*Urban Social Work, Volume 1, Number 1, 2017*

# Social Work Analysis of Social Change Reflecting Renewed Plans for Effective Urban Community Policing in Baltimore City

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Background: Despite the plethora of social ills which came to bear on the death of Freddie Gray, the charm of Baltimore City is being revitalized through social work liberation-collaborative efforts toward effective urban policing. Objective: Social workers, community leaders, faith-based groups, gang members, fraternities/sororities, and businesses united under the auspices of one banner to strengthen Baltimore's promising future. Methods: Using the strengths, prevention, empowerment, and community conditions (SPECS) framework, an urban community policing agenda was developed. Findings: This United Baltimore adopted the slogan of "One Baltimore" and generated a comprehensive agenda with 9 specific endeavors. Conclusion: Social workers in particular are called to action given their justice-oriented professional ethics to assist in Baltimore City's recovery and to become catalysts of positive social change.

**Keywords:** urban community policing; social injustice; social work liberation; person-in environment; SPECS framework

Over the last few years, the relationship between police and African American communities across the country has become strained as more citizens have begun to document the unjustified deaths of African Americans. Although many residents witnessed police misconduct, it was considered a conjecture until people started to record police abuse on their digital devices and phones. In less than a few minutes, video recordings of Michael Brown's shooting in Ferguson, Missouri, in August 2014; Eric Garner's asphyxiation in Staten Island, New York, in July 2014; Samuel Dubose's shooting in Cincinnati, Ohio, in July 2015; and Tamir Rice's shooting in Cleveland, Ohio, in November 2014 were accessible on the Internet and viewed by millions of people across the nation and the world. Subsequently, the police departments' actions were scrutinized, and many communities called for the resignation of the officers involved based on public opinion formed through technology-facilitated access to information. This contributed to the development of a historic mistrust of law enforcement among many African American communities across the United States (Pratt-Harris et al., 2016;

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http://dx.doi.org/10.1891/2474-8684.1.1.5

Hall, Hall, & Perry, 2016). It seemed apparent that after each killing of an unarmed African American, the minority communities grew increasingly weary of the police and tensions within the community became volatile. Grassroots organizations such as "Black Lives Matter" began to take root and organized passionate protests after each shooting (Edwards, 2016). According to Lowery (2016), African Americans account for only 13% of this country's population but represent 24% of those men fatally shot and killed by police officers. An investigative report on the Baltimore City Police Department concluded that the Baltimore City Police Department "engages in a pattern or practice of discriminatory policing against African Americans" (United States Department of Justice (USDOJ; 2016, p. 47). According to USDOJ (2016), Baltimore City police officers made 520 stops for every 1,000 African American residents between January 2010 and June 2015, compared to making 180 stops for every White resident in Baltimore. Baltimore City was primed for an explosive reaction as years of police harassment of poor and primarily minority citizens under the unlawful police practice of "Zero Tolerance" resulted in a broad mistrust of police officers by the community they are sworn to protect and serve. In fact, riots in American cities since the mid-1960s have been mostly associated with conflicts between African Americans and police (Skogan, 1995).

In April 2015, the mission of the Baltimore City Police Department was called to question as Freddie Gray, a young African American man, died at the hands of those who have taken an oath to serve and protect. Consequently, as a symbol of disgust toward decades of experience with bullying, civil rights violation, and inhumane treatment of citizens in Baltimore and across the nation, cars were set on fire, neighborhood stores were looted and burned, and rocks and bottles were thrown at police officers. It was clear from the voices on the front line, inclusive of social workers, faith leaders, police, neighborhood residents, students, gangs, and rioters that the death of Freddie Gray and the devastating aftermath contributed to a cumulative bubble waiting to burst. As a result of the persistent injustice exposure in this community, feelings of disempowerment were fostered; requiring collaborative support from helping professionals (Kegan, 1994).

