ABOUT LBS

**Mission**

Leaders of a Beautiful Struggle (LBS) is a grassroots think-tank which advances the public policy interest of Black people, in Baltimore, through: youth leadership development, political advocacy, and autonomous intellectual innovation.

**Vision**

We seek to radically change the discourse around local and regional politics by injecting community voices into political conversations through policy research, advocacy, and community organizing from a grassroots perspective.

We will remain unbeholden to any foundation, nonprofit, or political party; as an unapologetically Black independent group of concerned leaders engaging the public policy arena. As our knowledge, collaborations, and support grow our vision will evolve as well.
LEADERSHIP TEAM

ADAM J. JACKSON
Chief Executive Officer

NADIRAH SMITH
Chief Operations Officer

DAYVON LOVE
Director of Public Policy

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Letter from the CEO

Peace family,

Thank you for engaging Leaders of a Beautiful Struggle’s paper - “When Baltimore Awakes: An analysis of the Human & Social Service Sector in Baltimore City”.

LBS takes its position as Baltimore’s grassroots thinktank very seriously. We are a collaborative of local thought leaders and advocates working to make Baltimore a better place to live and thrive for our community. Whether in Annapolis, at City Hall or just working around the city, we see our role as advancing the collective well-being of the Black community by advocating in the policy arena. We do so with an unapologetically Black political perspective and African-centered cultural framework.

As you begin reading this, you may think it is a traditional “white paper” that most traditional thinktanks produce. This is not a white paper. White papers just give you information. This is a Black Paper – because we want to spur you into action. The purpose of this paper is to not just give you information, but to also make arguments and set the stage so that you – the reader – are armed with the tools to advocate for yourself and your community from an African-centered perspective. This is an intentional, culturally grounded, polemic on the state of the human and social service sector in Baltimore.

This paper is not passively presenting objective information so that you will casually reach a conclusion. We think that it is vital for Baltimore’s future that Black people take back the thought leadership typically assigned to white mainstream institutions. Our methodologies and practices should be the center of gravity for the services administered to our people – both in the private and public sector. Black practitioners, thought leaders and service providers are often relegated to the margins of discourse when it comes to these questions. It is our hope that this paper elevates and centers Black cultural and methodological perspectives as it relates to the human and social service sector.

Please share this widely with your networks so that our people can organize to take resources, build institutions and sustain an infrastructure that serves the interest of Black people. Thank you for your continued support!

Sincerely,

Adam J. Jackson
Chief Executive Officer
Leaders of a Beautiful Struggle
Letter from the Author

Greetings,

In my last book, *Worse Than Trump: The American Plantation*, it was important that I emphasized the plantation metaphor. Even though America has moved on from chattel slavery, the political economy of America operates under the same slave plantation framework. Hubert Henry Harrison, who was a major intellectual force of early 20th century Pan Africanism, and the New Negro Movement, wrote a book in 1917 called “Negro in the Nation” that best describes America’s political economy.

He says that “the chattel slave was compelled to work by physical force; the wage slave is compelled to work by starvation.” We currently exist in a global a system of white supremacy that has mechanisms of brute force that maintain the social order, but is mostly managed and maintained by starvation. White society has ownership of and political power over the capital that sustains the livelihood of the majority of people on this planet. When someone behaves in ways that are disruptive to the global political order, their livelihood is often attacked as a way to marginalize substantive opposition. This dynamic is an extension of the plantation framework that served as the basis for the development of the American social and political order. This dynamic exists in a variety of iterations in various institutions around the world. As a Black person in Baltimore, who is seeking to build independent Black political power this dynamic, is especially important in the context of navigating the political terrain.

The human/social service sector is an extension of the American plantation here in Baltimore that uses starvation as its way of maintaining the system of white supremacy. It is important to develop an understanding that the systems that are professed to help us are actually set up to maintain the plantation. Until we come to grips with this reality we will continue to allow white institutions to use the public sector to finance Black people’s collective dependence on white saviorism. While there are many other issues that impact Black people’s collective condition in Baltimore, it is this white saviorism that contributes to Black people being understood as problems to be fixed, instead of the solution to our own problems.

