useful than other disciplines is our explicit commitment to leveraging the

findings of our research to change the very phenomena we study. We believe that rigor

and partiality are not mutually exclusive, that critical analysis need not be separated from

practice prompted by our critiques.

At its heart, this theory-driven practice dissertation has been a laboratory for

considering practical means to effectuate changes in Baltimore City Public Schools

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[64] Andrews, William L. "Before Positionality." In White Scholars/African American Texts, edited by LONG LISA A., 81-86. NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY; LONDON: Rutgers University Press, 2005. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/j.ctt5hj0dr.11.

[65] Danelo, David J. "Developing Your Research Style." In The Field Researcher's Handbook: A Guide to the Art and Science of Professional Fieldwork, 17-30. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2017. doi:10.2307/j.ctt1ps317t.5.

[66] Ricker, Britta. "Reflexivity, Positionality, and Rigor in the Context of Big Data Research." In Thinking Big Data in Geography: New Regimes, New Research, edited by Thatcher Jim, Eckert Josef, and Shears Andrew, 70-88. Lincoln; London: University of Nebraska Press, 2018. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/j.ctt21h4z6m.9.

(BCPS) and neighborhoods disjointed by race. It has also been a lab for experimenting and tweaking and refining reflective practice models to conduct analysis of my own work during practice. My goal has been to create a pragmatic 'roadmap' highlighting what tactics can best leverage privilege to catalyze inclusive urban renewal, and create a model that can help future practitioners steer around potholes relevant to their own work.

Using a double-loop reflective practice model (Schön 1983, Gould 2010, Rein and Schön 1996), I began evaluating the outcome of my organization's efforts starting in early spring 2016. Keeping a regular practitioner field journal, I recorded my actions, meetings, phone calls, written correspondence, and other interactions, and evaluating how these activities moved forward, undermined, and/or complicated efforts to engage upper/ middle-class families in community building, particularly our work to catalyze greater middle/upper class parental involvement in city schools. I kept field notes on three categories: First, my overall impressions and thoughts on what had struck me as important the day before: *Was I having a strong emotional reaction to something? Did I encounter anything that had surprised me? Was there anything that struck me as out-of-the ordinary, or something I just couldn't get out of my mind?* Second, all the things I had done the day prior. I would go line by line through my calendar, and take notes on each meeting, block of time working on a project, or particular action— a rally in Annapolis or march around State Center in West Baltimore— in which I had participated. Third, I took notes and speculated about the ways in which I thought each of these actions connected

back to my overarching question, considering how these actions reveled something about the ways privilege could be leveraged to move an issue forward.

This was the first "loop" of the double loop- if I take "X" action, I get "Y" result. The field diaries I've documented over the past two years are the raw data I used for the second "loop"— X action leads to Y result, and the deeper analysis I conducted once I incorporated the Cheldelin-Lucas Nestled Framework into the process. I will go into this in greater detail in theoretical framing chapter that follows this introduction.

Data Collection

The bulk of the data from which I draw my conclusions are primary sources from my field dairies. The other primary sources upon which I build my central argument are social media posts regarding race, class and gender in Baltimore, both directly regarding DBFA's work, or indirectly highlighting social constructs which influence the outcomes of our efforts. In addition to these primary data, I have included direct quotes from newspaper articles regarding DBFA's school funding work and antiracist efforts. I have also drawn from field notes I made at public events where press was present. Finally, I occasionally pull direct text from my emails, using only portions of emails that I wrote. I have not included responses from my interlocutors. I have not included direct or indirect quotes from meetings, phone calls, or traditional ethnographic field methods.

Data Analysis

Keeping a daily record has allowed me to "obtain accurate and authentic observations" of progress being made throughout the process, while also "allow[ing] for

an in-depth analysis of how [my own] various psychological processes" influence the research/practice process (Ciere, Jaarsma, Visser, Sanderman, Snippe, Fleer 2015; Meth 2003). These reflections have helped me understand the implications of my own subjectivity and location in relationship to the phenomena I have been studying, which are "simultaneously and complexly connected, by intended and unintended consequences" (Marcus 1999, 551).

Data analysis has been guided heavily by grounded theory methodology. Jacobs (1961) emphasizes that to understand the ecology of any city, researchers must focus on the social processes taking place in the city. "Everything is in flux…It does not do to study things and expect them to explain much in themselves. Things have significance as participants in processes". Grounded theory offered an ideal approach for this inquiry as it homes in on social processes underlying phenomena observed (Glaser 1992) and places emphasis on processes of social construction (Charmaz 1990). This approach has allowed me to understand the social power relationships undergirding the changes unfolding in Baltimore, allowing new theoretical insights to emerge from data observed, rather than constraining my observations and analysis in the context of pre-established theoretical frameworks. Analyzing the ways in which private development and school choice police been successful- and in other ways harmful- have contributed to my understanding of the ways social constructs of power influence the dynamics unfolding. As data analysis and collection have in some ways happened simultaneously, as is common in grounded theory models, I have been refining data collection questions to better reflect these social

processes as they emerge, focusing more and more on the events surrounding the school

funding fight and DBFA's antiracist work. This process has yielded more salient data

(Charmaz 1988) as I gained more information.

The Case for Field Diaries as Data

My use of keeping a field diary to collect and reflect on experiences in the process

of conducting this work builds on the success of field diaries in both qualitative and

quantitative research methods. Any good Trekkie can expound upon the indispensable

value of keeping a Captain's Log; it's exciting that social and STEM sciences are now

leveraging the power of field diaries as tools for reflective practice. The medical,

sociological, anthropological and psychological fields have been employing practitioner

diaries to capture learning processes and practitioner reflections to understand the

potentials and pitfalls of various types of work being done in each unique field (Punch

2012; Ciere, Jaarsma, Visser, Sanderman, Snippe, Fleer 2015; Meth 2003). Regular

entries in field diaries are being recognized as rich data and "thick descriptions" (Geertz;

Marcus 1999) which "offer detailed insight into when and how learning phenomena are

experienced, how they vary over time and across different situations, and into the factors

that trigger, accompany or follow them" (Ciere, Jaarsma, Visser, Sanderman, Snippe,

Fleer 2015; Meth 2003). Field diaries also retain the immediacy of fieldwork (Punch

2012); reflection on the emotional impact of fieldwork can later be mined for

appreciating the shifting dynamics of research processes, which contributes to feelings of

"uncertainty (a lack of complete knowledge) about the forces that shape their practice and the location (and direction) of those forces" (Tim and Couldry 2007).

In the midst of field work over the course of this project- most especially evidenced in the public school funding battle and a public Safety Town Hall discussed in chapters three and four- the emotions surrounding my practice both complicated and contributed to my efficacy. Having field notes that document the visceral reactions I've experienced during this work has helped me glean insight on ways other practitioners can manage feelings of white fragility (DiAngelo 2011, 2018), which in some cases feels almost like a form of survivor guilt (Van Der Watt 2005[67]). Engaging in this work erodes the socially constructed veneer "that protects and insulates [whites] from race-based stress," that "builds white expectations for racial comfort while at the same time lowering the ability to tolerate racial stress" (DiAngelo 2011, 54).

Having field notes created an outlet for me to process my feelings and has hopefully yielded some helpful information for others to do the work of showing up and shutting up to better understand the lived reality of those marginalized and victimized by racist structures, not to mention the increasingly emboldened bigots who have felt empowered by Trump's rhetoric.

The use of field diaries- both kept by the researcher/practitioner and by study participants from a range of science fields- has come to be known as "intensive

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[67] Van Der Watt, Liese. "Witnessing Trauma in Post-Apartheid South Africa: The Question of Generational Responsibility." African Arts 38, no. 3 (2005): 26-93. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/3345920.

longitudinal methods" (Bolger and Laurenceau 2013; Ciere, Jaarsma, Visser, Sanderman, Snippe, Fleer 2015; Meth 2003). Intensive longitudinal methods (ILM) include a range of approaches, including daily diaries, experience sampling which snapshots participants' or researchers' mood or responses to stimuli at set intervals in time (hourly, daily, or weekly), and solicited open ended diaries that capture the experiences of researchers and/ or participants without specific prompting questions.

Across both the social and STEM sciences, field diaries are recognized as powerful tools for conducting rigorous research, especially research designed to understand what works and what doesn't when trying to measure the impact of practitioner approaches. As Bolger and Laurenceau argue in their work studying the use of diary methods in medical education, diary methods "enable researchers to study how and under which conditions learning in the healthcare setting occurs and in which way learning can be promoted. Hence, quantitative diary methods may contribute to theory development and the optimization of teaching methods", which can be leveraged in fields beyond medicine. These successful uses of diary methods for reflexive learning suggest that using a field diary is an ideal method for my project's data collection.

In addition to the advantages this method holds for yielding rich data for reflective practice, field diary methods offer advantages when considering the relationship between power and methodology. Feminist researchers have lauded open-ended diary approaches as powerful tools for giving voice to often marginalized populations, including women and LGBTQ communities (Meth 2003, Renzetti 1997;

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Cancan 1992), as they "offer the opportunity for respondents to define the boundaries of their shared knowledge, within, of course, the restrictive context established by the guidelines given on what is desired by the researcher" (Meth 2003). By not relying on pro-forma conceptions of what may (or may not) considered as important to researchers when designing surveys, diary methods "contribute towards a feminist analysis of social processes" (Meth 2003). I chose to use field diary method because of the myriad practical and theoretical upsides of this approach, and my curiosity to see how the method evolved over the course of my project. It has proven itself as a powerful means of documenting practice in real time.

The Pragmatics

At the outset of this project I was keeping a daily practitioner log detailing the actions and approaches I take daily. I did not have a particular focus on any vein of action at the start, for example focusing primarily on schools or antiracist work, because I wanted to have notes about even the most seemingly mundane work that in hindsight may prove to have been instrumental in building relationships or connections that furthered DBFA's agenda. I was plugging along with the daily field diary, my research and data collection having fallen into a nice rhythm around month two or three. I would wake up at 5AM or 6AM, taking an hour or two in the morning to reflect on the actions I had taken the day prior- the "researcher" part of CAR work- then spending the day 'in the field'- the "practitioner" part of our discipline.

In the months leading up to Trump's election, I was diligent keeping daily field dairies. After the election, I struggled to keep up with diaries as I went full tilt into increasing DBFA's influence in political arenas. My field notes became more sporadic, but also more robust. I have diaries that go on for 8 to 10 pages, capturing not just data on family retention efforts but also the emotions and work/life balance challenges of engaging in CAR work.

A More Useful Outcome

While at the time I was panicked about this shift, the result has been a more interesting, arguably more useful dissertation that delves into how to manage practical aspects of working in the CAR field and using one's work to best transform structural conflict. While I can see this in hindsight, at the time it was terrifying:

> *I'm falling so far behind that I am starting to panic. But I haven't gotten back into the swing of thing, and so now it's just catch up and [capturing] what's happening. I'm guessing that that's not good, but I think for right now it is what it is. I know that there's so much richness I could be capturing, and detail that's going to be important in the finish product, but I just don't think that there's anything more I can give at this point. I think I have to accept the fact that actually doing the work is more important or at least more pressing than the writing up of the work that I'm doing. (Field Note Diary March 13, 2017)*

The focus on family retention was supposed to be the dissertation itself, a consideration of how to best leverage family retention policies to influence sustainable, equitable urban renewal. Instead, this dissertation wrestles with deeper questions of the best role CAR practitioners, and the organizations we run, can intentionally exploit

disproportionate access and institutional advantages to upend sources of the conflicts we aim to transform.

This shift itself highlights the benefits of field diary method. As I mentioned earlier, one of the reasons I was drawn to try field diary method was the ability to capture not just action but feeling in the midst of practice, to use this information about researcher/practitioner subjectivity to better understand how to employ empathy in CAR practice while mitigating the possibility that our own emotions are undermining our efforts. This approach has pushed me to think about how to operationalize S-CAR's commitment to our stated mission to "interrupt cycles of violence," and how this avowed agenda, this 'having skin in the game', complicates our commitment to academic rigor.

This shift also captures a more universal lesson for researchers of all disciplines. Taking careful note of the ways in which our research meanders from our original intentions is itself data that can give rise to more nuanced research findings, and perhaps unforeseen breakthroughs. After all, what's the point of doing research if there's no room to be surprised? Why bother studying something if you're pretty sure you already know how things will play out, that you won't learn something unexpected along the way?

Methodological Contributions

My methods and methodological approaches for this project have been deeply informed by Smith-Lovin's (2000) assertion that sociologists should be striving to develop "the core understanding of a process that allows us to project future patterns," rather than concentrating "too much on generating complete understanding for a past

event" (2000:304). I can't overstate my agreement with her assertion that the goal of scientific, particularly sociological, explanation should be "to provide a simple, powerful model of how some process generates a large number of previously complex phenomena" (2000:301) that is "forward-looking" in nature (2000:302).

Prior to November 8th, 2016, I felt I was (at least in a very, very small way) thinking through ways to operationalize Smith-Lovin's advice. I hoped I was contributing something back to a field that has given me so much by tinkering around with reflective practice models that might better inform our conflict-resolution tactics.

In the spirit of full disclosure, any potential contribution to the field is no longer even on my mental radar. The possibility of nuclear war, or of my son's 46% Hispanic/ 27% black school being stormed by armed anti-immigrant white nationalists, consumes any energy I have beyond my professional commitments. My work hours are consumed by meetings with well-intended (white led) foundations giving me lectures on how white activists need to be "committed to listening" to black leaders, and then watching other well-intended leaders give a cursory nod to the black parents who turn out for community events, thanking them in words while dismissing them with inaction to the critiques they provide. My writing hours are now filled with pulling together statements of support rebuking violence against black kids and immigrant parents.

Most of my field note diaries from the election on start with something along the lines of, "I feel so emotionally vulnerable right now. We've had couple of weeks, leaning full tilt into the school budget crisis, we've organized huge protest rally, with almost a

thousand people. We've gone to Annapolis 3 out of 5 days over the past week, and then on top of that we're still trying to do some of the social programming stuff," (Field note diary, March 1, 2017). Doing the work has eclipsed my focus on writing about doing the work.

There's something to be said for taking action rather than continuing to sit in analysis. Baltimore's mayor— of whom I have been incredibly critical in the past— took bold action two days after the Charlottesville violence, and had the city's four Confederate statues removed between the hours of 11:30PM and 5:30AM. Quickly and quietly, the statues disappeared without violence or unrest. Not a week later, the empty pedestals have been covered with racial epithets by aggrieved white supremacists who were robbed of the opportunity to decry the statues' removal. Thoughts about the potential of racist and anti-immigrant violence punctuate my thoughts over the course of any given block of time; I have limited bandwidth to get excited about the potential for my work to yield any great insight methodologically, although I do have hope that my analysis of the ways power and privilege play out in city (re)building has the potential for creating more inclusive, effective city revitalization policies, programs, and community spearheaded initiatives as other cities try similar approaches.

It's rare to know you are having a key moment in the process of moving forward a research project as it's actually happening. For me, the field diary method has provided moments of clarity and recognition of key turning events that have become obvious when looking back on the often circuitous path that led to a breakthrough or success. In

conducting data analysis, I feel as if I am watching a process unfold in real time. Punch (2012) argues practitioners should be "open and honest, revealing direct extracts from our field diaries". Such transparency, she posits, lead practitioners to recognize that "guilt, apprehension, fears and worries are legitimate, common and even useful experiences of fieldwork", and that using field diaries can "more explicitly to examine the ways our personal challenges and emotions impact on the research process and outcome". Field diary method has given me space to note uncomfortable feelings and unflattering interactions that have taken place along the way. I am grateful to have had months and months to think through models to help me throw my own efforts under a microscope. I hope this method safeguards me in some small ways from worsening the social structures within which DBFA operates.

On a more personal note, practicing field dairy method has yielded some poignant gifts in terms of my own growth. My marriage fell apart over the same period of time that I conducted this research, and completely imploded just weeks before I hoped to defend the final project. In the process of reading and re-reading and re-re-reading my field notes, I've tripped over little gems that remind me of all the self-confidence I've gained despite the upheaval over the past few years:

> *My marriage has been in such a shitty place for about a month now, but I [just] had this crazy experience, [a high school-mate] reached out to me. She reminded me that I was super genuine and smart growing up, that that was her perception. That was certainly not my self-perception. I thought I was fat and a*

loser and awkward. She thought that I was smart and passionate and super

genuine. That [was] eye-opening for me. I'm starting to feel more and more

comfortable in my own skin [the more I do this job]. That is such a joy and a gift.

I've testified in front of two different house hearings over the past week, as well as

had a bunch of small group meeting with legislators outside of the city delegation.

I feel like I'm reminding myself that I am fierce. And genuine. I literally didn't

back down when I was confronted by two different delegates. Both times I

*surprised myself that I just didn't f****** back down. It felt so good. I wasn't*

disrespectful or anything, but definitely did not back down. And that felt amazing.

I feel like I'm really reminding myself that I'm here to do something genuine and

good (Field Note Diary, March 1, 2017).

From Critical Inquiry to Practical Action

Despite bright spots like the one above, balancing the highs of realizing your

practice has positive impact and the challenges of navigating the pitfalls of privilege is

complex. What do you do when you realize your kid is not thriving in a city school? How

do you reconcile your ability to pull them from- or decide not to try at all- a public

school, opting for a private one, when you know your decision to do so means that zoned

school will be directly financially impacted to the tune of $10K-$20K? Or what if you do

stay, and you put your kid and your hopes for them and your available time and energy

into a PTO at a struggling school, and your white kid's presence at the school means you

get asked for input on school issues and quicker responses from the principal than the

black mom whose opinions have never been sought, whose emails have gone unanswered? What if your voice overshadows the voices of parents who have had kids in the school for years and years and years and have not been able to make inroads with the system in a meaningful way?? Are you reifying neocolonialist narratives to presume your time and presence in a city school can make a positive difference, that your white-affluent-magicalness can somehow matter in a way that doesn't simply plow over the concerns and values of lower-income, predominantly minority families??!

At some point these questions don't feel useful. They become paralyzing, and, eventually, infuriating. Imagine if every time you needed to tie your shoes, you thought about every other time you've tied your shoes in your life, all of the times you will do so in the future, how many shoes you've bought and gotten rid of and the money you've spent on them and the time you've spent going to the store and trying them on and putting them away and on and on and on. You'd never be able to pause during your day and tie your shoes.

At some point you must stop veering down theoretical roads that don't move you towards any useful action.

My frustration with this kind of reflection has less to do with my own challenges of figuring out how to steer my organization, or what to do with my kid, and more to do with the come to Jesus moment of reflection progressives are having in the wake of Donald Trump's election. Dan Savage, a sex-positive advice columnist turned left-wing political commentator, did an extended rant style pod-cast the day after the election

(Blabbermouth Podcast, November 9, 2016). At one point during the winding emotional

processing he shut down a millennial contributor to the pod, who was going on about

privilege and understanding the "other" and waxing platonic in ways that would sound

completely at home in S-CAR and gender studies discussions. "We have to remember

who the enemy is," Savage interrupted. "We've been picking the corn out of our own shit

for eight years and we've lost sight of what's actually at stake."

We've been so comfortable under eight years of relative progressivism with

President Obama that we've spent our time nit-picking each other rather than focusing on

addressing actual hatred and bigotry. After Trump tweeted that transgender service

members will no longer be allowed in the military, my husband posted something on

social media about supporting transgendered people. Amongst the comments in response,

someone pointed out that the term 'transgendered' was offensive, that 'transgender' was

the correct term. My husband was disgusted this person had chosen to publicly pick at his

message rather than say privately, 'hey bud, just FYI that most people prefer transgender.'

Savage was articulating the same thing— we've been so focused on evolving our

language and our thinking and defining ourselves amongst evermore confusing labels-

pansexual and womynist and wxmonist and whateverist— that we've alienated each

other and made it cumbersome to articulate a shared agenda grounded in inclusiveness.

I Walk the Line

So where is the line between undertaking interventions intended to "help"

marginalized communities- in effect communicating self-empowerment is not possible/

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desirable, and the goals of the intervenors are the "right" way to shift underlying sources

of structural violence- and action that results in transforming drivers of conflict that led to

marginalization in the first place?

Perhaps ironically, action that results in the creation of empowering tools and

transformed institutions often grow organically from self-serving projects undertaken by

families with the privilege of time, know-how, access and influence. Highly educated

parents with the privilege of time have written grants that fund state of the art libraries in

public schools and founded some of the highest demand charter schools in the city, the

vast majority of which serve extremely diverse populations. Because Maryland's charter

school law places these schools as part of the district overall, in addition to the children

actually served by the school, kids in charter schools draw desperately needed state

funding into the school system.

Let go of trying to help, to fix. Look at what would give you a sense of

connection to your community, what you want for your kid. Start there. If you want your

kid's school to have a great PTO, build a great PTO. If language immersion is important

to you, launch a charter school with a language immersion program. Build a park for your

kid; start a social justice book club with parents of your kid's classmates; host a monthly

pot-luck for your neighborhood...or simply buy a box of plastic gloves and make a

weekly habit of picking up the trash on your block because you're sick of looking at

garbage.

Over analysis can lead to inaction and paralysis. CAR tools are a safeguard from unintended consequences. Trust your training, trust your tools, and trust that you are not an asshole intent on causing harm. And then trust the wisdom of the poster hanging in my office: "We have a strategic plan. It's called doing things."

PART II – CITY DWELLERS, WHITE SAVIORS

<u>WELCOME TO CHARM CITY</u>

In the opening chapter of this dissertation, I contextualized Baltimore's economic

and population decline within a cohort of other post-industrial cities still reeling with the

fall out of the American economy's pivot away from manufacturing and other blue-collar

jobs. While Baltimore can indeed claim membership within this droll club, there are some

ways in which Baltimore is uniquely screwed in regard to any efforts to reform the

underlying causes of family flight.

The purpose of this brief chapter is to broadly outline the social structures and

lingering historical residue that stymie efforts to mitigate the institutional racism and

poverty that give rise to flight drivers. In the chapters that follow this one, I will delve

into greater detail on drivers of family flight: quality education, economic stability, and

public safety (Goldseker/BNIA 2015). This chapter illustrates in broad brushstrokes the

sociocultural, economic and political landscape in which these dynamics are unfolding.

Why is it that massive financial investments and goodwill in areas like Freddie Gray's

Sandtown neighborhood[68] and hundreds of millions of dollars in economic stimulus

packages fail to yield transformative changes? How does institutionalized racism—

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[68] https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/why-couldnt-130-million-transform-one-of-baltimores-poorest-places/2015/05/02/0467ab06-f034-11e4-a55f-38924fca94f9_story.html?utm_term=.3fb894ce03bc

manifested as police brutality, crippling violence within communities of color,

exploitative employment practices, and deplorable educational opportunities— continue

to flourish in a city that has been overwhelmingly represented by African-American and

black elected officials since the early 1990s[69]? What policy decisions, past and present,

contribute to Baltimore's dubious distinction as one of the most dangerous, most

segregated, and least prosperous places in America?

      This chapter cannot unpack all these questions. Indeed, each year entire

dissertations[70][71][72][73][74] are devoted to each of these inquiries, but deep dive policy

scholarship[75] and emerging research still leave scholars and policy makers alike

floundering for solutions to thoroughly address Baltimore's many intractable institutional

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[69] https://newrepublic.com/article/121667/black-cops-black-mayors-didnt-save-baltimore-police-abuse

[70] Otten, Richard E., 2016. Manufacturing Charm City: The Socio-semiotics of Baltimore's Decline

[71]
Owens, Melva Tuggle.1991. Birth outcomes and newborn hospital costs of the working poor in the state of Maryland since the implementation of the Pregnant Women and Children's Program with the Presumptive Eligibility option. George Mason University.

[72] Breanne Cave. 2009. Policing Places: The Influence of Street Segment Context on Police Activity. George Mason University

[73]Stephens, Erin M. 2018. Making #BlackLivesMatter: A Social Media Ethnography of Cultural Trauma.George Mason University.

[74] Reiter, Abigail. 2016. Racialized Microaggressions, Internalized and Intersecting Oppressions, and Identity Negotiations Among Students of Color at a Predominately White University in the US Southeast. George Mason University.

[75] Christopher G. Boone (2002) An Assessment and Explanation of Environmental Inequity in Baltimore, Urban Geography, 23:6, 581-595.

challenges. The purpose of this chapter is not to dig into these works in great detail.

Rather, my goal here is to provide a general overview of Baltimore's challenges to

contextualize my own research and lived experiences in Baltimore. In essence, this

chapter is a quick primer on underlying social structures complicating reform efforts to

give background for the deeper discussions, data and scholarship I will discuss in my

literature review, my empirical sections, and my data analysis.

A Patchwork of Policy Failures

Baltimore is a city of layers. Concrete paved by cut-rate contractors, who won the

privilege of working with the city thanks to City Hall's mandated "lowest bidder"

clause[76], buckles and cracks, revealing long-defunct street car tracks that now rattle the

teeth of cars inching across town at paces that can take more than an hour to traverse a

mile[77][78] (indeed, I've personally had to make bathroom stops with my toddler in the midst

of commutes that lasted more than 45 minutes to travel 8 blocks).   Present day

dilapidated infrastructure[79], rampant homelessness[80] epidemic level homicide[81], declining

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[76] https://www.kramonandgraham.com/siteFiles/News/MSBALitigationJan2012section.pdf

[77] https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/baltimore-city/bs-md-ci-traffic-congestion-lights-20180712-story.html

[78] https://www.thedailybeast.com/americas-75-worst-commutes

[79] https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/baltimore-schools-face-nearly-3-billion-maintenance-backlog/2018/09/29/beb7d9d6-c2ae-11e8-a1f0-a4051b6ad114_story.html?utm_term=.6e794e8cd953

[80]https://www.hchmd.org/homelessness-baltimore

[81] https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2018/09/25/baltimore-homicide-murder-rate-fbi-statistics-death-crime-killings/1426739002/

public school enrollment[82], fear from violence in everyday life's mundane encounters[83] are the norm for Baltimoreans. In aggregate, these factors contribute to an exodus of families seeking quality schools, maintained roadways, and neighborhood community Facebook pages that don't include staccato reporting of car jackings with infants in the back of the car while a mom unloaded groceries[84]. Despite massive investments of good will and financial resources, the city is losing residents year after year, while its surrounding suburban counties and the state as a whole continue to grow. [85]

The current state of affairs is symptomatic evidence of a patchwork of both intentional policies and haphazard, politically advantageous decisions that have, over centuries, created an intertwined set of challenges whose remedies are complicated by their interrelated nature. I'll dig into these examples in detail in the sections that follow, but to give quick clarification of what I mean by interrelated complications is this: Attempts to create jobs are stymied by the fact that many Baltimoreans enrolling in job training don't qualify for programs that require a reading comprehension level that they have not attained during their time in Baltimore City Public Schools[86]. Efforts to hang in

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82 https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/baltimore-city/bs-md-ci-enrollment-decline-20171220711-htmlstory.html

83 https://www.wmar2news.com/news/region/baltimore-city/there-is-a-war-going-on-in-the-city-of-baltimore-a-spree-of-violence-rocks-baltimore

84 https://baltimore.cbslocal.com/2017/01/20/city-police-id-man-charged-for-kidnapping-theft-triggered-amber-alert/

85 https://talkpoverty.org/2014/05/20/invest-residents-want-work-gary-crum/

86 https://talkpoverty.org/2014/05/20/invest-residents-want-work-gary-crum/

there at school are complicated by the fact that BCPS has no school bus system and using public transit can mean commute times north of 90 minutes each way for students[87]. And assuming a student has the diligence— or parental oversight— to stick out the commute, budget cuts to student MetroCards may leave kids as young as eight walking home *for miles* through seedy neighborhoods in the dark[88]. These systemic failures compound and complicate each other, and leave parents, policymakers, funders, activists, and NGOs alike floundering for transformative solutions.

There's a Hole in the Bucket, Dear Liza

My staff and I would often burst into the children's song "There's a Hole in the Bucket" when tackling any given challenge that, on its face, should have been simple to solve. A simple geographic analysis of identifying venues that straddled intentionally segregated[89] neighborhoods was not sufficient for overcoming the logistics of hosting a school fair that didn't intentionally burden families of color to attend. Not hosting at the geographically isolated peninsula school Francis Scott Key Elementary/Middle—- selected for years preceding my tenure because of its ample parking—- solved the racially determined lack of access that stemmed from the one-two punch of the dearth of families of color on the peninsula, and the fact that significant numbers of parents and

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[87] https://www.citylab.com/perspective/2019/01/baltimore-bus-relaunch-mta-transit-ridership-larry-hogan/579934/

[88] https://nextcity.org/daily/entry/baltimore-councilman-hold-bake-sale-for-bus-service

[89] https://apps.urban.org/features/baltimore-investment-flows/

children living in poverty in Baltimore lack access to a car.[90] But finding a unicorn

central location with access to public transit *and* parking—- hello, Baltimore Design

School!—couldn't compensate for the outcomes of the $135M[91] overhaul of the bus

system and a monthlong (!!) shutdown of the Metro system.[92] Rather than empower

residents in poorer, more affordable outlining neighborhoods to reach lucrative

downtown jobs, these costly transit investments had left impoverished families, the

overwhelming majority of whom are black, with hours long travel time to get to work,

much less to a weekend event. Oh! And let's not forget that we need to weigh the costs of

continuing the event on the weekend, which complicates attendance for low-wage

workers, with the costs of switching to an evening event, which erodes the possibility of

two-worker families juggling bedtime and community board obligations from attending.

No amount of creative geographic, socioeconomic, racial and transit related

calculus on our part could transcend the interrelated challenges presented by quasi-

functional city services and historical segregation that complicated our goal to provide

racially equitable programing. Just like Liza and Henry, we couldn't fix the hole in the

bucket because there was a hole in the bucket.

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[90] History, Public Policy, and the Geography of Poverty Understanding Challenges Facing Baltimore City and Maryland, Department of Legislative Services 2016, http://dls.maryland.gov/pubs/prod/InterGovMatters/Demog/2015-History-Public-Policy-and-the-Geography-of-Poverty.pdf

[91] https://www.govtech.com/fs/transportation/Report-Finds-Fault-With-Baltimores-Regional-Transit-Overhaul.html; https://www.baltimoresun.com/business/bs-md-baltimorelink-update-20171114-story.html

[92] https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/baltimore-city/bs-md-metro-subway-reopening-20180308-story.html

An Ideal Middle Passage Port

Many of the holes in the bucket date back to Baltimore's heyday as the preferred

disembarkation points for slave ships transporting enslaved Africans from the Middle

Passage to points in the deep South and New Orleans (Clayton 2002)[93]. As Ralph

Clayton, research assistant at the Enoch Pratt Free Library who has written several books

on pre-Civil War black Baltimore notes, "interstate traders in the domestic coast slave

trade found Baltimore's excellent harbor, central location and position in the midst of a

developing 'selling market' attractive incentives in which to build their slave pens and

base their operations near the bustling port.[94]"

While it's beyond the scope of this dissertation to argue a direct line between

Baltimore's sparkling reputation among slave traders and the present state of overt and

structural racial violence, scholars have made assertions that aspects of the Black

community in present day Baltimore have sociocultural practices that took root during

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[93] http://baltimorechronicle.com/slaveship_apr02.shtml

[94] https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/bs-xpm-2000-07-12-0007120236-story.html

that time [95][96][97]. Even without a deep dive into scholarship, anyone with a passing

knowledge of the geographic footprint of Baltimore's involvement in the slave trade can

see unsettling echoes of Baltimore's past along the thoroughfares that have been the

primary focus of organizations like DBFA and the Downtown Partnership of Baltimore

(DPOB). Within the mile radius DPOB delineated as "downtown," there were at least two

slave pens that have made their way into historical documents that note their

existence[98][99]. The possibility there were more than two in this radius is almost certain,

although sources like Maryland Historic Trust[100] and Enoch Pratt Library offer scant

information as to specific locations. The slave trade was omnipresent within Baltimore's

downtown, much as racial disparities are inescapable today. "For a half-century before the

Civil War, more than a dozen slave traders operated from harborside storefronts along

Pratt and adjacent streets. Some advertised regularly in The Sun and other papers,

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[95] Price, Clement Alexander. "Epilogue: History and Memory: Why It Matters That We Remember." *Baltimore '68: Riots and Rebirth in an American City*, edited by Jessica I. Elfenbein et al., Temple University Press, 2011, pp. 259–264. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt14bt6jv.20.

[96] "Baltimore's Vernacular Black Community." *Black Baltimore: A New Theory of Community*, by Harold A. McDougall, Temple University Press, 1993, pp. 25–45. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1bw1hrw.6.

[97] Davis, Amira Rose. "On the Courts of Druid Hill: Lucy Diggs Slowe and the Rise of Organized Black Tennis." *Baltimore Sports: Stories from Charm City*, edited by Daniel A. Nathan, University of Arkansas Press, Fayetteville, 2016, pp. 45–58. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1ffjhg7.10.

[98] https://www.theclio.com/web/entry?id=22337

[99] https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/baltimore-city/bs-md-ci-kelly-homewood-20180621-story.html

[100] https://www.theclio.com/web/entry?id=22337

declaring "5,000 Negroes Wanted" or "Negroes! Negroes! Negroes!" [101] This chorus feels

like an eerie reverberation of the cadence, "Tickets! Tickets! Tickets!" that black kids

today shout outside of Orioles Park at Camden Yards, a nationally exalted example of

stadiums built with public money[102] that has yet to trickle down to the communities it

was ostensibly built to empower.[103][104]

I feel a queasy ambivalence about Baltimore's collective social amnesia[105] (Cahan

2003 181-182) in my day-to-day life when in Charm City. Two of my most traversed

neighborhoods are the Inner Harbor and the beautifully preserved Fells Point historic

district. I own a home just four blocks from the Howard Street and Pratt Street

intersections where slave trader Bernard Campbell owned one of the city's most lauded

slave pens[106]. When my son was an infant, I often pushed his stroller along Pratt Street to

Fells Point. I rode my bike along the same route, him happily clapping in his seat on the

front of the bike, each morning on the way to his first preschool, which was in Fells Point

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[101] https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/bs-xpm-1999-06-20-9906220293-story.html

[102] https://www.baltimoresun.com/sports/orioles/bs-sp-orioles-camden-yards-0401-20120330-story.html

[103] https://www.thenation.com/article/apartheid-games-baltimore-urban-america-and-camden-yards/

[104] https://digitalwindow.vassar.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1239&context=senior_capstone

[105] https://www-jstor-org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/pdf/24540203.pdf?ab_segments=0%252Fdefault-2%252Fcontrol&refreqid=excelsior%3A39801f4a2dfc250c268fb128733314ef

[106] Stealing Freedom Along the Mason-Dixon Line: Thomas McCreary, the Notorious ...
By Milt Diggins

just two blocks from the point of departure for many mothers and sons headed to New

Orleans in shackles. In a 1999 story, the Baltimore Sun described a "routine spectacle"

along the streets Liam and I traversed daily: a "dreary procession of black men, women

and children in chains along Pratt Street to Fells Point, where ships waited to carry them

south to New Orleans for auction. Weeping family members would follow their loved

ones along the route; they knew their parting might be forever, as there would be no way

to know where slaves shipped south would end up.[107]

A whole different kind of family spectacle takes place along these same routes

now. DBFA members get a 10% discount off memberships at Port Discovery, the

children's museum set ½ a block off Pratt Street. Our former Community Engagement

Director is now the Executive Director of Fells Point Main Street, where she organizes

kid-friendly events in the trendy historic district. Families attending festivals like Aprils'

Maritime Heritage Festival can "celebrate Baltimore's maritime prowess and enjoy an

educational land invasion of living history," on the same public square where the Middle

Passage Ceremonies and Port Markers Project (MPCPMP) held its first ever public

ceremony for descendants of enslaved ancestors to honor family who experienced the

Middle Passage. MPCPMP had specifically selected Fells Point as the site of a series of

events that have now taken place across the country[108], as the group recognized Fells

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[107] https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/bs-xpm-1999-06-20-9906220293-story.html

[108] https://southernspaces.org/2015/middle-passage-ceremonies-and-port-markers-project-remembering-ancestors

Point as one of most active epicenters "in the international and domestic human trade for two centuries."[109]

Family friendly festivals are held year-round as part of the city's effort to put forward a family-friendly face, and many of these events share two common traits: First, they were started or are currently supported financially by DBFA, and second; they take place on the exact same sights where families were held, separated and sold South for more than two centuries. I lay out these facts not to suggest that DBFA or other organizations shouldn't hold festivals here, or to begin to make a case that supporting some sort of public remembrance (although...hey, there's an idea!) would serve the group's overarching goal to make Baltimore less intimidating for families open to investing in the city. I point this out only to say that everyday life in present-day Baltimore literally unfolds on the cobblestones laid 400 years ago, where other parents trod with their toddlers to very different destinations than the Harbor Harvest fall festival or Waterfront Concert Series. Indeed, much of the narrative of this dissertation was written sitting at a waterfront cafe, Pitango, that overlooks the exact Fells Point pier that "was a major shipping and auction area of enslaved people."[110] Be it parenting or writing, every aspect of life in present-day downtown Baltimore takes place on sacred soil.

Shading the City Red

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[109] http://www.middlepassageproject.org/baltimore-md/

[110] http://www.middlepassageproject.org/baltimore-md/

According to historical Sherry Olson and Howell Baum, a Professor in the Urban

Studies and Planning Program at University of Maryland who completed a historical

study of Baltimore school desegregation, racial animus and class divide were parts of

Baltimore's culture from the city's inception:

> *In 1752, Baltimore had just twenty-five houses, but by century's end the*
>
> *hamlet had grown into a small city, housing thirty thousand and becoming the*
>
> *most important city in the state. Yet what historian Sherry Olson called "the*
>
> *empty century" preceding this growth shaped the city's identity "as a people*
>
> *struggling" against outsiders, among them state politicians hostile to cities and*
>
> *British invaders. Baltimore developed a pattern of internalizing external conflicts,*
>
> *playing them out among local residents divided by race, class, or party.*
>
> *The city's character was shaped by Baltimore's location on the nation's*
>
> *North-South border and the consequent impossibility of escaping America's racial*
>
> *conflicts. In the early nineteenth century, Baltimore struggled for autonomy*
>
> *against rural state legislators who punished the city because it had a large free*
>
> *black population and abolitionist sentiments. Within the city, growing battles over*
>
> *slavery led the local elites to agree not to talk about race or slavery in order to*
>
> *keep the peace. Baltimore tried to stay neutral when civil war approached, but*
>
> *when fighting broke out, federal troops occupied the city. The war dashed the*
>
> *city's ambitions of becoming the financial center of the South and delayed its*
>
> *entry into the Northern industrial economy until it was too late.*

This ingrained tendency to make global conflict local, partnered with racialized

sociocultural and economic social scaffolding erected over two centuries of slave trading,

made Baltimore an ideal place for policymakers to test run formal segregation policies

that followed Reconstruction.

In a sinisterly serendipitous overlap of policy goals, Baltimore leaders were

interested in maintaining a racial subclass while national leaders were looking to ensure

the same on a macro level in the US. The response to this need was housing policies,

short handedly known as "redlining" for the actual red lines bankers and policy makers

drew around neighborhoods blacks would by economically and legally quarantined

within. Redlining was a "catch-all term to describe the Home Owners' Loan Corporation

(HOLC) attempt to assess mortgage-lending risk in hundreds of American cities."[111] The

HOLC gathered information about "terrain, type and age of buildings, sales and rental

demand, and about the 'threat of infiltration of foreign-born, negro, or lower grade

population," using this information to "delineate neighborhoods—from desirable "hot

spots,"[112] which they deemed appropriate for whites and coded in green. "High risk"

blocks got shaded red.

As Foreign Policy Institute explained in the wake of Freddie Gray's death:

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[111] https://www.citylab.com/equity/2015/04/after-nearly-a-century-redlining-still-divides-baltimore/391982/

[112] https://www.citylab.com/equity/2015/04/after-nearly-a-century-redlining-still-divides-baltimore/391982/

In Baltimore in 1910, a black Yale law school graduate purchased a home in a previously all-white neighborhood. The Baltimore city government reacted by adopting a residential segregation ordinance, restricting African Americans to designated blocks. Explaining the policy, Baltimore's mayor proclaimed, "Blacks should be quarantined in isolated slums in order to reduce the incidence of civil disturbance, to prevent the spread of communicable disease into the nearby White neighborhoods, and to protect property values among the White majority."[113]

Why would an economic think tank write publicly about historical mortgage lending practices the same week a 25-year-old black man from Baltimore was killed by the police? Because the impact of redlining still effectively casts an economic, educational, and juridical-political shadow over every square mile of Baltimore City.[114][115] Redlining "propagated a cycle of inequality, which many poor, black Baltimore residents still find themselves in today."[116]

A series of maps showing the original lines mortgage HOLC developed and present-day poverty and spending on incarceration highlight these historical and present day linkages:

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[113] https://www.epi.org/blog/from-ferguson-to-baltimore-the-fruits-of-government-sponsored-segregation/

[114] https://www.epi.org/blog/from-ferguson-to-baltimore-the-fruits-of-government-sponsored-segregation/

[115] https://www.citylab.com/equity/2015/04/after-nearly-a-century-redlining-still-divides-baltimore/391982/

[116].https://www.citylab.com/equity/2015/04/after-nearly-a-century-redlining-still-divides-baltimore/391982/

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Figure 1. Residential Security Map of Baltimore, Maryland[117]

Present day poverty levels almost directly mirror HOLC's original coding map.