This article is a reflection on the dichotomous past, present and future of Baltimore within the framework of the collective voices of those on the front line, in hope of shedding light on a community capable of changing the game not only for its residence but for a nation. The One Baltimore Project was developed as an attempt to mobilize liberation-collaborative efforts, to rebuild individuals and communities that were affected by social injustices that sparked a series of passionate protests, meanwhile developing an urban community policing agenda that connected urban communities and the police. This community project included individual and social community collaborations geared to address pervasive systemic issues that have been affecting Baltimore City for decades. Discussion is offered on the development of the One Baltimore Project taking into consideration the use of the strengths, prevention, empowerment, and community conditions (SPECS) framework and social work liberation processes.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Urban Community Policing

Urban community policing is the ability to control and manage urban spaces influenced by several forces: high level of inequality; intensive commerce and trade;

multiple presence of banks and other institutions that secure cash and valuables; substantial financial and commercial infrastructure; ample road networks and port facilities; increased poverty; and population concentration and density or urban space; all of which contribute to the collective rate of crime and violence (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2013). The United Nations Population Division (2008) has projected that by 2030, there will be more people in developing countries living in urban areas than rural areas. In the United States, more African Americans populate 15 out of the 20 largest urban areas—New York (61%); Philadelphia (53%); Boston (46%); Baltimore (51%); Houston (49%); Chicago (54%); Detroit (60%); San Diego (56%); Phoenix (45%); and Los Angeles (40%); relative to all other race populations (United States Census Bureau, 2010). This process of urbanization is understood in terms of high population density that includes diverse populations that live in close proximity to each other, which increases the opportunity for intergroup and cross-class conflicts, including conflict with police officers (Montgomery, 2008; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2013).

These urban environments face many policing challenges that are oftentimes misinterpreted or misunderstood. It has been consistently demonstrated that to build effective urban policing policy, the contributions of the different forces as well as the collaborative efforts of leaders in the community and in different organizations must be engaged. The community crime prevention movement of the 1970s seemed to be the catalyst in the emergence of the idea of urban community policing. It was believed that both the police and community members were equally responsible for the safety of the community. Crime cessation was considered a joint effort of police and community members with the police leaders responsible for taking the lead in promoting crime prevention programs. This began the increased presence of neighborhood watch, citizen patrols, and crime prevention community education programs. According to Skogan (1995), community policing should follow these general principles:

1. Community policing relies on organizational decentralization and a reorientation of patrol in order to facilitate two-way communication between police and the public.
2. Community policing assumes a commitment to broadly focused, problem-oriented policing.
3. Community policing requires that police are responsive to citizen demands when they decide what local problems are and set their priorities.
4. Community policing implies a commitment to helping neighborhoods solve crime problems on their own, through community organizations and crime prevention programs (p. 87).

It is through such principles that urban community policing emerged with the development of programs and policies in many cities across the United States. Pate and Annan (1989) reported that in 1988, the Baltimore City Police Department conducted a 1-year field experiment in three areas of two neighborhoods in the city—one predominantly middle-class and African American and the other predominantly blue collar and white. The three experimental areas were randomly assigned to receive either foot patrol, "door-to-door ombudsman policing," or no new police programs (conventional patrol). The results proved that both foot patrol and door-to-door ombudsman policing significantly improved community members' evaluations of police effectiveness and behaviors and community members' perceptions of safety and crime.

Nonetheless, the increased density in the Baltimore City population defines the lives of community members through their neighborhoods and contributes to the challenges in current urban community policing. In understanding urban community policing in Baltimore City, one must understand the multiplicities of forces that exist. To frame the present reality of Baltimore as a multidimensional city, the Seminole work by Chestang (1972) suggested that the social conditions that characterize the urban African American experience are social injustice, societal inconsistency, and personal impotence. Each social condition can have devastating effects on a person's identity as an individual, a member of a family, or a member of a community. For instance, social injustice is the denial of legal rights and a violation of social agreements that are implicit in laws. When the police officers violated Mr. Freddie Gray's rights, it reverberated not only within the victim but also within the community. As a group, the community became defiant and objectionable toward the litany of wrongs committed by law enforcement under the facade of justice. Social inconsistency is the realization that there is indeed a gross disparity between word and deed. In Baltimore City, social inconsistency led to frustration, confusion, and hurt among individuals who were deprived of the rewards that come from adhering to equally prescribed societal values, beliefs, customs, and norms. Likewise, personal impotence is a feeling of powerlessness and the inability to change one's circumstance despite one's best efforts. The crucial conditions in Baltimore in many ways seemed to have hindered the community members' character development and subsequently their well-being in the community.