*“When Baltimore Awakes”* is an essay that contains our most comprehensive critique of the human/social service sector in Baltimore and how it perpetuates the system of white supremacy. Our hope is to provoke conversation that can stretch the human/social service sector beyond the white supremacist institutional arrangement that defines it.

Sincerely,

Dayvon Love
Director of Public Policy
Leaders of a Beautiful Struggle
Executive Summary

“The white man had found a poetry in which there was nothing poetic. The soul of the white man was corrupted, and, as I was told by a friend who was a teacher in the United States...

The presence of the Negroes beside the whites is in a way an insurance policy on humanness. When the whites feel that they have become too mechanized, they turn to the men of color and ask them for a little human sustenance.”

- Frantz Fanon

The human/social service sector has a tremendous impact on the lives of the masses of Black people. It is an industry that is central to shaping the services that are provided in our community to address our societal challenges. It forms the institutions that produce professionals that provide those services. Most importantly, it shapes the socialization of those who are recipients of services and the approaches to human development by which professionals are trained. The power that this industry has to perpetuate the system of white supremacy and to undermine our collective ability to facilitate our independence is enormous.

Frantz Fanon, in the beginning quote, articulates the underlying ethos that animates the human/social service sector. Black people serve as meal tickets, and the existential sustenance for a white society that is structured on the exploitation and dehumanization of Black people. This dehumanization and exploitation happen in a variety of ways. In the context of the human/social service sector, Black suffering is trafficked in ways that reduce Black people to a helpless underclass in need of white saviors and their Black appendages to civilize us. We are often reduced to being pet projects of colonial paternalistic fantasies of white academics and professionals. We are a source of “human sustenance” that provide these professionals gratification that fuels their white supremacist missionary zeal. This zeal is accompanied by resources that allow these missionaries to shape the nature of the organizations that serve Black people.

There are three significant dynamics that exist in the mainstream of the human/social service sector that perpetuate the system of white supremacy. First, is the narration of Black people as inherently pathological. Many of the narratives and representations of Black people in this industry are mired in notions of inherent pathology. The nature of the research and policy proposals that are advocated for regarding this sector represent Black people as problems to be fixed. This pathologizing of Black life shapes the manner in which services are provided to Black people. Services that are provided to Black people that are framed from the vantage point that Black people are problems to be fixed perpetuates the internalization of Black inferiority.

The second major dynamic in the human/social service sector is the marginalization of culturally affirming research and methodology that exists in bodies of work produced by independent Black intellectual formations. Very few, if any, of the leaders of major institutions that are leaders in the industry have any familiarity with the works of Black scholars and practitioners whose work is rooted bodies of work outside of the white corporate liberal academic mainstream. This means that there are solutions to the problems that
we face that are being pushed off of the table because it is not recognized as legitimate by the gatekeepers of the industry. Third, people who are being served by the services offered by this industry are not reflected in the leadership of these institutions. This arrangement renders Black people merely as objects of other people’s thought experiments, and not as human beings who are capable of being the drivers of the institutions that govern our lives.

What is fundamentally missing in the major reports, policy briefs, conferences, and general dialogue about issues pertinent to the human/social service sector is an acknowledgment of the white supremacist methodologies that are the basis for the discourse and practices in the field. Methodologies are inherent in our intellectual and professional socialization. The ways that we are socialized shape the methodologies that are available to us in pursuit of producing positive outcomes in the community. The methodologies that are inherent in the socialization of professionals and leaders in the sector have embedded in them the elements that were mentioned earlier about the ways that white supremacy show up in the sector. Unmasking the way that mainstream institutions create learning environments that equip professionals in the sector with methodologies that perpetuate white supremacy is an essential task if there is a genuine interest in improving the quality of life of Black people.

Programs like Thread and The Baraka School, policy proposals around major education reform in Baltimore (the Kirwan Commission), and institutions like Johns Hopkins University (particularly its School of Public Health) are examples of institutions that constitute the mainstream elements of the sector that are the drivers of the system of white supremacy. These are institutions and initiatives that project themselves as a force for good for Black people in Baltimore. This is not an indictment on the intentions that these institutions/initiatives have toward Black people. This paper is an indictment on the white supremacist methodologies that these entities have institutionalized and continue to perpetuate.