The map below layers current "Census data on top of the HOLC's old map of Baltimore,"

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[117] https://jscholarship.library.jhu.edu/handle/1774.2/32621

revealing a "striking alignment of today's poverty rates" and government mortgaging

practices of the 1930s.
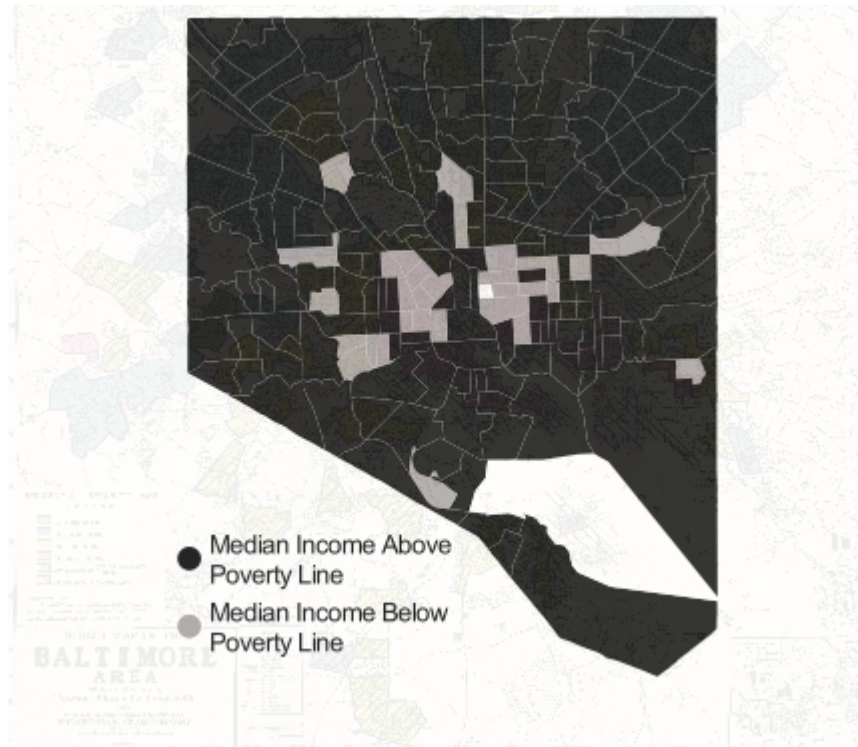
Figure 2. Redlining Income Map, Cartographer Evan Tachovsky, 2015[118]

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[118] https://www.citylab.com/equity/2015/04/after-nearly-a-century-redlining-still-divides-baltimore/391982/

A map of present day prison spending in Baltimore shows a similar alignment:
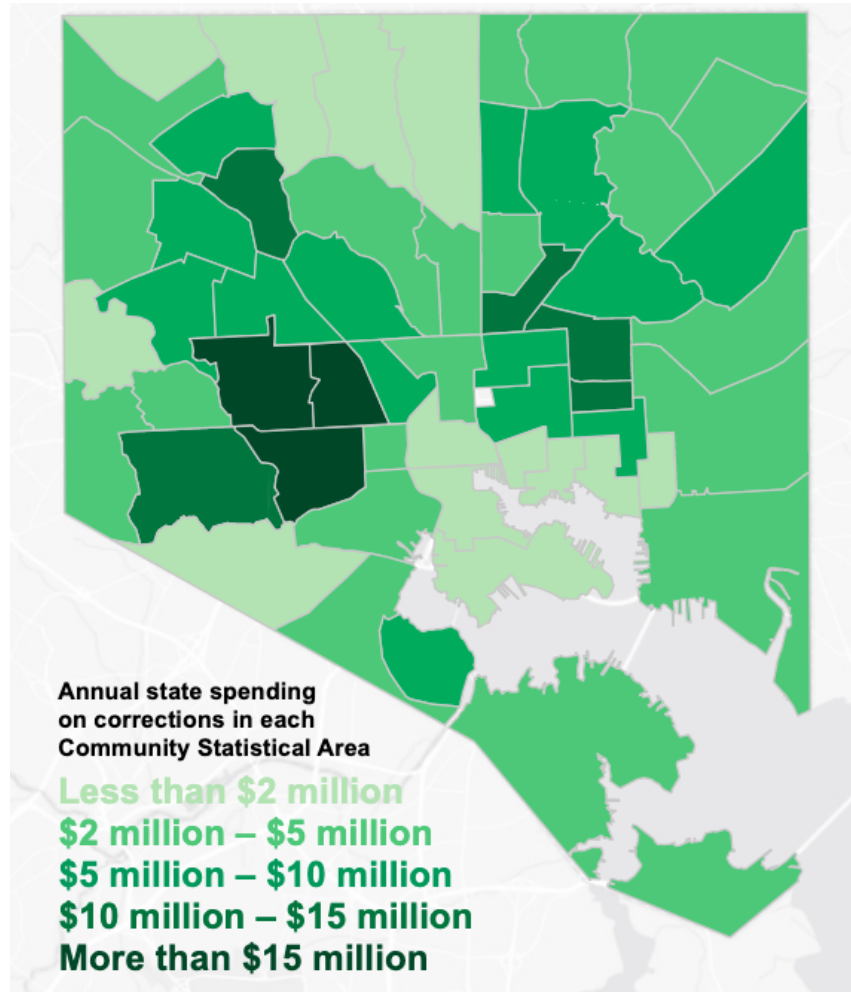
Figure 3. Present Day Prison Spending, Baltimore corrections, 2015[119]

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[119] https://www.prisonpolicy.org/origin/md/report.html

These maps are "not separate—they're inextricably linked," according to Mindy Fullilove, a social psychiatrist at Columbia University told Badger. The "cumulative downward force of this on social organization that's the stunning thing to be accounted for."[120] From policing to poverty, this force indestructible shapes everyday life in Baltimore.

The Holy Week Uprising

Like many other places in urban America, the city of Baltimore broke out in civil unrest following the assassination of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. "After several days of peaceful commemoration of Dr. King's death, disenfranchised youth instigated disturbances in fifteen neighborhood commercial districts," leading to the imposition of a curfew and "members of the clergy of all faiths walk[ing] the streets in attempts to restore order"[121] and police violence against black youth.

In Baltimore, "more than ten thousand Maryland National Guard and federal troops deployed to the city to quell the disturbances that broke out on April 6, 1968, two days after Martin Luther King, Jr. was shot dead in Memphis. A stunning 5,000-plus people were arrested (the majority for violating curfew)." By the end of what is now

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[120] https://www.citylab.com/equity/2015/04/after-nearly-a-century-redlining-still-divides-baltimore/391982/

[121] http://time.com/3839984/lessons-baltimore-1968/

known as the Holy Week Uprising, "$12 million in damage was ultimately inflicted in a

riot that touched nearly every major black neighborhood."[122]

Also like many other US cities, white residents responded to the unrest by moving

out of Baltimore. While "white flight" greatly predated 196— in fact, by 1920, there were

more than three white departures for every black arrival in American cities[123]— early

white flight differed in a key way. "The suburbs we know today effectively didn't exist at

the time, so whites were leaving these neighborhoods for other neighborhoods in the city.

That makes this earlier form of white flight even more striking; their new homes didn't

necessarily have lower taxes or better school districts, factors that complicated the

motivations of later generations of whites."[124] More simply put: whites didn't have a

cheery-present-day explanation for leaving, like schools or taxes. They just didn't want to

live close to black people.

Whites actually leaving cities shaped present-day suburbia— and present day

poverty in Baltimore— far before the 1969 uprising. "It is generally assumed that white

flight was a product of the political tumult and the spiking crime that afflicted American

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[122] https://www.citylab.com/equity/2015/04/1968-and-the-invention-of-the-american-police-state/391955/

[123]"RACIAL SORTING AND THE EMERGENCE OF SEGREGATION IN AMERICAN CITIES." SHERTZER, ALLISON, WALSH, RANDALL P. ISSUED IN MARCH 2016, REVISED IN JUNE 2018. NBER PROGRAMS(S): DEVELOPMENT OF THE AMERICAN ECONOMY, LAW AND ECONOMICS.

[124] https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2016/03/17/white-flight-began-a-lot-earlier-than-we-think/?utm_term=.9b670709b15d

cities in the nineteen-sixties, but it may well have been the other way around. Baltimore, three-quarters white in 1950, is now two-thirds black. As the surrounding suburbs became increasingly white, transportation networks that once connected the city and the outlying county crumbled. Industry and employment relocated to the surrounding areas. By the late sixties, the city was marked by poverty, a persistent lack of opportunity, and violent crime."[125]
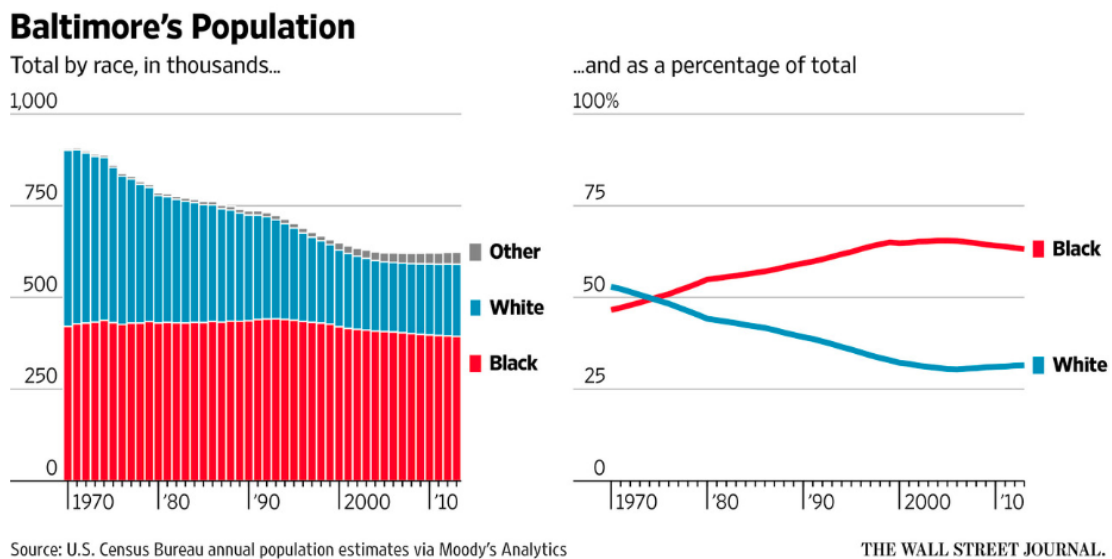
Figure 4. Baltimore Population Table, Wall Street Journal

[125] https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/05/11/city-life-what-racism-has-done-to-baltimore

Although white flight was not new in 1968, the population decline accelerated. "From 1970 to 2000, Baltimore's total population declined nearly 30%"[126], with "the city's black population remain[ing] steady for much of that stretch".

In addition to population decline, the uprisings that took place across America "provided an entrée for conservatives to finally, fully assert law and order as a national political issue. Something that had been brewing for decades at the local level, and which had played a role in the GOP victories of 1966, became after April 1968 the single most important domestic concern in the 1968 presidential race...the revulsion of white suburbia against the violent images of rioters reacting to King's death [became] a central theme in his campaign.[127]

These two factors— declining population and increased focus on policing— set the stage for much of the present dynamics regarding race, population decline, and policing in Baltimore.[128] [129]

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[126] http://graphics.wsj.com/baltimore-demographics/

[127] https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2008/apr/04/thelegacyofthe1968riots

[128] https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2015/04/baltimores-failure-is-rooted-in-its-segregationist-past-the-citys-black-community-has-never-recovered.html

[129] http://time.com/3839984/lessons-baltimore-1968/

A Double Whammy Leader

In the wake of the 1968 civil unrest and the national recession in the 1970s, Baltimore faced a "double whammy of de-industrialization and suburban flight[130]" that created space for creative problem solving and a strong-man leader to enact big ideas. Enter stage right one William Donald Schaefer, a Baltimore-born lawyer who ran three times before being successfully elected to City Council, who would become Baltimore's most influential mayor and remain in elected politics for another 50 years to follow.

Schaefer was not liked by white, affluent Baltimore; he was *beloved*[131]. He served four terms as mayor, and managed to "put a chip on the city's shoulder, convincing us that the whole world was out for Baltimore and that we needed to fight back…. he convinced those who stayed, like him, that they had to work harder, faster, and smarter."[132]

Unlike preceding mayors who focused on buttressing the city's floundering economy by drawing in corporations, Schaefer "pushed the city in a different direction: instead of being a place for work, Baltimore would be a place for play. Schaeffer formed a new growth coalition with real estate developers to repurpose old industrial districts

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[130] https://www.baltimoremagazine.com/2018/11/1/william-donald-schaefer-personified-baltimore-everyman

[131] https://www.baltimoremagazine.com/2018/11/1/william-donald-schaefer-personified-baltimore-everyman

[132] https://www.baltimoremagazine.com/2018/11/1/william-donald-schaefer-personified-baltimore-everyman

such as the Inner Harbor and Camden Yards for tourism, and to subsidize gentrification in

working-class neighborhoods to attract affluent middle-class residents"[133]

There is no public space in Baltimore's present-day waterfront that doesn't have

some aspect of Schaefer's fingerprints on it. "Today, the ever-growing Inner Harbor

stands testament to his transformation of downtown, often by sheer force of will."[134] The

development of the Convention Center, Light Rail, Metro Subway, and Camden Yards all

stem back to Schaefer's efforts to build Baltimore into a hub of recreation for a

gentrifying middle-class.

These developments, of course, didn't serve all Baltimoreans. Baltimore

Magazine's retrospective on his time as mayor blithely states, "To be sure, Schaefer had

blind spots, notably in regard to public education and social services,"[135] before

continuing on about his "legendary attention to detail… 'I remember pulling up to a

redeveloped block of formerly vacant houses and spotting him, already there, pulling

weeds from a tree pit,' recalls former planning aide Ron Kreitner. 'He was the mayor and

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[133] "'We Must Destroy You to Save You': Baltimore's Freeway Revolt." *Environmental Activism and the Urban Crisis: Baltimore, St. Louis, Chicago*, by Robert R. Gioielli, Temple University Press, 2014, pp. 73–103. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt16kdvrd.8.

[134] https://www.baltimoremagazine.com/2018/11/1/william-donald-schaefer-personified-baltimore-everyman

[135] https://www.baltimoremagazine.com/2018/11/1/william-donald-schaefer-personified-baltimore-everyman

not above pulling weeds. That was the message and it wasn't staged. He made us paint

our own offices and he painted his, too.'"

For residents of West Baltimore, Schaefer pulled up more than weeds. During his

time in city council, he was one of the driving forces behind the construction of Interstate

40, which decimated the bulk of the city's black middle-class neighborhoods[136]. Despite

massive community mobilizations to stop planned demolition and the construction that

would follow[137], "The city [was] so deeply involved with the road, regardless of what it

will do to Baltimore, that any change in policy is intolerable to city officials. We cannot

abandon our commitment to those whose homes and businesses will be taken, they say.

The line of reasoning is familiar. 'We must destroy you to save you.' The urban

expressway is our domestic Vietnam."[138]

Most of Schaefer's policies have a common thread: they benefited middle-class

(and thus primarily white) Baltimoreans and did little or worse for everyone else who

called the city home[139]. One of Schaefer's most enduring policies that benefited

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[136] "'We Must Destroy You to Save You': Baltimore's Freeway Revolt." *Environmental Activism and the Urban Crisis: Baltimore, St. Louis, Chicago*, by Robert R. Gioielli, Temple University Press, 2014, pp. 73–103. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt16kdvrd.8.

[137] The Big Roads: The Untold Story of the Engineers, Visionaries, and Trailblazers Who Created American Superhighways. Earl Swift. Boston, 2011 .

[138] James D. Dilts, "Changing City—'We Must Destroy You to . . . ,'" Baltimore Sun, August 4, 1968.

[139] https://themetropole.blog/2018/11/19/when-baltimore-was-hollywood-east-racial-exclusion-and-cultural-development-in-the-1970s/

Baltimoreans with capital was his "Dollar House Program", [140] a partnership with HUD

that allowed residents to purchase a house from the city at a nominal cost, provided they

could prove they had financial means to fix the house. This program has been billed as "a

useful model for true grassroots neighborhood revitalization in the modern era."[141] While

actual numbers of what the program did are sketchy— "We've come up with only 183

houses that were sold through the program. It is a legendary program in many ways,"

according to Julie Day, chief of staff at Baltimore's housing department— the "Dollar

Homes" program continues to live in Baltimore's public and political imagination as one

of Schaefer's most renown programs.

Creative Financing

Schaefer, and the politicians eager to draw business who have followed in his

wake, used tax incentives and public financing to draw corporations and developers into

the city. The two most common public financing mechanisms, Tax Increment Financing,

commonly referred to as "TIF" and Payment In Lieu Of Taxes, referred to as "PILOT".

These economic tools allow municipal "government[s] to make real or property tax

exemptions for developments that provide a public benefit".[142]

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[140] https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/1986/06/02/a-complex-big-city-mayor-who-defies-the-conventional/0a273ba7-b94f-40d7-ae80-0ca7438a572c/?utm_term=.39a0ee5c0e7d

[141] https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/baltimore-city/bs-md-ci-dollar-house-20171020-story.html

[142] https://www.capitalgazette.com/news/business/ph-ac-cn-pilot-folo-0212-20170211-story.html

"Benefit," of course, is in the eye of the public, and in Baltimore, the public is starkly divided by race. TIF and PILOT programs are extremely contentious in Baltimore[143] and other racially polarized urban areas[144], as they have been sold as programs that benefit impoverished communities by drawing in outside capital to ultimately improve the lives of poor Baltimoreans.[145] Poor Baltimoreans, however, express sentiment in wide public forums like the heavily trafficked "Baltimore City Voters" Facebook page and local outlets including Baltimore Sun and Baltimore Fishbowl to decry past programs that have yet to yield financial return for impoverished communities.[146]

Thoroughly explaining these mechanisms of these extremely complex economic tools in detail is beyond the scope of this dissertation, but in the coming chapters I briefly touch on some of the racialized debates surrounding proposed TIFs that arose while I was at DBFA. I am providing this basic primer to give a 30,000 foot explanation of the TIF/PILOT mechanics to contextualize the discussions that will come later in this dissertation.

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[143] https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/investigations/bs-md-ci-sun-investigates-tif-debt-20171109-story.html

[144] https://www.citylab.com/solutions/2018/09/the-trouble-with-tif/569815/

[145] https://www.baltimorebrew.com/2016/03/23/analysis-before-city-hall-loved-tifs-it-shunned-them-as-bad-policy/

[146] https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/opinion/oped/bs-ed-city-development-20150215-story.html

During my tenure, DBFA dipped its toes into the TIF/PILOT debates that arose around Under Armour's proposed redevelopment of a fairly barren track of industrial land on the city's waterfront. On an even more cursory level, we contributed to Baltimore's bid to Amazon when the company was considering where to locate their second world headquarters, commonly referred to as HQ2. In that instance, I authored a letter in support of the project. Our letter was in response to a request to do so from Live Baltimore, which was working at the request of the Mayor.

To give a basic overview of how these programs work, in recent example from Anne Arundel County, Maryland, the developer of a newly proposed conference center would have "between $500,000 and $1 million in local taxes waived annually, according to the county's budget director. But part of that tax break would be paid back under the eventual agreement negotiated between county officials and the developer" [147]. In theory, in addition to receiving the money back over the course of this loan, the city would also be generating new tax revenue thanks to the taxes stemming from the boost in property tax rates that would, theoretically, increase as a result of the conference center raising the value of property surrounding the development.

Municipalities across the country, rich and poor alike, use TIF to draw corporations. When Amazon breaks ground on HQ2 in Northern Virginia in 2020[148], it will become the largest recipient of a TIF in American history. Handily enough, Amazon

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[147] https://www.capitalgazette.com/news/business/ph-ac-cn-pilot-folo-0212-20170211-story.html

[148] https://www.baltimoresun.com/business/bs-bz-amazon-hq2-story.html

World Services created a general overview of how TIF and PILOT programs generate

revenue for municipalities, which was the most user-friendly explanation I've come

across in the four years I've conducted research for this project. As explained in their

overview:

> *The idea behind PILOTs is that property values, and therefore tax*
>
> *collections, will rise after the TIF plan improvements have been completed. TIF*
>
> *allows the increase in property taxes to be used to reimburse the developer for*
>
> *certified project costs.*
>
> *The difference between the taxes on the property before and after it*
>
> *becomes part of a TIF plan is called the PILOT; PILOT stands for Payment-In-*
>
> *Lieu-Of-Tax[149].*

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[149] https://s3.amazonaws.com/TIFC-Resources/What%20are%20PILOTs%20%26%20EATs.pdf
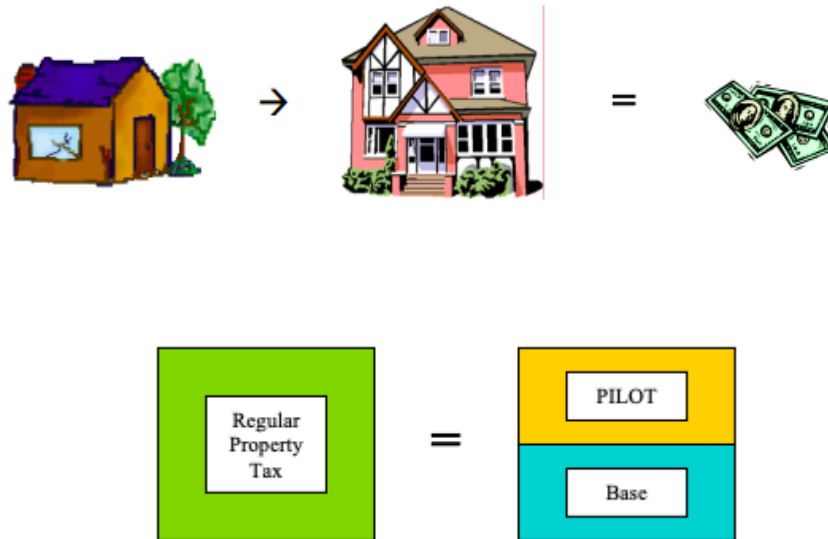
Figure 5. "What are PILOTs?" Amazon World Service

If there were existing tax on the property, the portion of property tax that existed before the TIF plan is called the "base". Any tax amount larger than the base is then the PILOT.

Amazon's explanation included a generalized example of the actual revenue that, again, in theory, would be generated as a result of a TIF program:

Before TIF:

Tract 1: Open Pasture, market value $60,000

	Residential	Commercial
Value:	$60,000	$60,000
x Assessment Ratio:	.19	.32
Assessed Value:	$11,400	$19,200
x Tax Levy:	0.0572	0.0572
Tax:	$652.08	$1,098.24

After TIF:

Tract 1: New development, market value $700,000

	Residential	Commercial
Value:	$700,000	$700,000
x Assessment Ratio:	.19	.32
Assessed Value:	$133,000	$224,000
x Tax Levy:	0.0572	0.0572
Tax:	$7,607.60	$12,812.80
Market Value Increase:	$ 640,000.00	$ 640,000.00
Property Tax Increase:	$ 6,955.52	$ 11,714.56
Base tax:	$ 652.08	$1,098.24
PILOT*:	$ 6,955.52	$ 11,714.56
Total tax:	$ 7,607.60	$ 12,812.80

Figure 6. TIF Calculation Example, Amazon World Services

In this case, the PILOT dollars would be redirected to reimburse the developer for certified project costs, like building sewers, roads, and sidewalks for a new housing subdivision.

Again, TIF and PILOT programs are complex tax mechanisms used across the country, to greater or lesser acclaim. The primer included above is only for the purpose of contextualizing discussions that come in the following chapters, and is not an exhaustive explanation. Resources for further explanation about the basic mechanics (not the racialized debates about the programs' usefulness and equity) are available from the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada [150] and the World Bank[151].

Apartheid Transit

One of the most prominent developments built using TIF in Baltimore was the repurposing of Camden Yards, transforming the former rail yard[152] into one of the most architecturally celebrated baseball complexes in the world[153][154][155][156]. Attached to this TIF was a requirement that the city would create a lightrail above-ground train system; this string was attached with the explanation that a lightrail would give poorer neighborhoods

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[150] https://www.gfoa.org/sites/default/files/EOGTIF.pdf

[151] https://urban-regeneration.worldbank.org/node/17

[152] https://www.smithsonianmag.com/travel/how-baltimore-quietly-became-coolest-city-east-coast-180964241/

[153] https://www.citypaper.com/news/features/bcp-040517-feature-a-more-complex-legacy-oriole-park-25th-anniversary-html-htmlstory.html

[154] https://www.baltimoresun.com/sports/orioles/blog/bal-camden-yards-named-mlb-s-best-ballpark-for-third-straight-year-20161021-story.html

[155] https://www.baltimoresun.com/sports/orioles/bs-sp-orioles-camden-yards-0401-20120330-story.html

[156] https://www.chicagotribune.com/sports/baseball/ct-camden-yards-wrigley-field-spt-0504-20170503-story.html

outside of the downtown area access to the new stadium, and also import money from

wealthier county residents who would come spend at the swanky new stadium and other

waterfront entertainment developments.

Building the stadium meant investing in infrastructure to get people in and out of

Baltimore— indeed, seems like public transit was set up for the express purpose of

importing workers and tourists into the redeveloped waterfront areas— and quickly

whisk them away once their dollars have been extracted for taxes that benefit a narrow

subsection of the city. It's as if policy makers and transit planners collectively decided it

was economically more expedient to invest in mechanisms to extract wealth from

outsiders than make investments that would transform the city into a place people would

want to live. In this regard, it's possible to visit Baltimore without interacting with

Baltimoreans, beyond the BID street team and the contract workers at the stadium the

vast majority of Baltimore's residents can't afford to visit[157].

As with most things in Baltimore, use and benefit of the light rail has racial

implications. The light rail is colloquially known as the "White Rail," the metro, which

has yet to see a facelift from any TIF program, is called the "Ghettro". On game days,

swarms of riders pack onto the lightrail from outer lying suburbs[158] and head to Orioles

Park at Camden Yards. On all days, metro functions to greater or lesser effect to connect

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[157] https://www.thenation.com/article/apartheid-games-baltimore-urban-america-and-camden-yards/

[158] https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/bs-md-light-rail-25-20170421-story.html

predominantly black East and West Baltimore to jobs in the city center. In other words, things didn't go as planned.

The light rail is one of two public transit options in Baltimore that function in ways that benefit primarily white riders and disadvantage primarily black riders. Bus services are literally bifurcated into two systems: the Maryland Transit Authority, which costs money; and the Charm City Circulator, which is "Fast, Friendly, Free" according to the cheery green and purple bus wraps that adorn the vehicles whirling residents and shoppers along the waterfront. After a $130M investment in "improving" MTA services[159], service times getting across town soared to triple the normal commute time, jeopardizing jobs of poorer residents coming into the downtown from blacker, less expensive neighborhoods[160]. Protests about the futility of the improvements were met with platitudes and reassurances from MTA and city officials that things would soon run smoothly[161]. By contrast, city policy makers fiercely protect the Circulator[162] (which in full disclosure gave DBFA $10,000 in unrestricted funding during my time as Executive

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[159] https://usa.streetsblog.org/2015/10/23/sizing-up-baltimores-consolation-prize-hogans-135-million-bus-link-plan/

[160] https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/opinion/editorial/bs-ed-0905-transit-baltimore-20170901-story.html

[161] https://www.citylab.com/perspective/2019/01/baltimore-bus-relaunch-mta-transit-ridership-larry-hogan/579934/

[162] https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/baltimore-city/bs-md-ci-circulator-cuts-20160720-story.html

Director), citing the service as essential for drawing consumers and white collar professionals into the downtown.

It's important to note that MTA is responsible for getting BCPS's 80,000+ students to their schools each day. While some students absolutely can and do walk to school, students taking advantage of BCPS's school choice policy to get to better schools are at the mercy of a quasi-functional MTA system that is so aggressively ineffective at transporting the primarily black population of students that BCPS CEO Dr. Sonja Santelieses has referred to it as "apartheid transportation"[163]. When MTA enacted an 8PM shutoff to student MetroCards as a cost-saving measure[164], students doing after school activities were left with little options but to walk through neighborhoods with gun crime to get home.[165] Instead of the mayor or governor— both of whom have ultimate responsibility for the fiscal well-being of the district— parents, activists and city council members organized a bake sale to raise money to reinstate late night student service[166].

Yes, that's a thing that really happened. A bake sale. For *public* services. For students to get to and from school.

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[163] DBFA Town Hall with Dr. Sonja Santelieses

[164] https://www.baltimorebrew.com/2018/02/12/confusion-anger-and-late-students-on-day-one-of-metro-shutdown/

[165] https://www.baltimorebrew.com/2017/02/03/a-call-to-action-on-homicides-a-bake-sale-for-buses/

[166] https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/baltimore-city/politics/bal-council-members-hold-bake-sale-to-raise-money-for-students-to-ride-buses-20170202-story.html

The Schools Shackled My Right

Apartheid transit is only one of a series of challenges Baltimore students face that would seem mind-boggling to residents of American suburbia. These challenges, and the structural inequities that both drive their creation and stem from their existence, constitute the bulk of my data. This section is not a cursory overview of Baltimore's education system, as the following chapters give both an overview and a deep dive into the nooks and crannies of BCPS and the many ways it influences family retention, equity, and racial animus. Instead, my goal here is to highlight the zeitgeist about education felt by the vast majority of black students and parents with whom I interacted throughout my time at DBFA.

Education is often lauded within scholarship[167] and pop culture alike as the key for urban students to escape poverty[168], to tap opportunity. For black Baltimore, the overarching sentiment about education is the opposite. The schools are sites of oppression, of the state imposing order and sanction. In *Between the World and Me*, his "treatise on the history of racism in America"[169] that drew from his experiences growing up in Baltimore, author and activist Ta-Nehisi Coates said, "If the streets shackled my left leg, the schools shackled my right. I was a curious little boy, but the schools were not

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[167] Grootaert, Christiaan & Kanbur, Ravi & Gi-Taik Oh, 1995. "The dynamics of poverty : why some people escape from poverty and others don't - an African case study," Policy Research Working Paper Series 1499, The World Bank.

[168] https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2017/06/millions-could-escape-poverty-by-finishing-secondary-education-says-un-cultural-agency/

[169] Massachusetts Education Justice Alliance, January 10, 2016

concerned with curiosity. They were concerned with compliance." Students are

compelled to attend schools in classrooms filled with asbestos[170][171] , without heat[172], and

with fire alarm systems so out-of-date that they are nonfunctional[173]. Teachers take turns

roaming the halls on the hunt for fires, walking past water fountains with "*Do Not Drink!*"

posted above them[174]. Lead pipes run through the walls, and windows let in drifts of

snow[175]. For many students, Baltimore schools are a health hazard, not an onramp to

prosperity and a self-determined future.

Deadly (Eye) Contact

By the time Freddie Gray was born in August of 1989, the Sandtown

neighborhood where he lived was already "a neighborhood where generations of crushing

poverty and the war on drugs combine to rob countless young people like [Freddie Gray]

of meaningful opportunities."[176] Annually, Marylanders spend $16,946,000[177]

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[170] https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/education/k-12/bs-md-ci-asbestos-rosemont-20171213-story.html

[171] https://www.mesothelioma.com/blog/asbestos-concerns-at-a-west-baltimore-school.htm

[172] https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/04/us/baltimore-schools-winter-heating.html

[173] https://www.aclu-md.org/en/news/baltimores-school-facility-crisis-no-air-conditioning-no-heat-no-excuses

[174] https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/investigations/bs-md-ci-safe-water-20180905-story.html

[175] https://www.citylab.com/equity/2018/01/how-baltimore-students-got-left-in-the-cold/549866/

[176] https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/opinion/editorial/bs-ed-freddie-gray-20150425-story.html

[177] https://static.prisonpolicy.org/origin/md/Sandtown.pdf

incarcerating 458 people from Sandtown-Winchester/Harlem Park; indeed, it has the

dubious distinction as being "the census tract that is home to more inmates in the

Maryland correctional system than any other"[178]. Only slightly more than half of 9th-12th

grade students from the area make it to school regularly, and less than 40% of the

population over 25 have a high school diploma.[179] One out of every three homes is

vacant, and nearly 8% of children have elevated blood-lead levels[180]. The mortality rate

for 15-24 year olds is 19.0 per 1,000 youth[181]. In short, "even in a city where poverty is

widespread, it stands out."[182]

Around 8:40am on April 12, 25-year-old Freddie Gray made eye contact with a

police officer, and ran. By 9:24am, he had been arrested, put into a police van, and

sustained injuries that would prove fatal. "By no account — not even that of the officers

who arrested him — was Gray doing anything wrong that morning when police arrived.

It turns out he had a switchblade in his pocket, according to police, but he wasn't

brandishing it or threatening anyone. According to a police report, all that happened was

that an officer made eye contact with him and another man. Gray and his companion ran,

[178] https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/crime/bs-md-ci-baltimore-incarceration-report-20150224-story.html

[179] https://static.prisonpolicy.org/origin/md/Sandtown.pdf

[180] https://static.prisonpolicy.org/origin/md/Sandtown.pdf

[181] https://static.prisonpolicy.org/origin/md/Sandtown.pdf

[182] https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/opinion/editorial/bs-ed-freddie-gray-20150425-story.html

and the officers pursued him."[183] In desperately impoverished, overpoliced areas like

Sandtown and its dozens of counterparts across the country, life on the run is just, well,

everyday life[184].

The protests and civil unrest that followed Freddie Gray's arrests and funeral "did

not come as a surprise" for activists and ethnographers "who [had] been working and

studying socioeconomic issues and race in Baltimore. Rather, it was the result of years of

disenfranchisement coupled with processes of deindustrialization that left the Baltimore's

urban population in some of the most problematic socioeconomic conditions in the

United States in the 21st century"[185].

In the days following Freddie Gray's death, The Washington Post drew a direct

line from Redlining to the present day:

Neighborhoods weakened by mass incarceration were the same ones

divided by highways. Families cornered into subprime loans descended from the

same families who'd been denied homeownership [because of Redlining] — and

the chance to build wealth — two generations earlier. People displaced today by

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[183] https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/opinion/editorial/bs-ed-freddie-gray-20150425-story.html

[184] On the Run: Fugitive Life in an American City (Fieldwork Encounters and Discoveries). University of Chicago Press, 2014.

[185] https://mdsoar.org/bitstream/handle/11603/11691/Push%20It%20Along%20Durington.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

new development come from the same communities that were scattered before in

the name of "slum clearance" and the progress brought by Interstate highways.

And the really terrible irony — which brings us back to Baltimore today —

is that each of these shocks further diminished the capacity of low-income urban

black communities to recover from the one that came next. It's an irony, a

fundamental urban inequality, created over the years by active decisions and

government policies that have undermined the same people and sapped them of

their ability to rebuild, that have again and again dismantled the same

communities, each time making them socially, economically, and politically

weaker.[186]

Focusing on the Good

There is no easy way for organizations like DBFA, Downtown Partnership, Live

Baltimore, and other smaller groups attempting to sell the city's many upsides to counter

literally centuries of racialized violence, marginalization, divestment, and exclusion. The

best leaders of these groups can hope to do is move the needle in their own ways; selling

the family friendly aspects of the city, drawing in new businesses to office buildings that

help anchor the city's financial district, and match potential buyers with financing and

great real estate agents. Leaders like DPOB's executive director, Kirby Fowler,

passionately believe in the city's future, and focus in on the good.

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[186] https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2015/04/29/the-long-painful-and-repetitive-history-of-how-baltimore-became-baltimore/?utm_term=.cbf4d68941f6

As Fowler said in preparation for DPOB's release of their 2018 annual scorecard of the downtown area's economic and residential status, "Because of the more negative news," referring to the climbing homicide rate that policymakers and residents alike have been focusing on, "I wanted people to walk away with the understanding that many positive developments occurred last year. More buildings came online and more people move into live or work and those are good things for the health of downtown. I'd like to see more of it and that's our challenge."[187]

Without in any way minimizing the fact that leaders like Fowler (and myself) have wildly privileged positions *vis-a-vis* residents of Sandtown, the work of trying to grow the city— or at least stop the flow of residents leaving— *is* a monumental challenge, one that they take seriously. I've spent hours with Fowler, who served as an informal mentor during my time at DBFA. I sat on his board, spoke at his events, befriended and loved people who work for him. His words are not attempts to pivot or gloss over challenges; they are heartfelt, and grounded in the belief that building up the city will transform opportunities for people like Freddie Gray. This is not PR. This is not wishful thinking. It is hours away from kids and sweat equity and lots and lots and lots of creative thinking done with tons of smart people whose hearts are in the right place. Unfortunately, goodwill, hard work and tons of money often translate to little lasting

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[187] https://www.baltimoresun.com/topic/business/downtown-partnership-of-baltimore-ORNPR0000053-topic.html

change in a place with racial and socioeconomic inequities as deeply rooted as Charm

City.

WHAT WE KNEW BEFORE WE STARTED

Be very slow to believe that you are wiser than all others; it is a fatal but common error.
-Charles Caleb Colton, *Lacon*

Can you engage white, affluent parents in an equitable, democratic process of recreating a city that doesn't work for people raising young kids? This question has been at the heart of my practice and research for the past two and a half years, and is the driving question behind the empirical work grounding my argument that CAR practitioners *can* and *should* exploit their privilege in the service of deconstructing the social forces that give rise to it in the first place. This chapter reviews prior scholastic work that contextualizes these questions.

In addition to scholastic inquiry focused explicitly on family retention, this literature review draws from relevant theoretical and empirical bodies of scholarship exploring racial and gendered privilege, structural violence, gentrification, and urban revitalization. Each section within this literature review explores topics informative to this inquiry independently. However, the themes explored in each section are interrelated, resulting in topical discussions that weave back and forth between sections.

From a scholastic standpoint, this dissertation is the continuation of a

conversation- and a response back to- academics critically investigating the impact and

consequences of family retention policies. I say "response to" because my research has

been a practical experiment in how to do family retention in a way that incorporates these

critiques to create retention activities that do more help than harm to families without

options to escape urban poverty. This written work is a reporting back to prior scholars;

this is what I've learned from your work, and here's what happens when we changed

tactics according to your critiques. Accordingly, this literature review is less a

compendium of prior research and more a dialogue between earlier work and my

empirical observations.

While many academics may have looked at similar programs and concluded that

retention efforts have the potential to do real harm, I believe retention is necessary to the

point that it's worth the risk. You can argue that cities' efforts to retain white, affluent

families are harming vulnerable populations. You can't, however, argue with simple math

showing the population of residents 34-55 in post-industrial cities is declining, and in turn

recognize that this decline has implications for increased poverty and increased

segregation. This project has been a practical tinkering of incorporating the thoughtful

critiques of scholars before me into retention efforts in one of the most desperately

segregated and impoverished cities in the U.S. The relationships of power, identity and

social structures I hope to illuminate through this literature review offers theoretical

lenses for other practitioners hoping to engage in related urban revitalization work to consider the ripple effects of their efforts and make changes midstream.

Scholars studying family retention from U.S. cities including Philadelphia, Boston, and Chicago, as well as international settings in Canada and Australia, have different takes on the impact and lasting effects of retention efforts. Academic analysis of retention efforts ranges from economic critiques declaring retention as the panacea to urban decline, to arguments that such initiatives render invisible the lived experiences of the vast majority of people raising children in American cities. The goal of this dissertation is not to argue a definitive standpoint as to the sociopolitical ethics, economic impact, or efficacy of family retention policies. Rather, this project considers the racial, socioeconomic and gendered implications of retention efforts spearheaded by families themselves (versus a Business Improvement District (BID), economic development organization, or social agency), and how to best leverage these efforts in a way that improves the city for families of all backgrounds.

My White Existential Angst Ran Over Your Kindergartener

The most prominent scholastic critique of family retention programs is Maia Bloomfield Cucchiara's *Marketing Schools, Marketing Cities: Who Wins and Who Loses When Schools Become Urban Amenities* (2013). In her two-year ethnographic study of Philadelphia's Center City Schools Initiate (CCSI), Cucchiara wrestles with the same dilemma I have struggled since my first interview for the executive director role in which I now serve:

Unquestionably, urban public schools should hold on to families that have the ability to pressure school districts to meet higher standards for safety, academics, enrichment, and school climate," not to mention school funding (Cucchiara 2013, 194). But what are the sociopolitical ramifications of targeting them explicitly, and to what end? "Can an influx of middle- and upper-middle-class families even begin to address the deeply entrenched problem of urban schools, problems that are rooted in such macrostructural factors as federal policy, racial discrimination, poverty, and the chronic underfunding of education? (Cucchiara 2013, 194).

In her concluding chapter, Cucchiara recounts running into one of her key study participants at her field site school's dismissal time months after concluding her research. During the encounter, the school custodian came to shut two gates that allowed cars access into the school yard. Sharon conspiratorially whispered to Cucchiara' that the custodian hated her, because she called the school every time the gates were open at dismissal because she was concerned about kids getting hit by cars:

Sharon told the story with a grin I knew well. It communicated her frustration with the school staff's inability to meet her expectations and the satisfaction she derived from, once again, making sure they did what needed to be done (2013; 194).

After spending the following paragraph delving into the ways Sharon and other high-status parents gain satisfaction in being catered to by the school and district, Cucchiara mentions:

During the years I was conducting my research, newspaper accounts of [car] accidents involving young school children appeared with some frequency. Weighed down with backpacks and art projects, they were struck by careless drivers as they left or crossed a street (2013; 194).

Any parent will likely tell you that their child not getting hit by a car surpasses their concerns about privileged parents' smugness about the efficacy of their complaints to school administrators. However, the real harm done by retention tactics that hinge on catering to middle- and upper-middle class families further erodes the sociopolitical legitimacy of parents long served by schools targeted for intervention.

Cucchiara argues that such administrative responses are, "more than just a matter of customer service" (81). These practices are evidence of "altered institutional policies and practices" (2011; 81), a finding echoed by other scholars theorizing the impact of retention initiatives (Simmons 2005; Silvestri 2008). By signaling "recognition of middle- and upper-middle class parents as customers whose status entitled them to special privileges and access to top district leaders," these responses lead to the "development of privileged channels of contact between Center City parents and district leadership" (Bloomfield 2011; 81). In enormous urban school districts like Philadelphia

and Baltimore, which annually serve 199,033 (AY2016-17[188]) and 80,592 (AY2017-18) students respectively, these privileged channels are the difference between the ability to merely navigate a phone system that can take over 45 minutes to get a live human (my personal record is 1 hour, six minutes) and direct email to the school system CEO's Chief of Staff .

Cucchiara's study differs slightly from my focus, as I am specifically concerned with peer-to-peer retention efforts launched by middle- and upper-middle class families. While the CCSI was not initiated by parents, the changes within Grant, the school Cucchiara uses as her field site, were implemented by parents who were recruited to the school through the CCSI's marketing initiatives. Even more relevant to the focus of my inquiry into the implications of DBFA's work, early in our organization's history DBFA Board members to go to Philadelphia to meet with Paul Levy, CCSI's creator. In fact, one of our Board member's blog post about the trip is included in the references section of Cucchiara's book (2013; 266).

Levy was (and still is) the executive director of Center City District, the BID responsible for promoting economic development and revitalization in historic Philadelphia's central district. DBFA, along with the foundation who underwrote the expenses for the trip, were interested in meeting with Levy because he launched the CCSI

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[188] http://www.education.pa.gov/Data-and-Statistics/Pages/
Enrollment%20Reports%20and%20Projections.aspx#tab-1

in response to the same retention motivation of DBFA's founders. Both programs grew out of the belief that if Philadelphia or Baltimore are to have a sustainable future, the cities must convince "'people with six-year-olds' not to head for the suburbs" (Wall Street Journal 2007).

Cucchiara's overarching conclusion is that CCSI's "market strategies to lure middle- and upper-middle-class-families into the city and city schools as a way to reverse urban decline and improve public schools" has relied on- and further reified- policies that perceive families of different socioeconomic backgrounds as "unequally valuable" (2013, 2). Market-driven solutions to family retention position "'knowledge workers' as critical to the city's future and seek to use key amenities [like schools] to attract and retain this group" (2013, 2). In so doing, CCSI "furthered the creation of a two-tiered system of educational options and resources across the city's schools" (2013; 192) where "educators, administrators, and other parents view Center City parents as valued customers" (153).

Put more simply, parents of all backgrounds came to understand in the most explicit terms that the school system and its superintendent "love [Center City school] because there are educated white women promoting the school!" (2013; 153).

Class, Distinction, and "High-status" Families

Politicians and economic developers touting the impact of retaining middle- and upper-middle class are calling out social markers that go beyond economic capital. French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu argued throughout his life as a public scholar that class distinctions based on economics alone don't delve deeply enough into the behaviors and habits that delineate those with and those without access to social power to influence change (Bourdieu 1984, 1985; Bourdieu and Passeron 1990; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). Bourdieu terms this power "capital" (1985), and identifies several forms of capital- financial, cultural, symbolic and social- that can be leveraged or exploited to give those possessing it access to influence social change to benefit them and their children. Individuals' selection of lifestyle activities, from the books they read to the schools they choose for their children, mark them as belonging to a particular class and in possession of particular forms of capital.

Cucchiara argues that parents targeted for retention were appealing not merely for their economic capital or available time to volunteer in schools. CCSI targeted families who were "high-status" (153). Their preferential selection of Grant distinguished it as a "good" school. Bourdieu would emphasize that these parents' expression of approval for Grant, through their lifestyle choice to send their children there, signaled to other parents and to administrators that this is a school worth investing in. The children of high-status parents aren't 'inner city' youth, they are "proud city kids"[189]. They accompany their

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[189] DBFA 2017 membership drive materials

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parents to Zagat rated restaurants and navigate public transit with confidence. They attend

quirky downtown festivals and attend summer camp at art museums. Put enough of these

kids in an 'inner city' school, and suddenly the school becomes something else entirely; a

symbol of socially progressive white parents' commitment to diversity and inclusion

(Kimelberg and Billingham 2010). The decision to send a child to a public city school

serves as both a signifying choice that reflects the parents' identities through lifestyle

choice, as well as a symbolic endorsement that raises the social capital of the school itself

(Crozier, Reay, James, Jamieson, Beedell, Hollingsworth, and Williams 2008; Raveaud

and van Zanten 2007; Saporito and Lareau 1999; Smith 1979).

Without high-status families' approval of the school, politicians and school

system administrators face few political ramifications from families long served by the

school (Warren 2011; Stone, Henig, Jones and Pierannunzi 2001). While there is evidence

that lower status families put in more elbow grease in classrooms- vs. high-status

families' involvement with boards and other high profile school involvement activities

(Cucchiara 2013, Cucchiara and Horvat 2009; Posey 2012, Ream and Palardy 2008)-

these parents lack social, economic and political capital. These families are politically

expendable, and thus unworthy of investment (Warren 2011; Meininger and Lareau

2003).