## Social Justice

To assist Baltimore City community members with their feelings of social injustices, social inconsistencies, and personal impotence surrounding the criminal justice system, it was determined that a social justice modality needed to be developed. Rawls (1971) describes social justice in terms of the distribution of material and nonmaterial benefits and burdens available to all members of a society based on social cooperation; known as *distributive justice*. In this context, social justice does not only refer to equal distribution of economic goods and services (material benefits) but also in terms of the social production of goods such as access, opportunity, self-respect, and overall well-being (nonmaterial benefits). Social work, as a justice-oriented profession, promotes distributive justice recognizing that it is these social goods (self-worth, self-esteem, liberty, access, opportunity, and self-respect) coupled with economic goods that equate to a valued life—those who are denied access to this valued life is also denied social justice (Wakefield, 1988). The social work profession has a proven commitment to social justice. However, because social justice is a multidimensional concept, social workers are required to use multifaceted responses in an attempt to improve the overall health and well-being of individuals, families, and communities exposed to injustice (Reisch, 2002).

## Social Work Liberation

The process of social justice for Baltimore City community members' interaction with the criminal justice system warranted a need for including social work liberation principles. Social work liberation refers to the process by which social workers partner with clients through a collaborative process to expand their view of their problems into an ecological context. In so doing, clients begin to shift their

narratives from being subject-focused toward being more object-focused. “Subject” in this context refers to “those elements of our knowing or organizing that we are identified with, tied to, fused with or embedded in” (Kegan, 1994, p. 32). “Object” are “those elements of our knowing or organizing that we can reflect on, handle, look at, be responsible for, relate to each other, take control of, internalize, assimilate, or otherwise operate upon” (Kegan, 1994, p. 32). Persons exposed to social injustices oftentimes express themselves as “subject-to” their injustices and disempowerment. Those persons who are able to move from subject-focused to object-focused narratives shift from an avoidant response to a more active and empowered response to those injustices. Object-focused narratives expand the worldview of people and allow them to identify new and existing resources in their environment they did not use before, which in turn activates their social activism (Kegan, 1994).

The role of the social worker in the liberation-collaborative process requires that the social worker possess competence not only in the psychobehavioral effects of social injustice but also the socioeconomic effects (Martinez & Fleck-Henderson, 2014). Social workers must have a clear understanding of what is required to promote social change in a community. Prilleltensky (2003) reported that those in the helping professions should confront the socially unjust practices and focus on the transformation and liberation as well as address the institutions that support such social injustices. The collaborative method allows for those who are directly affected by the social injustices to work directly with those who possess specialized knowledge in social change modalities—for example, social workers. The well-being of persons affected by social injustices are considered at the micro, mezzo, and macro level—from the individual to the community, from the psychological to the political (MacKellar, 2009). This type of approach allows for social workers to join the broader movement for social change and social justice and transition from being the detached observer to becoming connected to community efforts that mobilize opposition to social injustices (Murray & Campbell, 2003). This process allowed for the social worker to engage community members in the collaborative process of developing an urban community policing agenda in Baltimore City.

## Person-in-Environment: The SPECS Framework

Prilleltensky’s (2005) SPECS framework is a strength-based community-oriented approach that promotes personal, relational, and collective well-being. This is an appropriate framework to examine the development of an urban community policing agenda in Baltimore City through the collaborative efforts of community leaders, faith-based groups, gang members, social workers, fraternities/sororities, and businesses. The core of the framework is based on social justice principles geared at altering unfavorable social conditions at the micro, mezzo, and macro level by applying community based participatory approaches along with action-based research ventures. Prilleltensky and Nelson (2002) proposed that the concept of overall health and well-being must be understood in terms of the manifestation of the aspirations, personal, relational, and collective needs of both individuals and communities. Based on this premise, the person-in-environment (PIE) concept is considered, examining both the micro, mezzo, and macro influences of social injustices. At the micro level, the SPECS framework identifies the well-being of an individual based on available opportunities to promote empowerment through

