Race, Racism, and Baltimore's Future:
A Focus on Structural and Institutional Racism

Structural Unrest Power Society Race Experiences
Diversity **Racism** **Justice** Urban
Prejudice Police Trauma Change Jobs Hopkins Student
Profiling Institutional Hope Crime History **Black**
White **Latino** Privilege Solutions Redlining
Community Housing Future Blame System Colorblind
Youth **Baltimore** Class Health Education
Forgiveness

Panel 4:
Racism and Policing

#SDH2016

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Introduction

After the death of Freddie Gray on April 12, 2015, and the protests and demonstrations that shook the city soon after, Baltimore became a symbol of racial strife and inequity and gained the media attention of not just the United States but the entire world. This was not news for the people of Baltimore or for many of the organizations that work tirelessly toward positive change in this city. To many, the death of Freddie Gray did not come as a surprise. To them, inequitable treatment of young, black men was nothing new; and it certainly was nothing that they had not heard, witnessed, or personally experienced. With the whole world watching, this tragedy brought determination; a determination that his death was not in vain, that the spotlight would not go away, and that together, through galvanized momentum, something would be done.

On April 25, 2016, over 700 people came together to attend the 5th annual Social Determinants of Health Symposium on **Race, Racism, and Baltimore's Future: A Focus on Structural and Institutional Racism**. The symsposium was hosted by the Johns Hopkins Urban Health Institute and the Office of Provost. Attendees were a diverse group from the Baltimore area and beyond. Twenty-one invited speakers ranging from research and legal experts to leaders from non-profit community organizations spent the day in an intense discussion of race and racism in Baltimore. They participated in four panels, sharing poignant anecdotes about their personal experiences and presenting their research, all offering suggestions for ways forward.

This year, for the first time, the symposium also facilitated small breakout sessions in an effort to turn discussion into action, as tangible goals are necessary for making progress in Baltimore.

Speakers participated in four panels sharing expertise on:

1. overcoming structural racism,
2. how racism affects health,
3. how racism, racial segregation, and the education system are connected, and
4. racism and policing.

The goals of this symposium were to:

1. reiterate how salient structural racism is in the lives of people in Baltimore City,
2. acknowledge structural racism as a critical public health concern, and
3. critically assess the changes that we can make to reduce structural racism in our personal lives and in the institutions where we work.

Freddie Gray's death and the events that followed brought determination to the event—a determination that his death was not in vain, that the spotlight would not go away, and that together, through galvanized momentum, positive change would be made.

This report summarizes key lessons learned and challenges as discussed by the symposium speakers. Additionally, successful Baltimore City organizations are highlighted throughout.

Panel 4: Racism and Policing

Disparities in policing are a symptom of structural racism

Keynote Speaker: **Sherrilyn Ifill**, President and Director-Counsel, NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.

Discussants: **Deborah Peterson Small**, JD/MPP, Executive Director and Founder of Break the Chains, JHSPH Post-Doc Fellow

David O. Fakunle, BA, Drug Dependence Epidemiology Training Program, Department of Mental Health, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

Moderator: **Daniel W. Webster,** ScD, MPH, Director, Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Policy and Research, Deputy Director for Research, Johns Hopkins Center for the Prevention of Youth Violence

Historical Context for Racism and Policing

late 18th century

In the **late 18th century**, the emergence of a semi-formal, organized police force can be traced to slavery, in an effort to control the slave labor population that in some cases equaled or surpassed the size of the master class.[33] These slave patrollers had the authority to physically punish runaway slaves, and whippings and extremely violent acts were not uncommon.[33]

late 1860s

In the **late-1860s** legislation was passed, starting in Mississippi and South Carolina to enforce vagrancy and loitering, but became known as Black Codes because despite being "racially neutral," they essentially created a set of legal tools for continued subordination of blacks to white economic power.[33]

1877

In **1877**, Jim Crow Laws were created in the South, which were a series of elaborate regulations to govern black life in shared public spaces, and to reduce interactions between the races.[33] Formal police systems, as well as the general white public, were responsible for upholding the formal and informal social order.[33] Police brutality was often used to punish subordination.[33]

"I struggle when I have to tell my son to bow his head, to avert his eyes, to close his mouth. He should be able to walk up to the other man and look him square in the eyes and say to him, I am James Edward Paige the third and I am not your target practice. But I have to tell him, don't say anything son. Just come home and give me a hug and tell me about your problems and fears. But just always come home."