Many methodologies and tools can be found in bodies of work produced within Black communal intellectual formations that are autonomous and have been systematically marginalized from the mainstream. The American collective consciousness is rooted in white supremacy and has resulted in the belief that methodologies that draw from the cultural and intellectual resources of Black people (particularly those that have not been co-signed by an entity that is perceived to be credible by the white-dominated mainstream) are inherently inferior, less rigorous and amount to “old wives’ tales.” The reality is that the white-dominated mainstream in the human/social service sector has demonstrated its incompetence regarding the issue of improving the quality of life of Black people. Even though this is a provocative statement, there are two reasons why it is a necessary pronouncement. The first is to combat the arrogance that exists amongst the white-dominated mainstream in the industry that has used its perceived legitimacy to dismiss the validity of African-Centered (and other culturally affirming, culturally-based) methodologies.

Just as those of us that use methods that draw from the intellectual and cultural resources of people of African descent are often forced to defend the legitimacy of our work; those in power, given the collective failure of their institutions and the methodologies produced by the training those institutions provide, should be faced with the burden of having to defend the legitimacy of their approach. Secondly, the bold statement of the incompetence of the white-dominated human/social service sector is necessary to open up space for the exploration of methodologies that are not seen as legitimate by the mainstream to discover solutions to problems that have been difficult to address under the dominant paradigm.
We are declaring war on the intellectual and methodological architecture of the human/social service sector. The architecture of this sector is steeped in white supremacy. We can no longer tinker on the edges of the mainstream, nor can we continue to allow resistance to the system of white supremacy to be absorbed into the existing institutional arrangement. The acknowledgment that we live in a society structured on the system of white supremacy requires an intentional confrontation with the intellectual and methodological status quo that are the legatees of a society responsible for the attempt at metaphysical destruction of African people.

The attempt to annihilate Black people from the pages of human history has buried the tools of social transformation beneath the pathologies that are projected onto us. It is time to bring those tools to light in order to build a society that can affirm Black life while destroying the 500-year white supremacist assault on the humanity of Black people as it has manifested itself in the human/social service sector in Baltimore. This paper will substantiate the claims that are made in this introduction.
Section 1: The System of White Supremacy

White supremacy is the system (often rendered invisible) that organizes every aspect of civil society. It is not simply a series of beliefs or bigoted behaviors, but a societal organizing framework set in motion by the project of European colonization.

Charles Mills, in his book *The Racial Contract* on page 1, describes the nature of the system of white supremacy:

> White supremacy is the unnamed political system that has made the modern world what it is today. You will not find this term in introductory, or even advanced, texts in political theory. A standard undergraduate philosophy course will start off with Plato and Aristotle, perhaps say something about Augustine, Aquinas, and Machiavelli, move on to Hobbes, Locke, Mill, and Marx, and then wind up with Rawls and Nozick.

> It will introduce you to notions of aristocracy, democracy, absolutism, liberalism, representative democracy, socialism, welfare capitalism, and libertarianism. But though it covers more than two thousand years of western political thought and runs the ostensible gamut of political systems, there will be no mention of the basic political system that has shaped the world for the past several hundred years. And this omission is not accidental.

> Rather, it reflects the fact that standard textbooks and courses have for the most part been written and designed by whites, who take their racial privilege so much for granted that they do not even see it as political, as a form of domination. Ironically, the most important political system of recent global history—the system of domination by which white people have historically ruled over and, in certain important ways, continue to rule over nonwhite people—is not seen as a political system at all. It is just taken for granted, it is the background against which other systems, which we are to see as political, are highlighted.