Indeed, without high-status families, "fiscally conservative" politicians can score

points by further disinvesting in such schools, as families without sociopolitical and

economic capital are used within the public imaginary as a means of touting the

accomplishments of those who succeed at amassing sociopolitical and economic capital

(Kozol 1991, 2005; [190]). Amid the 2016-2017 Baltimore City Public School (BCPS)

budget crisis, Maryland Governor Larry Hogan was applauded by constituents in rural

counties for his refusal to step in to address the structural deficit, itself a byproduct of a

decade of disinvestment. In a radio interview during the midst of the crisis, Hogan

pilloried the school system for lacking any "fiscal accountability," referring to Baltimore

public schools as an "absolute disaster[191]."

When white, affluent parents get involved, tangible changes happen within

schools and school systems that have long been ignored or scapegoated by fiscal

conservatives (Anyon 1980; Ball 2003; Bartlett, Frederick, Gulbrandeson and Murillo

2002; Boyd and Christman 2003; Covaleskie 2007; Kozol 1991, 2005; Warren 2005). In

Chicago, Nettlehort School's flagging academics were acceptable to politicians and

system administrators because the students being served were politically expendable

(Edelberg and Kurland 2011) to elected officials who counted on primarily affluent,

primarily white donors, social media boosters and voters to keep them in office. When

families with political capital get invested, politicians unwilling to invest in schools are

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[190] Chemerinsky, Erwin. "Making Schools More Separate and Unequal: Parents Involved in
Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1." The Pursuit of Racial and Ethnic Equality
in American Public Schools: Mendez, Brown, and Beyond, by Kristi L. Bowman and James E.
Ryan, Michigan State University Press, 2015, pp. 279–290. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/
10.14321/j.ctt13x0p5t.23.

[191] http://www.baltimoresun.com/topic/baltimore-city-public-schools/OREDU00835-topic.html

forced to intervene or face consequences from well-connected voters who- at least in Baltimore's case- not only vote but also have the privilege of time to knock on doors, make fundraising phone calls, hold house party 'friendraisiers', and travel to Annapolis during business hours to pester white legislators.

Not just any old squeaky wheel gets the oil. The wheel who gets greased is the one held in the political imaginary as having legitimate claim to being part of the governing class.

Cultivating a Docile (Student) Body

Scholars have been theorizing the relationship between school quality and citizenship for nearly four decades. In what has become known as the first seminal work on school funding, *Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools,* Jonathan Kozol (1991) argued,

What is now encompassed by the word, "school," are two very different kinds of institutions that, in function, finance and intention, serve entirely different roles. Children in one set of schools are educated to be governors; children in the other set of schools are trained for being governed (1991, 46).

This dynamic is not just a reflection of the quality of schooling poor children receive *vis-a-vis* their more affluent counterparts; it's a reflection of the ways in which parents' involvement and selection reflects on the district's public image (Abowitz 2005; Anyon 1997; Ball 2003; Carr 2006; Covaleskie 2007; Harvey 2008; Lipman 1998, 2002;

McGrath and Kuriloff 1999; Shipps, Kahne and Smylie 1999; Warren 2011). High-status parents' selection of a particular school reinforces the idea that the school is able to produce graduates poised to join the bourgeoisie, while low status schools churn out graduates- or drop-outs, in many cases in the worst of the worst schools in Baltimore- whose failure to amass capital further reinforces the dominant status of students coming from high-status families.

This perception is both false and violently insulting, as poor and predominantly black students are systemically disadvantaged through policies and practices of urban school districts. French philosopher and critical theorist Michel Foucault (1978) argues that societal power structures assert and reinforce their power over individuals by accessing control of the body. In the case of urban schools, abysmal teaching standards, violent campuses and testing procedures that ensure the failure of students with limited access to computers, are a tangible manifestation of state power asserting control over city students (Kearns 2011). The laws of the state dictate that students attend failing schools, asserting control while also ensuring the replication of status quo power structures. This assertion and replication, Foucault argues, plays out between individuals and macro-level power structures and societal institutions. As a result, urban school systems cultivate a population that is compliant with the dictates of dominant social norms (Cucchiara and Horvat 2009). When family retention policies are enacted that rely on market-driven solutions— i.e., catering to high-status families— categories of the elite are foisted upon and then adopted by non-dominant groups.

The illusion that impoverished students of color have a path to join their elite counterparts compels disadvantaged students to view their inability to thrive as a personal failure, an adoption of elite standards. The presentation of educational "equal opportunit[ies] inevitably seeks to reproduce and maintain structures of class and racial privilege" (Sundquist 2002). This adoption serves as a form of social control to reinforce the dominance of the sovereign elites (Foucault 1978). Bourdieu calls this process of adoption "symbolic violence," the internalization and legitimizing of structural violence committed against non-dominant social groups by those being oppressed (2004). It's hard to rise up and overcome systemic violence when one has come to view this violence as legitimate and merited.

Giorgio Agamben (1995) furthers Foucault's analysis, extending the theory to argue that those displaced by war live in the "state of exception": they are both outside the protection of a sovereign state that takes their interests into account, and also at the whim of that same sovereign as it has the power to define their "bare life"- access to food, water, shelter (1998). In urban America, gun violence and failing schools and police brutality limit the life choices of families of color living in poverty. This violence, both direct and systemic, mimic the conditions and trauma of war zones (Dubrow and Garbarino 1989; Freiberg 1994; Ng-Mak, Salzinger, and Feldman 2002, 2004). Low status families live in the state of exception, subject to the whim of dominating state power by being forced to attend violent, inadequate schools and excluded from institutions that would allow them

to transcend structurally violent systems and directly violent communities. Ethnic studies scholars have come to refer to this dynamic as the "facade of social mobility" (Elia and Kim, 2016), the promise made to ethnic minorities that hard work and adherence to the laws and dictates of the governing class will grant access into these elite ruling classes. Bourdieu's discussion of the lower and petit bourgeois classes' efforts to embody legitimate bourgeois society through the acquisition of economic and cultural capital show the futility of such attempts.

Social markers of taste, juridical-political power exercised against ethnic minority communities, and failing institutions prevent the vast majority of poor students of color from attaining a place amongst their high-status peers. Mbembe (2003) terms this barring of access as "necropolitics", the modern manifestation of juridical-political powers' exertion of dominance over individuals' mundane lives. This juridical-political power is distributed throughout society by vesting individuals- high-status parents, in the case of family retention- in the maintenance and propagation of the state. The disproportionate attention high-status families receive from system administrators and politicians reinforce these families' literacy and sociopolitical capital (Apple 2001).

Retention policies that push principals and teachers to provide great "customer service" to high-status families replicate state power, imbuing these families with the sense that their presence is important in the school. It's little wonder that these families then view their participation in the school as vital to the school's success (Boyd and

Christman 2003; Cucchiara 2013; Chubb and Moe 1990; McGrath and Kuriloff 1999; Shipps, Kahne and Smylie 1999). They dictate the programs prioritized by school leadership, often subverting the priorities and needs of families long served by the school (City Paper 2004; Lareau 1999; Lipman 1998, 2002; McGrath and Kuriloff 1999). This prioritization of high-status families' preferences over the needs of lower status families benefits children whose bare life needs are met by parents, and disadvantages children who rely on schools for food, emotional stability and access to simple things like a washer and dryer (Strong City Baltimore 2016).

Jonathan Kozol was the speaker at my freshman undergraduate induction at American University, and his book was mandatory summer reading for all incoming freshman. His worked sparked my interest around the disparities of education and funding policies fifteen years ago. At many points over the course of conducting this research, I have been struck by just how little progress we've made in the fifteen years since I saw him speak. Indeed, in many ways, systemic failures in education have exacerbated since the publication of *Savage Inequalities* in 1991. Schools are more racially segregated than they were nearly 40 years ago, according to the Government Accountability Office[192], and socioeconomic segregation has outpaced racial segregation as a determining factor in the Achievement Gap between African-American and white students (Brookings Institution 2016). High-status families' privilege of time

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[192] https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-345

compounded with the social dynamics that lead to the cultivation of a docile body *politic* through schools that systemically disadvantage black students and further the interests of white families are replicating social structures of oppression and marginalization in more acute ways than ever.

White Saviors, Failing Schools

Throughout my time at S-CAR, more than a few professors have referenced the CAR field as the "white savior industrial complex," a dark humor nod to the fact that much of our field is comprised of privileged, predominantly white, predominantly Western Scholars, who focus on disadvantaged, developing, and— let's just say it frankly — brown and black cultures that differ drastically from the settings in which most CAR academic programs are situated. Driven by well-intended attempts to wrestle with social problems that seem bigger than "first world problems," as a field we unintentionally and inadvertently often transmit assumptions about what the world should look like on two cultures that may value life and work and family in radically different ways.

The narrative surrounding privileged parents' participation in schools is an overt manifestation of the White Savior Industrial Complex at full tilt here in the U.S. The damage caused goes beyond the insulting implication that white parents are an 'add women and stir' (Bunch 1987) magic potion that can turn around failing schools. Similar to scholars' critiques of gender-mainstreaming policies that followed the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820, which mandated the

inclusion of women into peacemaking processes (Mertus 2008, Shepard 2008), simply increasing the representation of a particular demographic— be it women in diplomatic proceedings or affluent white families in urban schools— doesn't automatically translate to change. The degree to which different actors are able to enact change is tied to the social structures undergirding a respective demographic's privilege (Mertus 2008; Unger 1982; Sharp 2009; Risman 2004); white affluent parents' ability to get traction where black, impoverished parents were not speaks to the systemic valuing of whiteness, not white parents' advocacy acumen (Cucchiara, Rooney, and Robertson-Kraft 2015; Gaby 2016).

Urban school administrators' eagerness to court affluent families triages the *goals* unique to affluent families — paid aftercare, language immersion, Montessori curricula— over the *needs* of families long served by the school (Cucchiara 2013; Horvat and Cucchiara 2009; Washington City Paper 2006). The outcomes of this presumption include allocation of resources for programs like Cyberlibraries (accessible outside of school hours only to students with home computers) and the statistical overrepresentation of African American students in special education tracks (Blanchett 2006) for schools to try to recoup funding for services needed to give students living in poverty any shot at an equitable education. In massively underfunded urban districts, prioritizing the goals of high-status families means that schools become more strapped for ESL services, social workers, and upgrades to dilapidated buildings.

In AY2017-18, 64% of the student population of BCPS lived near the poverty

line, and one in five students come from a household making less than $8,000 annually

(BCPS 2018; US Department of Education Labor-Management Collaboration 2018). The

services needed for students coming from extreme poverty- ranging from food to medical

care- are barely covered by state aid, and the funding for such programs is often

swallowed by unexpected (but inevitable, given the age and disrepair) costs to maintain

dangerously under serviced buildings. An independent auditor's assessment of BCPS's

buildings found that only eleven of the 191 schools passed all relevant state building

codes (ACLU-MD 2016). More than a quarter of the buildings were deemed "beyond

repair," the study effectually condemning premises that continue to serve students to this

day. BCPS cannot afford to prioritize the goals of high-status families over services for

students living in poverty, or facility upgrades and repairs, yet the district faces enormous

pressure to hold on to families (Jacobs 2012). Over the past five years, enrollment has

declined by approximately 1,000 students per academic year (US Department of

Education Labor-Management Collaboration 2018; Baltimore Sun December 21, 2017).

Annually, this translates to a drop in state aid of approximately $30M, meaning that the

operating budget for AY2017-18 is *$150M less* than AY2012-13 (ACLU-MD 2017).

BCPS cannot afford to prioritize high-status families, but they can't afford to lose them

either.

Urban Schools as Conflict Settings

The dynamics of prioritizing the needs of high-status families parallels research in post-conflict settings. In a state newly emerging from war, the voices of the elite are most likely to garner access to bodies imposing temporary sovereign power (Pugh 2004). 'Security' and 'safety' are defined through terms that protect the interests of elites. Affluent, politically progressive parents' involvement shares some common traits with third party peace building efforts largely conducted by state and international coalitions, which sustain power structures that reinforce the privileges of the elite. The "framework of liberal imperialism" underlying "efforts to control or isolate unruly parts of the world" (Pugh 2004:39) is evident in schools in cities across the urban archipelago. 'Inner city' schools are failing and out of control. High-status families' involvement transforms programs and practices, reshaping the schools in the image of high-status families' vision of what constitutes a 'good' school. Additional special area resources (SPARs- arts, physical education, STEM classes) are prioritized over social workers, language immersion tracks over ESL services.

International interventions have clung to positions of ostensible 'neutrality' that, when scrutinized, in fact privilege the status quo *politick real* by not ensuring infrastructure or means for non-dominant groups' needs to be addressed through the peacemaking process. Similarly, because whites are taught to think of their lives as "morally neutral, normative, and average, and also ideal" (McIntosh 1987), family

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retention initiatives that value high-status families' participation in schools reinforce the idea that the priorities of privileged parents will benefit students of all backgrounds. The narrative positioning of "white" as "normal" and "ideal" means when white parents "work to benefit others, this is seen as work that will allow 'them' to be more like 'us'" (McIntosh 1987, 1). High-status families' voices take precedence over the voices of lower status families, reinforcing their sociopolitical positioning and furthering structures of power and privilege.

As in post-conflict settings, these parents' involvement is ostensibly 'neutral,' as they can argue the position that their actions benefit everyone- after all, even the most politically marginalized, desperately poor parents don't want their children to get hit by a car.

Structures and Safeguards

A drastic influx of white, affluent families into disinvested urban schools is not inherently problematic; the assumptions that these families will be able to transform failing schools, however, is. Deeply embedded structures of violence and exclusion against black Americans and a corresponding system of advantages for white Americans propagate the insult and damage caused by explicit catering to high-status families. The roots of these dynamics predate the founding of our country. Baptist (2014), Goyal

(2014)[193], Kendi (2017) and Wacquant (2017) all argue that present day white economic and social supremacy are rooted in racial exploitation that dates back to slavery; current racial discrimination is not the just result of bigotry or hatred, but rather socially constructed norms stemming from centuries-old policies and practices that justify racial inequities. Overt displays of white nationalism that have been emboldened in the current political climate and 'everyday' racism of school books that drastically underrepresent children of color (Hall 2000; Hymowitz 1991; Allen 1997) are lingering extensions of intentional oppression and exploitation.

In the years directly preceding and following the Civil Rights Act of 1964, academics and activists struggled to describe "structural and governmentally perpetuated privilege that had been consciously given to whites" that differed from "blatant public acts of discrimination perpetuated and protected by governmental regulations" (Bennett 2012, 2).What was needed was a term that denoted institutions and structures, rather than thoughts and feelings. Institutionalized racism can thrive without the aid of individual bigotry (although the past two years in contemporary American politics certainly proves that they are mutually beneficial). Scholars dating back to WEB Du Bois have talked about sociopolitical and economic advantages bestowed by race as institutional structures, as opposed to personalized expressions of racial animus (Du Bois 1935). In

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193 Goyal, Yogita. "African Atrocity, American Humanity: Slavery and Its Transnational Afterlives." Research in African Literatures 45, no. 3 (2014): 48-71. doi:10.2979/reseafrilite. 45.3.48.

1988, McIntosh published "White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences Through Work in Women's Studies," which illustrated concrete examples of the ways white supremacy manifests to create unearned sociopolitical legitimacy and access to opportunities to gain economic capital (through education, preferential lending practices, and tax codes that benefit property owning families, and related policies) whites have over black and brown Americans. She framed these advantages as an aggregate "invisible package of unearned assets that I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was 'meant' to remain oblivious," and thus, see these advantages bestowed by as natural and inevitable (McIntosh 1988).

In the lecture that predated her article, McIntosh said:

I was taught to see racism only in individual acts of meanness, not in invisible systems conferring dominance on my group… I had been taught about racism as something that puts *others* at a *disadvantage*, but had been taught not to see one of its corollary aspects, white privilege, which puts me at an *advantage* (McIntosh 1987, my own emphasis).

McIntosh used feminist theories about male privilege as a model for her discussion of white privilege. Western feminists attuned to gender injustice have richly theorized the ways forms of violence- including rape, sexual harassment, economic marginalization, disparities of power within familial contexts, discrimination in education and the workplace, and the micro-politics of parenting- have disadvantaged Western

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women as well as our sisters in the Global South. Discounting these forms of violence as 'not conflict' not only further marginalizes those most directly impacted by them. Feminist theories about gender-based violence (GBV) offer useful frameworks for making visible other forms of violence- poverty, disenfranchisement, hunger- that tend not to be classified as 'conflict' in CAR scholarship. Careful attention to these "'little' violences produced in the structures of everyday life" (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois 2004:19) makes visible the many ways in which social constructs of race, gender, class, ability, identity and other categories of difference place certain groups at greater risk of harm than others. This attention illuminates power and privilege, and the ways in which power is stratified by these social constructions.

Gender as a Social Structure

The work of feminist scholars who call attention to the ways gender intrinsically influences the formation and functioning of social intuitions lays a foundation for considering structural violence as conflict. Social systems that limit individuals' ability to acquire social and economic capital based on their gender status (Lorber 1994) produce structurally violent institutions (Burton 1997); the same can be said about economic class and race. This systemic process arises from social constructions of gender/race/class and, simultaneously, reinforces and legitimates these constructions (Lorber 1994). Individuals' access to social capital is constrained by the socially constructed identities society ascribes to them, and their actions are similarly constrained by the boundaries of 'socially acceptable' behavior delineated by their identity. Their compliance with these ideologies

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fortifies the structures that arise from the ideologies through their behavioral compliance within these systems. As Lorber asserts:

Gender organizes social relations in everyday life as well as in the major social structures, such as social class and the hierarchies of bureaucratic organizations (Acker 1988; 1990). The gendered microstructure and the gendered macrostructure reproduce and reinforce each other. The social reproduction of gender in individuals reproduces the gendered societal structure; as individuals act out gender norms and expectations in face-to-face interaction, they are constructing gendered systems of dominance and power (1994:6).

Feminists' theorizing of gender as a social structure holds similarities to the founding of the CAR field. Galtung's (1969) theory of 'structural violence' moved conflict studies towards recognizing violence as a system of unequal power relationships that limit those in marginalized positions of power from gaining access to basic goods necessary for survival. As gender, class, and race serve as a major determinants of one's social position (Lorber 1994; Martin 2004; Risman 2004), individuals' access to goods and services necessary for their survival is in part dictated by individuals' culturally perceived identities (Burton 1997). Therefore, the processes by which these institutions are reified through these interactions are inevitably influenced by constructions of social difference. This process gives rise to institutions that limit or permit individuals' attainment of basic needs necessary for their survival- access to food, water, shelter, and safety from psychical violence from other individuals or geopolitical conflict- based on

individuals' position within a society, which is in part dictated by individuals' culturally prescribed identities.

Conceptualizing violence in this way makes visible the ways urban planning policies that have systematically overlooked the needs of racial minorities and women headed households. Growing public outcries to address the pernicious effects of structural racism in the US has prompted a sense of urgency among urban policy makers to counteract decades- in some cases centuries- of urban development policies that have reified racist sentiments into entrenched racial disparities. The history of cities' development in the US is, in many ways, a history of bigotry and racism made incarnate in crumbling infrastructure, failing schools and paternalistic aid programs that propagate racial and gender disparities.

Structural violence and Intersectionality

Scholars theorizing marginalization and oppression as rooted in social structures- rather than individual bigotry- have framed the *interplay of race and gender* as interlocking social systems that subjugate individuals while simultaneously structuring all social systems. Individuals within these systems have gendered and racialized identities, which are simultaneously constrained *by* these social norms while also *informing* the systems that give rise to the identities social actors embody (Collins 1990, hooks 1900, West and Fenstermaker 1995). One of the first people to publicly point to race and gender as symbiotically influential systems was Sojourner Truth, a formerly enslaved woman who questioned detractors at the Women's Convention of Suffragists in Akron, Ohio

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about their critiques that women were unfit for public life due to their delicate natures. "Ain't I a Woman?" she famously asked, pointing out that she could work as hard, eat as much, and bear even greater pain (she birthed fifteen children) than men (Truth 1851). Truth's words call attention to the ways in which race privileges marginalize actors *vis*-à-*vis* one another. White women are privileged compared to black women, while still being marginalized by their gender. It would be over one hundred years before Truth's ideas were translated into academic study (that it took over a century for black women to gain enough social credibility to canonize these ideas speaks to the very intersections of race, gender and privilege Truth pointed to (Hancock 2005)), but the basic concept of the ways race intersects with gender to structure relations between marginalized actors is still present in contemporary scholarship (Alexandre 2009; Amar 2008; Avegno, Mills and Mills 2009; Donovan 2007; Cooke 2011; Fagan 2011).

Three black feminist scholars are credited with introducing the concept of intersectionality in academic literature: Kimberly Crenshaw (1989), Patricia Hill Collins (1990), and bell hooks (1990). Crenshaw first asserted that "other dimensions of women's identities" (1989:1242), including race and class, must be accounted for in analyses of women's experiences of oppression and violence, and must be understood as operating within the context of social structures stratified by race, gender, class, and other dimensions of power. Addressing marginalization by racism and sexism on "mutually exclusive terrains" that address race and gender as separate issues fails to conceptualize the interplay of these systems of social stratifications and identity.

Hill Collins (1990) extended Crenshaw's argument to conceptualize race, class and gender as a single interlocking system, what she termed the "Matrix of Domination". Collin's argues that race, class, and gender function together as intrinsically interlocked, a *singular* holistic system of oppression rather than three separate but symbiotically influential *multiple* systems of oppression. This matrix of domination functions to marginalize actors from social power based on their placement within the matrix. The interlocked system of oppression formed by race, class, and gender functions such that an individual can be *dominated* while simultaneously be *dominator* of others. hooks (1990) and Collins' (1990) work argued that 'feminism' might better be thought of as "white, middle-class, feminist thought" (Hill Collins 1990: xii). This type of feminism insists that "subordinate groups such as African-American women frame our ideas in ways that are convenient for the more powerful," as "oppressed groups are frequently placed in the situation of being listened to only if we frame our ideas in the language that is familiar to and comfortable for a dominant group" (Hill Collins 1990:xiii). This insistence appropriates black women's experiences, argued hooks (1990), and paints them as deviant against elite norms which have been socially constructed to privilege the dominant groups.

It would be a glaring oversight to not call attention to the ways in which men are also harmed by racial, classed and gendered norms. Mandatory minimum sentencing, disproportionate police contact in black communities (DOJ Report on , and lack of legal, sustainable job opportunities (Pager 2007) have given rise to mass incarceration

(Alexander 2010; Clear 2009; Wacquant 2017). This has disenfranchised vast numbers of Black men, further marginalizing the voices of those whose voices are largely ignored and removed huge numbers of Black men from their communities to be warehoused in jails (Clear 2009). The ripple effects of these systematic violences impact more than just men in the Black community (Foster and Hagen 2009; Pattillo, Western, and Weiman 2004). Women of color are left to shoulder tremendous financial burdens, as they cobble together resources to support their families (Western and Wildeman 2009) Children in the Black community, already disadvantaged by failing schools and the trauma of threat of violence in neighborhoods, grow up with few male role models.

Crenshaw, Hill Collins and hooks' work sparked new avenues of theoretical and empirical inquiry among feminist, anthropological, sociological and critical race theorists. Scholars including Dorothy Smith (1987), Donna Haraway (1988), and Marjorie DeVault (1999) have leveraged the theoretical and practical implications of Hill Collin's work to undertake research on gender, race and class that are "potent for constructing worlds less organized by axes of domination," (Haraway 1988). In recent years, legal, economic and political scholars (Cho, Crenshaw and McCall 2013; Cooke 2011; Glenn 2002; Hancock 2007, 2009; Holvino 2008) have considered the ways in which intersectionality can be applied as an analytical framework for understanding social marginalization through legislative and political measures. Alexandre (2009), Amar (2008), Donovan (2007) and Irving (2008) applied framings of the intersections of race and gender to critique the ways the justice system addresses sexual violence against black

women. Alexandre (2009) argues that empirical evidence shows that rape cases in which the victim is black result in a lower number of convictions and lighter sentencing. In many instances, assaults against black women are not even reported to the judicial system; Irving (2008) argues that this is an example of the ways in which race compounds women's marginalization within juridical-political institutions. These contemporary works have yielded better understandings of the ways in which gender and race order social power, providing useful theoretical frames for considering the ways race, gender and class impact the outcomes of city revitalization efforts.

Intersectionality and urban revitalization

Zuk at. al. contend interlocking systems of race, gender and class inequities play out in urban development to create systemic poverty and institutionalized racism where "inner city poverty and metropolitan inequality were cemented". Growing attention to class-based inequities in cities, however, is not driven by richer theoretical understandings of marginalization; critical theorists of urban planning contend this attention is a politicized, intentional eschewing given that the "American state stubbornly refuses to acknowledge, confront, and mitigate when dealing with disparity and destitution: race" (1998, 149). American social and political institutions' discomfort to openly acknowledge the ubiquity of systemic racism and its impact on Black communities.

Wilson (1987), argues the necessity of viewing class *and* race as interlocking mechanisms that produce systemic marginalization and oppression, that "key mechanisms

driving inner city poverty [are] structural economic shifts…and the out-migration of middle class blacks as a result of Civil Rights gains." The combined result of these systems concentrate poverty within Black urban communities, "leaving residents even more isolated from mainstream institutions, labor market, and politics, which manifested spatially in the creation of the Black ghetto neighborhood (Wilson 1987).

These mechanisms result in urban decline, driven by systematic discrimination in housing markets, and that reify structures of racial segregation, producing "structural factors responsible for the perpetuation of black poverty" (Massey and Denton 1993, 9). As neighborhoods' racial compositions shift as a result of these structural factors, they also become more segregated by income (Zuk). Thus, increasing economic segregation is intrinsically intertwined with racial segregation (Fischer et al. 2004; Fry and Taylor 2015; P. Jargowsky 2001; Lichter, Parisi, and Taquino 2012; Reardon and Bischoff 2011; Watson 2009; Yang and Jargowsky 2006).

Radicalized and socioeconomic trends of urban settlement have "resulted in uneven geographies of opportunity, in which low-income and families of color experience limited access to affordable housing, high quality schools, and good-paying jobs" (Zuk). These patterns suggest that segregation— economically and racially— produce "spatial relationships between high quality housing, jobs, and schools structure social mobility" (Briggs 2005). Shifts in these spacial relationships prompted by housing policies— such as the Dollar House Program enacted during the 1970s in Baltimore— to

incentivize migration by economically privileged families result in gentrification. The term gentrification was coined in the 1964 by urban sociologist Ruth Glass, sparked by her research on linkages between residential migration and class segregation in her London neighborhood of Islington, specifically her concerns about the "accelerating rehabilitation of Victorian lodging houses, tenurial transformation from renting to owning, property price increases, and the displacement of working-class occupiers by middle-class incomers". Gentrification is prompted by a number of simultaneous factors: available city housing, a ready pool of socioeconomically privileged potential dwellers, cultural trends that portray city living as desirable, exciting and feasible (Hamnett 1991), and the influx of economic capital from the suburbs that follows these cultural trends (Smith 1979). It's a messy, dynamic, and iterative process that does not follow a linear pattern (Beauregard 1986; Freeman 2006; L. Lees 1996). Scholars have come to conceptualize gentrification as "simultaneously a spatial and social practice" (Zuk, reaffirming scholars' work linking space and social processes. These processed lead to, "the transformation of a working-class or vacant area of the central city into middle-class residential or commercial use" (Loretta Lees, Slater, and Wyly 2008, xv).

From the earliest scholarship on gentrification, researchers have paid critical attention to these processes' unintended consequences. While gentrification has been viewed by city planners as a powerful tool to revitalize physically blighted urban neighborhoods, this revitalization often results in displacement of populations who have long resided in these deteriorated— but inexpensive— areas. Clay (1979) suggests that

revitalization without displacement is possible but must be accomplished through

"incumbent upgrading: "whereupon existing residents improve the conditions of their

neighborhood". This internally prompted transformation differs from gentrification,

which "draws middle class residents to the city, attracted by job and recreational

opportunities, low and appreciating housing prices, stabilization of negative social

conditions (such as crime), and lifestyle or aesthetic considerations." (Clay 1979)

Incumbent upgrading- change from within- mitigates risk of displacement.

When considering gentrification as a driver of urban revitalization, it's vital to

note that economically privileged families have the economic means "to sort themselves

according to their preferences" (Reardon and Bischoff 2011). While families at the

bottom end of the socioeconomic spectrum become "imprisoned" (Sharkey 2012) in

historically disadvantaged urban areas; researchers ballpark that around 70% of families

currently living in impoverished neighborhoods were residing in the same areas in the

1970s as well (Sharkey 2012). In Baltimore, the gentrification of waterfront communities

included revitalization of park space, repaired sidewalks, and an influx of quaint shops

and local eateries. In the process of 'selective sorting', though, these households "control

local political processes that continue exclusion," as "income inequality leads to income

segregation" (Reardon and Bischoff 2011). Families "liberated by affluence" reinforce

"the economic and, increasingly, the cultural separations among us" (Fischer 2013). The

relationship between economic and racial segregation produces "racial

enclosure" (Wacquant 1997), a critical component of urban decline. The geographic

isolation stemming from racial enclosure produces a "culture of segregation…resulting in limited political power, less resilience to respond to economic shifts, and little or no access to job opportunities and mainstream institutions" Massey and Denton 1993, 9). Given the role of racial segregation in the production of structure of poverty, Zuk argues that "proposed interventions only focused on poverty will never mitigate and deconstruct the ghetto, since it is, in fact, the racial and ethnic enclosure and control that creates poverty, not the other way around."

Placemaking and Urban Revitalization

If proposed interventions solely focused on poverty cannot upend structures that have led to entrenched segregation and control, what policies and practices might? In recent years, urban planning professionals, economic development organizations and academics have latched onto the term "placemaking" to denote an approach to urban development centered around narrative construction in addition to infrastructure (Artscape 2015; Blokland 2001; Devine-wright 2009; Dynon 2011; Gieryn 2002; Gilmore 2013; Giuliani 2003; Kavaratzis 2004; Lewicka 2011; Scannell and Gifford 2014; Sevin 2011). Placemaking is exactly what it sounds like; the "making" of a place. This making, however, has just as much to do with cultural production as it does with capital improvements or new development. Although investments in new residential, retail and office space often come hand in hand with placemaking initiatives, the investment of creative capital to shift public narrative is significant.

Dating back to the 1970s, Baltimore City has launched a number of promotional campaigns attempting to shift a public perception of the city as burned out, drug infested and dangerous. Three public/private funded organizations have major branding initiatives underway in Baltimore as of this writing. Downtown Partnership of Baltimore (DPOB), the city's most influential BID, has its own promotional campaign, "Hey Baltimore (You're Cool)." Live Baltimore, a marketing organization dedicated solely to attracting and retaining residents, has a "I Heart City Living" campaign; the yellow posters/stickers/ license plates with the red hearts have been adopted by residents as an emblem of support for city living, as well as a marker of their identity as urban residents. Visit Baltimore, responsible for marketing the city to individual tourists as well as major conventions, realized Baltimore's public perception was harming the visitor market. Their #MyBmore social media campaign engages local residents in driving the narrative of what the city looks like through the eyes of people who live here. From local festivals to nights out at restaurants to quiet strolls in quaint neighborhoods, the hashtag is used to shift the public imaginary of the city.

Even more relevant to this inquiry, Live Baltimore's "Way to Stay" campaign is focused directly on keeping residents with young children, providing resources about schools, larger homes, and social groups throughout the city. Their tactics have important differences from the CCSI's— they promote good work already being done in schools,

and highlight long-time success stories, rather than pushing an idea that new (and whiter) residents will come 'fix' challenged schools.

Each of these organizations receive some portion of public funding or have avenues of political access: DPOB does not have any public funding, but is the parent organization to the The Downtown Management Authority of Baltimore City (DMA), a quasi-city agency and that entity does get the majority of its funding through a local tax surcharge with being a benefits improvement district. Live Baltimore receives city funding and has a seat on the Mayor's cabinet, and $0.11 of every tourism tax dollar goes to Visit Baltimore.

These are solid investments, with powerful outcomes from a narrative, economic and social standpoint. In addition to their role driving a renewed narrative, these organizations provide vital, tangible services that improve the city. The DMA has the staff keeping the streets clean, guiding tourists and residents alike, and (my personal most high use service) providing walking escorts to residents and employees to their car/home/ office after hours. High use, well lit, clean streets are a powerful deterrent to crime. Live Baltimore provides an incredible plethora of information to residents old and new. They help partner prospective homebuyers with real estate agents and mortgage brokers, provide $5,000 cash grants towards closing, and connect employees with programs like Johns Hopkins' "Live Where You Work," which provides employees with a staggering $17,000 in closing and down payment assistance. During a recent incentivized event to

push a revitalized area of the city, homebuyers had a 'one day only' opportunity to gain *$36,000* in cash incentives towards the purchase of a home. This incentive effectively repopulated a long-burned out area of the city, which had been a haven for drug traffic and related crime. These types of programs allow people who might otherwise be unable to afford a home the chance to own property and gain access to the related tax incentives. These are small but powerful inroads towards financial affluence that have long privileged whites.

Powerful Ripple Effects

My family's story is a testament to the lasting success of this work. Our best friends from law school received a $5,000 "Buy Into Baltimore" grant, empowering them to buy a home with less than the amount of one month's rent on their Alexandria, VA in their pockets. Three years later they successfully recruited us to buy our home a block away. Their first child is now in a public school, with a second headed in a few years—both children bring a state earmark of $8,700 annually into an underpopulated school. Despite having a kid in PreK, the wife has created a 5th grade debate team (and drafted my husband as a co-coach), benefiting kids in a school that serves a large population of low income kids. In addition to their work in the school, the couple were one of two families who launched a Facebook group— now 60+ families strong— that intentionally straddles the east and west sides of MLK Blvd, a long standing divide segregating white, affluent parts of the city from black, impoverished areas.

These narrative interventions have powerful economic ripple effects beyond the social benefits. Scholars argue that solely focusing on poverty can't unmake urban ghettos; peacemaking narrative interventions shift public perceptions while drawing in economic capital. This shifts the problem from a number of angles, drawing residents into the project of lifting up neighborhoods and schools. These changes happen concurrently to increased tax revenue from residents, businesses (including Under Armour and Pandora jewelry's world headquarters) and tourists, which can be used to invest in schools, community based conflict resolution programs, and capital improvements. Moreover, these tactics build a critical mass of people with political, social and economic capital to pressure politicians to pretend to care about their most vulnerable constituents.

I sound angry about this last point because I *am* angry— if you are looking for Baltimore City Mayor Pugh, roll on over to the latest ribbon cutting of Baltimore's next big trendy restaurant or hotel. You'll be hard pressed to find her on any of the street corners where she campaigned during the election cycle. Having residents with sociopolitical and economic capital forced the mayor to intervene in the 2017-18 budget crisis; after she publicly complained to a room of corporate muckety-mucks at a January 2017 United Way breakfast, DBFA, Baltimore Education Coalition, and Baltimoreans for Educational Equity put pressure on corporate leaders to push the mayor to deal with the crisis. If she felt these folks were peers she could vent to, then maybe she'd listen to those

peers more than she was listening to her constituents. It was gross to watch this play out, but I can't argue with the efficacy of this tactic.

During my tenure, DBFA was part of a "repositioning Baltimore" working group comprised of some of the most influential business leaders in the city, highest grossing private developers, and representatives from the Mayor's cabinet. The sole purpose of this group, as the name suggests, is to reposition Baltimore's public image. The group is in the process of launching an 'owned' media campaign of short- 90 second to 3 minute-podcasts highlighting good stories happening across the city. In addition to owned media, the group has successfully garnered national media coverage touting that, "Baltimore Quietly Became the Coolest City on the East Coast[194]," and proclaiming, "Charm City has raised the charm quotient, with hip cocktail bars, coffeehouses and a quirky historic appeal.

This focus on only high-end city amenities doesn't grapple with how to reconcile the very real revitalization of the downtown with the experience of most people raising children in Baltimore. This type of placemaking can't be an end in and of itself, but rather a precursor to leveraging the sociopolitical and economic capital of the people who choose to - rather than are forced by circumstance- to live in the city.

We're City People

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[194] http://www.travelandleisure.com/trip-ideas/city-vacations/baltimore-sagamore-pendry-rebirth

Placemaking tactics produce a narrative construction of a city that doesn't easily reconcile with the lived realities of the vast majority of people raising young children in urban America. The construction of what it means to be a 'city mom'— how the choice to raise kids in urban areas is a salient identity marker— is a bourgeois inversion of the much hyped 'welfare queens' of political campaigns past. Using the theoretical framework presented in this chapter makes visible the power dynamics at play in urban revitalization, setting the stage for more equitable, sustainable interventions. Understanding the relationship social capital and political will, of school funding and citizenship, and narrative construction and economic capital, we can exploit the power relationships that have led to the current deplorable state of affairs in urban America.

Family retention programs that focus only on marketing miss the opportunity to engage in truly transformative work, work that if properly done, would ameliorate the reasons marketing efforts are necessary. If we fix the underlying reasons people leave, we won't need to spend money getting them to buy into the idea they can and should stay. In the following two chapters, I delve into two 'mini case studies' that highlight how DBFA has attempted to leverage the sociopolitical and economic clout of families who have resources to choose to leave the city. We've worked to shift people from a feeling that they "heart" city living, moving them along a continuum to view their participation in working for equitable city services as part of their identity as "city people." There's early evidence that this is resonating. The day we launched our *We're city people. This is what*

we do tagline, we garnered over 40 families to participate in our "Adopt-A-Family"

holiday program. Less than 120 hours later we had a surplus of families to sponsor gifts

for another family.

Despite the success of simple programs like Adopt-A-Family, the case studies I

present explore challenging dynamics that have no easy answers: Can retention be done

without explicitly targeting them in ways that exacerbate existing inequalities? Moreover,

knowing that they are going to be given access and agency, can white, affluent public

school parents leverage their privilege for the good, without further legitimizing the

deferential treatment they are receiving? How can we take these conclusions, carefully

drawn from years of dozens of scholars conducting painstaking research, and apply them

to create better policies?

Once retention programs begin to pick up steam, the question needs to shift from

"*can we keep people here?*" to *what do we do now that they're staying?* More bluntly put,

how can we prevent kids getting hit by cars *and* avoid running over the agency and

voices of disadvantaged parents?

THIS WOULDN'T HAPPEN IN BETHESDA

"A white girl had to die for people to pay attention. If a black girl had died, or a black man…'Oh well, another person lost to violent protest.'"
-Susan Bro, mother of Heather Heyer

In early April 2017, DBFA held a town hall on public safety with Baltimore City Police Commissioner Kevin Davis and State's Attorney Marilyn Mosby, in response to concerns from parents across the city about the alarming rate of violent crime (Baltimore Fishbowl 2017[195], Free Republic 2017[196]). The second audience question was from J.C. Faulk, a professional diversity consultant to many of Baltimore's academic institutions and private corporations (Baltimore Corps 2015[197]) who lives in mid-town Baltimore with his college-aged daughter. Mr. Faulk asked Commissioner Davis what specific actions black citizens should be doing differently in order to transform the way that police interact with black residents in the city. The question followed a heartfelt story from another event attendee, Tawanda Jones, whose brother had been beaten to death by

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[195] https://baltimorefishbowl.com/stories/public-safety-town-hall-planned-police-commissioner-kevin-davis-states-attorney-marilyn-mosby/

[196] https://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/3541310/posts

[197] http://www.baltimorecorps.org/j-c-faulk/

the police the year earlier. Ms. Jones had pleaded with the police for reformed

relationships with the black community. Mr. Faulk's question was a follow up, asking for

concrete actions black citizens could take to help the process of rebuilding trust.

The commissioner dodged the question, politely but without offering a

substantive answer. After Mr. Faulk reiterated the question no less than three times,

reframing it an a few different ways, the commissioner said something along the lines of

"I look forward to hearing questions from the rest of the audience," effectively dismissing

Mr. Faulk and Ms. Jones and focusing on other audience members' concerns.

Commissioner Davis avoided answering their questions, in effect communicating that

their line of questioning reflected special interests, a unique set of issues that didn't

contribute to the overall functioning of civil society.

After the Commissioner's attempt to pivot, my (white, affluent *vis-a-vis* most

black Baltimoreans) board president put up her hand, then took the microphone and once

again reiterated the question. DBFA's president said she too would like to be given

guidance on what actions families could take to prompt changes in BPD's response to

community members— black and white. When she asked the exact same question as Mr.

Faulk, Commissioner Davis responded thoughtfully, giving her specifics around trying to

build meaningful relationships with the police. As the Commissioner wrapped up his

answer, Mr. Faulk popped out of his seat, did not approach the microphone, but rather

spoke out from where he was situated at the side of the room caddy corner to Davis. He

said "she asked the exact same question I did, and you responded to her gently and powerfully, while dismissing" him.

Exploiting Institutionalized Racism and Bias

In this chapter, I delve into empirical examples, like the public safety town hall described above, of high-status families leveraging their sociopolitical clout to lay bare obvious bias and institutionalized racism, in turn forcing action from state actors. The interactions I present in this chapter highlight in stark relief the ways juridical-political leaders and institutions in Baltimore view and respond to blacks and whites, and break down the process by which we have been able to mobilize high-status families to transform these responses. I investigate the ways these examples highlight theoretical contours of sociopolitical power, furthering understandings of the ways in which CAR practitioners can capitalize on privilege to transform long standing sources of structural violence.

Rather than wringing hands— or banging heads against the wall— over the horrific disparities in responses white affluent families get from legislators, over the past two plus years I have worked to capitalize on public officials' tendency to cater to high-status families in the project of upending long-standing marginalization of families of color.

There is nothing magical about high-status families that results in their demands being met by legislators and school administrators. Political leaders' and school

administrators' disparate responses reflect racial bias deeply embedded in the institutions

on which our democracy is built (Bloomfield 2013, Henfield and Washington 2012[198],

Hardie, Halliday, and Tyson 2013[199], Little 2009[200]). Without such bias, families and

students (McGee and Martin 2011[201]) of all backgrounds would receive equal access,

their concerns equal attention (Bloomfield 2013, Little 2009, Riddle 2000[202], Robinson

2013[203]). However, the dynamics unfolding around the fight for advocates, grassroots

leaders and parents to secure equitable funding for Baltimore City Public Schools

suggests that high-status families' involvement can gain traction to force the hands of

recalcitrant legislators.

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[198] Malik S. Henfield, and Ahmad R. Washington. ""I Want to Do the Right Thing but What Is It?": White Teachers' Experiences with African American Students." The Journal of Negro Education 81, no. 2 (2012): 148-61. doi:10.7709/jnegroeducation.81.2.0148.

[199] Hardie, Jessica Halliday, and Karolyn Tyson. "Other People's Racism: Race, Rednecks, and Riots in a Southern High School." Sociology of Education 86, no. 1 (2013): 83-102. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/43744619.

[200] Little, Kimberly K. ""Little Old Ladies with Tennis Shoes": The Relationship Between White Women and Racial Reform in a Post-King Memphis." In You Must Be from the North: Southern White Women in the Memphis Civil Rights Movement, 87-109. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2009. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/j.ctt2tv8qs.9.

[201] McGee, Ebony O., and Danny B. Martin. ""You Would Not Believe What I Have to Go Through to Prove My Intellectual Value!" Stereotype Management Among Academically Successful Black Mathematics and Engineering Students." American Educational Research Journal 48, no. 6 (2011): 1347-389. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/41306389.

[202] Riddle, David. "Race and Reaction in Warren, Michigan, 1971 to 1974: "Bradley v. Milliken" and the Cross-District Busing Controversy." Michigan Historical Review 26, no. 2 (2000): 1-49. doi:10.2307/20173858.

[203] ROBINSON, TODD E. "Where Do We Go from Here?: Setting the Course for Racial Reconciliation." In A City within a City: The Black Freedom Struggle in Grand Rapids, Michigan, 145-77. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2013. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/j.ctt14bt3tj.12.

I want to emphasize that I'm well aware that there are counterfactuals to many of

the examples (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990[204], Chin and Phillips 2004[205], Orr 2003[206],

Sacks 2007[207], Useem 1992[208]) I discuss in this chapter. High-status parents' involvement

can get traction that leads to positive change, but the processes that leads to such change

is riddled with deeply fraught racial tensions that feel unwieldy for administrators and

activist leaders alike; as Milne and Aurini (2015[209]) put it, education reformers eager to

benefit from parental involvement find they "are unable to fully tame higher

socioeconomic status parents."