individual choice. Competencies of well-being are realized through levels of self-actualization, self-empowerment, self-determination, and self-efficacy. At the mezzo level, well-being is negotiated at the relational level between individuals and groups. The competencies of well-being are determined by the ability to engage in democratic decision making while demonstrating respect for diversity, mutual support, and collaboration. At the macro level, well-being is displayed through social policies and social movements that produce new institutions and/or enhance current institutions. The competencies of well-being is realized through the delivery of equal access to high-quality resources geared at creating a safe environment for all citizens through the development of an inclusive urban community policing agenda.

## DICHOTOMOUS CITY CONCEPT

### Baltimore Past

The collective and cumulative struggles of the past came to bear on the day of the unrest in April 2015, as social workers, community leaders, and clergy walked arm in arm on the streets of Monroe to North Avenue in an effort to deescalate and end the scrimmage between the Baltimore City Police Department and rioters. In context, the cries of unrest were bigger than a group of young people engaging in deviancy and the death of one man in the hands of police. In fact, Baltimore City's inception in 1796 is intimately linked to the migration of African Americans from the Deep South in order to flee the atrocities of antebellum and Jim Crow slavery legislation. Yet, in Baltimore, from the very beginning, African Americans were unjustly forced and subjected to racial segregation and its accompanying negative socioeconomic consequences (Scharf, 2010). Rone's (2015) comprehensive evaluation of Baltimore City reveals that in its early history, Baltimore was a booming city known for producing and manufacturing steel, textile, and automobiles. However, after World War II, the city experienced a slow decline of deindustrialization that resulted in massive layoffs and "White flight," White European Americans fleeing into surrounding counties, thus resulting in the city consisting of predominantly impoverished African American residents (Table 1).

Pietila (2010) affirmed that African Americans were unjustly subjected to a long history of gentrification, de facto public housing demolition, redlining, patronage politics, restrictive covenants, disinvestment and displacement of communities, police zero tolerance policies, local war on drugs legislation that led to mass incarceration, tax increment finances to private developers, closing of recreation centers, and containment policies that set the stage for the present unrest. Rone (2015) further attested that the mentioned policies and practices paved the way toward the present unrest indicative of substandard educational achievements, high teenage pregnancy, illegal substance use, employment and health disparities, and high violence and crime rates. With the historical atrocities of these policies and practices, Baltimore City was on a trajectory to complete splintering and disintegration. This was evident to front line individuals as they marched and embraced young people with tears coming down their eyes and liquor on their breath, seemingly as a means to kill some of the pain. These were not just the tears of these young people but were ancestral and multigenerational tears that ultimately were the tears of those on the front line. Residents and front line individuals were historically a part of this

**TABLE 1. Demographic Characteristics of Baltimore City, Maryland, in 1960 and 2010**

| | 1960 | | 2010 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Characteristic | No. | % | No. | % |
| White | 610,608 | 65 | 183,830 | 30 |
| Black | 325,589 | 35 | 395,781 | 64 |
| Other category | 2,827 | 0 | 41,350 | 7 |
| Male | 452,606 | 48 | 292,249 | 47 |
| Female | 486,418 | 52 | 328,712 | 53 |
| Younger than 18 | 315,584 | 34 | 133,560 | 22 |
| Age 18–34 | 200,406 | 21 | 181,674 | 29 |
| Age 35–64 | 338,167 | 36 | 232,915 | 38 |
| Age 65 and older | 84,867 | 9 | 72,812 | 12 |
| Percent below poverty line | 212,154 | 23 | Not available | 23 |
| Total population | 939,024 | 100 | 620,961 | 100 |

Table adapted from *Data Dictionary: Census 1960 (US, County & State)* retrieved from http://www.socialexplorer.com/data/C1960CountyDS/metadata/ and *Data Dictionary: Census 2010* retrieved from http://www.socialexplorer.com/data/C2010/metadata/

collective decline and disintegration but were now summoned to be accountable for the challenges of the present time.