> - (Mills 1997)

There is no legitimate way to tell the history of the world over the past 500 years without a discussion of the centrality of Europe’s (and America by extension) attempt to dominate the world. And yet as Mills points out, the system of white supremacy is often a footnote in our discussions in the public mainstream. Although there has been an increase in the willingness to talk about race in the general public and in the human/social sector in Baltimore, conversations about the system of white supremacy remain controversial.
Sabina Vaught, in her book *Racism, Public Schooling, and the Entrenchment of White Supremacy* on page 26, describes this dynamic in a school district that was the subject of her critical ethnographic study. She observes:

> Within Gillborn’s framework, education policy (and I would add, practice) that perpetuates racial inequity is by definition White supremacist. It is a form of hegemony or domination that, like all others, must protect and promote itself (Gramsci 1971). The value of this term as a conceptual frame for educational research is that it identifies practices of racial inequity not singularly as the oppression of people of Color by individual, zealous Whites, but as structural efforts to maintain White racial domination. Most importantly, I privilege this analytical frame because in Jericho several participants did name White supremacy, but were silenced.

> For example, Velma Smith, the principal with whom I worked most closely throughout the year, directly addressed White supremacy in the context of an antiracism district training, and was both publicly and indirectly disciplined, in the most Foucauldian sense. She was accused of Nazism and McCarthyism, among other things, simply for using the term. Several White teachers insisted publicly that she only be allowed to use the term “racism.” For these teachers, racism was comfortably individualized, while White supremacy implicated entire systems and collectives. White supremacy is a concept and a frame that emerged from Jericho itself and most accurately captures the complex relationships and systems that define policy and practice there.

- (Vaught 2011)

The use of the term white supremacy is the most analytically precise terminology to describe the structure of our society. It puts in context the importance of understanding the ways that white colonialism and enslavement have structured the foundation of this society. It is also important to use the term white supremacy because it “identifies practices of racial inequity not singularly as the oppression of People of Color by individual zealous whites, but as structural efforts to maintain White racial domination.” Vaught mentions the experience of a woman who used the term white supremacy during a district training in New York and was punished for it. It has been our experience at LBS that our use of the term white supremacy has created similar levels of discomfort. Just as Velma Smith was accused of “Nazism and McCarthyism,” similarly, LBS has been characterized as hating white people. We have had several people tell us that they were told we hate white people.

Fortunately, we are an independent political organization, which gives us the freedom to speak clearly and unapologetically about the world in which we live. To describe our critique of white supremacy as hatred of white people is an exercise in deflection that makes the conversation about white people’s feelings of guilt or insecurity, instead of the conversation about how to address the system of white supremacy. Malcolm X, in a January 1965 interview, said the following in response to an interviewer asking him if he had been a teacher of hate:
Robin DiAngelo in his 2006 article “White Fragility in Racial Dialogues” says:

“I think that the guilt complex of the American white man is so profound, until when you begin to analyze the real condition of the Black man in America, instead of the American white man eliminating the causes that create that condition, he tries to cover it up by accusing his accusers of teaching hate, but actually they’re just exposing him for being responsible for what exists.”

- (X 1965)

The marginalization of the term white supremacy in the white-dominated and controlled space like the human/social service sector is a move that is designed by the leadership in this industry to “deny the significance of their racial positions.” The accusation that LBS hates white people is as Malcolm described, an attempt by leadership in the human/social service sector to keep us from exposing “him [and her/them] for being responsible for what exists.”

The statement that we live in a society structured on the system of white supremacy is a sociological fact. In every arena of civil society, in every meaningful measure of the quality of life, Black people are at or near the bottom, while white people are at or near the top.
Figure 1 - Real Median Household Income by Race and Hispanic Origin: 1967 to 2015, United States¹

Figure 2 - Infant mortality rate per 1000 live births, 2014, United States²

Figure 3 - Persons in Poverty by Race/Ethnicity, 1974-2011, United States

Figure 4 - Homeownership by Race/Ethnicity, 1976-2012, United States

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3 U.S. Census Bureau Historical Poverty Statistics - http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/data/historical/people.html, Table 2
**Figure 5 - Median Net Worth of Households by Race/Ethnicity, 1984-2011, United States**

![Image of Median Net Worth of Households by Race/Ethnicity, 1984-2011, United States]

**Figure 6 - Life Expectancy at Birth, by Race/Ethnicity, 1960-2010, United States**

![Image of Life Expectancy at Birth, by Race/Ethnicity, 1960-2010, United States]

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Figure 7 - Incarceration Rates, 1960 and 2010, United States (inmates per 100,000 U.S. residents)\(^7\)

The 2008 “More in the Middle” Dashboard Report, published by Associated Black Charities, provides Baltimore specific data that is consistent with the national data.