James E. Page

1900-1920s

After World Wars I and II, there was a surge of black migration to Northern industrial cities occurred, yet as the black population grew, so did tools and means of racially segregating them.[33]

After race riots broke out between **1900-1920** federal policies played a significant role in encouraging white flight to the suburbs and restricting African Americans to the cities.[33]

This is important because legalized housing discrimination had a profound impact on the police. Moreover, the police were responsible for upholding and enforcing these laws.[33]

It has been hypothesized that as a direct result of the housing segregation laws, racial minorities became viewed as objects of law enforcement and social control, rather than as citizens who are entitled to civil protections.[33]

It is believed that these laws, and the environments where police were bound to uphold order "set a pattern for police behavior and attitudes toward minority communities that has persisted until the present day."[34]

1973-1992

The War on Drugs was declared by President Nixon in **1973**, and re-dedicated in **1982** by President Reagan.[35]

Although these policies are racially neutral on their face, racial disparities in drug-related arrests intensified during the war on drugs.[33]

According to Tonry,[36] in **1976** 22% of individuals arrested by police were black and 77% were white, but by **1992**, 40% of the arrests were black and 59% were white.

Notably, during these years 82% of the population was white, while only 12% of the population was black.[36]

Policies implemented in the War on Drugs included stop and frisk, where people could be stopped based on an officer's reasonable suspicion, but were predominantly conducted in impoverished black and Latino communities.[36, 37]

These stop and frisk policies lead to psychological violence and increased risk of physical and sexual violence, and arguably frayed relationships between civilians and police.[35]

2010

In **2010**, Congress passed the Fair Sentencing Act (FSA).[38]

2011

In **2011**, the U.S. Sentencing Commission voted to retroactively apply the new FSA guidelines to individuals sentenced before the law was enacted.[38]

Baltimore City Events

1942

In **1942**, Thomas Broadus, a black soldier was killed by white officer, Edward Bender who shot him when he ran from him after trying to get a cab after going to see Louis Armstrong with his friends on Pennsylvania Avenue.[24] Broadus was the second African American that Edward Bender had killed, but charges were dismissed.

prior to 1966

Prior to **1966**, African American officers were limited to foot patrols as they were barred from the use of squad cars. These officers were quarantined in rank, barred from patrolling in white neighborhoods, and would often only be given specialty assignments in positions in the Narcotics division or as undercover plainclothes officers.[39]

1990s

In the **1990s**, Baltimore City Council members instilled "zero-tolerance policing" in Baltimore City, which lead to mass arrests for minor infractions and severe "community frustration" according to Ms. Kumar of American Civil Libertties Union, who was quoted in a 2015 New York Times article, titled "Baltimore's Broken Relationship with Police."[40] These "zero-tolerance policies" are interrelated with police violence against black adolescents and adults in the United States.[35]

1942

In **1942**, a peaceful March in Annapolis occurred where more than 2,000 protesters convened while Carl Murphy, Lillie May Jackson, Juanita Jackson Miller, Edward Lewis, and W.A.C. Hughes met with Governor O'Conor to investigate police administration in black neighborhoods, and request that he appointed black uniformed policemen, a black police magistrate, and an additional place policewoman.[24]

His response was noncommittal; instead of doing as asked, he appointed five blacks and thirteen whites to an Interracial Commission to Study Problems Affecting the Colored Population.[24]

1968

On **April 4, 1968**, Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated, followed by the Baltimore riots.

2015

On **April 12, 2015**, Freddie Gray was arrested by the Baltimore Police Department and later died in a hospital from spinal injuries.