As a response to a declining trajectory, in 1970, Mayor William Donald Schaffer hired four marketing executives to change the devastating image of Baltimore City. As a result, Baltimore was called "Charm City." Monies and resources were primarily poured into the inner harbor as a tourist attraction but neglecting urban communities, thereby the sentiment of Baltimore as "a tale of two cities" (Brown, 2015). Undoubtedly, the events of April 2015 were culminating effects from a past left unchecked and business unfinished. The social worker working directly with the One Baltimore Project interviewed several persons during the community unrest, and they articulated this "tale of two cities" in different viewpoints: P. Johnson, an elder member of the community responded, "This unrest didn't just happen—it was in the making for some time now. Police brutality has gone unchecked for a long time" (personal communication, April 28, 2015); M. Henry, a member of a neighborhood gang stated,

> How can you close recreation centers and activities for young people and not have violence? Reason we are even in gangs is because they are family to us . . . we have methadone centers all in our communities. We've always had to fend for ourselves. (personal communication, April 28, 2015)

T. Funderburke, a community activist claimed,

> Baltimore has always been a tale of two cities . . . all the money has always gone to building downtown while our communities have gone unnoticed . . . we have vacant houses and drugs all over the place. Our families have been in trauma for some time

> now in our city. Our children are getting the hand-me-downs of a problem that's been going on for a long time . . . we want all of you adults to stop blaming us for what' s happening—it's been happening. (personal communication, April 28, 2015)

Evidently, the challenges in "Charm City" have been simmering for some time. Among the many responsibilities of the social worker currently engaged in the One Baltimore Project is to understand the psychobehavioral and socioeconomic effects described by persons in the community in order to engage them in the decision-making process (Prilleltensky, 2003).

## Baltimore Present

The dichotomous past of Baltimore City have set the stage for present polarization and inconsistency in rules and laws and practices applied to the mainstream community versus those in urban communities (Rone, 2015). Even though the six officers in the Freddie Gray case were found not guilty, according to the recent U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) report (USDOJ, 2016), the psychological consequences of a polarized system of disparities and privileges have been far and overreaching not only in systems on the macro level but also on the micro and mezzo levels. As proposed by Krishnan (2015), communities that are excluded can experience stressors that are expressed negatively whereby intragroup and intergroup conflict arises.

Through the lens of a polarized system and devastating social conditions perpetuated by years of urban decay, social injustice, and government corruption, Baltimore is the nation's 24th largest city with a population of approximately 621,342 people. African Americans constitute 64% of Baltimore City population and 30% of the state's population. About 23% of Baltimoreans live below the poverty line compared to about 9% in the state of Maryland. The median household income is $40,803 which is significantly below Maryland's median household income of $72,999. The unemployment rate in Baltimore is 8.1% compared to Maryland's 5.4% and the national rate of 5.5% (Baltimore Neighborhood Indicator Alliance–Jacob Francis Institute, 2013).

The community where the Freddie Gray uprising occurred, known as Sandtown-Winchester, is a 72 square block community in West Baltimore, Maryland, known by more than 10,300 residents as "Sandtown." In Maryland, Sandtown is considered the highest incarcerated community and accounts for $75 million of the State's correctional-spending. The incarceration rate is 3,074 per 100,000 persons compared to the national incarceration rate of 455 per 100,000. The juvenile arrest rate is 211 per 100,000 persons compared to the national juvenile arrest rate of 39.4 per 100,000 persons. The median household income is $24,000 with more than half of residents aged 16–64 years being unemployed and a quarter of the residents receiving public assistance. The life expectancy is age 68 years, and 19 out of every 1,000 people in the area die between the ages of 15 and 24 years. The rate of elevated blood lead levels is three times that of the rest of Baltimore (7.4%). Fewer than 40% of those living in the Sandtown neighborhood have a high school diploma, likely because almost half of all students (49.3%) are chronically absent (Prison Policy Initiative, 2015).