**Figure 8 - Percent of Families Below Poverty – Total, Baltimore**

![Figure 8](image)

**Figure 9 - Percentage of Persons Receiving Income from Interest/Dividends - Total, Baltimore**

![Figure 9](image)

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Figure 10 - Percent Unemployed - Total, Baltimore

Figure 11 - Percent of Homes Valued Over $90,000 - Total, Baltimore
There are only two logical conclusions to draw from the data presented. Either Black people are inherently inferior in ability and character, or there are societal forces that are designed to produce collective socio-economic advantages for white people. The argument that Black people are inferior is ridiculous and will be addressed later on in this paper. If the idea that Black people are inferior is taken off of the table, then the only logical conclusion that we are left with is that there is a system that is producing outcomes that in every major index of quality of life is most accurately described as white social, political and economic supremacy.

The system of white supremacy is so ubiquitous that it should be alarming that it is not a central aspect of the research, practice, policy work, and dialogue in the mainstream human/social service space. White supremacy is the system, instituted through a process of hundreds of years of European colonization, that organizes all other systems of power. Whether we are talking about sexuality/gender, class, ability, religion, etc. these are power dynamics that are organized by the system of white supremacy. Nah Dove in an essay she wrote entitled “Africana Womanism: An Afrocentric Theory” says:

“The use of a cultural analysis enables one to trace the social and ideological construction of race, gender, and class structures to their European antecedents. At the same time, it becomes evident that these structures’ exploitative characteristics demonstrate their centrality to the operation of Europeanized societies and the process of Europeanizing societies.

Although there is a recognition of the complex interplay among these unequal and unethical power relations, primacy is given to race as a social construct because racist oppression/white supremacy for African women, men, and children takes precedence over and affects the natures of gender and class oppressions. However, it will be also argued that European patriarchy underlies the Western social inequalities that affect African women and men in equally perverse ways.”

- (Dove 1998)
All aspects of the dominant culture rest on the cultural foundation of European domination. Culture is not merely the artifacts, cuisine, and customs of a people. Culture is an interpretive lens that is used by a people to both navigate the world and produce a fully functional, self-sufficient collective identity. Embedded in culture are notions of child-rearing, technologies of governance, approaches to health care, etc. that can be utilized to solve human problems. We live in a society that normalizes European cultural ideals and projects them as universal. Greg Thomas, in his book *The Sexual Demon of Colonial Power* on page 4, says:

"A basic anthropological hierarchy cultivates the will to universalize for the benefit of white Western dominance and hegemony. The "master race" of Europe is canonized as the paragon of social and biological development inasmuch as it pretends to embody certain universal laws of human civilization. Still, the claim (or presumption) of universality is far more than a mere ethnographic assertion; it reflects a greater epistemological assertion which by no means requires cross-cultural historical verification. An immediate, transcendent approximation of objective reality is asserted in a manner that represses the ideological agenda of such a posture.

Some supernatural force of reason is supposed to provide access to some truth whose scope is boundless in both space and time. Partiality and relativity are anathema to this perspective, which presumptuously claims to cover all people and all places beyond all conflicts of culture and history. The only earthly intelligence that need be consulted is the hyper-rationalist authority of Europe. A crude particularity is projected as the primordial identity of its colonized subjects. This is how the West is enshrined as the veritable essence of human being, human knowledge, human progress, human civilization."

- (Thomas 2007)

The projection of European (American) culture as universal perpetuates the invisibility of white supremacy. This invisibility produces tremendous conceptual blind spots for those unable to see the system of white supremacy around them. Mills asserts in the previous quotation the fact that white supremacy goes either unmentioned or under-theorized in academic discourses on the political history of the last several hundred years; this demonstrates a fundamental misunderstanding of the world that we live in. In fact, Mills goes on to say on pages 18 and 19 of *The Racial Contract*:

"Thus, in effect, on matters related to race, the Racial Contract prescribes for its signatories an inverted epistemology, an epistemology of ignorance, a particular pattern of localized and global cognitive dysfunctions, producing the ironic outcome that whites will in general be unable to understand the world they themselves have made.