Two recent laws have been passed that are hopeful for improving police and civilian interactions:

- Doubling the maximum awards in civil lawsuits by those injured by police.[40]
- Requiring the reporting of police-involved killings in Maryland.[40]

Current Status in United States, Maryland, and Baltimore City

Unfair Interactions by Police Because of Race – Results from a National Poll

In a poll of a nationally representative sample of 1,951 adults conducted by CNN in October of 2015, one in five blacks (19%), and 17% of Hispanics reported that they had had an "unfair" dealing with police in the past month. By comparison, only 3% of whites said that they had been treated unfairly.[5] When asked whether they believed that the American criminal justice system treats whites and blacks equally, only 38% of whites, 29% of Hispanics, and 9% of blacks said yes. When asked the same question but whether whites and Hispanics were treated equally in the criminal justice system, only 41% of whites, 28% of Hispanics, and 12% of blacks agreed.[5] These findings suggest that many citizens of color experience discrimination or unfair treatment at the hands of police.

Civilians Killed by Police Nationally

According to the Washington Post, between 2014-2015, 990 people were shot and killed by a police officer in the United States. Although approximately 13.3 % of the U.S. population is African American,[41] black civilians accounted for 40% (258) of police deaths.[42] There were 172 civilian deaths who were identified as Hispanic and 492 who were white. Civilians killed by police tended to be armed (783 had a deadly weapon), mentally ill (250 had signs of mental illness), and/or were fleeing, generally on foot (approximately 25%). Although the majority of individuals killed by police were white (492 deaths), only 32 white individuals, or approximately 7% of these individuals were unarmed. This is in contrast with 36% (93) of black men who were unarmed.[42]

As of August 29, so far in 2016, a total of 622 people have been shot and killed by police nationwide.[43]

Civilians Killed by Police in Maryland and Baltimore City

According to this same database,[42] between 2014-2015, there were 15 civilians killed by police in Maryland. Twelve of these (11 male, 1 female) were black civilians and 3 (all male) were white. All of the white civilians were armed, yet the three African American were not.[43] While there are various hypotheses as to why this is the case, a plausible conclusion is that police fear is greater when the civilian involved is not white.

In March of 2015, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Maryland published a report on deaths in police encounters in Maryland between 2010-2014.[44] During these years it was reported that at least 109 people died in police encounters, and that out of the 17 counties, 28% (31) occurred in Baltimore City. Sixty-nine percent (75) of the total deaths were black and forty-one percent (45) were unarmed. The most startling finding of this report was that the number of unarmed black civilians who died (36) was greater than the number of whites who died (30), armed or not[44]. After controlling for the size of black and white population, it was found that unarmed 10 black people died for every unarmed white person who died.

Disparities in Homicide Mortality in Baltimore City by Race

In 2013, homicide was the cause of 5.1 per 100,000 deaths nationwide.[45] In 2012, the homicide rate in Maryland was 7.0 per 100,000, compared to 33.6 per 100,000 deaths in Baltimore City, nearly five times higher. Black men have the highest homicide mortality in the city with 100.6 deaths per 100,000 residents, which is 11.67 times higher than the homicide rate for white males, at only 8.6 per 100,000 residents.[14]

According to Vital Signs 14, on Crime and Safety and the Baltimore City Police Department, there has been a substantial increase in homicides in the city. In 2014, there was a total of 211 homicides, which rose to 344 homicides in 2015.[3a] In 2014, the neighborhoods with the largest number of homicides were Southwest Baltimore (14), Cedonia/Frankford (11), Southern Park Heights (11), Dorchester/Ashburton (10), and Pimlico/Arlington/Hilltop (10).[3a]