The purpose of this chapter is to wrestle with the tensions of this dynamic, and

present empirical examples from my case study that highlight the gains community

activists and parents were able to achieve when their collective energy was aligned. The

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[204] Bourdieu, Pierre and Jean-Claude Passeron. Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture. 1197, 1990. London: Sage Publications.

[205] Chin, Tiffani and Meredith Phillips. "Social Reproduction and Child Rearing Practices: Social Class, Children's Agency and the Summer Activity Gap," Sociology of Education 77, July 2004: 185-210.

[206] Orr, Amy J. "Black-White Differences in Achievement: The Importance of Wealth," Sociology of Education 76, October 2003: 281-304

[207] Sacks, Peter. "PUBLIC SCHOOLS, PRIVATE PRIVILEGE." In Tearing Down the Gates: Confronting the Class Divide in American Education, 92-108. Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 2007. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/10.1525/j.ctt1pp8rb.10.

[208] Useem, Elizabeth L. "Middle Schools and Math Groups: Parents' Involvement in Children's Math Placement," Sociology of Education 65, October 1992.

[209] Milne, Emily, and Janice Aurini. "Schools, Cultural Mobility and Social Reproduction: The Case of Progressive Discipline." The Canadian Journal of Sociology / Cahiers Canadiens De Sociologie 40, no. 1 (2015): 51-74. doi:10.2307/canajsocicahican.40.1.51.

many counterfactuals stand; my goal is not to refute prior scholarship and critiques, but rather to delve into the complexities that hold promise for reformers to be able to harness high-status parents' eagerness to improve their own children's education in order to yield systemic improvements.

My own experiences as a parent and homeowner in Baltimore illuminate some of the contours of these complexities. My presence and life in the city had negative implications for impoverished families— when I undertook a massive renovation of a severely dilapidated house, my property value went from $180,000 to $340,000 in the span of less than a year. I bought my home for $168,500 in October 2014. As of this writing in December 2018, I am preparing to list the house for $365K. The properties adjacent to mine and in my neighborhood have been impacted by the increased value of my home. However, because of the homestead exemption, a tax perk for homeowners to protect from tax increases beyond 4% per year, other homeowners are safe from a massive surge in their property tax bill in the immediate short term. For hopeful buyers, however, I have personally contributed to making the market more challenging by helping to jack up prices in one of Baltimore's more integrated, relatively safe neighborhoods.

My story shows similar complications on the education front. Had I remained living in Baltimore through my son's school years, I would have sent my son to a school out of our zone— a decision made possible by the "school choice" policy BCPS enacted

in part to keep families with concerns about their neighborhood school in the system. Enrolling my son at Fed Hill Prep, rather than our zoned George Washington Elementary, would have sent the $8,700 earmark of state funding (MSDE 2018) on his head doesn't go to a school that is 7% under enrolled (BCPS 2016-17 AY). I am amongst a vast number of college educated, financially comfortable parents who wrestle with how to best educate our children within the confines of a dysfunctional educational system that fails to meet.

My dissertation committee's request for me to "address this decision fully" captures the tension that my socioeconomic cohort of parents face: there is no way to "address this decision fully," because—- from my unique vantage point as parent *and* reformer—- there is no way to fully reconcile deeply held sociopolitical beliefs and the desire to put our children into the best possible schools available. I've had dozens of informal conversations with parents, some of them in tears, all wrestling with the same tension. Perhaps to an outsider there is a way to fully address this decision. For the tens of thousands of city-committed Baltimore parents who have the privilege of choice, however, choosing to go out of zone seems less harmful than hightailing it to the suburbs.

These tensions mirror many of the intractable conflicts CAR scholar-practitioners wrestle with. There is no one 'right' answer, no way to fully address the conflicts privilege and institutionalized racism create. Inquiry and action are our best hopes. The question for Baltimore parents and CAR scholar-practitioners alike needs to shift, as

McKesson argues, to consider how we can use this understanding of privilege to dismantle it. How, in light of well documented disparities, can we use the unearned social legitimacy and access afforded by institutional racism and class deference to upend the underlying structures that give rise to privilege and marginalization?

I. A Process for Engagement

Over the course of the past two plus years, DBFA's staff, board and I have, at least in some small ways, successfully recruited high-status families to publicly question disparities in Baltimore. The city's segregation and poverty are so pronounced that discussions of "Two Baltimores" are commonplace amongst NGO workers and academics. Residents of the "White L" and "Black Butterfly" (Brown 2017) co-exist, but rarely co-mingle. Using a program model to intentionally unify these two worlds around the bedrock love all parents feel for their children, we have been able to engage high-status families in the project of leveraging their privilege to demand city resources for families living in deeply racially and economically segregated areas.

This has been an endeavor of intentional programming and narrative constructions that position Baltimore as a family friendly city. These initiatives then flowed into building an explicit identity of "city moms" and "city dads" that includes a recognition of the city's diversity, extolling the differences their children will be aware of as they grow up as a positive. We then translated city parents' identities rooted in the valuation of difference into a sense of unity with others living in the city, families who have very

different experiences living in Baltimore. This sense of shared geography was then used

to push for a recognition of the disparities inherent among differing racial and economic

groups. We eventually capitalized this recognition to mobilize high-status families in the

project of demanding equity for all Baltimore families. Rather than push high-status

families to consider themselves positioned to "help" marginalized families, we have

cultivated a sense that the fate of families along the entire sociopolitical and economic

spectrum are intrinsically tied.

We're city people. That's what we do.

DBFA's work is different than other family retention efforts, in that the

organization focuses on connecting families together to create a better city, rooted in the

belief that parents share a visceral love for their children. We expand on the love high-

status parents have for their children, bubbling that out to kids across the city from all

backgrounds. We take care of our own and create programs that link parents to each other

so that we can improve schools, public parks, and government accountability.

The high-status families who are DBFA members feel invested in kids across the

city not out of a saccharine patronizing sense of obligation (Bloomfield 2013), but in a

unified belief that "we all do better when we all do better."[210] Four centuries of legally

and socially mandated deferential treatment has given high-status parents and students

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[210]Del. Brooke Lierman, inaugural Baltimore Women United meeting, December 8, 2016.

(Arshad and Maclennan 2012[211], Golann 2015[212]) a bedrock belief that their children

deserve— and will receive— the very best the State has to offer (Arshad and MacLennan

2012, Hudson 2009[213], MacBride 2012[214], Milne and Aurini 2015, Karr 2018[215], Warner

2010[216]). Expanding these parents' expectations to include children across Baltimore city

has enabled DBFA to mobilize massive numbers of white, affluent families to demand

equity in school funding, in turn contributing to the tangible gains achieved by a larger

coalition of education advocates.

As Cucchiara (2011) documented, when high-status families' kids are enrolled in

public schools, those schools start to change— not always in ways that benefit students of

[211] Arshad, Rowena, and Susan Maclennan. "Social Capital, Diversity and Inclusion: Lessons from One Primary School." In Social Capital, Children and Young People: Implications for Practice, Policy and Research, edited by Allan Julie and Catts Ralph, 137-58. Bristol: Bristol University Press, 2012. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/j.ctt9qgrxp.12.

[212] Golann, Joanne W. "The Paradox of Success at a No-Excuses School." Sociology of Education 88, no. 2 (2015): 103-19. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/43743430.

[213] Hudson, Janet G. "White Resolve." In Entangled by White Supremacy: Reform in World War I-era South Carolina, 41-72. University Press of Kentucky, 2009. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/j.ctt2jcs7x.7.

[214] MacBride, George. "Commentary: Social Capital and Inclusion: Implications for Practice." In Social Capital, Children and Young People: Implications for Practice, Policy and Research, edited by Allan Julie and Catts Ralph, 99-112. Bristol: Bristol University Press, 2012. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/j.ctt9qgrxp.10.

[215] Karr, Ronald Dale. "The New Landscape of Suburban Politics." In Between City and Country: Brookline, Massachusetts, and the Origins of Suburbia, 89-106. Amherst, Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2018. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/j.ctv346trn.11.

[216] Warner, Catharine H. "Emotional Safeguarding: Exploring the Nature of Middle-Class Parents' School Involvement." Sociological Forum 25, no. 4 (2010): 703-24. http://www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/40927642.

lower caste families (Buck 2010[217], Posey-Maddox 2014[218]). However, if you can marry

high-status families' petitions on behalf of their kids with a sense of unity amongst all

city families, you can start to mobilize for system-wide changes. When you have high-

status children learning in public schools, playing in public parks, and taking public

transit to high schools of choice, high-status parents' persistent demanding for better

begins to shift city resources. Capitalizing on high-status families' expectations for "their"

children is- in a small put meaningful way- changing the face of education and

neighborhoods in Baltimore City.

II. Linking Progress to Programming

DBFA's work differs in important ways from other family retention initiatives

focused on reaching families whose financial capital has the potential to resuscitate

Baltimore's anemic tax base. Our programming highlights the city's exemplary schools

and neighborhoods in an effort to retain elite families, and then in turn leverage the clout

these families have to push elected officials and the private sector to invest in failing

schools and transform violent neighborhoods. Creating a narrative that the city was a

place elite families can call home was central to DBFA's efforts from the organizations'

inception. Early iterations of DBFA's marketing materials include the tagline "Making

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[217] Buck, Stuart. "WHEN DID "ACTING WHITE" ARISE?" In Acting White: The Ironic Legacy
of Desegregation, 125-46. New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2010. http://
www.jstor.org.mutex.gmu.edu/stable/j.ctt1npp4n.12.

[218] Posey-Maddox, Linn. When Middle-Class Parents Choose Urban Schools: Class, Race and
the Challenge of Equity in Public Education. 2014.

Baltimore a Place Where Families Thrive," the words emblazoned beneath the faces of

happy families painted against the backdrop of the Inner Harbor skyline. In a city where

an affluent couple's pregnancy announcement is followed almost immediately by a call to

a real estate agent, these images run counter to most of the high-status families'

perception of what the "city" looks like.

These narrative positioning efforts were linked to programs that reinforced the

message that families could thrive in the city. Much of the work from the start involved

exposing parents to the fact that the city was even traversable and safe to explore. The

annual "Egg-sellent" Day in Patterson Park, a spring time egg hunt in one of the city's

largest public greenspaces, was started as both a social event and a practical way to get

families into the park. Show them that the park was safe and not littered with needles, and

hopefully they'd come back- perhaps even with the friends they made at the event.

Over the course of DBFA's first eight years, programming had expanded but

without a tremendous sense of data-driven modeling to match initiatives and events to

flight-risk drivers. Drilling down into analysis conducted by the Baltimore Neighborhood

Indicator Alliance, my board, staff and I cut out many events that didn't specifically

address a flight risk factor and allow us to pay critical attention to unintended

consequences stemming from marketing and outreach focused only on high-status

families. I scrapped events like the egg-hunt, which absolutely had a positive impact of

bringing families together but ate up my time and our limited funds. I wanted to pump

every available minute and dollar into activities directed specifically around transforming

flight risk factors.

Connecting Communities, Empowering Families

When I came on as executive director, I was a 30 hours per week one woman

show, with the help of a very talented graphic designer consultant and a very dedicated,

creative board member. Out of necessity, we had to slice down programming in order to

simply keep our heads above water. Sitting at the graphic designer's kitchen table, we

boiled down the basic goals of what all DBFA's programming had been trying to achieve.

All of the social programming, advocacy and marketing outreach over the past eight

years loosely fit into two buckets: connecting communities and empowering families.

This analysis gave us an organizational framework making decisions around what to keep

and what to scrap- and a concise new tagline to communicate what we did.

The events DFBA produced going forward would specifically focus on

connecting families with one another and with public resources they needed to raise

children in the city. We would keep events like the New and Expecting Parent Social-

which we rebranded as a more catchy "New Babies on the Block"- and the School and

Children's Programming Fair, which brought over 40 education and enrichment programs

into the same school gymnasium. These type of events accomplished a few things: 1) the

opportunity for parents to meet one another and begin building their "parent posse"; 2)

connected them with resources to support their life in the city, by exposing them to the

many quality education options within the public school system, as well as options for

private schools should they feel the public schools were not a good fit; and, 3) provided a

narrative opportunity to showcase that there were other families also choosing to live in

the city.

My first exposure to DBFA was six days after I closed on my home in Baltimore.

We were not yet living in the city, but the friend that recruited us to move here

encouraged me to attend DBFA's 7th annual School and Children's Programming Fair.

Upon entering the gym where the event was being held, I was immediately struck by the

number of families— mostly white— who were also shopping for a school in the city. I

walked away from the event with a short list of schools to visit, having narrowed my list

from twenty-plus prospective schools to four. I also left with a firm understanding that,

despite my extended families' concern that we were moving away from the suburbs—

where we were "supposed" to raise our son— we were among a cohort of like-minded

families.

When less than a year later I found myself responsible for deciding DBFA's

programmatic direction, I kept programming that communicated to families the sense

they were in good company, but moved events to central, more diverse parts of the city

easier for families to access who live outside of the affluent areas of south Baltimore that

overwhelmingly represent car owners in Baltimore (43% of the population of Baltimore

are without cars,[219] and the vast majority of the city's population live outside of the South

Baltimore/downtown area[220]), as well as free transit provided by the "fast, friendly, and

free"[221] Circulator bus that uses tax funding to shuttle waterfront residents and visitors

around the Inner Harbor. These tweak tactics again had elements of practical goals-

reaching more families of color outside of the direct downtown area- and a narrative

objective of highlighting that we were concerned about families beyond the racial,

geographic and socioeconomic footprint DBFA had historically served.

We set out to configure the "empowering families" side of the work through a

number of initiatives that would capitalize on the social ties made through our

"connecting communities" initiatives, leveraging the sociopolitical capital of these

families to advocate for better city resources on which all families rely— schools, parks,

and walkable streets. DBFA had some traction doing advocacy with elected and

appointed community officials, as evidence by several elected officials sitting on our

board, and legislation on the city's books that gave DBFA a seat on the community

oversight panel tasked with giving input on the mayor's picks for the Board of School

Commissioners. As we worked on rebooting the organization, I wanted to expand this

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[219] http://planning.baltimorecity.gov/sites/default/files/2a_City%20Profile%20-%203.30.16_0.pdf

[220] https://www.godowntownbaltimore.com/library/docs/
2017_State_of_DT_Balt_Report_spring2018.pdf

[221] https://www.godowntownbaltimore.com/Publications/Strategic_Plan_Fullversion.pdf

advocacy to focus much more directly on flight-risk drivers and give families a "seat at the table" in public decisions.

We decided to focus our education advocacy efforts on augmenting public school resources and improving the flow of information from Baltimore City Public Schools to families served by the system. To address walkability and sustainable transit, DBFA had historically partnered with private and public sector leaders to preserve and increase Baltimore's urban green spaces, and to continually improve our community as a more pedestrian-friendly, walkable place. The success of these efforts had been impressive- we had helped found a beautiful waterfront park and were on task forces to give input on plan redevelopments downtown. I wanted to expand the focus of these efforts beyond the affluent waterfront, improving environmental features that could enhance the quality of city living for all Baltimore families.

Modeling Programming

Based on these goals, we began to sketch out a model that would move families along a continuum from connecting with one another into action, advocating to transform underlying flight risk factors:

Revised Program Model Addressing Flight-Risk Drivers
Supportive Programming/Initiatives: Provides meaningful assistance to new parents- food prep, a shoulder to cry on; Promotes the upsides of city living through marketing outreach to increase awareness of family-friendly programs.
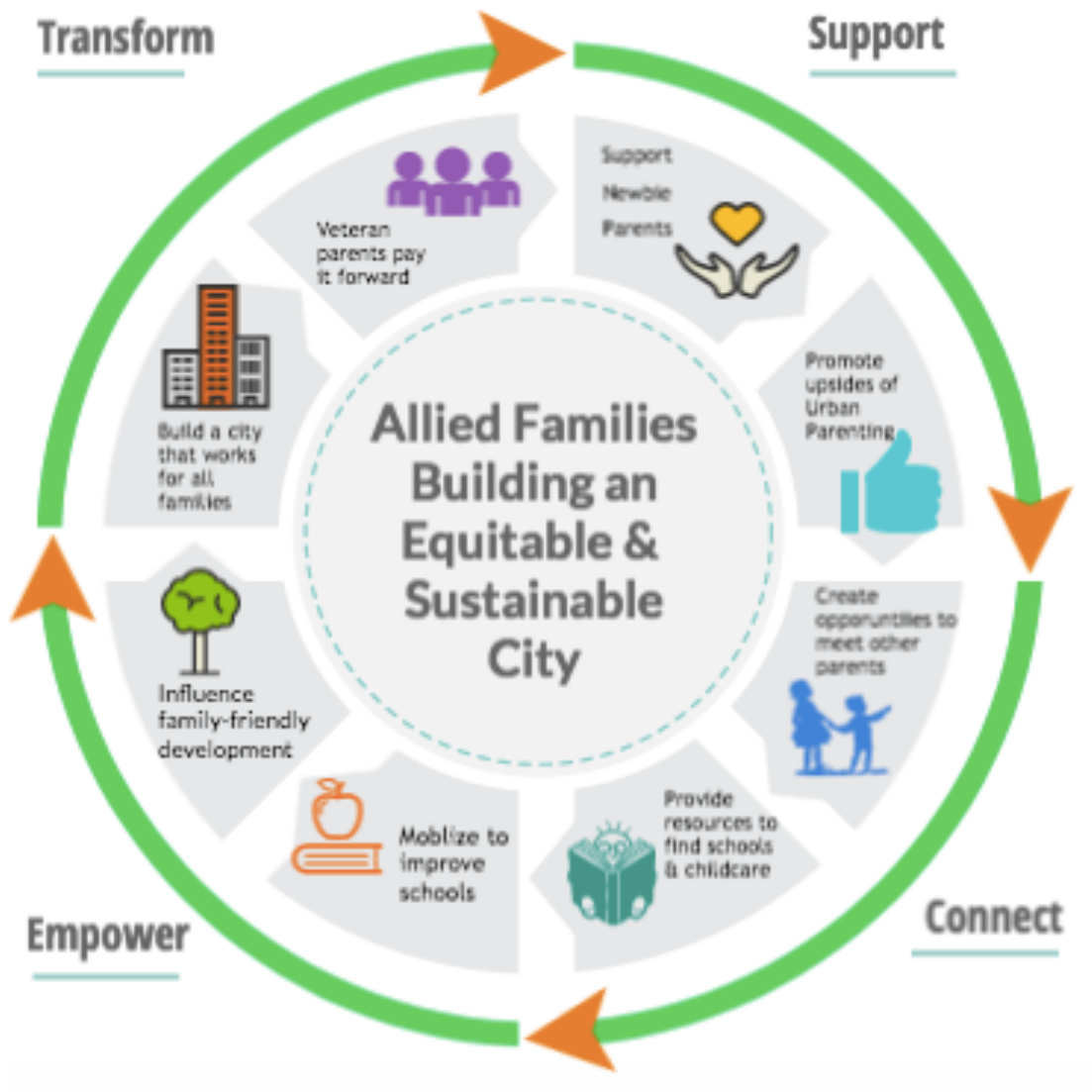
Figure 7. DBFA Program Model

Connecting Programming/Initiatives: Introduces families to one another; Connects families with resources like schools and children's programs to thrive in the city.

Empowering Programming/Initiatives: Mobilizes families to advocate for schools; Creates partnerships with NGO, city, and private sector groups to promote family friendly development that includes parks, greenspace.

Transformative Programming/Initiatives: Builds off empowering programs and initiatives to push legislators to prioritize families' needs— quality education, equitable greenspace and safe parks, and sustainable transit— in city planning; Engages 'veteran families'- parents who were recruited to DBFA when they first had babies- to reach out to the next generation of city parents and provide peer-to-peer support.

Our revised programming model created a continuum designed to engage families attracted to DBFA for our newbie parent support into the project of advocating for improved, equitable city services. This continuum set the stage for us to mobilize families en masse, both reactively to crises that are the inevitable consequence of decades of divestment in city services, and proactively to push for family-friendly development.

III. Mobilizing Privileged Families

The public safety town hall was a powerful moment of intentionally, blatantly bring the "Two Baltimores" together, but the event itself was a one-off in the midst of a much greater battle for equitable funding for BCPS. On December 1, 2016, BCPS CEO

Dr. Sonja Santelises announced a staggering $129M budget deficit for the looming

academic year 2017-2018. The gap, the result of a broken funding formula compounded

with years of CEOs moving money around to try to cover deficit, threw parents,

educators and advocates alike into a frenzy. Over 1,000 teacher jobs would be lost if the

gap was not filled. Individual schools stood to lose more than 30% of their operating

budgets in AY17-18, and more the following year if the budget crisis scared parents off

from enrolling in the school. Sitting in a meeting with allied advocates a few days after

the shortfall was announced, we asked a legislator what the plan was. "Layoffs." That was

the only plan, should a solution not be found to close the gap. The cuts to school funding

would disastrously impact all schools but would hurt black and impoverished students the

most.

In a very tangible sense, schools are a place where we can see visible evidence of

the oft-referred "System" — the systematic sociopolitical and economic marginalization

and exploitation of black, impoverished Americans. Schools epitomize Agamben's "state

of exception." Black children across urban America are compelled by law to spend their

days in "schools with no heat where it's so cold they can barely hold a pencil in their

hand. When they want a sip of water, they can't go to a water fountain because the pipes

are filled with lead. They risk cancer sitting in buildings filled with asbestos, and can't

even go to use the bathroom because the bathrooms don't work properly."[222] Parents who

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[222]Tomika Snead, Testimony to Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners, January 9, 2018

decide to pull their kids on days where broken boilers cause classroom temperatures to

drop into the 40s, or who fear in-school violence in the aftermath of a neighborhood drug

skirmish, risk criminal educational neglect charges. Students who skip risk truancy

charges that can be the start of a lifelong relationship with the penal system. Students face

health consequences and violence if they attend school, and penal consequences if they

don't. Scholars struggling to find concrete evidence of "the system" need look no further

than the state of Maryland's unwillingness to take drastic action to fix Baltimore City

Public Schools.

We Are Not a Disaster

When the budget shortfall was announced late in 2016, DBFA was just three

weeks out from our inaugural gala, which had garnered us enough financial resources to

bring on a third staff member. My community engagement director and I had

painstakingly written a job description for a marketing expert with ninja-level

administrative management skills. Walking smack into the civil rights crisis the shortfall

would create— or further exacerbate, given BCPS was already underfunded according to

an independent audit prior to the announcement of the $129M shortfall— we scrapped

the job description and hired a community organizer. The day prior to her start date, our

board president, community engagement director, the new organizer and I decamped

from the office to a pub and began to plot how to mobilize our membership. We started

unpacking the racial, economic, and political dynamics at play, and brainstorming what

part DBFA was uniquely positioned to play within the broader community of advocates calling for intervention.

Already the mayor and governor were getting slammed with demands for funding to address the crisis. Taking to the airwaves, Gov. Hogan (R-MD) said the deficit was "simply a gap between what they'd love to have and what the legislature says they're supposed to get," the school district's financial situation is an "absolute disaster." The gap was due to mismanagement and lack of accountability, according to the governor. To step in would be fiscally irresponsible: "We're going to be watching every penny of taxpayers' money to make sure it's spent wisely."

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In addition to being factually inaccurate— a recent audit found that the state should provide $387 million more annually to the city school system than it is currently, as documented by the state's own Department of Legislative Services— Gov. Hogan's remarks played at deeply entrenched racialized bias about the black communities' fiscal acumen. The governor raised his own political capital by scapegoating politically expendable poor, black students, scoring points with his base at the expense of constituents that didn't merit his attention. A BCPS parent's op-ed to the Baltimore Sun later that week perfectly captured the power contours the governor was capitalizing on: "With these comments, Mr. Hogan play[s] up the stereotypes so common among those

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223 http://www.wbal.com/article/223247/97/hogan-no-blank-checks-for-pimlico-city-schools

who reside outside of our city who believe, without any proof, that the city must be 'wasting' their hard earned tax revenues."

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As a group predominantly comprised of white, affluent Marylanders, DBFA had a niche messaging platform uniquely qualified to push back against this narrative. It was one thing for community advocates and activists to call out the governor's racism. It was another to present powerful images that challenged the racial and economic undertones of his accusations. We were white people with wealth, who were making the conscientious decision to send our children to the public schools he was deriding. Furthermore, we represented high-ticket taxpayers he was pandering to.

Investing in City Schools is Investing in the State

We devised a response drawing a direct line between the economic wealth of the downtown and the state of Maryland. DBFA was contributing to the planning of the Baltimore Education Coalition's rally in Annapolis in late February, which brought 2,000 parents, teachers and students to the lawn of the Governor's Mansion to demand a solution. We'd follow this action up in early March, with a rally at the Inner Harbor. Having a diverse crowd of families calling for equity, painted against the backdrop of some of the largest businesses based in Maryland, capitalized on the racial and economically biased vitriol being levied at the schools.

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224 http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/opinion/readersrespond/bs-ed-hogan-schools-letter-20170302-story.html

Our tactics were also aimed at pushing the mayor to act. While the governor was busy explaining inaccurate talking points to media outlets across the state, the mayor was busy hiding from her constituents. For a politician who campaigned on a platform that included upping the city's investment in BCPS by millions of dollars annually, she was oddly hostile towards parents and activists urging her to step in. At a United Way fundraiser breakfast in early January, she prefaced her response to question about the budget crisis by saying "If I have one more person ask me about the school budget" before throwing BCPS CEO Dr. Santelises- who'd been in the job just months and had inherited, not caused, the mess- under the bus. The mayor was strangely absent from the rough street corners she'd been campaigning on, but was consistently present for corporate lunches and sparkly new hotel openings. Positioning our advocacy as rooted in efforts to keep affluent families from leaving seemed like a tactic that might help push her into action. In our initial press release, I stated:

> After nine years of working to reverse the trend of middle-class flight, DBFA is finally seeing families stay in the city as they move from the stroller years to the school years. Concerns about school quality are the number one reason families cite when moving out of the city. The city is the center of business and commerce for the state. Keeping families in the city helps build the tax base, and spurs industry. For Maryland to do well, Baltimore must do well (DBFA Press Release, January 12, 2017).

Directly tying education funding to family flight, and in turn family flight to the city and state's economic stability, we played to legislators' clear willingness to prioritize the voices of white, affluent citizens.

Leveraging Privileged Networks of Knowledge

Working our networks within our membership, we learned that even if the mayor and state legislature pulled together a plan for gap funding, the governor would have to approve a supplemental budget to release the funds. The mayor needed to come up with a portion of money, and the state would need to backfill the rest. Having a membership comprised of highly-educated, connected and influential families helped garner information to craft a message that would speak to the practical actions needed to close the deficit, in addition to a message that would mobilize our members.

City Kids are Maryland's Kids

Many advocates were crafting their messaging to mobilize people to target the mayor, the governor, and state legislators within the city delegation. We were just months past Donald Trump's election, and having watched Hillary Clinton delineate complicated messaging crafted to resonate with specific subsections of the electorate, we decided one simple rallying cry would be most effective mobilizing our membership. Rather than drill into the specific sausage making it would take to get all of the city and state actors coordinated, we crafted a concise message targeting just the governor, as he was the one that would have to give a final say to fix the crisis, regardless of state delegates and senators. *City Kids and Maryland's Kids*, we proclaimed on a press release announcing

our rally at the Inner Harbor. Our children- not just the children of high-status families, but the 80,000+ kids served by BCPS- were children of the wealthiest state in the wealthiest nation in the world, and we would not stand silent while our state's executive scored points with his base on the backs of our kids. We demanded Gov. Hogan to "#Releasethe130," a pithy, strait forward message speaking to the action needed to fill the shortfall- the governor to release a supplemental budget- as well as the optics of the dollar figure families were citing as they panicked about the possibility of teacher layoffs.

Lifting Up, Not Speaking Over

We were keenly aware of the very real possibly that our response could be viewed as white saviors stepping in to speak on behalf of families of color, further delegitimizing their voices. We wanted to use the privilege we had— of access, time, and economic capital— to call attention to the shortfall's drastic consequences in very real and solid terms. Our graphic designer and our board president pulled together an 'apple for the teacher' apple graphic with a writing prompt on a sheet that could be distributed throughout city schools. "Dear Gov. Hogan," the sheets read, "I'm counting on you to #Releasethe130 because…"

The letters[225] range from heartbreakingly earnest:

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[225] I have retained the original spelling and grammar directly from the letters without editing.

You would be taking away teachers. Please don't take away teachers, especially Miss Russell. Miss Russell is very nice and she is my favorite teacher. Sincerely, M[226]

We need 130 millin so we can git beder bathrooms. Sincerely, B (Kindergarten)

I love my teachers and it would be of nightmare just to lose one of them. Also our education would be lower and I would have to transfer and that's my second nightmare I could have. Please don't let my top two nightmares come to life. Please. Sincerely, A

I want to learn and get a good learning skills so I need your help and I don't want alot of students in my classroom I already have 31 students in my class and I don't want anymore. Sincerely, J (1st grade)

To well reasoned, with a bit of snark for good measure:

This is not fair what you are doing to schools effecting others by not just taking money from schools parents to because they work to get that money and donate money to the schools and the parents need money for food, water, houses and clothes. Sincerely, Abraham

PS- also notice the bad grammar. It's going to be more in the future if you take our teachers

To searing:

At least the segregated water fountains had drinkable water. (Anonymous)

Without a solid education opportunity comes from the street — drugs and other crimes. Education is cheaper than prison. Sincerely, C

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[226] I have redacted full names.

We even received some from parents that pointed directly to the heart of the dilemma I'm unpacking in this book:

We have loved every minute of living in the city and have spent the past 10 years trying to make Baltimore a place where parents want to raise their families. That only works if our schools have manageable class sizes and valuable enrichment programs. Sincerely, K & L

The story sheets snowballed on themselves. What started as an initiative at about ten schools spread to countless others, as well as family living rooms and neighborhood pubs. Bartenders were passing sheets to patrons— *here, fill this out while you wait for your fries*. Our board president, community organizer, and community engagement director racked up miles on their car as they collected thousands of 'apple stories'— over 2,500 by the time we were done. The stories gave voice to the students, parents and teachers being called "disasters" by the top elected official responsible for their education, as mandated by Maryland's constitution.

We March 4th

Our Inner Harbor rally was slated for March 4th. As we distributed apple sheets, we also passed out posters with the apple image, and the words "We March 4th." Hundreds of homes and businesses downtown displayed the posters in their windows, creating the impression that the gentrified district of the city was invested in the success of the school system.

The night before the rally, our board president stayed awake hours painstakingly gluing the apple stories one by one onto a massive scroll of paper the length of a football field. I was going to be on a stage with dozens of legislators and the CEO of the schools, but students' voices would be the most prominent feature of the event.

The high temperature the day of the rally was 25 degrees. Looking out over a crowd nearing a thousand, I saw my mom with my 2yo son in a stroller, bundled in his snowsuit and wrapped in a blanket. DBFA members had created signs shaped like apples saying "City Kids are Worth It." Dozens of kid in coats and scarves had similar signs strapped to their backs, proclaiming "I'm Worth It." Standing on the podium looking at all of these little kids, freezing on a Saturday morning when they should have been enjoying the time honored tradition of rotting their teeth out eating sugar cereal in front of the TV, I went off script and said what was on my heart:

Kids in Montgomery do not have to do this. Those kids are at home watching cartoons in their jammies, and our kids are out here freezing, begging those responsible for their education to give them what they are guaranteed by our state constitution. This would not happen in Bethesda. This is not an education crisis, this is a civil rights crisis.

As I spoke, DBFA staff and volunteers unrolled the scroll. It kept going, and going, and going. The voices of kids about to be stuffed into kindergarten classrooms topping forty kids unfurled into the freezing morning, with office buildings built with

public subsidies gleaming in the background. One of DBFA's board member's 5th grade daughter spoke after me, explaining why she loved her teachers and wanted them to keep their jobs. "I am not a disaster, Governor Hogan," she said, gripping a piece of looseleaf paper with her speech on it in her rainbow colored gloves. City Schools CEO Dr. Santelises followed, saying funding the shortfall would be "an investment in the future leadership of our city, of our state, of our country and, frankly, of the world."

$100M Closer

DBFA was only one of dozens of groups— in addition to thousands of independent students, parents and teachers— who pushed leaders to address the budget crisis. In no way do I want to suggest that our actions alone prompted leaders to respond; my goal here is to point out the specific way we exploited the perception that we were comprised mainly of and concerned primary about white, affluent high-status families. The hard work put in by collective citizens and groups including student-led Baltimore Algebra Project, Leaders of a Beautiful Struggle, the BEC, Baltimoreans for Educational Equity, Strong Schools Maryland, and BUILD resulted in Maryland State House Appropriations Committee Chair Del. Maggie McIntosh and Baltimore City Mayor Catherine Pugh hammering out a solution to close a large portion of the gap. Sustained pressure on City Council brought another $10M in from the city. In total, between state, city and school system pledges, mobilized citizens were able to garner $100M in funding, a historically unprecedented investment in the face of a school budget crisis.

IV. Leveraging Distinction

While high-status families' involvement can add clout to systemic equitable funding fights, their school selection has more complicated financial impacts. Bourdieu (1979) argues the selection of goods and services signal class status; high-status families' selection of where to send their children within the public school system is a decision that snowballs on itself. The more high-status families who choose a school, the more high-status families will choose that particular school. When a high-status family chooses to put their kid in a particular public school, they are, concisely or not, signifying the standing or importance of the school.
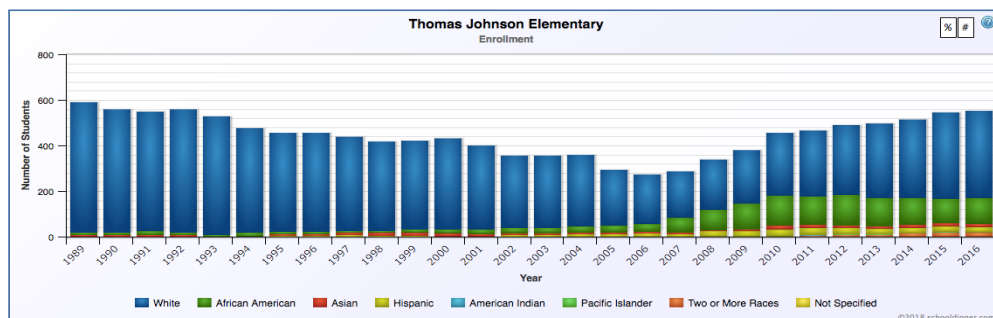
Figure 8. Thomas Johnson Elementary Enrollment, SchoolDigger.org

At Thomas Johnson Elementary/Middle School (TJEMS) one of the schools DBFA has been most active in for the decade since the organization's inception, the school was a target for closure from the Board of School Commissioners due to declining enrollment. Today, the school is overenrolled by 10%. "Principal D," as Principal Dendinger is affectionally known among kids and parents alike, credited the turnaround in part thanks to DBFA parent engagement and Live Baltimore's marketing efforts (Baltimore Sun Nov 23, 2016). In addition to the climbing enrollment, the school has raised nearly $50K in 2016 alone from parent donations (made possible in part by a 0% fiscal sponsorship agreement with DBFA— more on that in the concluding chapter), and has garnered support from Under Armour and private foundations.

Interestingly, at the same time that enrollment has gone up the point that the school is thriving— from 291 at DBFA's inception to 547 in 2015 (the last available public census data) — the racial demographics have stayed fairly consistent in regards to the proportion of white students and African American students (70%/23% in 2007, 68%/19% in 2015), and the school has gained a greater gross number of Hispanic and Asian students, going from 15(2007) to 25(2015) and 4(2007) to 12(2015) respectively. These data run counter to the public narrative that DBFA's impact in the school has resulted in the school becoming less diverse.
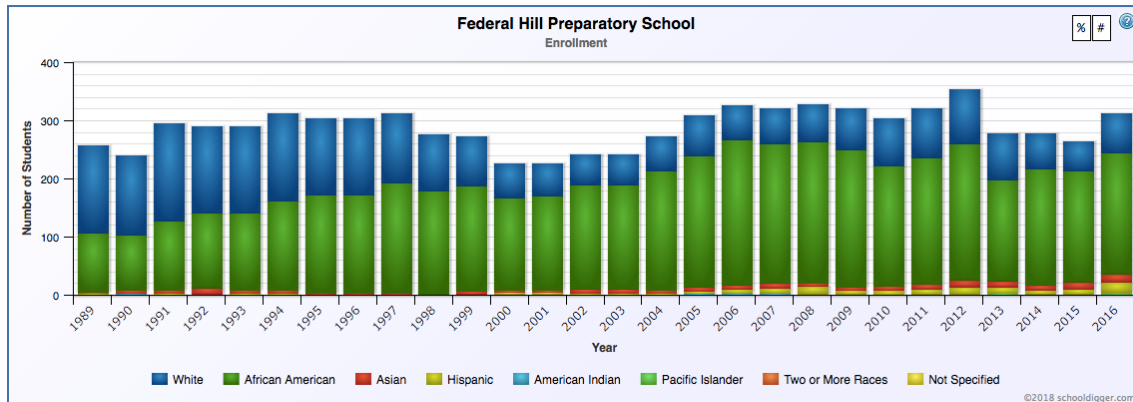
Figure 9. Federal Hill Preparatory School Enrollment, SchoolDigger.org

Federal Hill Preparatory School— often held up (by people including myself) as

the most dramatic example of DBFA's work in schools thanks to our founding board

president's work to increase the number of extracurricular programs (theater, karate,

language clubs) and school time "special area resources" (SPARs) including arts and

physical education— has seen a gross decrease of enrollment of 58 students, and a

consistent racial composition of 19% white students and roughly 73% African American

(74% in 2007, 72% in 2015). In 2007, the school served 323 students, and in 2015 served just 265 (SchoolDigger.com).

A complicated (motion) picture

We shot our legislative advocacy video for 2018 session at another school within DBFA's original catchment area, Francis Scott Key Elementary/Middle School (FSK). Walking the halls and popping into classrooms with a camera crew, I was struck by the clear shift in racial composition of the student body in the time since DBFA[227]'s founding. The 4th graders, all of whom were babies back when DBFA's original documents were submitted to the IRS, were a diverse clump of ten and eleven year olds, a handful of white and black children in roughly equal numbers. Further down the middle-school section of the school, the eighth grade class was comprised of almost all African-American children. When we hit the first floor to grab B roll for the video, one of the youngest classes was just leaving the gym. I caught sight of my Board Vice President's son— a student from the relatively rougher area of West Baltimore attending a South Baltimore school thanks to BCPS's open zoning policy— as the almost all white line of kids as they wound their way back to their classroom. Again, however, the raw data collected by the state shows a more complicated picture of the changes at FSK. From 2007 to 2015, the population declined from 663 to 473, and the proportion of white students and African American students did exactly the opposite of my antidotal observations during filming. In 2007, 39% of students were white, 55% African

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227 DBFA founding documents: South of North Avenue

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American. In 2015, the ratios had shifted to 27% and 65% respectively

(SchoolDigger.com).
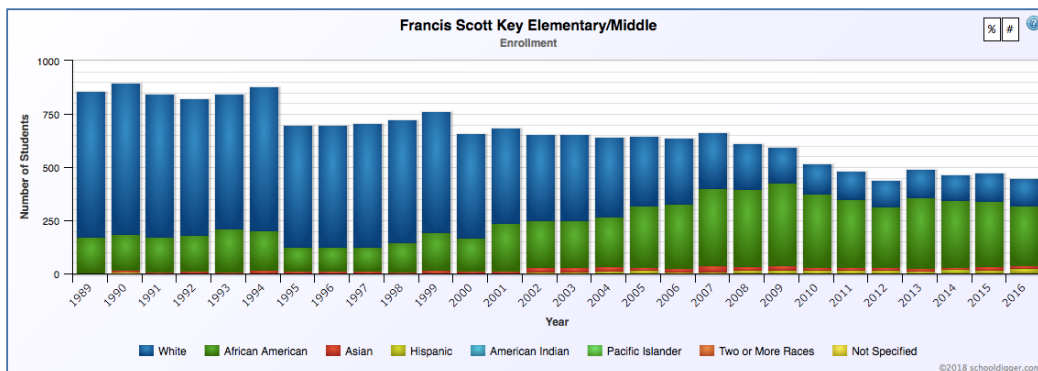
Figure 10. Francis Scott Key Elementary/Middle School Enrollment, SchoolDigger.org

These numbers don't matter a great deal as a true indicator of DBFA's impact—since our work is not focused specifically on enrollment, but rather on encouraging

parents' involvement in the school— but they matter a great deal from a funding

standpoint. Massive urban districts (in 2016-17 Baltimore City Public Schools served

83,800 across 191 schools, Philadelphia 134,241 across 214 schools) are

disproportionately reliant on state funding directly tied to enrollment, due to the majority

of school funding formulas being tied to property taxes. In urban areas with declining

populations, the tax base is insufficient to meet the needs of school systems, and the state

is responsible for making up the difference, in accordance to funding formulas enacted by

state legislators. The decrease of 950 student in BCPS from AY16-17 to AY17-18

corresponded to a state decrease in funding of nearly $29M students. Decreased

enrollment has a tangible negative effect on students living in poverty- increased class

sizes, fewer (or no) social workers and counselors, and eradication of arts and enrichment

offerings.

When funding drops as a result of decreased enrollment, student class sizes go up

and SPARs go down, prompting an even greater enrollment decrease the next year.

Enrollment- plus or minus- exponentially snowballs on itself. As a general rule, a year-to-

year decrease in enrollment foreshadows a year-to-year decrease the following academic

year as well. As enrollment is tied to funding, enrollment dictates the type of programs

and class sizes the school can offer. When 10 additional children enroll in a school, the

funding for that school increases roughly (depending on the proportion of students living

in poverty) by $100,000, about the same amount it costs a school to hire a union teacher

($94K in AY2016-17). Any parents' choice to place their child in a particular school is a

boon to that school, as the school will receive the funding allotted to that child. As high-parents' choices signal to other parents— of all backgrounds (Cucchiara 2011) — that the school is high quality, the school they send their children to has the potential to benefit exponentially.

Baltimore and other urban areas experimenting with open zoning and school choice need to take the influence of high-status parents' selection into account. Currently in Baltimore, there are no institutional safeguards to ensure stable year-to-year funding for schools unable to compete marketing-wise, or who are situated in high-crime neighborhoods, which face a downward funding/enrollment death spiral. Schools with declining enrollment face closure, even in neighborhoods where they are serving students and the greater community's needs. William Pinderhughes Elementary, located in the Sandtown-Winchester neighborhood Freddie Gray called home, is currently on the Board of School Commissioner's chopping block due to under enrollment and poor performance. While the school has been a "mainstay of the community forever," operating a food pantry, personal finance workshops, and services for neighborhood residents, its academic ranking dropped from 15th in the state to 840th from 2004 to 2017, with enrollment rates all over the map. Stabilizing and strengthening enrollment rates signal to city leaders that a school is healthy. High-status parents' investment in these schools can contribute to the overall stability of neighborhoods, but schools can

only compete for these families if they have teachers, facilities and principals able to deliver quality education high-status parents demand.

Equitable funding— both from a per-pupil standpoint, and a base building budget to ensure schools with declining enrollment have money for heat and toilet paper- is the best mechanism for controlling unintended outcomes of system administrators and principals privileging the concerns of middle-class families at the expense of families from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Ensuring equitable funding across the system is not just a moral imperative, it's smart attention to urban municipalities financial stability. Individual failing schools fuel high-status parents' concerns about the system overall, which in turn drives high-status family flight. Cities must be invested in the success of their overall school systems in order to keep these families. For these reasons, cities should view investments in their school systems as the most vital component of family retention work.