Whites signatories will live in an inverted delusional world, a racial fantasyland, a "consensual hallucination," to quote William Gibson. There will be white mythologies, invented Orient, invented Africa’s, invented Americas, with a correspondingly fabricated population countries that never were, inhabited by people who never were—Caliban’s and Tontos, Man Fridays and Sambos."

- (Mills 1997)
This inverted epistemology that Mills refers to produces many of the racist distortions of Black people and the historical amnesia that produces policies and practices that perpetuate the system of white supremacy. What is often difficult for well-meaning white people to understand is the idea that they have internalized notions of white supremacy. To be clear, I am not saying that most (white) people have conscious beliefs in white supremacy. There are certain narratives, common experiences, and popular media that are typical elements of being socialized in America, that taken together cumulatively result in subconscious beliefs of white supremacy and Black inferiority (unless intentional efforts are made to challenge these notions within ourselves).

Many Americans are not exposed in their formal education to examples of high levels of intellect and technological advancement of Ancient African civilizations (i.e., C-sections, architecture, navigation, medicine, etc.). Many of us that enter professional establishments like universities or medical centers observe a pattern where the professional staff is more likely to be white, and the service staff are more likely to be Black. The people that are often projected as recipients of social services are often Black. In many cases, when local corporate media report issues related to violence and crime, those images typically are of Black people. The American Revolutionary War and its violent opposition to British tyranny are often heralded as heroic, while violent uprising and attacks by Black people against American racist oppression are understood to be a sign of pathological violence, or just ignored altogether. The cumulation of these ideas and many others produce, almost unavoidably, subconscious beliefs in white supremacy and black inferiority. Asa Hilliard, Theresa Perry, and Claude Steele on page 96 of their book Young, Gifted and Black provide insightful commentary about the societal notion of Black inferiority in the context of public education:

“In the post-Civil Rights era the task of achievement for African-American youth is much more complicated. The idea of African Americans’ intellectual inferiority still exists as a part of the “taken-for-granted notions” of many people in the larger society, irrespective of political orientation. But at the same time there is the illusion of openness and opportunity.

A twenty Something Black woman who recently completed a Ph.D. from a competitive university was telling me why she really liked one of her professors. She said, “He is one of the few, no, maybe the only white professor I have had during my doctoral studies who didn’t automatically assume that because I was Black I was less than competent.” A seventeen year old female, who has participated in a city-to-suburb busing program since she was five years old, commented, “My teacher always tells me I am so smart, that I am not like the other Black students. They think that this is a compliment, that it will make me feel good. They don’t know that it would only make me feel good if I didn’t identify with my community, with Black people. Instead it lets me know that they think Black people as a whole are dumb. Every time they make statements like this, I feel bad about myself.”

Today, the ideology of Black intellectual inferiority is expressed not only in these kinds of interactions, but also vividly and constantly and with considerable force in the media, which inserts itself into all aspects of our lives. The ideology of African-American inferiority is perhaps more robust today, in terms of its impact of students, than it was in the pre-Civil Rights era.”

- (Perry, Steele and Hilliard 2003)
We cannot overstate the extent to which notions of white supremacy and Black inferiority have been baked into the collective American consciousness. Even though many of us have been exposed to images and narratives of Black individual success, these narratives perpetuate the societal notions of Black inferiority. Tom Burrell on pages 1-5 of his book *Brainwashed* he says:

“*The marketing of black inferiority and white superiority as building blocks for the founding of America is a chicken that has finally come home to roost. Now we must ask ourselves: did the world’s greatest brainwashing campaign work? Fast-forward 233 years. “Yes, it worked brilliantly.”*

...I can just hear the critics: “Whoa, whoa! Hold up, Burrell. Sure, there’s black negativity on a grand scale, but how can you say all Blacks are brainwashed to feel inferior when you just noted inspiring examples of prideful, positive, and progressive African Americans excelling and accomplishing historic feats?”