High Crime Neighborhoods in Baltimore Face Substantial Deprivation

A recent analysis was conducted by Gomez, published in 2016,[46] on policing, community fragmentation, and public health in Baltimore City. Her analysis of six high police activity neighborhoods including Clifton/Berea, Madison/East End, Oldtown/ Middle East, Sandtown-Winchester, Southern Park Heights, and Pimlico, indicated that these neighborhoods, which are predominantly African American, have some of the worst indicators of deprivation. Six of these neighborhoods in Baltimore city are ranked in the worst quintiles 4th and 5th – on four out of the five socioeconomic indicators of depravation (households earning less than $25,000; population over age 25 with less than a high school diploma; gun-related homicide rate per 1000; percent of adult population on probation). Additionally, five out of six ranked in the worst quintile for infant mortality and life expectancy.[46]

According to a 2016 report by Milam et al,[47] two communities in Baltimore stand out due to their high violence. Specifically, Park Heights has a rate of 160 homicides or shootings per 100,000 residents and Southwest Baltimore at 180 per 100,000 residents.[47] These numbers are staggering by any measure.

> "Had Freddie Gray lived, what were his chances for a full and filled life? There are other Freddie Grays out there that we are not talking about, simply because they are alive. But we have not been asking what their lives would have been like."
>
> *Sherrilyn Ifill*

Narrative from Sandtown-Winchester

Unequal Protection

An analysis of incident reports, interviews, and testimonials of police misconduct as told by citizens living in Sandtown-Winchester published by the No Boundaries Coalition, reveals detailed reports of distrust and unfair treatment. After the death of Freddie Gray and the subsequent protests, residents of Sandtown-Winchester discussed differential levels of police protection, and a notable number of foot patrols to protecting areas such as the Inner Harbor far in excess of that in Sandtown. The interpretation was articulated by one neighborhood resident: *"The city was pretty much saying Sandtown doesn't matter; the Black neighborhood can burn. They were protecting the white people, the richer people. Made it clear to me that even though we have a Black Mayor, Baltimore is still a very racist city."*

Unequal Treatment

In this same report, the War on Drugs was discussed by Sandtown residents as creating an "us against them" mentality where police officers acted aggressively and invasively when policing drugs. In discussions of police strategies and tactics, and out of 57 interviews, key informants identified 67% of the stops as unwarranted (not prompted by a legitimate public safety crime), and 86% as excessive (resulted in a response disproportionate to what they expected or was necessary). During stops, informants described physical violence (96%), long periods of detention (46%), and abusive, demeaning, or subordinating language (57%). The report explained that this created a "cycle of antagonism, recrimination and resentment."[48]

Changing Help-Seeking Behaviors

According to research by Freudenberg et al,[49] for some populations who have experienced excessive violence or coercion at the hands of police, it changes help seeking behaviors. In particular, it may cause hesitation to summon police assistance in cases of civilian-on-civilian violence, because there is a fear that the police could escalate the situation.[50] This has public health consequences for safety and has an impact on health in Baltimore City. Ultimately, if black Americans know that that policies have racial bias, they can become deeply disillusioned by their current situation and according to Bobo and Thompson, "undermine a readiness for positive engagement with the police in the court."[50]

Lessons Learned

- **We must work together to improve racism in policing.**

  Panelists discussed the need for open and honest discussion. David Fakunle asserted that sometimes people become defensive when discussing racism because they don't want to be seen as a racist. He said how we must try to relate to each other, understand each other's point of view, and be accepting of ourselves when we make mistakes. Understanding our differences allows us to see humanity in one another and see others as worthy of kindness and respect. Ultimately. we must not be afraid to bring our biases to light, as it is the only way we can learn from each other. After all, panelists agreed that racism is bad for everyone, not just people of color. We cannot be a fully functioning, diverse, multicultural, thriving community when racism is present.

- **When investigating inequity in police treatment, people are asking the wrong questions.**

  Sherrilyn Ifill discussed how in the moment of crisis, and largely in the death of unarmed black men at the hands of police, people become fixated on what she believes to be the wrong questions. Though Ifill believes that focusing on moments where officers deliberately choose to treat someone differently because of their race is important to call out, she argued that what is more important is focusing on the broader social, political, and organizational cues that instruct the officer's actions. Yes, it is important to understand the circumstances that led to the death of Freddie Grey, including understanding the actions of the police officers who interacted with him, but she also calls on us to understand the lack of opportunities that Freddie Grey had for housing, employment, and schooling.