V. We Call It Like We See It

In the opening chapter, I recounted the conversation I had with my predecessor about the opportunity I would have being viewed as an apolitical, altruistic mommy. After almost three years in this role, I am a bit more of a known quantity, and I've undermined my standing as a cheerleader in the city's 'we're family friendly' brigade. Happily, as a result, I'm no longer the executive director of a mostly white organization with an all white board. By going further and further pushing the envelope talking about

the relationship of racial equity and the city's ability to provide for *all* families, we have

grown our membership from 1,720 to over 5,200 parents of diverse backgrounds living

throughout the city, and brought community leaders of color onto our board. When we

started talking about things that mattered to the vast majority of Baltimore families, the

vast majority of Baltimore families all of a sudden had a reason to listen to us. We have

become stronger by having clear agenda centered around social justice, rooted in the

justification that better schools, safer streets and greater neighborhoods will serve our

mission to retain families:

> After a year and some change of struggling to tell the story that we're not
>
> just a white Social Club, and trying to build out our diversity, we've actually
>
> managed to do it. And we didn't do it through better PR marketing, we did it by
>
> having a massive protest and mobilizing people to take action on behalf of city
>
> students. And lo and behold, here we are, getting press and being very visibly not
>
> an organization just comprised of white people. I think that we're really starting to
>
> change the narrative, just by doing a better job the actual work, not really about
>
> telling the story on social media so much. Just taking documentation of the work
>
> that we're already doing, because it's actually reaching people of color and they're
>
> getting invested in our work. This isn't just about Moms Night Out anymore.
>
> Thank the Lord. The big things [now are] a protest at rash field, plus all the small
>
> group meetings that we've done in Annapolis. I feel like there were so many
>
> moments where we are getting pushback about our messaging from different

elected officials, and at the end of it [the thing that fixed it was that] we just went

full-out balls to the wall. (Field note diary March 1, 2017)

Leveraging Greater Clout

Greater numbers stemming from more relevant programming has led to greater

purchase to directly call out civil rights disparities. During the recent heating crisis that

left an estimated 60 schools with classrooms below 50 degrees, I went out on a limb with

our public response, blatantly pointing to lack of heat as a racial issue, and the lack of

immediate action on the part of the mayor and governor as suspect.

When pictures of kids stuffed into parkas in their classrooms started making

news, I had just come off the heels of being asked by City Hall to support the city's bid

for Amazon to put their second headquarters, "HQ2" in Baltimore. I had a written letter to

be included in the proposal to Amazon, bubbling about Baltimore's "many upsides when

it comes to attracting and retaining top talent…. The well-established community of city

families will help Amazon draw leading professionals seeking opportunities to grow in

their career as their kids grow up. As a proud city resident, parent, and community

development leader, there is no other city in the world I'd rather call home. I hope

Amazon will choose to make Baltimore HQ2's home as well."

My words were heartfelt, and my hope for the city to get the bid sincere. Like all

bids of this type, I knew tax incentives would be involved, economic development tools

at the city's disposal that DBFA and I personally feel are useful for bringing in jobs and

infrastructure improvements. My enthusiasm for the bid was halted by an exposé in the Sun that the city "didn't have a copy" of the proposal, which included "mind boggling" tax incentives which were being kept under wraps. The city didn't have a copy, and couldn't share one if they did, because Sagamore— the private real estate development company which owns the land on which HQ2 would be built if the bid was successful— had the only one.

To break this down more concisely, if the city was to be believed, a private company had promised *public* money to another private company (that's not a thing, just in case you're not up on Constitutional uses of tax payer dollars). Moreover, the Sun reported that Sagamore had paid for the proposal- a funny thing to find out, given that the request for DBFA had come to me directly from the mayor's office. I requested the ACLU add us to their Maryland Public Interest Act (the state's rough equivalent to the Freedom of Information Act). I couldn't go as far as joining them as a party to the suit, but had felt comfortable pushing the city to be transparent with the way it was offering and allocating resources.

I was struck by the city's eagerness to cater to Amazon— and the families a possible Baltimore based headquarters would bring— and the mayor's complete disregard for issue impacting the families who already lived here. Calling attention to this mismatch in political will, my education director and I drafted an open letter to the Mayor, the CEO of BCPS, and the head of the Department of Public Works. Just minutes

after BCPS announced it would close for a second day due to lack of heat in the buildings, we posted the letter to our social media. It read in part:

> It is unconscionable that families are sending children to schools where they must keep their coats, hats, and gloves on, or risk health consequences from prolonged exposure to temperatures that would not be tolerated in the warm downtown office buildings built with public subsidies…The conditions of our schools would not be tolerated in a majority white, affluent district.

As it is wont to do, social media went BOOM. But this time, instead of DBFA being called out as tacitly racist, or doing something that only benefited families in the White L, we had BCPSS teachers- of all races- sharing the letter, posting it to their walls and asking others to do the same. Some comments were extremely critical of our tactics, expressing sentiments along the line of this direct quote: "Wanna put blame on the white man again, but not where the blame should be!!!! You should be demanding their jobs, and real leadership, but instead you wanna create another issue [race] to go with this one." However, most people just shared the post, then picked up the phone and called the mayor.

The mayor had already been getting slammed on public media and with phone calls, and our post— which included her phone number— added to her headaches. When I got emails from members a few hours later saying they'd been blown off, we posted a follow up on Baltimore City Voters, a page with over 8,000 (very) active users:

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We're getting very distressing reports from #DBFA members that Mayor

Catherine Pugh is punting on our calls. Reps at City Hall are telling parents "the

mayor is not handling that" and "to call the CEO of schools". Before one parent

could say anything else the rep transferred her call to North Avenue.[228]

At this point people were pissed. The mayor and the governor were being pelted

with phone calls. A city councilman and I were in talks about a press rally on the steps of

city hall, and my education director was working with colleagues throughout the city to

organize parents to testify at the Board of School Commissioners' meeting the following

week. National media was starting to pick up the story, touting the pictures of kids in

freezing classrooms a civil rights crisis. Lo and behold, city engineers and trucks were

deployed. The governor kicked in $2.5M to help offset emergency facilities.[229] And the

kids got heat.

DBFA did not raise the initial alarms about the heating crisis, nor were we solely

responsible for the continuing attention the mayor is paying to this issue. I delve into this

example not to suggest that DBFA had a unique impact in this fight, but rather to

highlight the opportunities other organizations have for mobilizing communities to push

for political change. NGOs like DBFA play a central role in American Civic life by

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[228] Baltimore City Public School's central administrative office is known colloquially as "North Avenue," referencing the street the building is located on.

[229] The current estimated repairs needed to bring all BCPS buildings up to code (not to make them functional beyond code, but simply to make them legally compliant with building codes) is estimated at $2.4B, exactly double the $1.2B 21st Century Schools earmark for building upgrades often pointed to by state leaders as justification for lack of further investment in facilities and maintenance.

mobilizing voters to push politicians for initiatives that further social justice issues (Anoll

2018; Arpenter, Carpenter and Moore 2014; Han 2016; Strine 1996; Touchton, Sugiyama

and Wampler 2017; Valdivieso and Villena-Roldan 2014). Han asserts that organizations

like DBFA play a vital role "fostering political activism in America," and in turn,

"activists make democracy work by attending meetings, engaging others, trying to make

their voice heard, and participating in myriad other ways" (Han 2016, 296). Community

organizers that rally community members empower "the powerless learn how to use and

think about power for themselves," and thus occupy a vital role in "constructing a radical

vision of democratic politics" in which relational power and the mutual self-interest of

community members can be leveraged to "develop democratic forms of deliberation and

action" (Phulwani 2016, 863).

Civic organizations that foster political engagement in the U.S. are, of course,

themselves embedded within the complex racialized power structures. Anoll (2018)

argues that "both race and neighborhood context moderate the social value of political

participation in the United States." However, Anoll's findings that "neighborhood

characteristics outpace individual-level indicators [such as race] in predicting the social

value of political participation," (2018, 494) hold relevance for other organizations like

DBFA, whose work intrinsically rests on the socioemotional ties between neighbors,

often on a hyperlocal block-by-block, school-by-school level. Organizations hoping to

leverage the social value neighborhoods place on political participation to foment

political activism can learn from DBFA's success building strong bonds between neighbors; these bonds were the building blocks that led childless couples to take to the streets to demand their taxes be invested in public schools. Having built a diverse constituency on the foundation of a critical mass of high-status families, we were able to gain traction that made a difference for kids of all backgrounds. To quote one of the parent leaders who shared the letter and asked friends to call the Mayor, "When everyone's on the same page, magic happens!"

VI. Risky but Worth It

Despite the complicated racial and economic issues surrounding the work DBFA has done over the past decade, I have become convinced engaging in family retention is worth the risk. Moreover, that high-status families retained can make their presence useful to families of all backgrounds. As much as I was skeptical of the idea of families of choice and getting them to stay in the city when I was approached to consider DBFA's executive director role, almost exactly 10 months into my role, I began to really understand the importance of middle-class integration to Baltimore's civic and economic sustainability. Retaining families and attracting middle-class families is a key to getting the city on a good track. If nothing else, without a strong property tax base critical civil services most relied on by impoverished families would go belly up. More importantly, vibrant economic and racial integration is becoming more and more well understood among academics as a key to closing the Achievement Gap.

When DBFA was established in late 2007, among the primary goals of one of the founders was to socioeconomically integrate downtown schools (DBFA Founding Documents). Prompted by the models proposed in Jacqueline Edelberg and Susan Kurland's *How to Walk to School: Blueprint for a Neighborhood School Renaissance*, DBFA founder Dr. Rebecca Gershenson Smith wanted to find ways to would keep families downtown and prompt them to consider enrolling their kids in BCPS. In the decade that has passed since that conversation, DBFA has built a network of families that have transformed the educational, cultural, and economic landscape of downtown Baltimore. These changes have had positive and negative consequences, differing when argued from the standpoint of economic developers, community activists, and parents involved in our organization. In a city so violently segregated by race and class, no action can be taken, no change can be made, without the very real possibility of consequences that blow up racial and socioeconomic structures in a way that harms people- almost always black, brown and poor communities.

While the ripple effects of DBFA's work are complicated, the overarching conclusion I have reached is twofold: First, to point to high-status parents as the (or one of the) reasons individual schools' principals, system administrators, and legislators are not responding to black and impoverished families is not the fault of high-status families, and to place criticism at these families' feet for the disparate responses they receive misplaces blame that could better be lobbed at these officials. Moreover, this blame

would be far more effective if it was being leveled in lock step with high-status families willing to point out the glaringly obvious disparities in administrators' and elected officials' responses. White parents are the not problem. Structural racism that values the participation and enrollment of white families is.

Second, holding individual parents responsible for the racialized fallout of their decision to send their child(ren) out of zone to take advantage of the better schools is counterproductive to addressing the underlying structural racism that has resulted in schools with (some, but not all) high white populations being high quality and (some, but not all) high black schools, low quality. Parents who face allegations of being racist or "the problem" when choosing to send their kid out of zone— a commonplace occurrence on social media— become discouraged to the point that they may choose to opt-out of the system all together.

These categorizations blatantly ignore the racial and socioeconomically fraught issues of privilege surrounding relocation in Baltimore. Having the option to voluntarily move outside of the city is itself a manifestation of financial and sociocultural privilege (Varady, Walker, McClure, Smith-Heimer, and Larkins 1999). The combination of financial means necessary to leave any given housing situation— credit to qualify for a rental or purchased home, money for first/last month and security deposit or a down payment, access to help for the physical toll moving takes— is beyond the reach of most Baltimoreans (Thompson v. United States Department of Housing and Urban

Development, 348 F. Supp. 2d 398 (D. Md. 2005)). However, beyond the actual financial resources needed to relocate, it's vital to note that relocation has a deeply fraught history that significantly predates Baltimore's current retention efforts (Harvard Law Review 1969), as relocation is often not a choice but rather a ramification of lack of sociopolitical and economic privilege (Desmond, Gershenson, and Kiviat 2015). As Desmond, Gershenon and Kiviat (2015) note, "low-income families move frequently without fully understanding why. Low incomes are associated with higher rates of mobility due to poorer renters' greater exposure to forced displacement," including "formal and informal eviction, landlord foreclosure, and building condemnation". Forced displacement "often compels renters to accept substandard housing, which drives them to soon move again" (Desmond, Gershenson, and Kiviat 2015, 227).

Inverse to the lack of agency low-income families can exercise over their ability to relocate or stay put, high-status families' privileged ability to decide to stay or go is an outgrowth of the very socioeconomic, political and racial structural violence that has given rise to the conditions that prompt them to consider leaving. Despite the cyclical irony to the conundrum, and the level of emotional and sociopolitical investment high-status families feel in coming up with solutions to these problems, the reality for most families—- low income, high-status, black, white or otherwise— is that "It's utterly exhausting living here: mentally, physically, and emotionally exhausting" (Ott Feb 21, 2019).

I'm Not Sensitive, I'm Just Exhausted

I am convinced that this throw-your-hands-up and opt-out move is not white fragility. It is the response of reaching a point of exhaustion of trying to navigate everyday life from within a bomb, trying your best not to cause any explosions that would further harm your black and brown neighbors who are also occupants of the bomb, and being reminded again and again that your actions are the reason the bomb continues to be difficult to disarm. In the midst of the #FixtheGap brouhaha, I had a meet up with a group of parents that highlighted how parents are vilified for considering leaving the city:

> "11am-2pm- the LONGEST coffee date ever. Usually I am the one doing the majority of the talking, but with this meeting I was really just listening, I almost felt like a fly on the wall, with [the parents I was meeting with] going on and on about all the ways in which Baltimore it's f***** up, and the ways in which taking care of your kids might mean ducking out of the city. I feel like the #FixtheGap campaign has pitted people who consider leaving against people that really want to see the school succeed at all cost, even people [who don't] have kids [in schools] who get angry and self-righteous about telling people [with kids] to be all in.

This sort of finger pointing is counterproductive. Not because white families should be able to navigate everyday life without being reminded of their race and the privilege it bestows— being able to forget your race in the context of broader society is itself evidence of privilege— but because these families' unearned sociopolitical

legitimacy can drive improvements for the system overall. These improvements are not limited only to the financial resources these families bring into cities, or from their children's state earmark for school funding. Families with the privilege of time have sweat equity to invest in communities, schools and parks, and sociopolitical clout to push for systemic reforms and greater investment.

VI. We All Do Better When We All Do Better

Based on DBFA's own membership survey data, from academic literature I've discussed in this dissertation, and from similar efforts in cities around the country that concerns over education are the top reasons families cite when choosing to leave a city. Fixing shortfalls and systemically inequitable funding formulas must be cities' top priority if they hope to retain families. Equitable funding— both from a per-pupil standpoint, and a base building budget to ensure schools with declining enrollment have money for heat and toilet paper— is the best mechanism for controlling unintended outcomes of system administrators and principals privileging the concerns of middle-class families at the expense of families from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

Ensuring equitable funding across the system is not just a moral imperative— it's smart attention to urban municipalities financial stability. Individual failing schools fuel high-status parents' concerns about the system overall. Cities must be invested in the success of their overall school systems in order to keep these families. For these reasons, cities should view investments in their school systems as the most vital component of

family retention work. The fact that it is also the most impactful work in regard to addressing the grave social justice issues facing cities suggests that we do, indeed, "all do better when we all do better."

DBFA's work in the 2016-2017 budget crisis has not 'fixed' racial divides in Baltimore. However, it did "steer an organization which previously had limited political relevance to the forefront of the fight for equitable education funding at the city and state level" (Cohen 2017). In a letter regarding DBFA written to ACLU-MD's Board President, Councilman Zeke Cohen wrote "Having middle-class parents advocating fiercely for City Schools gave a tremendous amount of political cover for the City Council to push harder for funding." Involving high-status families in urban revitalization is not a fix-all for violence, divestment and segregation with roots that predate the United States' founding, but they can play a salient role in making progress.

PART III – MAKING PRIVILEGE MATTER

EVERYTHING I WISH I'D KNOWN

How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives.
-Annie Dillard, Choosing Presence Over Productivity

Right around the same time I found out I'd been accepted into the PhD program at S-CAR, my partner and I filed our annual taxes, my first time doing so as a full time graduate student. I vividly remember getting into my car to leave the old 3434 Washington building the same day we filed, and saying to myself "*oh my gosh, I made $60,000 less this year than last.*" Almost immediately, a small voice in the back of my head answered back, "*but you don't hate your life anymore.*"

There are far simpler ways to make a living than working in the conflict field. If you are like me, however, the relative cushiness of a job in the private sector comes hand in hand, on a deeply spiritual basis, with a rejection of living as the truest version of ourselves. This field is a calling just as much as it is a professional track. Managing the tensions of building a life for yourself while also pursuing a career rooted in passion, hope, and a belief that the world can be more peaceful is profoundly rewarding, occasionally heartbreaking— sometimes both at the same time— and rarely straight forward.

This chapter is a bit of a departure from many dissertations' analytical sections. It is the culmination of lessons learned from my research and field work over the past two years, as well as the preceding decade I've been working in NGOs. The collection of guidance I lay out leverages my experience in management, operations and basic self-care when running a conflict focused nonprofit organization. This chapter draws from my personal reflections on lessons learned along the way as I have volunteered, consulted, worked, and started profit organizations focused on ameliorating violence.

While this chapter is unusual from many other dissertations, it's not an outlier in the context of mine. My overarching question centers around how best to leverage privilege to extend the dignity, protection and access it affords. In this chapter I share my impressions of how best to do this as a CAR scholar-practitioner.

There are any number of great resources for people leading, working in, or starting NGOs. This guide is different from others in that it's specifically focused around two areas unique to conflict analysis and resolution. First, it considers what it means to be a nonprofit professional who is both a practitioner and a scholar, someone who is willing to sit at these intersections and use their own experiences as data points to suggest new theories that furthers scholarship and refines practice in our field. The second reason it differs is that the focus is for NGO leaders working on issues where their presence, even if ostensibly neutral, is impacting the dynamics of the conflict.

Conflict practitioners incalculably influence the dynamics we are studying and working to address through practice. We are part of the systems we study, part of the systems we hope to change. We research the waters in which we swim, and in so doing inevitably impact the waves around us. We must anticipate the implications of our own actions, and control for unintended consequences. This starts with a well-articulated, well-reasoned vision rooted in a deep understanding of the power structures in which we operate. We must balance the tension of being willing to step back and consider the implications of our involvement, while also doing the hard work of managing staff, programs and budgets, and keeping the lights on through fundraising, compliance with local laws and tax codes, and diplomatically collaborating with key stakeholders.

All the different demands that NGO leaders face are complicated, as well as emotionally, physically and mentally taxing. There are countless entries in my field note diary that go something along the lines of, "In all honesty [most of what] I did all week leading up to the [DBFA event] was freak out and spend a lot of energy thinking how much I dropped the ball. And then the event turned out great" (Field note diary, January 7, 2017). Learning how to navigate the logistics and emotions of working at and leading NGOs over the past decade has given me dozens of hard-knock lessons, ones that I hope can save other CAR practitioners time and bruises. The following chapter is a compendium of recommendations, based my own observations and impressions over the course of this project, for my peers who are by their currently engaged in similar work or hoping to enter the CAR field.

I. What We Have Trained to Do

The day after Pres. Trump announced his first "travel ban," stranding thousands of Green Card holders and permeant residents in limbo, a dear friend who practices law posted a photo on social media of lawyers hunkered over laptops at an airport gate. She captioned the photo:

> I'm privileged to be associated with the young lawyers in this group, setting up shop in airport terminals doing the thing we trained to do and the thing we best know how to do- writing, petitioning, arguing, and reminding one another that this country and our shared freedoms were equally born of blood and the might of pen.

Her comment stuck with me throughout the day. That night I jotted down some notes trying to unpack why her post had affected me so much:

> One of the things that struck me between the eyes was that these lawyers were doing "what they were trained to do". I'm struggling with this idea of what exactly it is that I'm training to do, and what part that training enables me play in the work opposing fascist dictators. Obviously opposing a fascist dictator should probably be one of the most important things that conflict practitioners do, so how do you figure out and decide what it is specifically that you're supposed to do? How do you figure out what it is that you're trained to do, and what you're supposed to do with it, and how to evaluate if you're doing it in the best way possible considering your training?

As I've noted before, the CAR field has nebulous boundaries (Avruch 2013), for many good reasons. We are pumping out scholars and practitioners who are dealing with very different types of conflict, with widely varying tools to ameliorate them based on our ability to access funds, garner press support (or, conversely, avoid publicity to fly under the radar) and make meaningful inroads with power players and grassroots actors alike. One of the biggest things that I've struggled with throughout the process of doing this work, however, is trying to figure out how to engage in conflict resolution work as a privileged actor, without replicating the social structures that have led to my disproportionate access and legitimacy.

My friend's comment captured a dynamic I believe CAR practitioners can use as a guide. These lawyers were not replicating their own privilege in using their skill set; they were tipping the balance of power in an asymmetrical conflict. Her colleagues were equipped to use the law to protect both people and the legal codes that make manifest the values laid out in the American Constitution. Their skills were in part garnered by having the social and economic capital necessary to jump through the many hoops between applying to law school and becoming a member of the Bar. By doing "the thing [they] trained to do and the thing [they] best know how to do," these lawyers were in a small way evening the playing field between individual immigrants vs. the force of an executive order backed by the muscle of the Department of Homeland Security. In short,

their training gave them skills to leverage the social and economic privilege they have to benefit those who lack it.

This should be CAR NGO leaders' professional barometer for considering the impact of our work: How do we use our training and technical approaches to shift the balance of power in the dynamics we are hoping to influence? What this means in your specific practice day today is something only you can determine. But this should be what we strive for: using the skills that we've been given to help reshape structures of power that propagate violence.

In my own work this means leveraging the disproportionate access I have been given— be it in Baltimore City Hall, within the police department, or in corporate boardrooms where I'm given financial support— to try to extend the dignity and advantages of privilege. In the proceeding chapter, I will discuss what this means at an organizational level, exploring how to leverage the infrastructure of formal NPOs and NGOs to level the balance of power. This chapter focuses on how to do this as an individual scholar practitioner aspiring to serve in NGO leadership. What this leveraging looks like in your context only you can know, but there are universal principals and tactics that can help you in your work. Here's what I've learned along the way.

II. Start Where You Are

Feminist scholars have done a pretty solid job eviscerating the idea that 'objective' research— data extraction from a pristine source of 'truth' to be processed into 'unbiased'

knowledge— is a façade, and an approach that reinforces constructions of reality positing men's experiences as universal (DeVault 1999, Du Bois 1983, Luker 2010, Lott 1981, Unger 1982). Likewise, pursuing CAR work that is disconnected from your own experiences- especially ones that have harmed you or your community- in the misguided effort to avoid being 'biased' in your work is both unnecessary, and unwise.

We work on issues— genocide, sexual violence, poverty, disenfranchisement and a host of other massively daunting issues— that demand an emotional response. To feel unmoved in the face of such violence should be an indicator of burnout, not an inability to remain unbiased. The trick is to use your emotions as fuel for your work and have strong safeguards to ensure your responses don't cause harm. Hurt people hurt people. I'll go into detail on self-care later in this chapter; I bring up emotions and pain now because I believe there is no better guide for understanding where to start than understanding the things that move you most.

I have spent the past six years working professionally as the executive director of organizations whose missions are central to my life experiences. My driving inspiration behind pursuing a graduate degree was to have a greater influence changing circumstances that placed people at risk of being raped. This interest was not driven by my feminism or sense of justice, but rather by my own experience being in a sexually and emotionally abusive relationship during high school.

When I had a resurgence of PTSD symptoms at the beginning of grad school, a counselor at GMU's mental health services asked if it was really wise to study and work on sexual violence. Why would I choose to pursue a research agenda that would bring me nose to nose, day in, day out, with material that so closely mirrored the reality of my own rape? The answer was so clear to me then and continues to be so to this day: the only way for my experience to have not been in vain, and thus, ever painful, is for me to leverage it in some meaningful way. Working with Dr. Leslie Dwyer and Dr. Sandra Cheldelin to create the Center for the Study of Gender and Conflict was one of the most healing experiences of my life. Watching the Center continue to grow and flourish in the years since I've left is a joyous validation that I used one of my worst experiences to help create something meaningful. Using your worst experience to drive change is a powerful salve for a damaged soul.

I wrestled for almost three months considering whether or not to leave the Center for my job with DBFA. Would I be abandoning a mission central to my being? After much bouncing back and forth with friends, I made the final decision to go to DBFA after a colleague suggested that perhaps I had worked out what I needed to around the rape. Was is possible that there were more pressing dilemmas I needed to emotionally and intellectually grapple with in the present? I was living in a city where I was relatively affluent, complicit in gentrification through my purchase and renovation of a dilapidated home, and raising a white male son in a deeply segregated city. Tension and conflict and

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ambivalence were presenting themselves in different ways in my life. The work to be

done was to confront and wrestle with the dynamics in my present.

Eli Wiesel starts *Night* by stating, "I decided to devote my life to telling the story

because I felt that having survived I owe something to the dead. And anyone who does

not remember betrays them again." What's the main conflict in your own story? Start

there.

This is not being "biased". This is being brave.

III. Getting Started

What's Your Venn Diagram?

There's a bit of a jump from figuring out what issue you want to work on to

figuring out exactly how you want to go about doing this work. It's great to know you are

passionate about addressing rape, but what are you actually doing at 8AM each morning?

I push my mentees and staffers to answer this question by considering their passion,

subject matter knowledge, skill sets, and innate personality traits. This sounds more

complicated than it is— a simple Venn diagram will get you where you need to go.

Sitting in the intersection of overlapping circles representing passion, subject matter

knowledge, skill sets, and innate personality traits is a good starting point for figuring out

where you will best thrive. To give a practical example, my Venn diagram looks like this:

Passion:
-Children's welfare
-Racial equity
-Gender based violence

Innate personality traits:
-Gregarious
-Empathetic
-Assertive
-Decisive
-"30,000 foot" mindset
-Visual thinker

Knowledge and training:
-Systems theory
-Legislative advocacy
-Feminist theory
-Print journalism
-Website design

Skill set:
-Persuasive communication
-Fundraising
-Strategic planning
-Motivational management

Figure 11. DuBois SkillFinder Framework

I've had jobs I'm very good at but hated. These jobs were good fits for my skills, training, and personality, but didn't spark my passion. I've had jobs I cared about deeply — but was terrible at— which centered on issues I was passionate about. In these cases, I lacked skills, training and personality traits to thrive. Turns out I can sell hundreds of thousands of dollars of radio advertising to Mattress Discounters but can't manage data entry for a women's political NGO.

Find something you care deeply about, that you have subject matter understanding of or the opportunity to gain such knowledge, and a bit of natural aptitude for the actual tasks the job entails. Don't mistake passion for expertise! It's great to take on a role in an organization outside of the subject matter you have a solid grasp on, but make sure the job in some way taps your natural personality traits. Then put in the hours getting to understand the context you'll be working on and gaining skills you need to thrive.

Find a prototype

Once you have a sense of how you want to partner your passion with your aptitude, find someone who has the expertise and skill set you need to be successful in what you hope to do. Don't "work your way up" by applying for an admin role in the hopes that one day you'll get to become the leader, having distinguished yourself as the very best receptionist. If you are passionate about being a support staffer or logistical manager, by all means, pursue this route— I would be lost as an executive director without the support of extremely talented administrative staff. But if your interests and

aptitude align with one day running an organization, find a leader who is doing exactly what you hope to do, then learn everything you can about how they are doing it.

Don't be afraid to start at the top when you're searching out this person — be bold and reach out to the most prominent leader working in the track you're pursuing. Just because you're starting out in a career doesn't mean you have to ingratiate yourself with mid-level management before you approach an executive director or legislator whose career you hope to emulate. People like when others admire their work, and, if they are anything like me, enjoy the opportunity to share with people who have the passion and aptitude to follow a similar path. Show leaders that you have drive and talent, and they will likely take the time to share their knowledge and make introductions within their networks.

In 2008, I took the leap out of fluffy PR writing and ad sales jobs to use my persuasive personality and communication skills to lobby around women's issues. I had zero networks and zero mentors in the field, having just relocated to Miami while my husband went to law school. Sitting at my desk in the job I hated, I Googled the top lobbyist working on violence against women legislation in the state of Florida, emailed him (yep, a guy) and asked him to lunch. And lo and behold, he not only met with me, he also brought along one of his junior colleagues to make sure someone would have time to follow up with me after our conversation. He even paid for lunch.

I made phone calls or sent emails to every single person he suggested I meet. Within months I had a small but mighty network of judges, NGO leaders, and grassroots advocates working on sexual violence issues. I was laid off from my advertising job when the economy crashed not long after this lunch date. I was let go in the early afternoon, and spent the next few hours burning up the battery on my cell phone, calling every single person I'd met with in the preceding months. By 4:30PM, I had a contract for a fundraising consultancy with the Women's Fund of Miami-Dade, an organization I had come to know through the simple but time consuming work of meeting with dozens of people, demonstrating my passion and a willingness to learn.

The Magic Words: How Can I Help?

Successful networking— that is, networking that eventually leads to a job you want— is not about "who you know". It's about who you know who believes you have what it takes to be great in their field. Recommending someone for a job is a professional risk. Should the person recommended turn out to be a dud, the perception of the recommender's profession judgement takes a hit. The best way to prove you're a bet worth making is to ask every person you meet "how can I help you?"

Most networking happens on a reverse model; entry and junior level professionals seeking senior leaders and asking "how can you help me." NGO and private sector business leaders get asked for favors All. Day. Long. Distinguish yourself by asking what *you* can do to help *them.*

They may not have anything off the top of their head; for very driven people, delegating can be more time consuming than simply taking care of a task oneself, especially if you don't know the skill set of the person offering to pitch in. Check out the leader's website, get a sense of their programs and events. Then offer to do a very specific task related to their work— be it stuff envelopes for their annual giving campaign or run the check in table at their organization's next event. Then do an awesome job at that task.

Asking *how I can help?*, suggesting specific ways I can pitch in, and then kicking ass at the tasks I take on has gotten me further than any other tactic I've used to gain traction in my career.

Be a Helpful Shadow

One of the office managers who worked under me during my time at DBFA was making a mid-career move into the NGO sector. She had passion and aptitude but needed to gain the skills and expertise to one day launch or run her own shop. She spent time working as my shadow, taking tasks she could manage off my plate, then knocking it out of the park accomplishing them. She is set to be a powerhouse in this field once she has a bit more grounding on what the actual job of running an NGO looks like. Working as my clone helped her gain some of the requisite skills to become an effective leader in the future.

This is a great template to follow if you're looking to make a jump, be it into a new subject field or from a junior role into a leadership position. Find someone who is doing something approximating what you're aiming for, then make yourself an invaluable shadow. Take work off their plate by learning what they do, then helping them do it. Don't wait for assignments to come your way— if you have a sense of their to-do list, offer to take on a task, then go above and beyond completing it. Mentoring someone takes a tremendous amount of time and energy. Rolling in and helping will get you far further than asking for them to simply impart wisdom. Besides, you'll gain far more expertise by *doing* the work than *asking* how they have become successful.

IV. Learn the Ropes

Finding a prototype and building a network are great precursors to gaining experience. However, if the bumps and bruises I've learned along the way offer any generalizable insight, it's that passion does not equal expertise. Take your time building your skill set and be humble enough to critically evaluate if you're up to leading an organization— your colleagues can help you wrestle with this question. There's a lot to be said for "fake it till you make it," but taking on way, way more than your ready for can lead to mistakes that lead you to doubt your true potential to be an effective leader long-term. Skip some of the ego-busting mistakes I've made: I jumped in to NGO leadership before I had the requisite skill set to do so, not long after I started consulting. An opportunity to re-launch a statewide children's welfare organization came my way just

months into my professional fundraising work. I was excited and figured since I was a quick study I could learn as I go, so I jumped at the chance. Almost immediately, I was way over my head. In the midst of my fear of being inadequate I became paralyzed— the proverbial deer in the headlights. I parted ways with the two senior children's advocates that had offered me the chance feeling deeply embarrassed, with my self confidence in shreds.

Candidly, even though I've started one organization and rebooted another, successfully lobbied to influence public education funding, and fundraised more than a million dollars since that time, the crash and burn still stings. I sometimes doubt my leadership abilities when I take on a new task, thinking of the ways I fell short in that first leadership job. If I had more experience going into that opportunity, things likely would have turned out differently.

Consult your way to expertise

Before you undertake building a new organization or stepping into leadership of an existing non-profit, learn as much as you can about the nuts and bolts of what it takes to fundraise, drive an agenda, manage a staff, and "manage up" to board members and community stakeholders. For me, consulting for a handful of NGOs gave me a great education on how to handle these tasks. Rather than starting as an admin, which was not the role I was striving for, consulting gave me the chance to carve off small pieces of what leaders have to do. I was a fundraising consultant for a women's community

foundation, planned an annual exposition for a girls' empowerment group, did press relations for a children's welfare organization, and secured community partnerships for an arts integration program for at-risk youth. Each of these consultancies gave me the chance to focus specifically on one aspect that an executive director must oversee.

Having first hand know-how of what each of these jobs entails has been invaluable as I manage staff members tasked with these roles. I can support without micromanaging, and troubleshoot potential obstacles. My experience has also helped me have a strong sense of how great execution of each of these tasks can strengthen the outcomes of the others. For example, high-profile fundraising events can garner media coverage focused around your organization's mission. Some of the Gender Center's first press came as a result of a reporter turning up at our inaugural *Raising the Bar*. At DBFA's 2017 gala, we honored BCPS's CEO Dr. Sonja Santelises and Del. Maggie McIntosh, the chair of the State House Appropriations Committee who engineered a $180M three year stop-gap measure to fund City Schools until the adoption of a new state funding formula. Honoring their work gave us the opportunity to lift up the role we played in pushing for the bridge funding, celebrate their efforts in front of 500 of their constituents, and garner press coverage, which in turn further elevated their work amongst the general population of the city.

Whether it's through consulting or hard-core volunteering on a few NGO boards-which will allow you to learn about governance and operations far better than

volunteering at an organization's events or office- find a way to get some real hands on experience learning the ins and outs of running an organization before you jump into leadership. This may be— and probably *should* be— a years' long endeavor. Stepping into leadership before you know what you're doing will just set back your goals through haphazard efforts and diminished credibility within the community doing similar work. And, if you're like me, leave you feeling embarrassed and gun shy to try again. Take time to gain the know-how to match your passion.

V. Taking the Reins

So, you know what you want to do with your training, you've racked up some time in the field learning "the thing we do best," and now you're ready to step into leadership. Whether you are stepping into an executive director role at an established organization (congratulations!), or at the start of launching a brand new program (you got this!), the process at the outset should look somewhat similar. Setting your organization up for success means having:

1) A clear idea of what you are trying to do— your mission;

2) What will change or be different as a result of what you do— your vision;

3) Specific methods for how you will achieve your mission— your technical approach;

4) An organizational framework to that allows you to carry out your technical approach;

5) Feedback loops for learning and refining as you work towards your mission.

Defining your mission

Step 1: Start with a draft problem statement of the dynamic you are concerned about: i.e. *There are too many families leaving Baltimore when they have kids, people who love living here feel like there are no good options for schools and that life in the suburbs is safer, and the city is suffering as a result. Don't stress about this being concise; you'll get there once you start to articulate your mission statement. Focus on capturing the specifics of the problem, rather than stating it eloquently. The more detail, the more spaces you can investigate later as you consider the unique role your organization can play, as well as your potential technical approaches.*

Your problem statement is where you start to draw a mission statement from. *We are going to keep families here by making schools better and finding ways to make people feel more secure in the city*. This is how you get to your early concept of what your mission will be.

Step 2: Map the field of people and organizations doing similar work. Meet with <u>everyone</u> who will make time for you. When we were at the very start of thinking about what it would look like for (then) I-CAR to have an institutional "gendered agenda," Dr. Sandy Cheldelin and I spent a great deal of quality time on DC public transit traveling to USAID, USIP, and NGO offices. We met with anyone willing to give us input on the gaps in work being done around gender in conflict, and the unique ways an independent (non-

government, non-partisan) institution could fill these gaps. As you meet with other groups

doing similar work, you will start to refine your problem statement to capture what's

unique about the way you are approaching the problem. Stay humble through this process

- even if you think you know exactly what needs to be done, stay open to learning. I'm

headstrong (an understatement) and eager, but am glad I had Dr. Cheldelin and Dr. Dwyer

slowing my roll so we could better understand how we could support, rather than

replicate, the work already being done.

Step 3: Loosely codify your problem statement into something approaching a

formal mission statement: *There are too many families leaving Baltimore when they have*

kids, people who love living here feel like there are no good options for schools and that

life in the suburbs is safer, and the city is suffering as a result becomes *DBFA keeps*

young families in Baltimore by advocating for great schools and a safe, vibrant and

inclusive city.

Articulating your vision

A vision statement explains how the dynamic you're working on will be different

as a result of your work. You mission tells you what you will do— *keep young families in*

Baltimore- your vision tells you how the thing will be different if you achieve your

mission— *families love living in Baltimore.* Your vision is the destination, your mission

is the vehicle you are using to get there.

The vision statement merits a great amount of thought because it will save you

time— and money— as you do your work. Your vision helps you constantly assess if a

particular action you're thinking of taking will serve your organization. Southwest

Airlines' vision is to be "*the* low cost air carrier." Years ago, a Southwest executive had an

idea that they should serve chicken salad sandwiches as part of their inflight

refreshments. Lots of people like chicken salad sandwiches. But they couldn't figure out

how exactly people's love of chicken salad helped distinguish Southwest as the

preeminent low cost carrier. So, they didn't do it.

Use your vision to help guide your work. Sparkly new ideas abound, extra hours

do not. Refer back to your vision to decide when to say yes, and when to say no.

To draft your vision statement, imagine that you are living one year after your

organization has been doing its work. Describe the scenery: *more and more families are*

checking out public schools, playing in their neighborhood park, getting to know their

neighbors. Now two years: *families feel like they have quality education options in the*

city, feel safe in their neighborhood and home, and have tight-knit friendships. Then three

years, then four…keep going on this exercise until you feel like you've hit an emotional

cord. Your gut will tell you when you're on the right track.

About two years into my tenure at DBFA, I brought in a strategic planning

consultant to help us take stock of the changes we'd made in that time and set a path for

the next three years. After several hours of wrestling with how to articulate the vision, we

finally set it aside and decided to come back to it later. As we were closing the session

and reviewing notes, someone kicked out "*Baltimore is a city all families love to call*

home," Frankensteining together pieces of language we'd been playing with all day. The

room fell quiet. One of the board members on our communications committee broke the

silence, saying, "I just got goosebumps." Don't force your vision statement— the right

words will come after you've marinated in the feelings for a bit.

Finding your technical approach

Now you know what you are trying to do, and the way the world will look

wonderfully different as a result of doing it. The question then shifts to what tactics will

move you towards this vision. This is your "technical approach"- important for guiding

your work, and for your requests to foundations. If you are trying to engineer social

change— as opposed to providing direct services like counseling— your technical

approach should focus on root causes, not outcomes. Much of gender-based violence

work focused on helping people who have already been raped, rather than preventing

rape from happening in the first place. Clearly there is a need for quality victims'

services, but that was not the work I am suited to do as someone concerned with systems

and social structures. Likewise, I have focused DBFA's work on transforming flight-risk

factors, rather than throwing glitter on shitty schools or ignoring the very real disparities

that lead to crime and drug users nodding on street corners that can feel threatening when

out with a stroller. If we fix the reasons people want to move, we won't have to convince

them to stay. Use your CAR tools to figure out the conflict drivers. Then devise

programing or initiatives that address them.

This is another time to take your show on the road. Go meet with experts using

similar approaches, even if their mission slightly differs. For example, DBFA's mission is

to keep people with young children in Baltimore, but our technical approach involves

improving education, as one of the drivers of family flight is concerns over education

options in the city. As such, we work closely with Strong Schools Maryland, ACLU

Education Reform Project, Teach for America, and dozens of legislators and school

system administrators working to improve education in the city. Meet with other people

addressing the same conflict drivers you are. Their technical approaches can help inform

yours. What can you do that they can't? What can they do better that you should steer

away from? Refine your approaches by continuing to drill down on what your niche is,

what your training empowers you to do unique from others in this niche.

Developing an organizational framework

Your organization needs a framework for conducting your day-to-day operations

to help make sure your actions work towards achieving your mission— remember, being

busy does not automatically equal being effective. After meetings with a dozen or so

gender and conflict experts, Sandy, Leslie and I had a decent understanding of the gap an

academic center at I-CAR could fill. We had the nimbleness of working without the

political constraints of a government agency, the intellectual wealth of a cohort of

international gender and conflict scholars, and the opportunity to add to this cohort by expanding I-CAR's appeal to graduate students wishing to study gender through a conflict frame. We needed to organize our initiatives so we weren't taking buck shot approaches. I played with dozens of models from other gender focused NGOs, and then realized it made more sense to adopt I-CAR's framework- research, theory, practice- then replicate and adapt something foreign to the school. We used this framework to guide the work for the time I was at the Center; if something didn't fall within the bucket of research, theory and/or practice, we didn't do it.

DBFA's work is similarly structured. When I came on as executive director, I spent a great deal of time studying flight-risk factors, in line with my interest in addressing root causes rather than fixing the consequences that stem from conflict drivers. We then tooled the focus of our work around the three primary risk factors- education quality, feeling of safety at home and in the city, and community connections. If a great idea or collaboration opportunity comes along that doesn't squarely fit within one of these categories, it goes the way of the Southwest Airlines chicken salad sandwich.

Create a feedback loop

Plan your work, then work your plan. As you go, circle back to all the people that helped guide the creation of the organization. All those folks you met with who gave input on the gaps in the field, the technical approaches. These are now your informal

feedback team. Keep in touch with them. Make it clear that you are eager for their critiques and suggestions.

In addition to meeting with the cadre of folks who have helped guide my rebooting of DBFA, I have a practice of meeting annually with our major foundation heads prior to submitting funding. Foundations have great "30,000 foot" viewpoint of work being done across huge swaths of a field or geographic area, depending on the focus of the foundation. When I meet with our program officers and the foundation leaders, I ask "if you were my boss, what would you tell me to do differently." I take this feedback and put it in context with the critiques I'm getting from my network, and refine the direction of our work if it seems we could do something better.

The most important feedback loop should be people directly invested in the success of your organization, be it a governing board of directors, a steering committee, or informal advisory group. These are the people who help you in the refining, who stay up late or get up early to plot and carry out your plans. Find people who care deeply about what you are doing and invite them along for the ride.

VI. How to Build Your Dream Board

Regardless of whether you are launching a new organization, taking over an NGO already in existence, or starting a project without the formal institutional structure of an NGO- like a community program or PTO initiative that doesn't plan to pursue a 501c3 but will operate with a fiscal sponsor, or even a community group that doesn't plan to

fundraise- you will need a team of committed people who share your passion for the

mission. If this is a formalized NGO, or a group pursuing incorporation, this posse will be

your board of directors, a group vested with governing say over the direction of the

organization. If you are a project that doesn't need a formal board because you are not

planning to seek IRS status, or because you are in a country that doesn't require a board

in order to solicit funding, your goal should still be to build a passionate team committed

to the mission. The difference in your case will be that this team, depending on how you

write the documents that guide the structure of your organization, will not have governing

say over the project.

The first thing you should be thinking of when recruiting your board— I say

board here for ease of doing business, but the same advice applies to a steering committee

or advisory group— is the gaps in your own skill set, expertise, and networks. Start with

an assessment of what you don't know, and who you don't know that will help you work

towards your mission. When I started at DBFA, most board members had been recruited

because they knew someone else on the board. As a result of this insular recruitment,

there were people who loved the mission, but a lack of diversity in their networks, not to

mention racial or socioeconomic diversity. Additionally, because there was little clarity

around what, exactly, DBFA was trying to do, there was no diversity in skill set or

expertise around the various aspects of our mission. DBFA's founding documents laid out

that the group would work on education, greenspace and walkability, and community

engagement. Over the eight years prior to my hiring, the formal committees around each of these tracks had lapsed, and new board members had been recruited without an intentional understanding of which track they would be best suited to work on.

When I came on, I began identifying what skill sets, expertise, and networks we were lacking. I prospected for new board members who had specific professional expertise around education, public parks and transit, and community development. My outreach was laser focused on bringing in leaders of color and parents from waterfront neighborhoods that had been overlooked as DBFA's "downtown" focus had, unintentionally or not, morphed into "affluent downtown". I did this recruitment with a very keen eye towards network diversity— that is, thinking about the different communities and professions we had not had a presence in or entree to, and finding people who cared about our mission and had expertise around our work.