Despite the present despair in many of its neighborhoods, Baltimore City as a collective is also filled with hope. As social workers and faith leaders marched on North Avenue (Sandtown-Winchester Community) and knelt down between the

oncoming police department in militarized riot gear and the rioters, both sides recognized the need for mediation, thus allowing these front line social workers and faith leaders to reach out to the young people involved in the riot. Community leaders, families, neighbors, gang members, and rioters came together at a nearby Church to discuss the problem and to proceed with not only healing but also finding solutions to a way forward. Many who gathered expressed being tired of the injustices in Baltimore City, but that the riot facilitated local and national attention to an age-old problem. In fact, K. Henson expressed,

> The thugs in the city are not us but the conditions that gave rise to these problems. As gangs we called a truce to go after the police for disrespecting us all this time and we were not the ones rioting, most came into the city to do that. (personal communication, April 29, 2015)

Y. Thompson, a long-standing resident of the Sandtown-Winchester community, reported,

> Our public schools are dilapidated and we still expect our kids to learn in those kinds of environments. Community policing as a policy never worked in Baltimore because for the most part it was based on state and federal grant funding and was never relational—when the funds ran out so did the program. Local city politicians are also part of the problem in legitimizing and somewhat continuing the dismantling policies of the past. (personal communication, April 29, 2015)

The sentiments of many in the community was that many individuals become so inundated in their own individual lives and in their own silos that the collective issues are ignored. When this occurred, it became the role of social workers to increase the competencies of individuals toward mutual support and collaboration (Prilleltensky, 2005).

During this time of recovery through mutual support and collaboration, many front line individuals continue to engage the urban communities of Baltimore continuing the quest to revitalize the real "Charm of Baltimore City"—enhancing the strength and resilience of internal community support, that is, people coming together to clean up and hold each other accountable. Parades in communities, churches opened for services in the streets, fraternities, sororities, and students from all backgrounds lend support during cleanup—music and dancing were once again heard in the streets of Baltimore. Peaceful protests and marches commenced concerning Black Lives Matter; communities demanded that political leaders be held accountable; and the human spirit triumphed—a spirit that would be imperative to resolve the present crisis. It was time to find restitution for issues that resulted from a horrendous past and to secure a brighter future for all of Baltimore City.

Indeed, the "communal spirit" that existed at the aftermath of the riot was a familiar spirit for those growing up in the streets of Baltimore, who enjoyed the spirit of mutual support and collective uplift that gave rise to empowerment, strength, and resiliency. These communal aspects have certainly mitigated past and present unrest in Baltimore. Moreover, the presence of social workers and other helping professionals within these communities was vital in taking the necessary steps to alleviate "community trauma." The city being governed by predominantly African American leadership and the involvement of the State and U.S. DOJ was a strength and an opportunity to make right what has been wrong for quite some time. The collective support of other surrounding communities, universities, social

workers, and faith leaders acknowledged that the real work happens in the present with the need to maintain the restoration of Baltimore City as front and center on the agenda of decision makers to develop effective and culturally responsive urban policing. The well-being of the citizens was displayed through social policies and social movements that were developed as new institutions and organizations arise (Prilleltensky, 2005). It was determined that to build effective urban policing, the contributions of all stakeholders (e.g., community members, police officers, social workers, academicians, grassroots leaders) must be understood to allow for implementation of collective insights into current urban community policing.

Consistent with the SPECS framework at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels, a coalition of social workers, faith leaders, educators, and community organizers joined to build urban community policing interventions at a relational and policy level with the police department and community at large (Prilleltensky, 2005). One of the first initiatives agreed on was cultural competency training at both a departmental and village (community) level. At the police departmental level, the cultural competency training was held at Morgan State University, the premier urban institution of higher education in Maryland and a historically Black college and university (HBCU). The training focused on content that spoke to six generations who currently live in Baltimore with an emphasis on interacting with the largest generation—millennials (Cross, Bazron, Dennis & Isaacs, 1989; Gambone, 2002). In summary, several of the officers indicated that

> this was one of best trainings they had because it specifically provided them with needed information to know who they were actually policing and the kind of conditioning that shaped their experiences as well as understanding that just because ethnic groups share a common race, it doesn't mean that they are culturally monolithic.