- **Black lives matter in life, not just in death.**

  The death of Freddie Grey was a topic that arose and was discussed by the panelists often. The main sentiment was that Freddie's life should have been important before he was killed. Only seeing black lives as worthy of action in their death is a very painful message for African Americans and people of color and is dangerous for well-being, health, and internalized racism.

- **Police brutality and an unequal justice system is about a failure to see humanity in others.**

  Although it was emphasized that we must focus on changing the systems that allow racism in policing to occur, it was also emphasized by panelists that we must remember to put a face to the work that we are doing. We must not lose touch of why we are seeking to change policy, because ultimately it is the people that we are changing. As David O. Fakunle stated: *"We need to acknowledge our differences and the differences in our experiences… in that, we can recognize our humanity. Sometimes we lose touch of this when we think about policies and laws because we are thinking about what we have to put on paper."*

"Some of the best allies that I have ever had in my life were people that did not know (about their personal biases) and it was not about putting them down, it was about teaching them and making them learn. I don't blame you - you have been taught just how I have been taught. So let me show you."

David O. Fakunle

Challenges

- **There is sometimes innaccurate portrayal of people of color in media.**

  Racism is embedded in American culture and is internalized by even our youngest members. Images and ideas of black inferiority and white superiority are commonplace in American culture and are perpetuated in almost every form of media. Thus, our society embeds within us a culture of racism, which leads to bias, stigma, and stereotyping.[20]

- **There is a need for more data around police-involved killings.**

  Panelists discussed the lack of transparency that occurs when police harm people. Although there has been substantial community mobilization and commitment to making the facts known about the current status of police interactions in Baltimore City, there continues to be a glaring lack of data and evidence on police interactions or deaths at hands of police.

- **The black community does not trust the police and they are afraid.**

  In a powerful personal narrative, Dr. Page discusses his fear in raising a black male child in today's society. He discusses how he has been followed in stores and had guns pointed at him by police. Dr. Page's narrative helps us understand that these fears are not unique to him, but rather a common African American experience.

- **Police brutality and oppression are traumatizing for the black community.**

  In discussions about police brutality and oppression for African Americans and people of color, panelists discussed the negative mental and physical health impacts that result from the cumulative and unpredictable trauma that occurs from unfair treatment.

Examples of Successful Baltimore Organizations

- **No Boundaries Coalition** has brought together community members from Sandtown, Druid Heights, Upton, Madison Park, Penn North, Reservoir Hill, and Bolton Hill to address issues in racial and economic segregation in Baltimore City.
  www.noboundariescoalition.com

- **Safe Streets** is a Baltimore City Health Department community engagement program that utilizes community mediators to intervene in potentially violent situations to reduce violent crime before police have to respond.
  http://health.baltimorecity.gov/safestreets

- **Baltimore Racial Justice Action** is a Baltimore City organization that works against racism and other forms of institutional oppression through consulting, coaching, and assistance to organizations and the community.
  www.bmoreantiracist.org

"The myth of black inferiority and the myth of white superiority has caused structural trauma, it has caused economic trauma, mental trauma, and psychological trauma. And we really don't emphasize that enough."

David O. Fakunle

Who we are

Established in 2000, the UHI serves as an interface between Johns Hopkins University and the Baltimore community in which it resides. Together with its university and community partners, the UHI explores ways that the research, teaching, and clinical expertise of the University can be better harnessed for the benefit of the residents of Baltimore.

Our Mission

To serve as a catalyst that brings together the resources of Johns Hopkins Institutions with the City of Baltimore, to improve the community's health and well-being, and in so doing serve as a model of community-university collaboration regionally and nationally.

We would like to acknowledge the contributions from the Community-University Coordinating Council and community planning meeting participants in helping to shape the symposium.

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