Doers, Donors and Door Openers

Your potential board members should fall into one of three categories: Doers, Donors, or Door openers. When DBFA did a major expansion of our board following a revision of our bylaws in 2017, our Governance Committee pulled together an impressive slate of nominees who were selected for their passion for making Baltimore a sustainable city for families, their personal commitments and professional expertise, and their ability to be a "doer," someone with time willing to put in elbow grease; a donor who could write a big check or tap their professional and personal network for donations; or "door-

opener," someone with access and influence in our target communities, legislative circles,

the media, the corporate private sector, or with community partners like ACLU.

Nominations were made with careful attention to racial and gendered equitable

representation. Once again, unsexy but trusty Venn diagrams are your friend for

prospecting. This is the model we used:
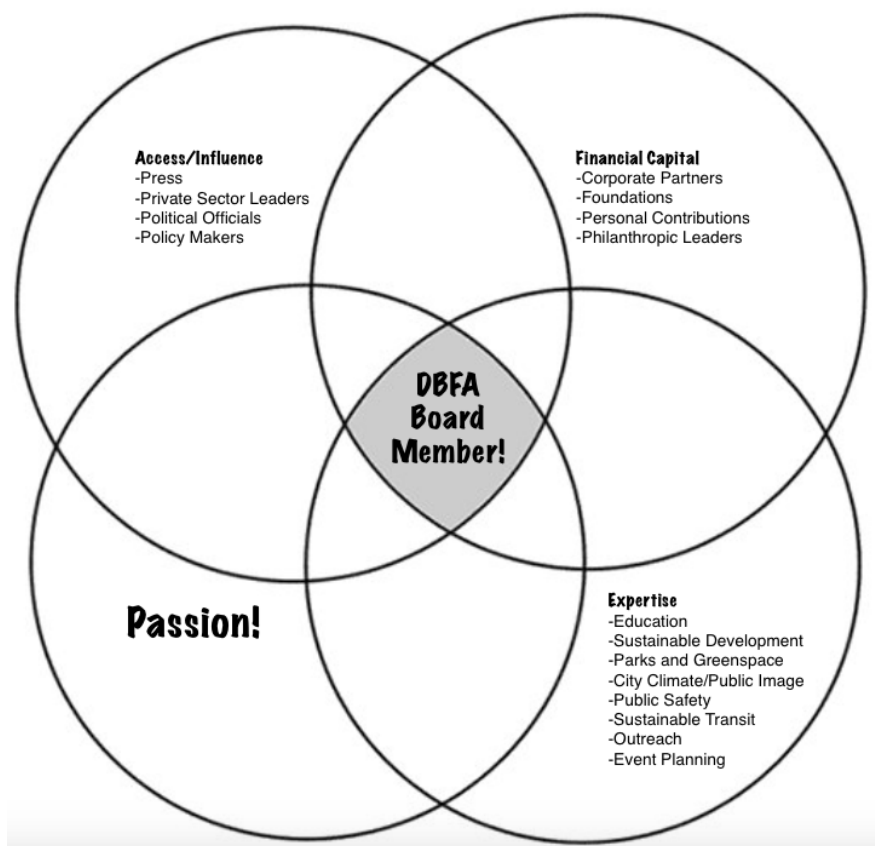
Figure 12. DuBois SkillFinder Framework, adapted for DBFA Board

Prospecting

For the sake of not having to herd cats, you should organize your board into subcommittees around aspects of your work. Sending mass emails asking the entire board to pitch in on a specific thing, like tabling at a community event, can quickly become a full time job answering emails back and forth. Break your board into groups, appoint a chair to each group (we call ours committees), and let that chair direct the logistics of the organization's work on their assigned issue. For example, our community engagement chair works with our community engagement director to help staff tables at events throughout the city. Our education chair works with our education director to help wrangle members to testify at school board meetings. Your staff— or you, if you're a one woman band— should have a 30,000 foot view of the work being done. Your committee chairs are the boots on the ground.

When we were shooting our video around school funding advocacy, we had a full day of shooting at two different sites with five different featured interviewees. I was the key person in touch with the Comcast film crew helping to guide the flow of the video, and prepping speakers to fit within my vision. My education committee oversaw making sure interviewees were in the right place at the right time. Five minutes before we were set to wrap, I began to panic that our star interviewee was not in the room. I swung the door to the filming room open, set to launch franticly in search of Del. McIntosh, and was

greeted by my smiling education chair, who had the delegate in tow. Because we had built a strong team, we were able to pull off an amazing video.

In case this isn't obvious, pick committee chairs who are people you enjoy spending time with, who you 'gel' with. These are the people you will spend the most time coordinating your organization's work with. Make sure they are people you like.

Your MVP: Can you ugly cry in front of your board president?

Perhaps even more than your staff, your relationship with your board president is the most important factor in the success of your mission, and your sanity during the work. The specific relationship of this person's role within the organization is often interchangeably referred to as president or board president (Board Effect 2016; Joyaux 2013). An important difference, however, is between a Board of Directors (BOD) president and an Advisory Board (AB) president. People serving on BODs have a legally binding relationship to the organization; if a foundation, donor or person served by your NGO sues the organization, members of your BOD are on the hook. Members of ABs do not have a legally binding relationship to the orgs they advise (side note: always, always, always carry Directors' and Officers' Liability Insurance to protect yourself and your BOD members from potential legal action).

Your board president should be someone who has a bedrock belief in the mission, possibly more than you do, as you are (ideally) getting paid to do this work. Your board president is not. They are putting in time, money, and emotional sweat equity into this

work. Make sure you tap someone for this role who you admire, who you work well with, who you can trust. They are your most important confidant, and—ideally— your biggest cheerleader.

If you are coming into an organization that already has a president in place, take time— lots of time— to invest in building a strong relationship. Don't take the job until getting to know the board president, even if it's just over a long lunch. This is the person who will help you make the tough calls, and you want to make sure you can be honest with them, respectfully agree to disagree with when necessary, and have their emotional support when the work gets rough.

If you are doing your job well, you are inevitably going to make someone angry along the way. If you're pushing an agenda for change, you are going to rub up against critics- some of whom will be people on your board. You need your board president to have your back, even when she/he doesn't agree with the calls you are making. You need to have someone who can criticize you behind closed doors, who won't throw you under the bus in front of the team who has governing say over your job.

When DBFA made the decision to weigh in on the master plan for Port Covington, a proposed real estate development owned by Under Armour president Kevin Plank, we were stepping into the cross fires of one of the most contentious political and financial debates in Baltimore's history. When the project moved forward with the $660M subsides that will fund the development, the deal went down as one of the largest

investments in American history of public funds in a private real estate development (Baltimore Sun 9/19/2016).

Our decision to make public commentary was deeply fraught racially and socioeconomically, as the "city within a city" (Baltimore Brew 2016) would have shops, housing and recreation financially accessible to a relatively small, extremely affluent population of the city. We went out on a limb to testify at the City Planning Commission hearing on the Master Plan, stating that we thought the project had potential to be transformative for the city. We cited the jobs that would be created— 1/3 of which were ensured to go to residents, as per a binding community agreement between the City and Sagamore— because of the tax revenue generated from the planned 11,000 residences to be built, and because of the infrastructure upgrades to I-95 that would bring in federal dollars to fix roads long overdue for repairs.

Almost immediately, social media went BOOM. I was personally called racist. DBFA was accused of being racist and elitist (Baltimore Brew 2016). It was not the most fun month of my life. But I wasn't alone. I didn't make the call to support the proposal in a vacuum; I did it in close consultation with my board president. Before we decided to make a public stand, we huddled in her kitchen and hammered out a press statement. We did this not just to have a public stance to point to, but to go through the intellectual exercise of understanding whether or not we wanted to move forward.

Having to put down our thoughts in ink forced us to discuss every possible particular of how our involvement would play out in the media, and what our responses would be. We laid out our reasons why we were taking a public stand; this process made us talk through why, exactly, we wanted to be involved. As a result, every time we had an accusation thrown at us (a very, very frequent event), we could point to a list of reasons why we believed we were doing the right thing. When I would call my president in a panic or in tears, she would remind me that we had good reasons for what we were doing. Or she would just listen to me vent. Both were vital to me staying afloat during that crappy month.

They critique you because they love you

While you need an emotional anchor and a partner in crime, your board president should also be someone who is willing to disagree with you. If you are about to steer over a cliff, it's best to have someone point that out before you're in free fall. Set aside time on a frequent basis to go through the work you're spearheading and ask for genuine input from your president. This should not be a rote exercise. Pour over what you hope to accomplish, comb through the details with a critical eye to what might go wrong, both in execution on in resulting outcomes. Then take the input given and tweak your work as necessary.

If your board has governing powers, your board president is just as copiable for the organization's outcomes as you are. Make sure you work with the insurance company

who writes your liability policy to get a Directors & Officers Insurance policy!

Nonprofits Insurance Alliance Group (https://insurancefornonprofits.org/) is a great place

to start if your organization doesn't have a policy in place. This safeguards you, your staff

and the board members in the case of litigation against your organization. Make sure your

president is in the loop on any controversial actions you are taking, and respect her input

if she disagrees with you. Find common ground you can see eye to eye on and take action

on the aspects you have agreed upon.

VII. Keeping the Lights On

Fundraising can be the *most* time consuming part of an NPO leader's job. If you

are at an organization with a massive financial development arm, you will still need to be

available to be trotted out to meet with big donors. Fundraising can be downright

terrifying. Even talking about money in American culture— and many other cultures— is

taboo. Asking people to give you some of their money takes a certain amount of

chutzpah. On top of working up the temerity to solicit money, the added stress that your

livelihood and the livelihood of those you employ is resting on your ability to bring in the

dough can be nerve wracking.

I have no perfect formula to bring in money, but a decent track record and some

tips that have helped me both get more dollars in the door *and* helped overcome some of

the anxiety that comes with this part of NPO leadership. Over the past ten years, I have

raised over one million dollars in cash contributions, and uncounted hundreds of thousands in in-kind goods and services. If I can do this, so can you.

Here are a few of the things I keep in mind when fundraising:

You're not asking for a donation, you're offering an opportunity

When you ask someone for a contribution, you are giving them the chance to play a role in something they care about. You are doing full time what they only can do here and there, or only contribute to through financial means. You are doing them a favor by giving them the chance to feel good about how they are using their money.

R.A.T.s are your friend

When you make an ask, break it into three parts: A compelling Reason, a specific Amount, and a Timeline: "I am calling because the governor is threatening to cut funding for city schools, and I need to rent a bus to bring families to Annapolis. I need $500. Can you make a contribution on our website while I'm on the phone with you today?" or "Our upcoming gala is an opportunity to get in front of over 500 affluent homeowners, your target market. Our $5,000 sponsorship is a great marketing package. My print deadline is September 30th— can I call you next week for your pledge?"

Just. Be. Quiet.

After you throw out your RAT, Shut. Up. Don't keep vamping. Be comfortable in the discomfort of the silence. Wait for them to break the tension.

Let them sell themselves

In a pitch meeting with a big law firm leading up to our first DBFA gala, the managing partner said he was "sure we were running into other companies" saying that they couldn't get involved because their marketing budget was done, or because their "philanthropic commitments were already made for the year." Rather than freaking out and calculating how to get him involved, I just waited until he had kind of talked his way through why he was reticent to sign on. Then I just very gently said, "oh, that's so surprising, we actually haven't heard that at all, people are really excited to get invested in what we are doing" (Sept 2, 2016 Field Notes). Lo and behold, an email committing to $1,500.00 came the next day.

Find an ambassador

If you can at all swing it, hire a fundraising consultant to get you started with introductions. Opening doors to big money is almost impossible if you don't have any history with the corporate or philanthropic communities in your area/focus field. I was (very, very) lucky enough to have a political fundraiser take me under her wing and teach me a lot of what I know, in addition to opening most of the doors we've successfully walked through. This is money well spent.

VIII. How to Deal with the Haters

If you are doing the work of interruptive change, you are going to piss people off. The status quo is the status quo because people in power are benefiting from it. Don't back down if you're getting criticism from people in power.

If you are getting critiques from marginalized communities, however, make time to meet in person with the individual or organization making the compliant or accusation. If they are not a whack job, ask for a meeting, no matter how small the critique. You want to understand the criticism, and, if appropriate, tweak tactics considering what you learn.

There are absolutely people not worth making this time and space for. There was a woman who wrote a scathing article in the Baltimore Sun about how greedy children and parents should get out of the city because they take up too many tax resources for schools (Baltimore Sun, 3/1/17). I was set to meet with her to understand her perspective and see if I could learn and perhaps recruit an ally. Instead, I got tipped off by many, many folks that she was a local nutty provocateur, so unhelpful and intentionally incendiary that her neighborhood created a Facebook Page— Locust Point Issues that Don't Concern Ellen— to circumnavigate her trolling. This was a meeting I canceled.

In contrast, my staff or I personally met with as many people as possible who raised concerns, either online or in person, about the ways we were taking racial equity into account in our work. These men and women have incalculably informed DBFA's mission and tactical approaches. When I came onboard, I clarified our mission statement to focus on drivers of family flight, shortening a convoluted mission statement into: "DBFA connects communities to create an 'urban village' and empowers families to advocate for good schools, safe streets, and great neighborhoods." Over the course of meeting with community members raising concerns of racial equity and bringing more

and more people of color on to the board, our mission has evolved to: "*DBFA keeps young families in Baltimore by advocating for great schools and a safe, vibrant and inclusive city.*" Our PTO networking series expanded to focus directly on how to democratize school, working collaboratively with the Teachers' Democracy Project. The person who facilitated that event— which drew the most diverse crowd of any DBFA event to date— was the very same person who raked our program manager across the coals at the PCAB meeting.

Listen to critiques from people who have been shut out from the circles of power to which your privilege has granted you access. People willing to explain to you why they are concerned about your work can be your biggest teachers, and many of them may become your biggest allies if you prove through your actions that you have taken their input seriously.

IX. Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway

Managing my own fear about doing things "right" has been by far the largest hindrance to my work. Frankly, this has been a theme throughout my life, but I've not had to truly address it until I got into NGO leadership. Conflict analysis, strategic planning, and coalition building cannot be done on the fly, and working through paralyzing fear is a necessary precursor to be able to carry out your organization's mission.

At the one year mark of my time at DBFA, we were just about to head into our first ever gala, and I was drafting a response to the U.S. Department of Justice Consent

Decree the city had just brokered in the wake of allegations against the police following

Freddie Gray's death. DBFA had been operating under the radar for three years prior to

my on-boarding, and had never taken a hugely visible public role on controversial

political issues. I was about to launch us squarely into the spotlight on hugely visible

initiatives, and I was petrified:

> The fear! The fear! It settles over me like a wet blanket every time I think
> about The To Do List— not just email back and forth and logistics. The stuff that
> requires thinking time, thinking not related to branding or creating a video or
> anything creative. But the actual sitting down and writing a response to the
> Department of Justice report about the Baltimore City Police, or creating an issue
> stance framework to decide how we're going to respond to any particular issue.
> The fear that settles over me before I get started, the fear that I don't know how to
> do it the right way, that feeling that has come up a million times in the context of
> trying to do things I haven't done before (field notes September 7, 2016).

The only way through the fear is simply to move forward. My tendency is to

freeze up and wait for my "panic procrastination fairy" to show up in the eleventh hour,

when the fear of missing a deadline overtakes the fear of not doing perfectly whatever

I'm putting off. Last minute panic leaves no room for being afraid or feeling insecure

about my ability to actually pull off a project. But fear and anxiety lead to last minute

decisions and haphazard activities— it's easy to be busy without being effective.

Being proactive, analytical and strategic, and managing deadlines are impossible if we let fear of being unsure how to move forward dictate our lives. I can't deny that my fear is still there, though it's waning as I continue to do this work.

There is no right way

For me, the scariest part of conflict analysis and resolution work is that there is no "right" way to do it. Research suggests that there are plenty of wrong ways— tactics that cause harm and exacerbate the conflicts were trying to upend— but the best we can do is try to learn from the mistakes of our predecessors, and refine our tactics moving forward. Remind yourself often that there is no right way, that conflict resolution work is messy and complicated and that feeling unequal to the task is a good thing: You, individually, *are* indeed unequal to the task of transforming conflict. This work is a team sport. Find colleagues with whom you can be vulnerable, find strength in sharing your fears, and build coalitions of similarly dedicated people who will be in the trenches with you.

Momentum is your friend

About a year into my job at DBFA, I started to settle into a rhythm of what the organization's year should look like from a programmatic and fundraising standpoint. This was immensely helpful for being able to accomplish daily tasks, as well as larger goals of the mission. Humans are creatures that thrive in structure. Moving through the year and planning in a rhythmic way- legislative advocacy in the winter, grant writing in

the spring, corporate fundraising in the summer, education programming in the fall, etc.-helped the fear abate immensely. About a year and a month after I started, I wrote:

I feel like the fear is dissipating. What used to be scary was having so much time on my hands to be able to do the job [because we were rebuilding the organization and defining its goals]. Now that it's real, it feels easier to just sit down and get through the work, to plow away at the logistics and the details and the insurance stuff and all of that in order to be able to get through the actual mission stuff. It's all getting easier everyday- as I get more organized, as I have more assurance on how to do the job, it's getting easier (October 18, 2016- Field Note Diary).

If you're stuck or procrastinating or just feel overwhelmed, pick a little task that will take less than 5 minutes. Cross it off your list. Prioritize the things that will take the least amount of time, even if they are not the most pressing issues. Knock those off your list first. Finishing three or four little things will give you enough of a high to get your energy up to do some of the bigger, scarier things. Just get going, and the momentum of feeling a sense of accomplishment will snowball on itself.

Success snowballs on itself. Days and weeks of pushing through challenges will turn into months and years. You'll eventually have enough of a personal track record that you can say to yourself— as I do often— "I've done hard things before, I can do this hard thing too."

X. Self Care is Not a Pedicure

This work is hard. Take the toll on your psyche seriously. There are several great TED talks about empathy fatigue and trauma stewardship, the ways in which we internalize this work that in turn pops up in our practice and our personal lives. Trauma stewardship is different than burnout— it is the culminating effect of being confronted day in and day out with desperate pain. I strongly encourage you to visit The Trauma Stewardship Institute's website- http://traumastewardship.com/- for resources to "care for yourself while caring for others" (van Dernoot Lipsky 2009).

Not addressing emotional toll of your job impacts your ability to be effective. I am not a direct service provider, meaning I don't provide counseling or necessary interact on a daily basis with people in acute crisis. Despite this, constantly focusing on all the challenges facing Baltimore— challenges that feel even more insurmountable when I forget to take care of myself— takes a huge toll. My marriage hit the rocks about fifteen months into my job at DBFA, the result of my then-husband and I both prioritizing our public interest work over our personal lives. His public interest law firm and my NPO took a hit while we worked through our crap. His clients and the families I serve would have been so much better off had we just taken care of ourselves and our relationship along the way. Amid the crapstorm when my marriage began to fall apart, I wrote:

> I am not just burned out from the emotional rollercoaster of this past
> fortnight marriage wise, but also from the up and down of the two programs we

have done explicitly addressing race. We had a Tough Talk lecture thingie last

week about talking to your kids about race and difference. Then this week on

Tuesday we did a town hall with the state's attorney and the police commissioner.

I feel like all the elements of my life are falling apart (April 6, 2017 Field Notes).

Taking care of yourself is taking care of your work. Get a therapist to help you

unpack some of the personal and emotional crap that comes up. If you don't have

insurance, many medical schools have student clinics where you can see a psychology or

psychiatric resident.

Beyond mental health, do basic adulting. This cannot come second to your work,

because the work will suffer if you fail to stay on top of life logistics and self-care. Go to

the doctor. SLEEP. See friends and family— tunnel vision is real and helps no one. Pay

your bills, even when that means you must do CAR work in your off hours, instead of

full time at first. This may mean you are building an organization in your spare time

between an office job or waiting tables. I did this when I was starting consulting. Waiting

tables at night while I worked basically for free in the day sucked but taking on credit

card debt to pursue your passion will only lead to greater stress, and thus greater strain on

your ability to make an impact.

Draw boundaries around your work to ensure you prioritize taking care of

yourself. You are not an infinitely stretchable rubber band.

The Graveyards are Full of Indispensable Men

If you feel any sense of guilt prioritizing self care, remember that you're doing it for the good of the organization. Self-care is fundamentally good management. Healthy organizations are set up to function even when they are down a key player. After all, what would happen if you were to get hit by a bus tomorrow? Or, more optimistically, to win the lottery and move to Fiji? What would happen to your mission? To your budgeting and bookkeeping? To your fundraising goals? To the people counting on the programs and services you provide? To the staff that rely on your fundraising acumen to pay their mortgages?

When I was hospitalized with complications during my first pregnancy, it became clear very quickly that we had not done a tremendous job setting up managerial practices at the Gender Center around our financial management and outlining a clear operations plan. When my father died about a year later, we had worked to systematize the administrative side of the Center, making it much less stressful for everyone while I was back and forth to my hometown for hospice stuff and the memorial service.

If you've done the work of creating a strong strategic plan that lays out your goals, and clearly articulating the destination to which you are steering— your vision— your organization should be able to run on autopilot here and there as needed. Staff, board, and volunteers simply have to stick to the plan while you take care of yourself, whether that's for an afternoon every other week while you go to therapy, or if you have to tap out for a stretch of weeks for a medical or family emergency.

Your goal, from an organizational-functioning standpoint, should be to set up processes and structures that will allow your NPO to function without you. Manage your way into irrelevancy, my friends.

Drowning in empathy doesn't help

One of the most challenging parts of my job is managing my anxiety around the fact that my job performance directly impacts the financial stability of my staff. If I don't raise money, they can't pay their mortgages. It's the thing I struggle with most on a daily basis in terms of HR. It creeps into my thinking and my management processes. It's unhelpful empathy that overshadows the mission's success, as it just leads to panic.

Philanthropists and companies don't want to invest in leaders who seem desperate and unstable. Standing in between the realities of my employee's financial welfare and the reality that getting my job done means not thinking about other people's mortgages is really complicated to balance emotionally. It's not something that people talk a lot about in terms of leadership, but the stress of raising your staff members' salary— and your own, of course— will likely weigh heavily on your head as an NGO leader. Stay focused on your mission, offering donors the opportunity to invest in your mission. Articulate the value of your work, and the donation checks will come.

XI. Odds and Ends to Keep in Mind

Good Enough Really, Really Is Good Enough

There was a small poster hanging in my high school band rehearsal room proclaiming, "Good Enough Is Not." Meaning, good enough is *not* good enough. I can't tell you the number of hours that poster has cost organizations I run, nor the amount of self-flagellation it has prompted. Perhaps I took it to heart in such a damaging way because I was young and impressionable, or because I am by nature a very sensitive person. Regardless, the mentality that nothing less than the very, very best will do is a terrible management and operations model.

The conflicts you work on evolve quickly, and responding timely is more important than responding perfectly. During the midst of BCPS's heating crisis at the start of 2018, my education director and I were racing to draft an open letter to the mayor and BCPS CEO demanding an action plan before a second day of school was called off due to boiler outages. We wanted to ship the letter within minutes if city officials made the call to close a second day, as we wanted to have the benefit of high public attention to the issue when we released the letter so we could effectively rally our membership and mobilize (Fox Baltimore, 2018). We published the letter on social media within 10 minutes of the closure announcement for day two, and I hit send on the emails to the head of the Board of School Commissioners, Mayor Pugh, Dr. Santelises and the head of the Department of Public Works within a half hour of the call. And wouldn't you know it, a few minutes after as I enjoyed watching social media blow up, I realized there was a grammatical typo in the second to last paragraph.

Guess what? No one cared. Not one. single. person. I don't know if anyone caught it, but no one said anything. You know what people *did* do? They got on the phone. Media picked up the letter. The mayor got angry calls, and when she blew off our members, we linked to the letter and posted the dismissive response she gave our members on Baltimore City Voters, a Facebook group with over 8,000 very engaged constituents. The letter was effective, even if it wasn't perfect.

Don't get trapped by perfectionism. It is a time suck, a terrible weight on your psyche, and is unintentionally self-centered: your colleagues are smart! Trust they will quality check you if something you pump out is truly sub-par. Most of it won't be, I promise.

Always Tell the Truth (but don't always say everything you're thinking)

When I was starting out in my career early after college, a dear mentor told me, "the only thing you have is your reputation." You can be smart, an expert in your field, charming and kind, but if you aren't known as a person who can be trusted, you can't hope to go far. Being honest in your motives and your plans has been one of the best principles I've stuck with since taking on a management role. Let people know where you stand on a particular issue, even if your view is controversial.

The corollary to this is to know when to hold your tongue. There is no need to be provocative for its own sake. If you take a public stand, don't back down, but don't be offensive in your commitment to your position. If something is shared with you in

confidence, don't share it further. The overarching goal here is to be known as someone who keeps their word.

Being honest includes things that perhaps fall into the "personal, not at work" bucket. When I ran into pregnancy complications with my son, I was honest about what was happening, and in turn had support from the S-CAR Gender Center staff and its other leaders. When I ran into marital challenges about a year and a half into my time at DBFA, I brought my staff and board president into the loop on the basics of what was happening. Not having to put on a game face, in turn compounding the stress of the situation with trying to hide about it, made it easier to deal with the necessary work stuff that couldn't be delegated. I rested or cried when I needed to, and buried myself in work when it felt good to escape into emails.

Be honest with what's going on in your life, and you'll mitigate some of the consequences that come when you pull yourself in too many directions.

Play Nicely with Others

Working in coalition with dozens of other groups as part of the Baltimore Education Coalition has been amongst the most challenging aspects of my work with DBFA. My second day working at DBFA was the 2015 BEC retreat. I walked into the day-long meeting saying to myself, "God gave you two ears and one mouth; listen twice as much as you talk." About 2 hours into the retreat, however, I was so frustrated with what I saw as a glaringly missed opportunity that I piped up and asked why the coalition

wasn't pursuing a legal strategy to push for equitable funding, as guaranteed by the Maryland Constitution. I was the new kid on the block and had extremely limited background on the organization— just a two hour run down with DBFA's board education subcommittee chair— but felt like I had something to contribute to the conversation. So I piped up, but did my best not to convey my frustration. More importantly, I backed my critique with tangible action. Say what you mean, but don't say it meanly, and if you're going to criticize, make sure it's constructive and backed up with action on your part— *don't wait for someone else to fix a problem you've identified.* Jump in, get messy, and use the expertise that led you to identify the problem to innovate a solution.

In regard to the BEC, in the years that have followed my initial critique, I've tried to put in elbow grease and intellectual sweat equity to move the coalition's work forward. Don't go along with an agenda you feel is counter to your values or your organization's mission, but try to show partners you're willing to work together even if you disagree on small particulars. Showing that you're willing to pitch in will pay dividends when you need support.

Share the Credit

Not long after the BEC successfully lobbied for the $1.2B earmark that will eventually rebuild or newly construct more than twenty schools, a schism happened between two strong coalition members that eventually led Baltimoreans United In

Leadership Development (BUILD), one of Baltimore's most prominent community organizations, to exit the coalition. After two and half years in my job, the best history I could piece together of what led to the split— the effects of which have disastrously impacted BEC's credibility within the black community— was that another prominent BEC member organization failed to acknowledge BUILD's contribution to the work in a funding application.

Over the course of my time in NGO leadership, I have felt the pressure and anxiety of having to prove your organization's value in funding solicitations. Don't fall into the trap of not acknowledging that you are one of many, many groups (or people, if you're a one woman show) doing good work. Funders evaluating your solicitation will not penalize you for nodding to others who are doing good work; the value of your work can stand on its own even if you acknowledge that others helped your mission succeed. If you are literally the only group working on your particular issue, find a way to thank and acknowledge others, even the most tangentially related partners.

It costs you *nothing* to say thank you, and can cost you untold losses to take sole credit.

Meetings are a Time Suck

In person meetings will take double or even triple the amount of time than you think. You will spend time getting to the meeting, coming back from the meeting, and in the meeting itself, if it goes over once you get talking and excited about all the shared

connections and possible collaborations. Cancel as many meetings as you possibly can and shift to phone calls if you are not doing generative, creative work during the planned meeting. If you don't know if a relationship is going to be worth investing in because you may not have aligned goals, have a quick phone call to introduce yourself before you make a coffee date.

The caveat to this is when you are launching a new project or organization, the start of a new job, or during a job search. Meet with as many people as you can who are involved int the work you want to do— especially leaders. If you are the leader trying to launch or re-boot an organization, ask the people you meet with to help you map the field: What are the gaps in services? What are the opportunities for an organization with your specific mission? Where do they see the greatest need for fresh perspective? If you are trying to break into a new field, go back to the four magic words: *How can I help.* These are meetings worth your time.

Sometimes It's Not You, It's Them

I have had to fire five people in the course of my career. I'm lucky that number's not higher, luck borne of hiring great people. Put time into finding great candidates, people who are passionate about the work, who have the aptitude to succeed in their role, and who have training and expertise that fit the job and your organization. I did not follow this rigorous process for three of the five people I've let go of, and my lack of diligence cost me (and them— obviously it sucks even more to get fired than it does to be

the person dropping the ax). The other two folks were staffers who predated my tenure, whose skill sets did not match the job roles we reconfigured at the start of my time at DBFA.

In all these cases, I initially thought the problem was me, a failure of managerial skills, or a lack of attention to detail on my part. Looking through my field notes from the past two years, I can see that I held on way to long in two cases where I had hired the staffer who I eventually fired. Absolutely invest time in helping to see if you can provide an underperforming staffer with the support they need to succeed. But trust yourself enough to have a clear deadline— one you communicate to them— to make a call as to whether this is going to work.

It only costs you time and money (in their salary, and in the hours it costs to have your attention diverted) to hold off on letting go of someone who is not a good fit. Even if it's not a lack of performance on their end, but just a mismatch between your leadership style and their work product, if the relationship is not working, the organization suffers all the same. Know when to fold 'em.

Your Compassion is Not a Blank Check

At a few points over the last two years, I have poured time and emotional energy into "helping" people who were really just taking advantage. Being hyperaware of the privilege I have, both economically and socio-politically, I tried throughout my time in Baltimore to make sure I was lifting up folks who are disadvantaged. In cases where

people took blatant advantage of my sensitivity to this, my organization suffered in big ways. In one case, we had a twenty-something young man who was coming into our community space visibly high on drugs, scaring away the young parents who are our target demo. He would come in with a big story— how he had a friend who was starving, or was trying to get food for himself— and then turn down offers of food rather than cash. When he ran into legal trouble and housing trouble, I took time and pulled strings to get referrals for the public defender and for emergency shelter, only to have him hang around for the rest of the day playing on a smartphone. I felt uncomfortable ejecting him from the space for fear of being racially biased and elitist, and as a result, families we were trying to reach felt unwelcome in the space set up specifically for their needs.

In another instance, I had an employee link their Uber account to my personal debit card. I had given him permission to do for one specific ride he was taking to field site where we were working, and he kept charging my account for weeks after without my knowledge. I don't keep meticulous track of my checking account until my family's quarterly taxes are due, and by the time I realized he was charging my card he had racked up nearly $600.00 against my checking account in less than three months. At the time, I agonized over how this was really "my fault" for not catching it sooner, musing that I've had bosses give me second chances (although none this big, for the record). I spent almost a month worrying and debating with my board president that it was likely an accident, that since I hadn't caught the charges it was unfair for me to assume he hadn't

done this accidentally by unknowingly setting the default card to mine instead of his. Combing back through my notes, there were so many egregious "whoopsies" throughout this saga that I can't believe how much time I spent agonizing before firing him.

Walt Disney once said, "a kick in the teeth may be the best thing in the world for you" (Forbes 2012). You're not helping anyone when you allow people to string you along out of a sense of misplaced responsibility for someone else's wellbeing. Cut it off, for your sake and theirs.

XII. Don't Put Off Your Life

If you are planning to make conflict resolution your life's work, by definition you need to find a way to do the work and live your life concurrently. My second year of PhD coursework, a male graduate student and I had the honor of picking up a renowned scholar from the airport to bring her to S-CAR to keynote at a prominent lecture series. After we'd fetched her from the airport, we chatted in the car about my colleague's exciting news that he and his wife were about to welcome their third child. The conversation veered into a discussion of my deliberations over when to procreate. The visiting lecture piped up and said something along the lines of "if you are truly committed to your doctorate, you'll put off having kids until after."

Setting aside the hilariously blatant sexist double standard (from a feminist critical theorist, no less), what troubles me about her comment is the simple but beautiful truth that most of the best things in my life have come when I go off script. My sister's

multiple miscarriages led my ex-husband and I to genetic testing, which in turn led us to having a baby before I finished my doctoral coursework. Having a pipe burst in the baby's room in our apartment led us to looking for a home to buy, which in turn led to us realizing we were priced out of DC and needed to consider alternatives. This led us to Baltimore, a place I felt more at home in than anywhere else I've ever lived (and that list is loooooong). Being in Baltimore led me to DBFA, an organization that has challenged and inspired me from the start. Despite the highs and lows of CAR practice over the past few years, and the spectacular implosion of my marriage that unfolded concurrently, I am grateful for all of it. Follow your heart, screw the haters, and settle for nothing less than your very best life.

XIII. Trust Your Gut

When all else fails, trust your gut. Step back, consider your work within the larger framework of any of the different tools that we are offered in the CAR field. Then take yourself off to a quiet place where you can sit and reflect and really marinate about what you think is going on and the best way to tackle it. This field is filled with very smart, very data driven people. At some point we must step back from all of the rumination and analysis, trust our instincts, and take action.

The advice in this chapter is meant as just that: advice. Not dictates, not a "How To" plan, nor a rigid framework for doing things the "Right Way". There's no one single solution to conflict, and there's no one single approach that's going to fully address the

specific context in which you're working. That is the challenge of this work. You will never arrive at a perfect solution, you will always be stepping back, reflecting and refining your approach. This too is the opportunity. We have the ability to learn from our mistakes, and we have tools to give us a way to view our actions as data points from which we can learn and refine our practice.

This is not easy work, but if you're drawn to conflict resolution work the same way I am, it's your only choice. I tried working in the private sector for three years and found it so soul-sucking that I was disillusioned and depressed. I find purpose and meaning and joy in doing this work, even on the most difficult days. I hope the suggestions and bumps and bruises I've shared help provide insight as you trudge the road to happy destiny. Good luck!

INFLUENCING EQUITABLE RETENTION

Love is an action word. If we love our children, we must take action for them.
-Tomika Snead, DBFA staff member, January 9, 2018 testimony to Baltimore City Board
of School Commissioners

Baltimore is in good company amongst several other cities struggling to stymie

flight of 34-55yo residents by launching family retention efforts. Vancouver, Chicago,

Boston and Philadelphia all have programs or initiatives launched by politicians, NGOs,

Business Improvement Districts (BID), school systems, and private sector developers.

Some of these initiatives, like the Philadelphia Center City Kids Initiative, are explicitly

operating to retain these families for their economic stabilization impact, rather than any

ability to influence sociopolitical transformation that would ameliorate segregation and

poverty that worsen as a result of middle-class flight. Other programs have been organic,

like the two moms back at Nettelhorst in Chicago (see Chapter 3), who walked into the

school not realizing their actions would prompt changes that have had sociopolitical and

economic outcomes beyond the school itself.

This chapter considers common traits among family retention efforts— which

vary greatly in regard to their goals, organizational structure, and motivation— that can

be replicated when removed from their particular social, historical and geographic

contexts, and expanded in ways that increase equitable access to quality city services for families of all backgrounds. What are the levers we can pull on to influence retention, and can we pull on them in a way that leverages policymakers' willingness to cater to middle-class families for a greater good?

Over the three-plus years I wrested professionally and academically with these questions, I have become convinced family retention programs have common elements that can be implemented strategically in ways that upend structural segregation and poverty. These common elements can be generalized to other urban settings and scaled up beyond relatively affluent downtown areas. My assertion that this is possible is based strongly on my own research, in addition to quantitate and qualitative studies by other scholars considering retention programs across the globe. However, given this is the concluding chapter of *my* dissertation, not theirs, the recommendations I outline here are based in my own observations of what works well, and what can be tweaked to amplify the potential for sociopolitical transformation of structural sources underlying racism, segregation and poverty. I draw others' work into this chapter to back up my claims, or, in cases where other scholars and I disagree, to lay out my arguments why their findings could be incorporated to improve the suggestions I propose.

The overarching goal of this project, from the proposal phase through the writing of this final chapter, has been to respond back to scholastic critiques- my own academic skepticism included- of family retention efforts. Urban revitalization efforts attempting to leverage the clout of the middle class, or, on a more basic level, even simply repopulate

areas that have been losing families for decades, are problematic for all of the reasons discussed throughout the preceding chapters; the replication of neocolonialist narratives of affluent whites' presumed ability to transform long-standing sources of failing schools, the reification of sociopolitical structures that propagate marginalization and separate *haves* from *have-nots*, the cultivation of a docile body politic comprised of impoverished black communities that is perpetually replicated by school funding formulas that bifurcate the governing and the governed class, and market-focused solutions to sociopolitical conflict.

I understand all these critiques. Indeed, I agree with many of them. But I argue it's setting up a false dichotomy— or perhaps even being intellectually smug and comfortable in the culture of critique rampant in academia— to simply step back and look at these programs and conclude they are bad and broken and replicate things that we should be trying to undo. To echo DeRay's challenge from this dissertation's introductory chapter, it's great to critique and pull apart and understand, but at some point you have an obligation to jump in and try. We can't simply say these things are challenging, and intellectually complicated, and perhaps harmful and neocolonialist, and conclude the best action is to eschew engagement and accept that most families with the means to do so will head to the suburbs. Reflection and inquiry without action and commitment to change the circumstances we study is a failure to use the privilege we have been granted.

More simply put, if we academic folks are so smart, let's go fix it.

Inaction is not an Option

I wish to empathize my vantage point, based on my fieldwork and basic population trends, that family retention efforts are essential to the economic and civic sustainability of cities struggling with population decline. Like many other urban areas, Baltimore is growing its demographics of 18-34 and 55+ adults[230]. However, Baltimore— along with post-industrial cities like Detroit, Cleveland and Cincinnati— continue to see families with young kids opt to move out, taking their tax dollars, state funding educational earmarks, and potential sweat equity in schools with them. In the period between submitting the first full draft of this dissertation on MLK weekend 2018 and turning in the final revisions on Thanksgiving 2018, three of the six families (myself included) comprising our core nucleus of social group that elected to enroll in public schools moved outside of the city. The Smiths[231] put their house on the market after their home was broken into a second time. The Jones moved for a better job opportunity in another city, months after the mom was mugged with her three year old in tow, six houses down from the home I own. I left for a stronger job market, and because I could not afford to live in a neighborhood where I felt safe making the salary available in my profession in Baltimore. Between these three families, six children that were enrolled/ would be enrolled when old enough will not attend public schools.

In a city like Baltimore, which is missing 400,000 people *vis-a-vis* the municipal infrastructure from its heyday as a city of a million plus people, it's not possible to throw

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[230] Insert census trend data

[231] Names have been changed

up your hands and say, "well this is too hard so therefore we can't do it." Baltimore City is missing half of its property tax base, and there's simply no way to fund teacher salaries, school furnaces, and toilet paper for students— much less roads without massive potholes, shamefully inadequate public transit that further propagates poverty and student failure, and drastically needed repairs to public housing— unless we find people to repopulate the city.

At the Kirwan Commission's Baltimore City Public Hearing in fall 2017[232], City Councilman Eric Costello, who heads the budget committee for the city, explained in painful detail that Baltimore has exceeded its financial capacity. The city is simply unable to provide for Baltimore City Public Schools (BCPS) due to the dangerously anemic property tax base, coupled with the high costs of providing services for students living in concentrated poverty. This dynamic is a one-two punch: We are struggling financially because we don't have enough residents, *and* because the residents who are left behind are living in such increasingly acute conditions of desperate poverty that children are requiring more and more and more interventions to provide them the opportunity to succeed. This is a downward spiral cycle; the more families we lose, the greater the services needed for the families left behind.

Desperate poverty and segregation become ever more pronounced in this cycle. We are not talking about kids living near the poverty line. Yes, we have that. The

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[232] Kirwan Commission Public Hearing at Baltimore Polytechnic Institute, October 12, 2017. Full hearing video available at *StrongSchoolsMaryland*.org. Excerpt clip of Elizabeth Degi Mount testimony available on *BaltimoreFamilies.org*

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majority, in fact, of Baltimore students live near or below the poverty line[233]. But 20%-one out of five kids- are students coming from a household making *less* than $8,000 annually. Read that sentence one more time. You read it right, but your brain may not have registered the possibility that families of four (often more) are living on incomes less than $8,000 annually. That's $5.48 per day, per household member, assuming there are only four people in the family. These are the kind of numbers CAR practitioners talk about in developing countries. These are kids living only miles from $1M plus waterfront Inner Harbor condos, and less than an hour from the US capitol.

Family retention efforts are racially fraught and logistically challenging. They are also essential. Urban school systems cannot continue to become ever more segregated and ever more impoverished. To do nothing is no longer an option.

Transformation is Possible

It's possible to construct equitable retention initiatives with the potential to transform the underlying reasons people choose to leave, rather than simply market around flight risk factors or throw our hands up and decide it's too complicated because of the risk of replicating some of the very structures that have led to segregation and marginalization. The trick for creating socioculturally transformative family retention efforts is not family friendly outreach to parents considering leaving.

Highlighting thriving urban schools, pumping up neighborhoods with fun festivals, better training for school staff and central administration to provide better

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[233] Insert BCPS data on student and family income, AY2016-17

"costumer service" to parents, or informing real estate agents about city neighborhoods

with bigger yards don't go far enough. Creating a fun vibrant city is important if for no

other reason than it pushes back against the overwhelmingly pervasive narrative that

cities aren't great places for kids. But we *don't have to settle* for retention efforts that

simply glamorize city living, marketing to families who can enjoy the city as their

personal playground without truly delving into the complexities and messiness that has

led to circumstances that have prompted families with their socioeconomic option to

leave. Transforming these underlying reasons *is* possible.

A Way Out

There are three primary reasons people raising young children choose to leave

Baltimore City: 1) Feeling safe in their home and neighborhood (even if this feeling of

safety is disconnected from the presence of violent crime in relatively close proximity

geographically); 2) Concerns about school quality; and, 3) Being connected to families in

their communities, be it community defined by geographic area, school, or faith-based

institution.

These three common flight-risk factors I have found through my research echo

other researchers' work[234] around family flight-risks. In a qualitative and quantitative

data-informed report funded by Goldseker Foundation, the grantmaker who funded

DBFA's initial inception in 2008, the Baltimore neighborhood Indicator Alliance assert

that "three elements appear in many theories of migration. First, economic and human

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[234] Goldseker/BNIA 2015. Grow Baltimore Report: Brief #3

capital: investable resources and richness of skills in the local labor force. Second, social capital: interpersonal networks and common civic values. Third, amenities: attributes that contribute to quality of life, such as good schools, clean parks, and quality housing" (BNIA 2015).

DBFA's technical approach attempts to build aspects of all of these "pull factors, also referred to as attraction or retention factors depending on context" (BNIA 2015). DBFA engages with policymakers and business development organizations to foster economic and human capital, such as contributing to Baltimore's bid to court Amazon to build their second world headquarters in the city. They invest a tremendous amount of time building interpersonal networks, which they in turn leverage to foster engagement in the public schools and parks, spilling over into the third category of migration theory, amenities.

These second and third categories— social capital and amenities— is where organizations like DBFA can have the most impact. Being able to legitimately claim an impact addressing push factors like economic development is beyond the scope of small community groups like DBFA, but case studies from other cities show that community engagement on social capital and amenities echo the success DBFA has had on these factors in Baltimore.

Building Social Capital

Having connection to the people who live around you is one of the most basic human needs, so it's little wonder it's one of the top reasons families with very young

children, especially young couples and singles in the first few months of parenthood, pack up and move "back home," returning to wherever they grew up. The current trend of millennials moving to cities, Baltimore included, is not new. For nearly two centuries, hundreds of thousands of 18ish year-olds have come to Baltimore to attend Johns Hopkins and University of Maryland. As the home of eleven major universities and colleges, Baltimore has no shortage of young people moving in for educational opportunities. These people often stay to work in the city or greater Baltimore/DC region but leave as soon as they start to have children.