Also collectively, other veteran officers felt,

> The training was okay but felt the community should be present in the trainings along with the officers. However, they did understand the trainers' perspective that the trainings should be done in modules so as to bring both groups together at a point that their voices can be heard and significant solutions can be developed by each group.

As a second initiative, a conference with the community (e.g., gang members, clergy, educators, community groups, students, political leaders) was held subsequent to the cultural competency training with the police. The conversations at the conference generated additional information to inform the urban community policing agenda. In general, participants from both groups (police and community) affirmed the need for the cultural competency training; however, there are unresolved and unfinished "trauma" within the community that must be processed and addressed prior to gathering with police officers to generate much needed policies. Both groups agreed that policies need to be put in place, especially a "consent decree" as recommended by the DOJ report (Matthew, 2016).

## To the Future With Baltimore

A call to action has been issued for a "One Baltimore Campaign Strategic Plan" to move the city forward in the development of an urban community policing agenda that is effective and culturally responsive. Although still in its infancy, many contend

that this plan cannot be "for optics" only; it must have deepening resolve. Although the Freddie Gray case concluded with zero convictions of police officers, the plan for a "One Baltimore" forges ahead, and the voices on the front line suggest the infusion of the following recommendations into the "One Baltimore" plan:

1. Invest time, energy, and resources in nonpartisan political organizing around an action-oriented agenda negotiated within the African American communities of Baltimore—all of the community representatives should be at the table. Call for an agenda to be determined through what the corporate and academic community call focus groups, but in organizing language is called "listening campaigns" where community members discuss what they see as the major problems facing a neighborhood or city and then interpreted into winnable issues that can be measured to determine when they have been achieved.
2. Negotiate with Baltimore's corporate (business) community for more job opportunities for the unemployed and persons transitioning from criminal justice contact—defined as lifetime arrest, probation, parole, or incarceration, who have demonstrated their willingness to engage in lawful employment and/or training opportunities that will lead to jobs. The predominant case study in Baltimore is Johns Hopkins Hospital/University, which is the largest employer in Baltimore and also the corporation that employs the most persons transitioning from criminal justice contact. Hopkins has taken on the task of employing persons transitioning from criminal justice contact that can be effectively reintegrated into society if given a chance for "living wage" employment. Baltimore's civic employment entity—the Mayor's Office of Economic Development—must provide training that leads to available jobs in growth industries while offering wrap-around services to those struggling to overcome addiction and other issues encountered by persons transitioning from criminal justice contact.
3. The faith-based communities must invest in using their facilities to provide out-of-school-time gathering places for youth. Such facilities can form both the trusted value-centered backdrop and daily programming to provide tutoring, recreation, and homework assistance to young people struggling in the current public school system. This has been implemented previously in Southwest Baltimore under the grant funding of The Family League of Baltimore, which allowed faith-based entities to serve as after school "community resource centers" (funds were discontinued during the recession).
4. Drug treatment on demand must be available 24 hr a day if the city wants to seriously address the drug problem in Baltimore. Community groups must begin to urge the philanthropic community to partner in creating a pool of resources that could then be used to leverage additional resources from both the city and state to create the facilities and hire the staff necessary to seriously address the drug problem the city faces.
5. African American communities can begin to strategically be involved in leading the effort to redevelop communities uptown to ensure that neighborhood redevelopment does not devolve into regentrification but will be a process that recognizes the need for affordable housing for young families, especially given the Empowerment Zone resources given to the West Baltimore community during the Clinton Administration in the 1990s but only to result in developer prosperity while leaving the communities still ravaged (Jacob France Institute, 2005).
6. HBCUs, which were extremely integral in developing safe educational climates for African Americans and were at the forefront of political protest must be revisited to continue to use research and internship/practicums as the impetus for the development of public policy and to fuel employment opportunities in the city's future leadership.