If young parents need family nearby to help with the (many, many, many!) demands of new babies, creating kinship networks is the best way to address the second primary family-flight risk factor; a feeling of being known, supported and loved by your surrounding community. For over a decade, DBFA organizationally has created programming to prompt friendships among new and expecting parents. Informal socials at pools, bars, and restaurants have held "New and Expecting Parent Socials," (which I rebranded as "New Babies on the Block") for newbie parents to get to know one another. It's powerful- and shows the impact of the organization- to go through photos from the earliest of these socials and realize that the parents standing over bassinet strollers or resting their hands on their round pregnant bellies are the same parents riding together on busses to go to Annapolis to fight for school funding. This is clear evidence that intentionally bringing very young families together can yield long term positive impacts

on everything from retention to advocacy as parents move from the stroller years to the school years.

Building kinship networks has happened fairly organically beyond these formal socials. Some of the most impactful ways these networks have grown have been through moms- almost always moms- taking it upon themselves to gather other mothers together to surround expecting families with tangible support that grandparents or other extended family would provide if the new parents were to leave the city. These "block moms," as I've come to refer to them, do any number of lovely little things to make new moms feel supported, but there are three primary activities that have seemed to give root to concrete outcomes that address the connected communities flight risk: providing food, providing frequent unsolicited in-person contact, and creating high-visibility ways of showing that young kids are present and welcome in the neighborhood. These three actions give new parents- all of whom are in the midst of exhaustion, identity shifts, and one of the most emotionally challenging periods for any marriage- logistical assistance, emotional support, and a feeling of camaraderie.

These three types of support could be given by a social agency or public health agency. However, the special sauce that makes these activities move the needle related to retention is the support is coming from new parents' peers: Other parents who have been through sleepless nights, colic, diaper blow outs, and the other challenges early parenthood brings. There is no overarching agenda beyond sharing in the bonds of new parenthood. The way block moms make sure newbie parents are stocked with food is a

good illustration of how this differs from a social agency or community organization: Block moms (again, an informal designation) bring seasoned veteran moms and other women in the neighborhood without children (almost always only women) together to make food for the expecting parents. During these 'freezer fills,' women gather at the block mom's house and laugh, drink wine, and share war stories of early mom-hood while assembling massive quantities of casseroles that can be frozen. Once compiled, the food is covered and a little index card with the maker's name, phone number, address and names/ages of children are wrapped into the casserole. The gathering spills out into the streets of the neighborhood and progresses over cobblestones in a group something akin to a combination of trick-or-treating and Christmas caroling, with a healthy dose of Pinot Noir to accompany the procession. It is a raucous, joyful time.

This is not community building and parent support spearheaded by social workers trying to make sure parents have a smooth transition when welcoming baby. This is a sorority of 'those who have been there;' moms who have earned their stripes through dozens of diaper blow-outs, 3AM fevers, spousal fights over caregiving, leaking breasts in board meetings, and fighting with school principals to get basic services for their kids. This is not an offer to help. This is an initiation. As the group of moms packs the expectant parents' freezer, the mom-to-be gets a very clear message: You are now one of us, and we have your back.

Along with providing food and logistical support— coordinating dog walking while baby is being delivered, making sure Amazon packages get picked up off the stoop

before they get stolen— for expectant parents, block moms help create kinship networks

through high-visibility actions that communicate to the new parents, and to the

neighborhood at large, that kids are part of the community. Parents arrive home from the

hospital and are greeted by balloons on the stoop or a banner over the door— a nice touch

for the new mom and dad, but also a visual cue to the rest of the neighborhood that there

is a new kid in town, and people need to step up and help. It also communicates that this

is a neighborhood where kids are present. This may seem unnecessary in suburban

neighborhoods, but in an area when the overarching narrative is "no one with kids lives in

the city." Visual cues are vital to creating the perception that cities are family

friendly[235][236][237], and the balloons are a tangible marker of families with young children

dwelling in the city. Baltimore is a walkable, bikeable, and easily drivable city. People

move throughout neighborhoods all day long; like clean park space that gives the

impression that the city is family friendly, the balloons on the stoop broadcast kids

actually *do* live here.

Casseroles and balloons are followed by frequent drop-ins from veteran moms in

the neighborhood, who often shoo the new mom into the shower or into bed for a nap and

hold the new baby while hanging out on the new mom's sofa. Many a DBFA mom has

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[235] Smith, Kearns, Witten, Mavoa. Kids in the City Study: Research design and methodology.
BMC Public Health 11(1):587 · July 2011

[236]Carroll, Calder-Dawe, Witten, Asiasiga, Sep 2018. A Prefigurative Politics of Play in Public
Places: Children Claim Their Democratic Right to the City Through Play, Space Cult.

[237] Freeman and Paul, Jan 2012. *Children and their urban environment: Changing worlds*.
Routledge

shared with me different moments of showing up on a neighbor's stoop, new baby in hand, clad in dirty yoga pants and spit up stained sweatshirts, to hand off the baby and have a good cry to a listening ear. This matters from a retention standpoint in a way that is hard to calculate, but my observations and conversations over the past two years suggests being able to share the extremely emotionally challenging first few weeks of parenthood has a tangible impact on the decision to stay living in a particular geographic area.

From my own experience, having become a new mother living in a suburban area, which looked lovely for young families but in my reality was very isolating, and recently losing a pregnancy to miscarriage, the difference is powerful. When my son was six weeks old, I was emotionally exhausted, isolated, hormonally hung over, and desperately lonely. My "tribe" were people at work, and now I was working from home with a screaming, sleepless eight pound dictator. I called my godmother, who called my mom to come to my house, while I handed off the baby and ran away to my best friend's house in New York. I knew NO other new mothers and didn't share any bonds with the moms I met in a new moms support group at the local hospital— I was not exactly at the top of my game and in the mood to make new friends. I needed a familiar person I could just cry to, who would listen to me blubber and let me just be a mess. Going through the emotional Iditarod of a miscarriage, surrounded by neighbors and friends who have had children or lost pregnancies and know how very, very hard it is, has been a completely different experience, one that has made me feel even more tightly entwined with my

community. I have had a range of emotions— sad, angry, unreasonably anxious about my

son's safety— but never, ever, have I been lonely. I have a village of people who know

me, love me, and have let me be a mess when needed, distracted me when I wanted, and

been ever present. Since moving to Baltimore City, my car has been broken into multiple

times, vandalized once to the tune of $4,000, and a close friend was mugged eight houses

down from mine (with her son in her arms, moreover). Despite these very real downsides

of city living, I can't imagine ever parenting again without this tribe by my side, and the

thought of parenting without them was my primary hang-up when I made the decision to

move back to DC to get a higher paying job after my marriage ended.

Bringing people together and broadcasting that kids are present in urban

neighborhoods may seem mundane, but these tools are powerful. One of DBFA's more

recent addition staffers was blown away by the simple balloon festoon tradition, recalling

how she had walked up and down the street when her daughter was just days old,

knocking on any door that had kids' toys in the yard to try to meet other parents on her

block. The isolation of early parenthood— and again, especially early motherhood, given

that the task of early caregiving in this country is almost always delegated to mothers—

is crushing. Countless studies from all tracks of academia, from psychiatry to

anthropology, document the strain of early motherhood and the pain of isolation.

Connecting new moms to one another is a powerful tool for combating these stressors.

From a retention standpoint, these actions are invaluable. It's very tempting to head back

to the Midwest to be near mom when there's no one around to be relief pitcher after a third sleepless night with a colicky baby.

DBFA's 2019-2021 strategic plan outlines the goal of taking these practices, which have been mostly informally propagated by DBFA board members and general members who did them for several years when their kids were in the toddler phase, and scale them up into a formal set up practices that we can replicate using a "train the trainer" model. We are starting with a small group, around 20, of mothers who have young children and live in nexus neighborhoods. The goal is to have each of these formal Block Parents seeped in DBFA messaging about the importance of staying connected to one another, of the joys of raising kids in the city, and the upsides of having a tight-knit neighborhood where help is only a row house away. In addition to this messaging, each of these early recruits will have a common set of practices to welcome new babies and support families in the early bleary sleepless days of new parenthood. First, the freezer fill party, which is just an informal email followed by a get together at the block parent's house, then a raucous walk to the new parents' place. Second, the block parent will be the main point of contact for the new parents as they prepare for the actual birth. The block parent needs to be warm and fun and able to communicate that they are totally up for getting a text a 7AM saying the parents-to-be headed to the hospital at 3AM, could they please go walk the dog before heading to work. Third, block parents will run point among neighborhood moms to ensure the new parents have frequent (pre-announced via text) visits in the first few weeks, making sure someone is stopping by with toilet paper from

Dollar General and takeout, or heading over to convince the new mom to take a nap while the visitor coos at the new baby.

Beyond these very new-baby-focused activities, the block parent will be responsible for being the primary administrator on a hyper-local neighborhood parents Facebook group. This has worked *wonders* for building connected communities and facilitating friendships across historically racially siloed neighborhoods in Ridgely's Delight, Pigtown and Hollins Market. Hyper-local Facebook groups snowball on themselves, as a few moms and stay-at-home dads know about the group and start to use it to coordinate get togethers— formal outings to a museum, but also just "hey, tot lot in 5" messages— these relationships start to build powerful kinship networks. I've watched the evolution of the "SouthWest Baltimore Informal Toddler Play Co-Op" Facebook group of eight families boom into a group of 60, but more importantly than the actual growth, I've watched these families help each other navigate school choice, decide as a group to enroll their kids in public schools, and support one another as babies number two began to arrive for many of the families in the group.

Other retention focused groups can replicate and scale up these activities. There is nothing theoretically complex about these practices, but they do address many scholars' concerns about family retention initiatives being focused on market solutions to public school enrollment and glamorizing city living to affluent families. This is not retention using marketing, nor is it incentivizing school enrollment through slick marketing. This is peer-to-peer kinship building, old fashioned and innocent and powerful in its organic

unpretentiousness. These practices can be ported to any city struggling with retention and used as a way to bridge siloed neighborhoods and racial divides while ameliorating a root cause of family flight. Being known, valued and supported by your community are forceful retention tools.

Push Factor Amenity: Public Parks

Public parks are playing a key role increasing families' use of public space in areas like New York City (Kontokosta 2018), New Orleans and Miami (KaBOOM!), and Vancouver (Vox 2016). Capital infrastructure investment in park spaces create high traffic, well-lit and engaging family spaces throughout the city (Kontokosta 2018), and increases families' familiarity with their neighborhood and their neighbors (Urban Congo 2015).

New York City's approach to these investments brings community members into the process of reimagining public spaces, through its New York City Neighborhood Innovation Labs, also known as NYCx Co-Labs. Rather than top-down investments made by city agencies that are "often detached from the real needs of local communities and, therefore, do not achieve the promised benefits in practice," the NYCx Co-Labs address specific community needs "through the support and advocacy of local community organizations" (Kontokosta 2018, 229). The NYCx Co-Lab model offers useful lessons learned for organizations like DBFA who wish to have a seat at the table in the creation of public spaces that engage and increase feelings of public safety, "by providing a unique platform for collaboration, experimentation, feedback, and impact, the Neighborhood

Innovation Labs hold the promise of an inclusive urban innovation and neighborhood development model of the future" (Kontokosta 2018, 229).

KaBOOM!, a national non-profit that leverage funding from large donors like Target and CarMax to invest in public playspaces, asserts that "the well-being of our communities starts with the well-being of our kids," (KaBOOM! 2018) and link community well-being to readily available playspaces that transform seedy areas into well-traversed and engaging spaces. Their initiative in Miami, *iMiami*, "transform[ed] dead-end streets into unique, kid-friendly playspaces" in five districts with high concentrations of poverty. As a result of KaBOOM!'s investment of $23,900, City of Miami's director of the Office of Grants Administration Lillian Blondet said, "parents are able to rest more easily knowing their kids are playing in a well-designed playspace," which also "add[s] beauty to the neighborhoods, which gives community members a sense of pride and ownership" (KaBOOM! 2016).

KaBOOM! deployed a similar tactic in New Orleans' Lower 9th Ward, creating "The Hangout," whose public sign declares the space "an interactive installation created to promote community activity and social interaction through play" (The Hangout). KaBOOM!, Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the National Endowment for the Arts invested a collective total of $36,897 to "revitalize a devastated community by giving kids a place to play" (KaBOOM! Case Study, The Hangout). Once a "gloomy bus stop" in an area the design team said "looked like Hurricane Katrina had hit just two days ago," the space was "developed to bring music and light" that would

literally brighten the space to create a safer and welcoming public space. Project designer

Ryan Swanson said, "both kids and adults were immediately invested in the project," and

now that the space has been built out, "the Hangout is reinforcing a sense of identity in

the community" (KaBOOM! Case Study, The Hangout).

While KaBOOM!'s own case studies of their work clearly offer a retrospective

analysis of their impact designed to showcase successful outcomes, urban planners point

to the success of park space initiatives in social cohesion (Mulgan et al. 2006), arguing

that quality public spaces increase feelings of public safety and provide physical space

for community building. Parks and playspace initiatives are central to urban revitalization

efforts being undertaken outside the US, in areas like Johannesburg (De Vries and Kotze

2016). Conversely, areas like Kisumu, Kenya have not invested in parks and playspaces,

prompting urban planning scholars to push community stakeholders to consider the

"enormous social, cultural and economic development" that Kisumu's seven municipal

parks could be contributing to the revitalization of the poverty stricken area.

These data from around the globe suggest that parks and playspaces can and do

play are vital amenities for families, it's important to note that creating parks and

playspaces in intractably segregated neighborhoods can't facilitate socialization across

racial and classed differences. What we need to do is identify what I term "nexus

neighborhoods" — geographic areas at the intersection of racially and economically

siloed neighborhoods— and build play-spaces there. Beyond key safety outcomes,

building playspaces in nexus neighborhoods builds social cohesion across racial lines[238].

Parks and playspaces serve as a hub for connecting parents who may not have social

connections to one another through school or faith-based communities[239]. Outdoor

common spaces can play a role in the formation and maintenance of social ties among

older adult residents of inner-city neighborhoods[240]. In short, parks and playspaces build

strong social ties among residents of all ages, and are a powerful tool for addressing long-

standing racial segregation in urban areas. Social mixing is the real goal here, play spaces

are just the means to that end.

One appealing aspect of playspaces as a means of improving feelings of public

investment in a space is that parents can initiate these projects relatively simply. For

policy makers, this is an upside, as no capital resources from municipalities must be

invested. For residents, initiating the creation of playspaces is a relatively turn-key way to

have high impact improvements to neighborhood safety and family usability. Baltimore's

previous efforts to vest residents with the power to undertake revitalization projects like

the Dollar House initiative have been pragmatic moves "towards decentralization and

communal decision making" that has resulted in "the irradiation of nuisance vacant

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[238] Kuo. F. E,, Sullivan. W., Coley, R,, & Brunson, L. (1998). *Fertile ground for community: Inner-city neighborhood common spaces*. Journal of Community, 26(6), 823-851.

[239]*Playground Accessibility and Neighbourhood Social Interaction Among Parents* Author(s): Scott A. Bennet, Nikolaos Yiannakoulias, Allison M. Williams and Peter Kitchen Source: Social Indicators Research, Vol. 108, No. 2, Quality of Life in Hamilton, Ontario: Perspectives from a Re-Emerging City (September 2012), pp.199-213

[240]Kweon, B. S., Sullivan, W. C., & Wiley, A. R. (1998). *Green common spaces and the social integration of inner-city older adults. Environment and Behavior,* 30(6), 832-858.

[properties] and in the coordination of capital improvements" (Kelly 2004). Informal stewardship of parkspaces is working similarly: Parents have transformed vacant areas into playspaces, resulting in the successful creation of small neighborhood "pocket parks" without funding or permitting. When the current board president of DBFA was teaching her now-ten-year-old to walk, she became so frustrated with the empty lot at the end of her street that she went rouge and created one *sans* permit or permission. She tracked down the owner— an out of town investor who could care less about vagrants shooting up in the lot— and decided the blowback she would get would be minimal if she did something about it herself. A dozen bags of mulch and a ton of sweat equity later, the William Street tot lot was born. Flash forward eight years, and the space is continually in use by families and has become a hub for community life. The day following the uprising after Freddie Grey's funeral, thousands of Baltimore residents gathered at local parks and playspaces for "solidarity picnics". One such picnic was held at this former vacant lot, transformed by a mom who just couldn't handle not doing something to make the space better, if only for her own sanity.

The success of Baltimore parents with time and means to create pocket parks echoes back to my finding that leveraging the available time of middle-class families can have tangible improvements from all backgrounds, is that creating a more playful and thus more family friendly and safe city. An important caveat to these organic initiatives' success is that creating pocket parks in affluent areas like Federal Hill may move the needle on affluent (and mostly white) families feeling comfortable, but it does little to

transform poverty. Interestingly, however, focusing building efforts in high-poverty areas also fails to leverage the full potential of playspaces as a site for social integration. KaBOOM![241] focuses almost solely on impoverished areas. This is good, but again does not go far enough. Encouraging families living in poverty to use public spaces increases their feelings of safety and may move the needle on crime rates because of informal surveillance, but it does not fix the problem of socioeconomic (and thus almost always racial) segregation. The key for these to succeed from an integration standpoint is to build playspaces in nexus neighborhoods, informally prompting socioeconomic and racial integration.

I do want to acknowledge playspaces— even those built in rigorously identified nexus neighborhoods— are not a panacea for integration. Interestingly, socioeconomic segregation seems to be more recalcitrant than racial barriers. Over the course of this research, I have been part of informal and formal efforts for families of different racial backgrounds to build friendships, but have observed that families from vastly differing socioeconomic backgrounds are still self-segregating. This is playing out in my own neighborhood playground, which is itself in a nexus neighborhood. The Ridgely's Delight Tot Lot has had wild success pulling families from west of Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd (a very real racial and socioeconomic dividing line in Baltimore, as in many major cities)

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[241] Disclosure: As a result of this research, DBFA has created a citywide partnership with KaBOOM!, "We Built this City", to build playspaces in nexus neighborhoods. Data collected around playspaces for this research was conducted prior to the creation of this partnership.

into a majority white, relatively affluent neighborhood[242]. Families of many different racial backgrounds— white, African American, middle-eastern, Asian— are consistently using the park together, coordinating schedules and informal get togethers using a Facebook[243] group created by two moms, one from primarily African American, high-crime Hollins Market and the other from relatively safe, relatively white Ridgely's Delight.

However, there is little mixing of families from different socioeconomic classes. Among the tight-knit group there is wide variation of income, but all the parents are college educated, and investing a tremendous amount of time managing their children's education- no small investment in a city with school open zoning. Families who use the park but remain on the periphery of this friendship group are predominantly poor, but not all are African-American. A fair number of white families who use the park have social indicators — exhibit habitués outside of middle-class values and manners— that mark them as "other" *vis-a-vis* the more affluent park attendees. From an intersectional lens, this dynamic is consistent with recent Brookings Institution findings that socioeconomic segregation has now outpaced racial segregation as the driving cause of the Achievement

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[242] Ridgely's Delight has been a racially and socioeconomically integrated neighborhood back prior to Emancipation (see: Maryland Historic Trust and RidgelysDelight.org). While primarily white, the neighborhood is home to one of the more racially diverse populations in the city, thanks in part to housing stock that ranges from public subsidized and market rate housing that rents from as low as $500 a month, to homes valued at $900K+.

[243] Disclosure: I was one of seven or eight initial families included in this early Facebook group.

Gap[244]. While overt and structural racism are still very much at play in urban America, class is becoming an ever more dominant dividing structure.

While playspaces have not been as useful in breaking down class barriers as racial divides, they *are* operating to increase families' feelings of safety. Regardless of the type of neighborhood— high poverty/high-violent crime, affluent/high-property crime, or nexus neighborhoods, playgrounds and parks have markedly increased parents' feelings of comfort being in urban spaces with children. So let's build playgrounds and pocket parks and public art at bus stops that kids can play on. Let's litter the streets of every city with light up sidewalks and bright art installations and slides and swings and pirate ship climbing gyms. As highlighted in the case studies of KaBOOM!'s work in Miami and the Lower 9th Ward, and the NYCx Co-Lab initiative, playspaces change the social geographic landscape, transforming the topography of urban spaces from blighted to bright, from empty to energized, from siloed to social in ways that break down barriers of racial and perhaps one day, even classed differences.

Push Factor Amenities: Schools

Schools are *the* key to retention. Connected communities and feeling safe are obviously are important, but, from my findings and other similar research, schools are the biggie. Concerns about safety prompt families to consider leaving in the immediate aftermath of a run in with violent crime; an acute, isolated personal incident or

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[244] Reardon, S.F., Kalogrides, D., Shores, K. (forthcoming). The geography of racial/ethnic test score gaps. American Journal of Sociology. (Overview of raw data available at https://cepa.stanford.edu/seda/overview)

experience of another close friend. Moves prompted by school quality, however, are *years*-long in the making. People start plotting their exit from the city before children are even conceived. Real estate agents— still, 10 years in to DBFA's work— often remark to Federal Hill or Patterson Park homebuyers that a particular property will be great for them until their kids are ready for school. Young parents talk about moving away from the city for education the way they might about a long-lingering relative in hospice; not a week goes by where I don't interrupt a mom or dad in line at the grocery store or playground when they're talking with a friend about "how much longer" they have before they decamp for the suburbs (I once had to restrain myself from pouncing on two young mothers in a pool locker room going on about timelines for a move and possible suburbs to consider. Despite that I was wrapped only in a towel, I strongly considered it— they were saved my zealous enthusiasm thanks to my own toddler making a joyful naked beeline out of the room towards the pool).

Moving for better schools is a constant conversation, happening in neighborhoods across the city, even in areas where there are great school options. Years of elbow grease and frustration that have turned a school like Federal Hill Prep or Thomas Johnson into high-demand options can be undone with one bad funding loss. A room filled with 40 kids is still a room with 40 kids, no matter how great the library is. The constant state of unknowing if the schools will be sustainable keeps the option of suburban living not far from the back of any city parent's mind.

Fix the schools, and you fix retention.

Incentivizing Enrollment

Fixing the schools is, of course, contingent on having capital to do so. As of 2019,

BCPS is still facing year-to-year decreases in enrollment, expected to be to the tune of

1,500 students in AY2018-19[245], down even further from its 10 year all time low in

2017.[246] For each of these losses, there is a correlating year-to-year loss in state

funding[247][248][249] under the per-pupil funding formula currently in place in the state of

Maryland[250][251].

Stated more concisely: BCPS is broke and getting broker.

Starting around 2014, a group of policymakers, philanthropists, and BCPS

officials started to think creatively about how to keep parents invested in the system, and

thus keep kids in the schools. An idea took root that creating a universal promise

scholarship— that is, a scholarship promised universally to all BCPS students regardless

of income— might be enough to incentivize parents to keep their students enrolled. The

[245] https://www.wypr.org/post/city-schools-expected-lose-1500-student-2018-2019

[246] https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/baltimore-city/bs-md-ci-enrollment-decline-20171220711-htmlstory.html

[247] https://www.baltimorecityschools.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/Budget-FY18ComprehensiveAnnualFinancialReport.pdf

[248] https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/bs-md-ci-schools-enrollment-drop-20160129-story.html

[249] https://baltimorebrew.com/2019/03/27/the-dirty-secret-in-the-data-equity-in-baltimore-schools-is-a-long-way-off/

[250] http://dls.maryland.gov/pubs/prod/Educ/OverviewOfEducationFundingInMaryland.pdf

[251] http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/about/Documents/DBS/BudgetRes/2018/FY19StateAidPreliminaryDraftCalculations011918.pdf

initiative, which would leverage funding from the national Say Yes to Education[252]

organization, had a simple premise: Enroll your kid in public school, and they get a free

ride.

The group was, according to dozens of background conversations I had, the

passion project of a few key philanthropists, but the messaging was put out by elected

leaders, school officials and funders alike, in a united front effort rarely seen in

Baltimore, where petty infighting between policy makers and school officials over

funding minutia[253] is the norm[254]. In a 2015 Baltimore Sun article, then-Mayor Stephanie

Rawlings-Blake extolled the program's potential as a means of retaining families,

explaining that "Say Yes could attract and retain families and increase opportunities for

youth."[255]

Indeed, the entire initiative was built not just on the proposition that scholarships

could help individual students go to college, but that the program could transform the city

overall[256]. "What would Baltimore look like if every city school graduate were promised

a free college education?" the Sun asked. "It's an $80 million question that a group of

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[252] https://sayyestoeducation.org/

[253] https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/baltimore-city/bs-md-ci-phones-update-20130715-story.html

[254] https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/opinion/oped/bs-ed-op-0917-blame-game-20180913-story.html

[255] https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/education/blog/bs-md-ci-say-yes-20150715-story.html

[256] https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/opinion/readersrespond/bs-ed-college-letter-20150727-story.html

political, educational and philanthropic leaders will attempt to answer in the next few

months as they vie to make Baltimore the next city to provide college scholarships for all

students".[257]

The vision of what a universal promise scholarship could mean for Baltimore is

beyond tantalizing for people like me, who are desperate to see transformation within the

schools, while also deeply ambivalent as to whether we can invest the state funding

earmark on our children's heads in the system when to do so means our kids would be

heading into schools that are substandard by almost any metric. A universal promise

scholarship would mean that a massive influx of middle-class families would be

incentivized to send their offspring into the schools, so that instead of a handful of

parents deciding here and there to stick it out, there would be a broad cohort of parents

sending their kids— and their sweat equity, time in the classroom, and persistent

advocacy with BCPS administration— in as well.

The math of what this would mean for the district is staggering: BCPS lost 1,000

students in 2015, and in turn lost almost $30M from the state[258]. Engineering the reverse

of that, adding 1,000 students translates to $30M coming *into* the district. Talking in gross

generalizations, 5,000 parents choosing year-by-year to enroll their kids in public school

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[257] https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/education/blog/bs-md-ci-say-yes-20150715-story.html

[258] https://www.baltimorecityschools.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/Budget-FY16ComprehensiveAnnualFinancial.pdf

as a means of obtaining a free college education would yield $250 million additional

dollars per year for the school system.

The key factor for Baltimore being granted funding from Say Yes to Education to

enact the universal promise scholarship, according a statement from Baltimore

Community Foundation[259], was to demonstrate to the National Say Yes organization "a

citywide commitment to sustainable change and the demonstrated willingness of all

partners to collaborate in the development of a coherent strategy to achieve and sustain a

unified vision for the students and families of Baltimore…a broad-based commitment to,

and readiness for, successfully implementing a citywide turnaround strategy, which has

multiple steps including a citywide review of academic and non-academic services. The

extensive process required for a successful Say Yes candidacy is reflective of the

complexity, strategic planning, and commitment of every segment of the community

necessary to effect a sustainable citywide turnaround."[260]

What happened in between Baltimore City Community Foundation's January 11,

2016 statement quoted above, and the final rejection of the city's request to Say Yes to

Education, is absent from public records and news reporting, and nothing that I can speak

to directly from sources. I had several background conversations with policy makers,

BCPS administrators, and funders about tensions within the group in the period between

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[259] https://www.bcf.org/News/All-News/DNNArticle-Detail-View/ArticleId/552/Say-Yes-to-Education-Baltimores-Candidacy

[260] https://www.bcf.org/News/All-News/DNNArticle-Detail-View/ArticleId/552/Say-Yes-to-Education-Baltimores-Candidacy

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the funding application and the rejection from Say Yes. As evidenced by the fact that the

funding was not granted, Baltimore was not able to demonstrate "a citywide commitment

to sustainable change and the demonstrated willingness of all partners to collaborate in

the development of a coherent strategy to achieve and sustain a unified vision for the

students and families of Baltimore".

Baltimore Community Foundation, which played a key role in driving Say Yes,

pulled back from the overarching group of funders following the rejection. Instead of

trying to move forward with even a piecemeal effort of a universal promise scholarship,

remaining heavy hitters poured financial resources into creating yet another education-

focused non-profit, Baltimore's Promise[261], a "collaborative dedicated to improving

outcomes for the city's youth. Baltimore 's Promise has five ambitious goals for the city's

youth as they progress through life:

Babies are born healthy; Children enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school;

Children and youth achieve at grade level in school; Youth graduate high school prepared

for the next step without remediation; Youth earn quality post-secondary credential or

receive training and are career ready".[262]

Setting aside the nauseating fact that the group promotes these objectives as

"ambitious," the bigger issue is that, to date, the group's methods for bringing about these

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[261] http://www.baltimorespromise.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Baltimore-Citys-Investments-in-Children-and-Families-A-Review-of-Outcomes-Best-Practices-and-Financing.pdf

[262] http://www.baltimorespromise.org/about-us/goals-considerations/

goals is to provide ever-more data about the issues that make it so challenging for the city

to meet the educational needs of its children. It's like an entire collective of the city's

biggest philanthropic orgs[263]— and even national heavy hitters, like Annie E. Casey—

got together and decided what Baltimore's youth *really* needed was more information

about just how *profoundly* screwed they were by their geographical and economic

circumstances.

Baltimore's Promise's initial report is chalk full of dense terminology about how

the organization came up with a list of best practices— "Using an ecological framework

and research on adverse childhood experiences and toxic stress to ground the work" (BP

2014, 3)— but is scant on solutions as to how to address the fundamental issue plaguing

the city's fundamental education issue: Money, specifically lack thereof.

The Larger Funding Picture

Hundreds of dissertations have been written about school funding; a good handful

about Baltimore's $129M crisis in 2017 will no doubt be written in the coming years. The

atrocious disparities of funding for urban districts is well documented within

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[263] http://www.baltimorespromise.org/about-us/board-staff/

educational[264][265][266][267][268][269][270][271], sociological[272][273]

[264] "THE FIGHT FOR FUNDING." The Fight for Local Control: Schools, Suburbs, and American Democracy, by Campbell F. Scribner, Cornell University Press, ITHACA; LONDON, 2016, pp. 94–116. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt18kr4zm.9.

[265] Allmendinger, Jutta. "Good and Bad Education Systems: Is There an Ideal?" Education Systems and Inequalities: International Comparisons, edited by Andreas Hadjar and Christiane Gross, 1st ed., Bristol University Press, Bristol, 2016, pp. 321–334. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1t892m0.21.

[266] Gross, Christiane, et al. "Theorising the Impact of Education Systems on Inequalities." Education Systems and Inequalities: International Comparisons, edited by Christiane Gross and Andreas Hadjar, 1st ed., Bristol University Press, Bristol, 2016, pp. 11–32. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1t892m0.7.

[267] "Equity and Control in School Funding." Money, Mandates, and Local Control in American Public Education, by Bryan Shelly, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 2011, pp. 1–16. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/10.3998/mpub.1200038.4.

[268] Augenblick, John G., et al. "Equity and Adequacy in School Funding." The Future of Children, vol. 7, no. 3, 1997, pp. 63–78. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/1602446.

[269] Wil Greer, et al. "Meeting the Achievement Needs of California's African American Boys." The Journal of Negro Education, vol. 87, no. 2, 2018, pp. 169–182. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/10.7709/jnegroeducation.87.2.0169.

[270] Turner, Erica O. "Districts' Responses to Demographic Change: Making Sense of Race, Class, and Immigration in Political and Organizational Context." American Educational Research Journal, vol. 52, no. 1, 2015, pp. 4–39., www.jstor.org/stable/24546720.

[271] Reynolds Farley. "Detroit Fifty Years After the Kerner Report: What Has Changed, What Has Not, and Why?" RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences, vol. 4, no. 6, 2018, pp. 206–241. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/10.7758/rsf.2018.4.6.10.

[272] Greg J. Duncan, and Richard J. Murnane. "Rising Inequality in Family Incomes and Children's Educational Outcomes." RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences, vol. 2, no. 2, 2016, pp. 142–158. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/10.7758/rsf.2016.2.2.06.

[273] Eric A. Houck, and Elizabeth DeBray. "The Shift from Adequacy to Equity in Federal Education Policymaking: A Proposal for How ESEA Could Reshape the State Role in Education Finance." RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences, vol. 1, no. 3, 2015, pp. 148–167. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/10.7758/rsf.2015.1.3.08.

274275276277278279, economic280281282283

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274 TRUCHAN, STEPHANIE. "Not Your Parents' Neighborhood: Tradition, Innovation, and the Changing Face of Community Development." The Return of the Neighborhood as an Urban Strategy, edited by MICHAEL A. PAGANO, University of Illinois Press, 2015, pp. 167–185. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/j.ctt174d27j.13.

275 Making the Grade: The Economic Evolution of American School Districts (Book Review)
Hammack, Floyd M.
American Journal of Sociology, 01 November 2010, Vol.116(3), pp.1040-1042

276 Milner, H. Richard. "Analyzing Poverty, Learning, and Teaching Through a Critical Race Theory Lens." Review of Research in Education, vol. 37, 2013, pp. 1–53. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/24641956.

277 Meanwell, Emily, and Julie Swando. "Who Deserves Good Schools?: Cultural Categories of Worth and School Finance Reform." Sociological Perspectives, vol. 56, no. 4, 2013, pp. 495–522. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/sop.2013.56.4.495.

278 "Options for City Schools." Saving Our Cities: A Progressive Plan to Transform Urban America, by William W. Goldsmith, Cornell University Press, Ithaca; London, 2016, pp. 89–120. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt1g69x3p.8.

279 Constructing Citizenship: Exclusion, Subordination, and Resistance
Glenn, Evelyn Nakano
American Sociological Review, February 2011, Vol.76(1), pp.1-24

280 Reynolds, Laurie. "Uniformity of Taxation and Illinois School Funding: A State Constitutional Perspective." Journal of Education Finance, vol. 34, no. 2, 2008, pp. 179–195. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/40704352.

281 "TAX REVOLTS." The Fight for Local Control: Schools, Suburbs, and American Democracy, by Campbell F. Scribner, Cornell University Press, ITHACA; LONDON, 2016, pp. 117–137. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt18kr4zm.10.

282 "SHARING THE DREAM." Dream Hoarders: How the American Upper Middle Class Is Leaving Everyone Else in the Dust, Why That Is a Problem, and What to Do About It, by RICHARD V. REEVES, REV - Revised ed., Brookings Institution Press, Washington, D.C., 2018, pp. 125–154. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/10.7864/j.ctt20krz7n.9.

283 Rucker C. Johnson. "Follow the Money: School Spending from Title I to Adult Earnings." RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences, vol. 1, no. 3, 2015, pp. 50–76. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/10.7758/rsf.2015.1.3.03.

[284][285], and political scholarship[286][287] that literally spans more than a century[288]. While these studies inform my analysis of schools as a push factor in family retention, this isn't a dissertation about school funding. It's a dissertation about family retention, and, more importantly, about how to leverage the sociopolitical clout of families targeted by such initiatives to result in improved quality of life for all city families, regardless of socioeconomic or racial backgrounds. Therefore, the policy and programmatic proposals I outline here are not meant as suggestions to fix the state of inequitable school funding, they are suggestions for specific actions policy makers and school administrators can take to retain families within public school systems.

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[284] "Public Education." The Vanishing Middle Class: Prejudice and Power in a Dual Economy, by Peter Temin, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts; London, England, 2017, pp. 115–128. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1mtz5sw.13.

[285] "The Politics of the Knowledge Economy and the Rise of Populism." Democracy and Prosperity: Reinventing Capitalism through a Turbulent Century, by Torben Iversen and David Soskice, Princeton University Press, PRINCETON; OXFORD, 2019, pp. 216–256. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv4g1r3n.10.

[286] Patrick McGuinn. "Schooling the State: ESEA and the Evolution of the U.S. Department of Education." RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences, vol. 1, no. 3, 2015, pp. 77–94. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/10.7758/rsf.2015.1.3.04.

[287] Gerteis, Joseph. "Populism, Race, and Political Interest in Virginia." Social Science History, vol. 27, no. 2, 2003, pp. 197–227. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/40267807.

[288] Gerteis, Joseph. "Populism, Race, and Political Interest in Virginia." Social Science History, vol. 27, no. 2, 2003, pp. 197–227. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/40267807.

Although this is not fundamentally a dissertation about funding, it's impossible to

not emphasize that family retention and school funding are *intrinsically* intertwined[289][290].

Retention efforts in school districts should be seen by scholars in a different light than all

the existential hand-wringing that accompanies general population retention efforts.

Spare me the angst, fellow scholars. When it comes to school funding, the number of

students enrolled is the *most* important factor state formulas look when evaluating state

aid to local municipalities. Each student has an earmark on their head. Lose the student,

lose the earmark.

A Tepid Path Forward

So how do we fix retention? None of my suggestions are universal solutions, but

they are concrete and viable to implement. There are no complicated theories here,

because what families consider when they are selecting a school for their child is not

complicated. Well-staffed, well-maintained buildings with smallish class sizes, safe

facilities, and solid academics fits the bill for most parents. This is not rocket science. It

just costs money. And when you're talking about education money for primarily poor,

primarily black school districts, money comes with a whole host of political posturing

and racist, downright hostile politics. We must get past the politics, or continue to live in

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[289] Kimelberg, Shelley McDonough. "Beyond Test Scores: Middle-Class Mothers, Cultural Capital, and the Evaluation of Urban Public School." Sociological Perspectives, vol. 57, no. 2, 2014, pp. 208–228. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/44289995.

[290] ELLEN, INGRID GOULD, and JUSTIN PETER STEIL, editors. "WHY INTEGRATION?" The Dream Revisited: Contemporary Debates About Housing, Segregation, and Opportunity in the Twenty-First Century, Columbia University Press, New York; Chichester, West Sussex, 2019, pp. 29–43. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/10.7312/elle18362.6.

the status quo. I hope this dissertation has laid out a compelling case that coopting white

families' privilege to lobby alongside black and brown communities for equitable funding

can help shift the politics game. Beyond this shift, there are a few simple measures that

can be implemented:

First, fund reasonable class sizes. Beyond any other measure, class size is the

most overt, simple metric by which parents evaluate school quality[291][292][293][294][295].While

there are a ton of good studies that back up parents' judgement that class size is

important, it just makes sense that students will learn better in a class room with twenty

other kids vs. forty other kids. More teacher attention, sure, but just the very basics of not

being surrounded by that many other humans and be expected to sit and learn and retain

material for eight hours leads one to the logical conclusion that class sizes matter. Parents

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[291] Lareau, Annette, et al. "The Rules of the Game and the Uncertain Transmission of Advantage: Middle-Class Parents' Search for an Urban Kindergarten." Sociology of Education, vol. 89, no. 4, 2016, pp. 279–299. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/26382991.

[292] Favero, Nathan, and Kenneth J. Meier. "Evaluating Urban Public Schools: Parents, Teachers, and State Assessments." Public Administration Review, vol. 73, no. 3, 2013, pp. 401–412., www.jstor.org/stable/42002942.

[293] Siegel-Hawley, Genevieve. "A Segregating Choice?: An Overview of Charter School Policy, Enrollment Trends, and Segregation." Educational Delusions?: Why Choice Can Deepen Inequality and How to Make Schools Fair, by Erica Frankenberg et al., 1st ed., University of California Press, Berkeley; Los Angeles; London, 2013, pp. 129–144. JSTOR,

[294] Izraeli, Oded, and Kevin Murphy. "An Analysis of Michigan Charter Schools: Enrollment, Revenues, and Expenditures." Journal of Education Finance, vol. 37, no. 3, 2012, pp. 234–266. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/41337634.

[295] AVVISATI, FRANCESCO, et al. "Getting Parents Involved: A Field Experiment in Deprived Schools." The Review of Economic Studies, vol. 81, no. 1 (286), 2014, pp. 57–83. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/43551666.

feel this instinctually. It's why schools broadcast "small class sizes!" in their marketing material, and it's why parents took to social media during #Releasethe130 with pictures of classrooms where teachers had helped them arrange an extra 10 desks and students. Those marketing flyers and media posts didn't cite impressive research about the linkages between class size and student learning. There is no need. Parents are not going to be convinced that having an extra 10 or 20 kids in a classroom really doesn't matter. They are going to move their kids to a school where they're not packed in with too many other students. Fund reasonable class sizes and watch enrollment climb.

Second, remove political and logistical barriers to replicating high-demand enrollment schools. So much money is being spent on enrollment efforts for schools, $30M to be exact, split between the Baltimore Teachers' Union and BCPS— yes, $1M more than the budget deficit caused by enrollment decline in AY16-17— when this money and time and energy could be poured into expanding the number of seats available for students at programs to which parents are already flocking. This seems so obvious to me that it's infuriating. Currently, there are an estimated 3,700 students on waiting lists for eight of the top schools across the district. Some of these are charters, but a few are traditional schools as well. And because of the way the Maryland state charter laws are written, enrollment in charters still draw state financial resources into the district[296]. Looking just at the three charters where DBFA has high parent involvement— Baltimore

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[296] This is unique in Maryland, vs. most state charter laws, which do not have a beneficial fiduciary relationship to traditional school systems.

Public Charter Montessori, City Neighbors, and Patterson Park Public Charter School—

there are over 2,500 students on waiting lists, more than double the amount of students

who were not reenrolled between AY2014-15 and AY2016-17.

Rather than continue to pour time and so. much. money. to try to drive enrollment

into lackluster schools without parent interest, for goodness' sake let's spend those

resources replicating programs parents are voting with their feet to attend. Parents are

very, very clear on what they want. It is time that administrators, teachers' unions, and

education improvement agencies started using parent interest and enrollment-demand as

an important metric for considering what is working at a school. Parents, even parents

with the fewest available financial resources, will pull their children out of a school

where they are not thriving. The school may have amazing facilities, great clubs, and

wonderful administrators. But it the child isn't thriving, none of this matters to mom and

dad. Parents face jail time and fines for educational fraud (CITE) for using relatives'

addresses or sending their children to live with near-strangers to get their kids into better

schools. Create more schools parents want to send their kids to. Stop burning time and

money convincing parents to want something when they are already telling us something

exists that they really do want.

Replicating and expanding high-quality options is not an overnight task, nor is it

one without political and policy consequences. The very real impact of unintended

consequences that would accompany an overnight expansion of charters have to be

controlled for prior to massive replication. But a need to create proactive policies to deal

with these ramifications are not a reason to not expand. Policy makers and school

administrators- working hand in hand with parents- should focus on removing political

and logistical barriers to replication. This means a systematic review of legislation and

administrative policies that will get thrown off by rapid, widespread expansion. This

analysis must be followed with the years-long slog of legislation and policy changes to

control for these consequences. But expansion *cannot* wait until this this long slog is

over. If Baltimore waits five years to delay expanding high-demand enrollment programs,

we risk losing another 1,000 kids per year. Over five years, that's $150 million less year-

to-year in funding; that means a $30M reduction annually, and by year five BCPS will

have $150M less in its operating budget in AY22-23 than in AY17-18. We don't have the

luxury of time. Parents won't wait for policy solutions while their kids fly from grades

first through fifth. We must build the bicycle while we ride it.

The suburbs are calling, and they have smaller class sizes.

Where to Go from Here

The end of 2017 marked the closing of DBFA's first decade of work. Over the

course of DBFA's first ten years, impassioned families poured time, emotional resources,

financial contributions and countless hours of sweat equity into building an organization

that would keep families committed to the city by building ties that encouraged families

to become committed to each other. This work was not done perfectly in regard to the

many valid critiques academics have shined on similar programs, but it was done with

good intentions. And while good intentions can lead to consequences just as problematic

as malice— my own earlier research shows many an NGO has unwittingly undermined their own efforts (Mount 2013, 2016) — in my experience over the past two plus years, I have found that people motivated by good are generally willing to shift course when gently presented with information showing how their work can be done to better bring along all families. Progress has not been perfect, but it's been made nonetheless.

By creating programming and influencing policies to transform the reasons urban dwellers with kids pack up, DBFA has created a politically salient constituency to whom policy makers are responsive. Because of our work, families are now recognized as vital to Baltimore's civic and economic sustainability. From real estate developers to elected officials, leaders know that prioritizing families is vital to Baltimore's future. Unfortunately, these "families" who are prioritized are white, affluent, and downtown residents, and they are still too often catered to without regard their poorer, blacker and browner counterparts in neighborhoods beyond the downtown. But as we've tweaked course over the past two years, thanks in large part to the organizational nimbleness adaptive management enables, we've begun to focus programming specifically on root causes of family flight that resonate across socioeconomic and racial lines. Wanting a good education, a neighborhood safe from gun violence, and a supportive, loving community surrounding your kids are not desired reserved only for a privileged few. Regardless of race, socioeconomics, marital status, sexual orientation, or the generation you are raising (as many primary caregivers in Baltimore are grandparents), everyone wants their children to thrive. Family retention organizations have everything to gain by

shifting programming to focus on issues that resonate with families from all backgrounds. Inviting more and more families to the table only strengthens the power of retention organizations' efforts to transform underlying causes families leave urban areas.

Over the past ten years, DBFA has had programming that touched on these root causes: We've strengthened PTOs, helped parents navigate school choice, advocated for equitable funding, and provided capacity building support to schools. We've collaborated with city leaders and the private sector to create vibrant, well lit, high use public spaces, contributing to families' feelings of safety, empowering them to enjoy their home, neighborhood & city. We've built kinship networks of young families by surrounding new parents with love and support. We've worked behind the scenes to put into place legislation that mandates parent input on the mayor's selection of School Board Commissioners, turned around downtown schools, helped found the highest demand charters, & advocated with education organizations to secure more than a *billion* dollars for City Schools. Most importantly, we've connected parents to one another, creating a loving community of city families where kids are known, loved and supported. As a result of these initiatives, Baltimore is dramatically different than when DBFA started ten years ago.

The problem with these initiatives was not the programs themselves; it was who was and who was not invited to the table. Inclusive outreach efforts and deliberate retooling of programming to address concerns of parents from all socioeconomic brackets is not a 'simple' fix, but it's not a theoretically complicated one. It takes time, logistical

coordination, and a *tremendous* amount of willingness to have accusations leveled at you about propagating institutionalized racism and reinforcing the "non-profit industrial complex"[297]. I hope the two case brief case studies and the peer-to-peer guide I've provided in this dissertation help guide other CAR practitioners in similar work, and perhaps spare you a bit of the emotional upheaval I've wrestled with the past few years.

My own research presented here, as well as research on Chicago, Boston and Philadelphia initiatives similar to DBFA's work suggest that leveraging the social and economic capital of middle class families *can* expand public resources on which families of all socioeconomic backgrounds rely… if these efforts are undertaken with keen attention to the possibility of privileging middle-class parents' priorities while further marginalizing the voices of impoverished families who have long been served by schools targeted for transformation. This type of community building is more challenging than simply highlighting the upsides of urban living— the thriving social scene, vibrant cultural amenities, and walkable lifestyle. City living might be cool, but simply reinforcing a narrative that staying in the city is fun does little to transform the systems that prompt families to leave and that replicate long-standing sources of structural violence.

Research from Boston, particularly, suggests that community building efforts to get families to feel a strong sense that they have a stake in the success of their

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[297]Field Notes: Parent Community Advisory Board meeting, DATE; Kimberly Mooney facebook thread, DATE; etc

neighborhoods can in turn produce system wide changes. As Billingham and Kimelberg (2013) note,

> As young singles and childless couples, our respondents interacted with the city mainly as passive consumers. Years later, however, facing pressures to relocate in search of high-quality educational options, these parents emerged as active producers of the urban landscape through their substantial involvement in their children's public elementary schools (2013, 85).

My own findings echo Billingham and Kimelberg's assertions: By encouraging families to get invested in public schools, public parks, and public transit, they strengthen their sense of connection to their communities and in turn use their available time and socioeconomic clout to strengthen public resources.

Glamorizing city living to a privileged few does not mitigate structural inequity, nor does it fix the systemic failures that prompt families to leave the city in the first place. We cannot market our way out of institutionalized racism and poverty. And we *don't* have to settle for these seemingly quick fixes. It *is* possible to get privileged families invested in their neighborhoods and schools through meaningful community building- the "connecting communities" part of DBFA's work- and leverage their social, political and economic capital to push for systemic improvements- the "empowering families" side of the organization's mission. Capitalizing on the clout these families have can lead to transformational changes to the underlying systems that harm disadvantaged families

stranded by poverty in American cities, and prompt privileged families to leave for the suburbs.

What Must Be Done, That Won't Be Done

Investing in education, parks and playspaces, and efforts to build strong peer networks are specific initiatives cities can— and should— undertake to influence family retention in ways that don't further exacerbate racial and class disparities. However, these recommendations, of course, rely on the dubious presumption that cities— and the people inhabiting them— actually want to take action to alleviate poverty, political marginalization, and displacement. The recommendations I make are not the only measures cities can undertake to address disparities; they are, however, among the very few cities may be able to muster political will to launch. Many of cities' most harmful systems— broken schools, mass incarceration, and economically segregated housing— propagate status quo power structures. This is not a bug, it's a feature.

If urban municipalities, and the privileged families living within them, are truly invested in the goal of transformation, these are specific initiatives high-status families should throw their weight behind:

Penal System Overhauls

Ever growing bodies of scholarship and journalism highlight desperately needed changes to the US justice and penal systems. Building on these from my own research, there are two very specific focuses cities should implement to change the lives of families of color living in poverty, especially households headed by single women raising

children. We need to radically shift police attention and prosecution dollars away from non-violent crimes. Vice squad time spent busting sex workers and marijuana dealers is a waste of resources, and compounds violence done against communities of color. We need to shift all public safety resources towards violent crime, and shift any public dollars around sex work and drug towards jobs training, education, and rehabilitation services respectively.

Ideally, we would legalize prostitution and drug use (yes, even the really bad ones). Areas where sex and drugs are sold are often dangerous and seedy. However, this seediness is compounded by the illegality of sex work and drug sales. The constant threat of police intervention ads fear and stigma to already heartbreaking life situations. Even if voters and legislators cannot stomach such radical steps, prosecutor's offices can make universal policies to enter *nolle prosequi* any sex work or drug arrests. Additionally, police commissioners can make unilateral decisions that they will no longer invest resources pursuing sex workers and drug users. Criminal justice system attention to these issues compound fears, desperation, and trauma in impoverished communities of color.

Legalization and Taxation of Marijuana

The aunt of the 289th person murdered in 2017 in Baltimore wrote a scathing op-ed about the ways in which the city has failed her nephew. Speaking directly to his memory, she said: "You did the best with what was given to you by this great city of Baltimore." She then turned her attention to those of us still alive in this city: "Jeez — he didn't kill anyone; he sold weed. Had he been rich, white and lived in Hampden, he

could've opened a dispensary. Had he lived in the Midwest, the president would have called it all a crisis" (Baltimore Sun Nov 3, 2017).

Instead, Antwan Lamont Bond spent a lifetime being chased by the cops and dodging bullets from other dealers. Had his wares been a cash crop, he may not have survived the violence of the streets around him, but at least he may have had a shot at making a decent living before succumbing to his surroundings. He also may not have been overtly persecuted by the police as a criminal— although that's certainly not a guarantee for a law abiding black male in Baltimore.

In addition to these basic civil rights advances that would be made if we were to legalize marijuana, the flush coffers of municipalities that have successfully tapped marijuana as a cash crop suggest that this is an area of underutilized economic potential. Baltimore has crippling financial burdens it is unable to meet. I've argued throughout this dissertation that some of those expenses could be offset if we were successful in retaining affluent families. We'd also be able to address some of these challenges if we were to tap into the seemingly endless appetite people have for purchasing legalized marijuana. This is money cities are leaving on the table if they do not move forward with common sense initiatives to decriminalize and tax what has been proven through exhaustive science to be a relatively benign substance.

Education Testing Reform

Test scores drive a tremendous amount of parents' concern around particular schools. Greatschools.org is a website that dictates school ranking based solely on the test

scores of the students in that school. They do not break it out by racial demographic.

They do not count any sort of qualitative information on school climate, or even

quantitative information around class size and student to teacher ratio. Despite this lack

of attention to many factors we know from research tie into student achievement,

Greatschools.org continues to be one of the primary sources parents use to gather

information about schools. It's the first thing parents point to when they put up the for

sale sign, saying "well the test scores are terrible at that school."

What's not discussed in further detail is the fact that most standardized test in

Maryland are taken by computer. What these tests are measuring is not student aptitude,

but rather students' access to computers. Kindergarteners who spend their hours during

standardized test using hunt and peck method on keyboards far too big for their little

squishy hands are being penalized for not knowing how to use a computer. Students who

have easy access to computers, and parents at home tutoring them and practicing with

them how to use computers, have a far greater advantage to score high on these tests.

Given the in a relationship between racial segregation, economic poverty, and access to

computers, what test scores are actually measuring is students' ability to use computers

efficiently.

If you want to know how many kids have computers in their homes, Maryland's

standardized tests are really great way to extrapolate that information. They aren't,

however, great at giving you information as to whether or not students are learning in the

classroom.

Cities hoping to retain families either need to move back to standardized testing done on paper, or find ways to ensure students living in poverty have consistent access to computers.

If we want to insist computers are how the real world operates and therefore the best way to do standardized testing, we need to have massive investment in putting computers into the hands of every public school child. Whether this is providing students tablets that go home with them where they can practice, or ensuring that computers are used in a way that kids can use touch screens versus keyboards during tests, we need to move to a system where we are not measuring access to computers, but rather gathering data that can give parents a clear indication of schools' performance.

Universal Promise Scholarships Linked to Public School Enrollment

I'm intentionally ending this empirical chapter where my research began during my proposal phase. The Georgia Hope Scholarship is one among dozens of statewide scholarships where students who perform at a particular academic level, tied most often to GPA, are granted a full ride at a state university. When I wrote the initial proposal for this project, it was to be a process evaluation of DBFA working with foundations, the city school system, and universities in Baltimore City to incentivize parents of all backgrounds to enroll their kids in public school.

I strongly believe, based on my experiences as a community development professional, my research, and other academics' work that universal promise scholarships tied to public school enrollment would be transformative for cities. I discuss the

dynamics of universal promise scholarships in details in the "Schools" section in this chapter, but reiterate the basics here to emphasize the transformative potential these programs may have on urban school enrollment.

I've talked to an exhaustive detail throughout this chapter about the relationship between enrollment and school funding. As discussed in the *Influencing Retention* section earlier in this chapter, if more parents enrolled their kids in BCPS, driven by the promise of free tuition at any of Baltimore's many amazing colleges (hello, Johns Hopkins!), that money would directly translate to an increase in school funding. To reiterate the key points I made in that section, 5,000 parents choosing year-by-year for a five year period to enroll their kids in public school as a means of obtaining a free college education would translate 250 million additional dollars per year for the school system. Moreover, you would have the investment of sweat equity of middle-class parents who have the privilege of time to be involved in schools. Finally, this would be a program that would attract people to come live in the city, not just retain them. Families might consider decamping from the suburbs knowing that a cute row house in Federal Hill also came with the promise of free tuition. Beyond the actual enrollment benefits, over time cities may have a further influx of people coming to live based on the promise of free college for their kids, in turn adding to cities' property taxes, sales taxes, and income taxes to government coffers. Universal promise scholarships tied to enrollment have the potential to change our schools and our cities for generations.

Lifting All Boats

Given that schools, safety, and community cohesion are the three main concerns families with young children cite when moving away from cities, the initiatives outlined above would be solid investments for urban municipalities to make. Each of these touch on a different aspect of the major flight-risk factors. Over the course of decades, these investments would transform opportunities for families of all backgrounds to thrive. In turn, cities would grow their populations overall, strengthen their tax base, and spark innovation.

Although these proposals are logical and rooted in strong scholarship, they are so politically challenging they have little hope of moving forward. Additionally, the outlay of cash cities would have to invest is prohibitive, although many of these measures can be offset by the resulting influx of city families, as well as the reduction in costs spent prosecution and jailing drug offenders and sex workers, tax generated through legalized marijuana sales, and (dipping into the realm of outright fantasy) by placing the burden of costs to initiatives involving the private sector— like housing initiatives and rapid rail transit— onto the corporations involved in the upgrades. Cities and corporations would see a return on these investments over the span of decades— far too long a timeline for most politicians and corporate leaders to stomach and justify a massive outlay of cash. However, if these initiatives were brought to fruition, cities willing to invest the necessary courage, money and sweat equity would reap the benefit of hundreds of thousands of families choosing to call that city home.

The goal of making cities work for all families is still, thanks to institutionalized racism and White America's[298][299][300]comfort with the systems it propagates, not possible from a political will standpoint[301][302][303]. Mobilizing a critical mass of white wealthy families to lobby against measures that have historically benefited them at the expense of their impoverished counterparts is a ludicrous proposition those distressed about reverse white-flight would do well to abandon. Instead, community development professionals and grassroots activists should invest that time connecting families to one another, and empowering families to build cities that hold ever growing opportunities for the children being raised in them. By rallying privileged families around initiatives that actually do "lift *all* boats," perhaps what must be done, will be done. Here's hoping.

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YOU DON'T SPEAK FOR US

White led, corporate non-profit entities have assumed leadership of major education reform efforts. Black led organizations that are community based are left out of the picture. Institutional racism is embedded in your efforts.

-Baltimore Algebra Project, Open letter to the Baltimore Education Coalition

In early summer 2017, DBFA was asked to make a presentation to the Parent Community Advisory Board (PCAB), the formal committee tasked with giving the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners input on proposed polices impacting schools. Our education director prepared remarks highlighting our involvement in school funding advocacy and our PTO leadership development series. During her presentation at PCAB's June meeting, black parents from under-resourced schools pushed back against her remarks, accusing the Baltimore Education Coalition— and DBFA's work as part of the group— of drawing funding resources away from black/brown-led community development efforts, and focusing solely on issues impacting white flight.

An African-American DBFA board member sitting on our education committee was in the audience that evening. She jumped into the discussion, pointing out that black flight is a pressing issue bleeding BCPS enrollment, and undermining the establishment of a strong black middle-class. The meeting grew extremely contentious. Our board

member and education director stood on the firing line, taking criticism that ranged from BEC's organizational structure making it impossible for black parents to meaningfully engage in the direction of BEC's work, to racial composition of DBFA's board. As one parent said during the critical Q&A following our presentation, we were claiming to speak on behalf of families who we were deeply out of touch with. "You don't speak for me. You don't speak for us."

I was not shocked to hear we'd come under scrutiny. Reading the text messages from my education director late that night, following the meeting, I nodded my head along as I processed the criticisms she'd encountered. BEC's structure *does* make it cumbersome for black parents- especially parents working wage jobs unable to fully immerse themselves in a coalition member organization's work— to give any sort of input on the coalition's agenda. There are no individual members of BEC, only organizations— activist groups like DBFA and ACLU, community organizations such as the neighborhood development association Strong City Baltimore, churches, and foundations— can be officially BEC members. As a result, the only way that an individual can have any say on the annual legislative priorities BEC selects during its fall planning retreat is to be a part of an organization that is itself a BEC member. And of course, in order to be the person who represents a member organization at the BEC retreat, one must be fairly senior within one of those member organizations. Nary a parent without a huge track record of time in PTO leadership was present at these

planning tables, and the few parents that did manage to be the organizational leader that was the BEC representative were fighting to have their lay voices heard among seasoned attorneys, registered lobbyists with literally decades of experience, and people like me… executive directors with a slew of experience guiding NGOs, without children registered in public schools. As a result of BEC's structure, my professional opinion held much more sway than the voices of parents whose children were languishing in school buildings lacking heat, potable water, and fire alarms.

Apart from the critiques about BEC's structure, the criticism about DBFA was also spot on. Black and brown parents and activists were egregiously underrepresented on our board, and our staff was all white. At that point I had made inroads making the board more inclusive, but we had nothing approaching a model that reflected the demographics of the city we claimed to serve. I had been put on notice on second day in my job by a city official who told me she "could not take [DBFA] seriously because you have an all white board." It was not news to me that DBFA focused primarily on the relatively affluent areas of Baltimore, and that this focus was discordant with the realities of daily life for most Baltimore parents.

We made some strides towards shifting the geographic focus of our work during my time as Executive Director, re-engineering an all white board to a board that was comprised of people of color by nearly 40% (DBFA Board of Directors[304]), and

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[304] Available at BaltimoreFamilies.org/aboutus

deliberately working on issues that connect communities across racial and socioeconomic divides. Despite these changes, DBFA continues to have a reputation of being primarily focused on the amenities that Baltimore has to offer while families, while ignoring the structural disparities that impact the vast majority of parents raising young kids in the city.

Working to leverage DBFA's organizational infrastructure, IRS tax-exempt status, foundation and corporate partnerships, and sociopolitical clout to lift up marginalized groups struggling to attain these assets due to institutionalized racism has been the goal of my work from day one. My critical theory driven skepticism of DBFA's early guiding believe that "as the tide comes in, all the ships will rise" has informed every single managerial and programmatic decision I've made as executive director. As the tide comes in, people stranded on the dock get screwed. Generations of redlining, city planners' intentional decimation of black middle-class neighborhoods, poorly executed corporate subsidies and city legislators' willingness to court high-status families has left behind the vast majority of Baltimore families. Despite this, I have come to feel strongly that working to retain middle-class and affluent families is vital to Baltimore's economic and civic sustainability. The key is not viewing this retention as a means in and of itself, but rather a means to a larger end of pushing for truly transformative sociopolitical, economic, educational and legal reforms.

This final chapter details DBFA's experiences during my tenure in which we've leveraged the infrastructure of our organization to lift up community led efforts that have struggled to garner media attention, legislative traction and corporate/foundation funding, and uses these lessons as a starting point for considering how NGO leaders can leverage the financial infrastructure and access to extend these privileges to black and brown, community led efforts. Some of these struggles have been due in large part to a lack of political will to pay attention to black and brown led efforts, and some have been hindered by the very real investment of time necessary to set up a 501c3 structure, or inability to garner mentorship and education to succeed in the corporatized non-profit sector.

DBFA has by no means fully addressed the well-grounded critiques we've received over the past two years of my work, nor the criticisms brought to the attention of my predecessors in the eight years prior. There is still much to be done to expand our inclusive programming. We need to be intentional and creative working to ensure we are reaching families of color at risk of leaving the city. Additionally, there are further action steps to make our leadership more reflective of the vast composition of city families. Despite the work left to be done, the steps we've taken offer insight for other NGO leaders hoping to leverage their institutional advantages to lift up programs lacking the privilege of IRS status, volunteers with disposable time and income, and corporate partnerships. I have written this chapter to speak directly to executive directors,

governing board members, and foundation leaders, but my observations may be useful to community members beyond this group.

I. Think Institutions and Structures, Not Hearts and Minds

Alabama Senatorial Candidate and renowned child molester Roy Moore wasn't defeated because the hearts and minds of white voters in Alabama had been swayed by the clear threat he posed to women and minorities. Roy Moore lost because black citizens and women enfranchised by U.S. Constitutional Amendments were legally entitled to vote, and did so.

Your work as a CAR leader should be focused on transforming institutions and sociopolitical structures. Changing individuals' feelings does not change the lives of people excluded from power, vulnerable to exploitation, or harmed by violence. Use your chosen theoretical framework to understand the conflict you hope to transform or ameliorate. Find points of intervention where you're able to use the influence and infrastructure you've been granted to extend these tools to other folks engaging in the work on an even more organic level. Focus on shifting the underlying structures using the infrastructure and privilege you've been given to press for systemic changes.

I don't mean to imply that our goal as a field should be focused only on work to influence institutional changes that disrupt the status quo— interpersonal work is vital. However, speaking specifically to people responsible for the mission, vision and structure of NGOs, how your organization influences structural changes should be a predominant

question guiding your work. If you're in a leadership role, I encourage you to think about the structures driving the conflict on which your organization is focused.

II. Adopt a Formal Racial Equity Lens

The CAR field is littered with diagrams, charts and frameworks to help guide analysis and intervention of conflicts. If you are working on conflict in the US- or arguably anywhere in the Global North that has a history of racial oppression- your most important framework should be focused on understanding and addressing the way institutionalized racism impacts your managerial processes, organizational structure, and program design, implementation, and outcomes.

Adopting a 'racial equity framework" sounds complex. It should, given "racism is a fierce, ever-present, challenging force, one which has structured the thinking, behavior, and actions of individuals and institutions since the beginning of U.S. history" (REI 2018). However, this is a manageable goal, and one that should be a bedrock commitment guiding your work.

If your approach to thinking about race feels haphazard, you're probably not doing it very well. This is something that merits an incredible amount of scrutiny and time. Don't feel rushed into action to address your mission and tack to racial equity on as an afterthought. Your mission will be undermined, your outcomes unintentionally harmful. Take time on the front end to think about how to institutionalize equity into your programming and decision making. As a result, "through thoughtful planning and

engagement, you will create ways to move solutions forward that can have transformative impacts on systems and communities. Organizations and systems should target programs, resources, investments and strategies to those groups of people who are being left behind and to those who need them most" (AECF 2018)[305].

Adopting a racial equity framework starts with investigating and overhauling the processes and outcomes of your work. A good starting point for thinking this through is to ask "How are existing racial disparities standing in the way of the goals we seek to fulfill?" (AECF 2018). In the most ideal sense, if your approaches successfully incorporate the goal of achieving racial equity, race and class should not be predictors of the outcomes of your programs. BEC's participation structure, discussed in the earlier in this chapter, is a salient illustration of a mismatch in goals and racialized outcomes: despite a stated goal of participation from people of all backgrounds, the organizational structure made it cumbersome for parents without time to get involved. Time to invest in civic participation is curtailed by poverty; juggling three jobs makes it difficult to volunteer (Lee, McQuarry and Walker 2015; de Zúñiga, Valenzuela, and Weeks 2016; Gaby 2016). Because of the relationship between poverty and race in the US, parents with the privilege of time were disproportionately white, resulting in a "'civic participation gap' between socioeconomic, racial, and gender groups" (Gaby 2016, 923). Therefore, BEC's membership was predominantly comprised of white, affluent

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[305]http://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/AECF_EmbracingEquity7Steps-2014.pdf#page=11

Baltimoreans. The organizational structure led to predictably racially disparate

representation.

While DBFA certainly didn't perfect a model for overcoming racially structural

inequities, our efforts illustrate some tactics for incorporating a racial equity framework.

Taking DBFA's School and Children's Programming Fair as an example, if our goal is to

inform parents about school choice policies and schools they can choose to send their

children to, we should not be able to predict by race if parents will attend the fair.

Likewise, based on the information attendees receive at the fair, we shouldn't be able to

predict by race if attendees will choose to send their child to an out of zone school, nor

should we be able to predict which particular school they choose. We may see spikes in

enrollment in schools that have STEM programs vs. creative arts programs, or that have

after school soccer programs vs. Spanish clubs, but we will not be able to predict these

increases based on race.

Disproportionate Investment, Equitable Access

To achieve the goal of not having outcomes predicated on race, we have to take

seriously the ways in which race determines "the distribution of resources and

opportunities" (ibid) that make accessing DBFA's programing more or less challenging

based on the racial background of the families we design programming for. Because race

and poverty are so tightly intertwined in Baltimore, we consider economic barriers as part

of our analysis when considering how to design and implement programs using a racial

equity lens. Sticking with the example of our school fair, we consider race and poverty when choosing the location of the event- prioritizing the proximity of public transit over parking, as some estimates ballpark that as many as 70% of impoverished Baltimore families lack access to cars. We also take race into account in our outreach; while we use email marketing to reach out to our established membership, we put the bulk of our outreach time and money into working with Community School Coordinators, the formal liaisons posted at each designated Community School tasked with working with some of the most challenged schools in the district. We work with the coordinators to ensure families have flyers about the fair, we pay for printing and deliver the flyers directly to the school if needed, and do follow up to make sure they have been sent home in students' backpacks.
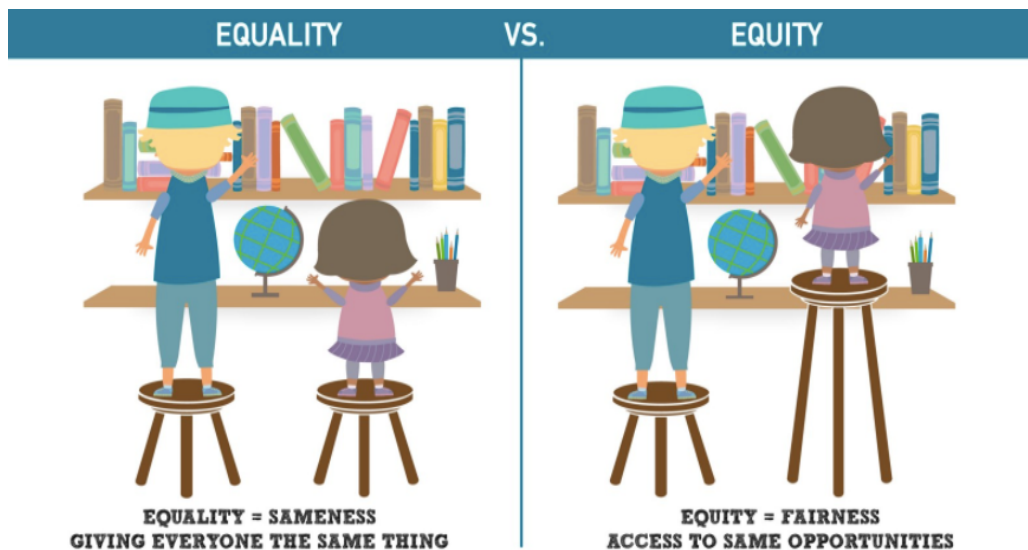
Figure 13.

Equality vs. Equity

We spend disproportionate time and money on outreach and planning to ensure students of color, especially those coming from impoverished families, have a shot at benefiting from our programming despite the barriers institutionalized racism presents. Disproportionate investment of resources (in some small part) contributes to an equitable distribution of services.

These efforts are important beyond DBFA's goal to ensure racial equity in *our* programming. We are trying to upend structural impediments students face due to public policies and legislation. Recent studies suggest Baltimore's "Open Choice Enrollment Policy" — ostensibly adopted to ensure students of all backgrounds could access quality education regardless of their family's ability to move out of a neighborhood with a failing school— has actually exacerbated the gap between middle-class/affluent and poor families' use of out of zone schools (Condliffe, Boyd and DeLuca 2015; Century Foundation 2015). Families with the privilege of time to sit in line- sometimes for days- outside of a school to get on a waiting list for out of zone spots, or who have the prerequisite information that such a system even exists, are able to use the policy.

Parents who lack insider knowledge from a friend or neighbor are SOL- BCPS's website on school choice is a nightmare, and the practices for getting an out of zone spot are haphazard and differ from school to school. Parents who can't afford to take off work to camp out in front of schools (literally, parents bring shade tents, lounge chairs, snacks and thermoses of coffee), or who don't have a spouse or family to unload their children onto while they wait in line for a spot have little chance of using school choice to benefit their kids. In summary, "despite the good intention of policymakers," researchers argue, "the constraint of poverty, combines with minimal access to information about how to select a school, prevents low-income Baltimore students from maximizing their academic options, even when they are given a choice" (Condliffe, Boyd and DeLuca 2015).

Hearts and Minds Don't Matter (All That Much)

Approaching racial equity has little to do with the feelings, emotions, and personal biases of individuals involved in your organization. Obviously, you should not court avowed bigots to join your board, but institutionalized racism was alive and well even before our national resurgence of emboldened white nationalists and Nazis. For these reasons, your thought process around applying a racial equity framework should focus on institutions and structures, not hearts and minds. Organizations "often work in very intentionally civil ways yet operating from multiple understandings that rely more on personal feelings and popular opinion" (ibid). The focus on political correctness and decorum rather than investigating and changing organizational processes and structures

"creates complications to the goal of eliminating racial and ethnic disparities and

producing equitable outcomes" (ibid).

The Annie E. Casey Foundation has a wonderful tool for helping NGOs break

down the commitment to racial equity into actual managerial processes and

organizational structures. Their guide, "7 Steps to Advance and Embed Race Equity and

Inclusion Within Your Organization," is available as a free download on their website,

http://www.aecf.org/resources/race-equity-and-inclusion-action-guide/. I have condensed

and broken down their steps- which are useful in large scale planning and at the start of

your organization's work to create and adopt a framework- to create a functional

framework that guides DBFA's decision making, programming, and implementation. This

is by no means a perfect model, but it is a useful starting point for discerning how

institutionalized racism will impact our work.

Table 1. DuBois RACIAL Equity Framework

Degi DuBois R.A.C.I.A.L. Equity Framework		
Objective	**Activities**	**Outcomes**
Representation al parity	Build your board and staff to roughly reflect the racial demographics of the area you serve.	The perspective, input and guidance of people of color is at the center of decision making around your mission, vision and technical approaches.

Degi DuBois R.A.C.I.A.L. Equity Framework		
Objective	**Activities**	**Outcomes**
<u>A</u>ccess barriers to participation	Consider the ways in which your organizational structure limits people of color from being involved your work. BEC has been consistently slammed for making it difficult for parents of color to have a voice in the organization's work, as participation in BEC is dependent on being part of one of BEC's member organizations- i.e., you have to be a DBFA member to participate in BEC. Individuals can't join BEC. When I came on as DBFA's executive director, we made membership free and simple- if we have your email, you're a member.	It is harder to *not* be part of your organization than to be included.

Degi DuBois R.A.C.I.A.L. Equity Framework		
Objective	**Activities**	**Outcomes**
<u>C</u>ollaborate with communities and leaders of color to plan programs and initiatives	Bring communities of color and leaders of color into your ground level decision making processes when planning programs, campaigns and events. Every initiative you undertake should be planned with community groups who have been left out of decision making due to race.	Programs and initiatives are designed with keen attention to priorities, needs and goals of people of color, and the ways in which institutionalized racism may impact program implementation and outcomes

Degi DuBois R.A.C.I.A.L. Equity Framework		
Objective	**Activities**	**Outcomes**
Inclusive outreach	Outreach efforts are made in ways that account for barriers caused by institutionalized racism and systemic marginalization. We spend far greater attention on outreach for DBFA's school fair reaching families of color living in poverty, given that email outreach is not always available for families of color who lack consistent access to computers.	Barriers presented by institutionalized racism do not hinder people of color participating in your programming or benefiting from your services.

Degi DuBois R.A.C.I.A.L. Equity Framework		
Objective	**Activities**	**Outcomes**
<u>A</u>meliorate root causes of racial inequities through inclusive programming	Programs should be designed to address conflict drivers, not conflict outcomes. DBFA's school fair works to ensure families of color have the same access to information about school choice as white families, rather than help families after their children are enrolled in schools they have concerns about.	Root causes of conflicts are undermined.
<u>L</u>ift up marginalized voices	Use institutional platforms- IRS designations, access to legislators and press, and fundraising efforts to bring voices of color to the forefront of conflict resolution work. Lift up, rather than speak on behalf of.	The dignity and benefits of institutionalized privilege are extended to people and communities of color.

Use a racial equity framework at the planning stages of your work and revisit it often as you move forward with programs and initiatives. Rigorously solicit feedback from your board members of color, and black and brown led community groups you collaborate with. Incorporate their criticism into your decision making as you go along. Keep in mind that thoughtful incorporation of a racial equity framework is an ongoing process, and that you will never be 'done'. While we have strived to these lenses to inform our work, DBFA is still light years away from realizing the goal of achieving true equity in our work. Having a formal racial equity framework helps us constantly access how we can better strive towards the goal of equity.

III. Leveraging Fiscal Infrastructure

Building a formal NGO requires a huge investment of time, sweat equity, and patience. Given the hours and hours it takes to learn how to pursue IRS status, build a board, network with aligned stakeholders, and design programs towards a mission, starting an NGO also requires money, in that someone must put in hours and hours without getting paid. People eager to change the world can quickly burn out as the trudge the path from "I have a great idea!" to "I brought my idea to life!" Sometimes the best way to bring a project to fruition is to work with an organization which already has a formal 501c3 or 501c4 status. You can get to work more quickly, with far less investment of time and money, by partnering with a group willing to take you under their fiscal wing. If you are in a leadership role at an NGO, consider ways to extend the privilege of your institutional infrastructure to benefit grassroots projects.

One of the ways DBFA has been doing this over the past year is by providing fiscal sponsorship to smaller organizations that have yet to be able to navigate the NGO application processes, or who have chosen to eschew it completely because of the tremendous amount of intellectual capital and time required. If you've been able to create formal institutions recognized by the IRS and access corporate support or foundation financing, finding ways to use these resources to support grassroots projects just getting off the ground is a great way to extend this privilege. The people closest to the problems are the people closest to the solutions, as my associate director often reminds me.

Another tangible way we do this in our work is simply connecting the dots between people who don't have power and people who do. This can be a simple introduction to corporate leader or elected official, or a more formal effort to confront power. Bringing folks to Annapolis in biracial teams, DBFA was able to break down some of the power structures where black teachers and parents were being ignored. Simply being present in the room with recalcitrant white elected officials sent a clear message: *if you'll listen to me, it would be racist to ignore my colleague*. This was not talking over, but rather pointing out. We were laying bare the obvious disparity between the legitimacy with which my complaints were heard and my partner's were dismissed. We were able to shift the narrative simply by presenting school funding as an issue that transcended race and class.

IV. Leveraging Funding Networks

If your organization has successfully garnered funding, be on the lookout for community groups- again, especially groups led by people of color- who are struggling to fundraise. Help open doors, make introductions, and put in good words. Have a template letter of recommendation you can amend to fit projects you'd like to lend a hand. If you have the political capital to do so, push foundations to host workshops in communities struggling with formal grant writing. Your efforts will create opportunities for transformation in your community beyond your capabilities and build good will that can lead to future collaboration.

V. Engaging the Private Sector

CAR practice often eschews engaging elite private sector actors as partners in efforts to interrupt cycles of violence. Given that corporations and social elites often benefit from these cycles, this avoidance makes sense. Nonetheless, the CAR field limits its relevance by ignoring the role the private sector can play in addressing systemic inequities when they see an upside to their bottom line.

Sagamore's planned redevelopment of Port Covington is dependent on receiving tax increment financing (TIF) — a public financing method that is used as a subsidy for redevelopment and infrastructure— to offset the massive construction projects being proposed. As part of their agreement with the city, Sagamore is mandated to invest _$100 million_ in the seven communities bordering Port Covington over the course of the TIF

loan. $100 million in under-resourced communities— heck, in any community— goes a long way.

In addition to actual hard dollars private companies can direct towards community projects, their sociopolitical clout can be leveraged to pursue mutually beneficial legislative and policy goals. If the current Maryland state school funding formula is not amended by the state legislature, Baltimore City Public Schools stand to lose over $1Billion in funding— possibly more— as a result of the tax incentive for the proposed Port Covington development in Baltimore. When the development was first planned, Sagamore played a role brokering a 36 month hold-harmless clause that ensured any wealth increases to the city's property values impacted by the development would not penalize BCPS's state funding. As each dollar of "increased wealth," based on assessed property value, not actual tax dollars paid, is a dollar the state will cut from BCPS's budget, the school system could have been devastated without the hold-harmless clause.

While many community groups have valid concerns over aspects of the proposed plan- including the possibility of exacerbating Baltimore's many racial and socioeconomic disparities— DBFA's immediate sole focus at the planning phase of the project was to advocate for a permanent hold harmless policy. The lack of such a measure has the potential to hurt city schools' budget for decades. We knew our voices would not sway state legislators outside of the city delegation, so we have been working with Sagamore's leadership team to encourage their continued attention to the possible impact

of the development on BCPS's budget. A permanent hold-harmless for TIF and PILOT developments is a measure being considered by state legislators as the Kirwan Commission prepares its recommendations for a new funding formula.

VI. Thoughts to Funders

Foundations play a huge role in determining the focus and direction of many NGOs (Agyemang, O'Dwyer, Unerman, and Awumbila 2017; Chatterjee 2018; Doctor 2014; Fejerskov 2015; O'Dwyer and Boomsma 2015; Rosenfield 2017). As our work is dependent on being able to keep the lights on— the satisfaction of making a difference doesn't pay for NGO staffers' mortgages— this is just part of the business. And it's not necessarily a bad thing, as foundations have a great deal of wisdom and research to lend to organizations (Rostorfer, Mitler and Ledbetter 2015). The "30,000 foot view" they have from being active in the mission of hundreds of NGOs over the course of decades is invaluable and should be viewed as an asset.

That being said, foundations' processes have contributed to the "non-profit industrial savior complex" by (unintentionally or not) creating barriers that limit grassroots and black/brown-led organizations from accessing capital (Chatterjee 2018; Gaby 2016). There are concrete steps foundations should consider taking to remove obstacles for emerging and marginalized groups to be able to benefit from the wealth of resources, financial and otherwise, they have available to influence change.

Tie funding to racial inclusion

Want to see more people of color sitting on boards of directors? Mandate representational parity in your funding applications. If a group claims to serve geographic areas or populations predominately of people of color, their BOD should reflect this. If their BOD doesn't, make them ineligible for funding. Directors and executive boards will prioritize leadership development faster than you can say "eligibility requirements."

Stop fetishizing numbers

On any given year, schools situated in Baltimore's most challenged neighborhoods rocked by violence lose students to gun violence. Excel Academy lost seven students between AY2016-17 through January 2018. There has been "so much violence that an empty desk might mean a skipped class — or another permanent absence" (NYT Jan 16, 2018). Community School Coordinators (CSC) in these schools struggle to serve as grief counselors and fulfill their duties as community liaisons. The Family League of Baltimore, one of the largest agencies responsible for managing the CSC programs, holds weekly trainings for their coordinators. During a period of extremely escalated gun violence, CSCs were begging for training on trauma intervention. Instead, Family League stuck with their planned professional development curriculum, which focused on how to accurately report data to the city. Their professional development focuses heavily on data regardless of circumstances, as their funding to continue as CSC administrators is contingent on being able to quantitatively track their outcomes. If they can't prove impact, they can't continue the program.

Foundations' insistence that numbers prove impact ironically detracts from many organizations' missions. Not only does overhead get shifted to staff hours to track and report data, some substantive programs that change lives get scrapped in favor of initiatives more easily quantified. Finally, program administrators who lack technical training to translate qualitative program outcomes into numbers are at a strategic disadvantage in funding requests. Given that access to program design education and training are impacted, once again, by racial barriers, people of color face more barriers to gain NGO management skills than their white counterparts. Foundations' romance affair with quantitative data hurts communities of color by overlooking powerful programs and potential leaders. It's time to break it off.

"Giving Boards" leave behind poor people (duh)

Most grant applications ask for the amount of money board members contribute to the overall budget. This question can be phrased in a couple of ways: What percentage of your budget comes from board giving? What percentage of your board contributes financially to your organization?; What was the total dollar amount given by board members last year? No matter its phrasing, this question is a ridiculous hindrance to building inclusive leadership teams.

The vast majority of families living in Baltimore are living below the national average income. One in five students come from families living in abject poverty. 80% of

BCPS's student body receive free lunch. And yet, funders want us to have a board that reflects our target population *and* is able to contribute to our operating budget.

I'm not sure why this is a news flash, but here it is: People living in poverty don't have philanthropic dollars lying around. Insisting organizations have "giving boards" by using this as selection criteria in grant applications is counter to the very principals the foundation community claims to stand for. This practice is extending institutionalized racism into the very fabric of the organizations working to upend it. Give it a rest with the giving board nonsense.

Provide leadership training to black and brown community members so we can have a strong bench of people ready to step onto non-profit boards

I firmly believe foundations are among the greatest sources of wisdom executive directors can tap. The expertise cultivated by having in depth understanding of work being done on a particular field or geographic area is a vital resource, and one that could be used to build strong NGO leaders among communities of color (Gaby 2016). Leadership training workshops given by program officers or long-standing foundation heads can be a tremendous asset to executive directors seeking out new talent to bring onto boards of directors, contributing to representational parity and lifting up marginalized voices.

Provide open grant-writing workshops in neighborhoods that have struggled to gain foundation investment

Many funders host (free!!) workshops on grant writing, but hold these events at their offices. It's great to provide training, but if people living in poverty without easy access to transportation can't reach these workshops, these resources only further propagate the gaps between organizations that have a leg up in funding applications and grassroots efforts struggling to get a foot in the door.

Deconstructing the White Savior Industrial Complex from Within

The points I've discussed throughout this chapter, and more broadly throughout the book, are certainly not meant to serve as the ultimate list of recommendations for those in our field interested in leveraging the infrastructure privileged individuals and organizations to benefit grassroots led efforts and marginalized leaders. Indeed, my hope is that this is a starting point for querying larger concepts of power, marginalization, class and race that other practitioners can further in their work.

Transformation of systemic disparities within our field is possible. It's hard, it's messy, it's emotionally fraught, and extremely expensive. But it's possible. Innovative practices that extend the dignity and access privilege affords can be extended through thoughtful synthesis of theatrical understandings of power and practical management techniques. This work is easier if academics come to the table with critical analysis coupled with suggestions for action. Sitting comfortably in a place of critique, attending conferences and putting together job application packets and dropping in now and again to touch base with research participants whose lives we study is a failure of the academy.

My accusation is by no means limited to CAR scholar-practitioners. Academics of all backgrounds owe our research subjects committed, sustained engagement with an eye towards providing useful tools for transformation of the problems we study. To not do so is an insult to those who have made time and space in their lives to provide us data.

While these goals are large, complicated and daunting, our approaches don't have to be. Start with what hurts the most; the work that sparks your passion is likely the work that will heal your heart and transform the lives of others who will intrinsically know you are speaking from authentic experience. Trust your training; you put in countless hours learning from ridiculously smart people with lots of wisdom. Rest soundly in that fact. Build a team of rivals, and listen to your critics. Take what strikes you as credible, discount the rest and move forward. Remember that you are not a bad person; you will encounter accusations of racism, tokenism and earn your share of bad press. If people in power are throwing accusations, you're on the right track.

Above all else, remember that transformation cannot happen without action. Reflect on your practice, use adaptive management techniques to course-correct, but don't get paralyzed by over-analysis. From time to time you will fail (sometimes badly) and it will suck (sometimes a lot), but press on. Inaction over fear of failure is an abdication of our responsibility as scholar-practitioners. That's the only way to transform your organization, our field, and— hopefully— our world. I hope "the big takeaway here is that the best way to is simply be more intentional about the actions that we're taking to

do the work. Is the work actually drawing in more people of color? Is the work actually

focused around sustainable change? If those answers are yes, then the story is going to

naturally evolve" that your work is inclusive and transformative (Field notes March 1,

2017).

Stop doubting, and start doing.

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BIOGRAPHY

Elizabeth Degi DuBois is a legislative strategist and public policy expert with more than a decade of experience guiding organizations dedicated to addressing gender-based violence, civil rights, and reproductive justice. Elizabeth graduated from American University in 2005 with a BA in Print Journalism and received her MA in Sociology from George Mason University in 2012.

Elizabeth currently serves as the Executive Director of the Eos Initiative, an organization she founded with her friend and colleague Christy A. Zlatkus, Esquire, to reform family law proceedings that endanger survivors of intimate partner violence. Elizabeth also provides direct services for survivors as a private trauma coach, and provides subject matter guidance to organizations supporting people experiencing trauma. More information about her current work is available at EosInitiative.org.

Over the course of her career, Elizabeth has served in executive leadership of numerous non-profits, and has been a consultant to organizations including the UNICEF, USAID, and U.S. government contractors on a range of issues related to gender-based violence and women's empowerment. Between 2016 and 2018, Elizabeth was instrumental in the passage of eight pieces of legislation related to education and civil rights in Maryland. In 2018, she partnered with members of Baltimore City Council to garner national press attention of a heating crisis that left an estimated 60 African-American majority schools without heat, forcing Baltimore's mayor and Maryland's governor to take action. In 2017, Elizabeth played a key role coalescing community advocates to secure an unprecedented $100M commitment from state and local legislators to fund a massive budget gap that jeopardized over 1,000 teacher jobs within Baltimore City Public Schools.

Along with Dr. Sandra Cheldelin and Dr. Leslie Dwyer, Elizabeth spearheaded the creation of the George Mason University Center for the Study of Gender and Conflict, where she served as the founding Executive Director between 2013 and 2015. She was a US Department of State Fellow at the Faculty of Sociology at National Research University— Higher School of Economics in Moscow, Russia in 2012.

Elizabeth's work has been published in numerous trade outlets, as well as peer-reviewed publications including *Advances in Gender Research*, *Empowerment in Practice: Strategies and Outcomes*, and *Women's Political Leadership Monograph*.

Elizabeth lives with her family in Washington, DC. She is prone to bragging about her kids to relative strangers, and is obnoxiously competitive at chess.