7. Baltimore City Police Department community policies must be revisited in a strategic way to reexamine community policing and to ensure proper planning and appropriate resources. Mission visioning must be clearer and resemble more relational departmental implementation and evaluative measures along with performance indicators. Efficiency must begin to build community relations without officer mandatory rotations into other communities.
8. Social entrepreneurship (partnership between social work and business professionals) must be seen as a viable solution to community and city uplift but also as a mechanism of returning citizens' (RC) employability. Entrepreneurial training has been seen as an evidence-based valuable tool to use in an attempt to increase the employability of RCs while potentially lowering recidivism rates and affecting Baltimore City's current unemployment rates; entrepreneurial programming would assist RCs with employment and entrepreneurship sustainability. Returning Citizens Entrepreneurship Program (RCEP) would target individuals who are challenged in entering the workforce and engage them to enter a high growth business area such as technology. RCEP provides an innovative and socially responsive program that intends to impact the business ecosystem of Baltimore City (Archibald, Muhammad, & Estreet, 2016).
9. Social workers, both locally and nationally, and other helping professionals must be engaged as a more strategic and critical part of the healing process, specifically as a resource to be deployed for emergency and crisis management. It was clear during this process that many community leaders were not as prepared to disseminate community trauma skill sets. This work could potentially be deployed with the assistance of the National Association of Black Social Worker's local chapters.

## CONCLUSION

A special call to action is issued to social work as a profession nationally and globally, as the following implications are offered. First, social work organizations are in prominent positions as first responders in navigating and implementing meaningful crisis and emergency management resources. The SPECS framework and an ecological perspective (micro, mezzo, macro) can be used to address the urban policing problems that affect the health and social functioning of residents in Baltimore City as well as urban centers across the nation and globally (Prilleltensky, 2005; Reisch, 2002). Second, community social workers can assist in community organizing and urban policing program implementation by providing professional expertise in communication and resources for primary prevention at multiple levels including individuals, groups, and communities across the country and worldwide. These partnerships could potentially help alleviate historical distrust among people of color and the community justice systems. Finally, social workers can help community and professional practitioners find common ground and a safe environment for progress that psychosocially supports individuals, families, and vulnerable populations during times of crisis and trauma thus increasing the quality of their overall health and well-being. This allows for an increased willingness to engage in the urban community policing agenda.

The death of Freddie Gray mobilized and created a platform for the city of Baltimore to reflect and ponder its dichotomous life story of strength, hope, and resilience in the midst of struggles, injustice, and social unrest. This tragedy was a

call to action and an opportunity to shed light on a city best described by Dubois (1969) as, "There are two thoughts, two souls and two unreconciled strings trapped in one dark body, whose dogged strengths alone keeps it from being torn asunder" (p. 45). Embracing the strengths, finding a balance, and navigating the dichotomous past and present of Baltimore City is a shared responsibility on which an abundant future through effective urban community policing can be built with support from competent social workers.

The essence of Baltimore reflects a dichotomy of strengths and survival in spite of overwhelming struggles with social and racial injustice and the common place of civil rights violation at the hands of those sworn to serve and protect. A city beloved by its residents for its charms, yet historically suffered from social unrests and systemic injustices. As a "Charmed City" known for its clean block campaigns, community and neighborhood celebrations, and operation champ cultural arts street festivals in the 70s, Baltimore now lays in juxtaposition. With its remarkable history and an uneasy present reality culminating in the untimely death of Freddie Gray and the riots that followed, the acknowledgement of perpetual unjust and inhumane treatment of especially African American men and young men in Baltimore marked the initiation of a social liberation. To promote social work liberation, the SPECS framework affords social workers the competencies to engage with the socioeconomic and the psychobehavioral aspects of community members at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels to address urban policing issues (Prilleltnesky, 2005). This process fosters a liberation that stimulates development of new organizations and institutions that advance urban policing programs that address not only the psychological effects of social injustices but also the political and social oppression that is associated with social injustice (MacKellar, 2009). This in turn transforms feelings of disempowerment where community members feel "subject-to" their injustices to a more empowered and active response to the social injustices of the criminal justice system. This facilitates change in social conditions that is deliberate and in a structured format that can be replicated to other communities nationally and worldwide.

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