- (Burrell 2010)

Burrell continues:

“...Some prominent black achievers have actually opened their own Kool-Aid stands. They, too, consider themselves the “exception” and, in many instances- consciously or unconsciously- have begun to regard blacks of lesser social status or achievement as inferior. Ironically, in many ways, the progress paradox is an impediment to substantive collective progress.

...Regardless of our individual social, economic or media success, it has not affected the black bottom line. Therefore, though black progress is more visible today than ever before, I maintain that the unwritten, audacious promotion of white superiority and black inferiority was (and still is) the most effective and successful marketing/propaganda campaign in the history of the world. African Americans, no matter how savvy, educated or financially privileged, could not completely avoid the conditioning that resulted from increasingly sophisticated bombardment of subtle and not-so-subtle messages created to reinforce how different and inherently inferior blacks are when compared to whites.”

- (Burrell 2010)

The subtle and not-so-subtle messages that I mentioned earlier (regarding the high circulation of images/narratives of Black criminality and the omission of and lack of exposure to historical examples of technologically advanced African societies) are the components to what Burrell is referring to as America’s propaganda campaign to convince the world that America is largely free from systems of oppression. The logical conclusion is that if there is nothing fundamentally wrong with America and individual Black people are able to succeed, then there must be something inherently wrong with these poor Black people.

John Henrik Clarke, in his book *Notes on World African Revolution*, says that Europeans did not just colonize the world, but they colonized information about the world. The propaganda campaign that Burrell is talking about is a perpetuation of the colonization about information about the world. Dr. Clarke also says in his book that "if slavery is the historical baseline for one’s understanding of African people, then everything else
looks like progress." Given the centrality of the system of white supremacy and the notion of Black inferiority in American society, it is incumbent upon us to figure out the aspects of our socialization that reinforce white supremacy. As was mentioned in the first Charles Mills quotation, white people who are often the authors of canonical text in their respective fields omit conversations about white supremacy. Many of them just take for granted that this is just the way things are and proceed without much acknowledgment about how they may be unintentionally behaving as instruments of white supremacy. This is true of practitioners, scholars, and advocates in the human/social service sector.
Section 2: Black Pathology

There are three major dynamics that are prevalent in the human/social service sector in Baltimore that perpetuate notions of white supremacy and Black inferiority. They are: 1) The normalization of notions of inherent Black pathology; 2) The marginalization of methodologies that draw from the cultural and intellectual resources of bodies of work produced by autonomous Black organizations/formations; and 3) The leadership of these major human/social service institutions are not reflective of the communities that they serve.

Given the extensive commentary earlier in this paper regarding the ubiquitous nature of the notion of Black inferiority in the collective American consciousness, it is not necessary to make the case that notions of inherent Black pathology are prevalent in the sector. The case to be made is the specific manifestations and the impact of this phenomenon. One of the clearest manifestations of this dynamic is in the nature of the kinds of research that is prevalent in the field. There is a strong tradition of Black pathology being the center of the discourse that drives social science research. Douglas Davidson, in a 1970 article “The Furious Passage of the Black Graduate Student”, writes:

"...social scientist continues to write many volumes discussing the 'social pathology' of the Black community. Many of these liberal academic colonizers have felt that they were making a contribution to the Black community by informing white America of the plight of Black people. These white liberal colonizers' "do-gooder" volumes have the actual effect of reinforcing the negative beliefs, attitudes and practices held by the dominant racist white society;"

- (Davidson 1970)

In this passage, Davidson explains that the research often produced by institutions that claim to be concerned with improving outcomes for poor and working-class Black people reproduce notions of inherent Black pathology. There are many people in the human/social service sector that fit the characterization of a “do-gooder”; a person who believes that their research will help to produce solutions to the problems Black people face.

“Social pathology” as the first frame that is used to research Black people becomes the intellectual basis for the belief in notions of Black inferiority. Davidson’s use of the term colonizer is important here. Given the fact that there are not enough well resourced, independent Black research institutions that are able to be the drivers of mainstream social science research about Black people, this creates a context where the prevailing notions of Black inferiority will show up in the nature of the kind of research that is done on Black people (as opposed to with, or by, Black people) by white “liberal academic colonizer” institutions. People who are culturally, socially, and professionally outside of the community have been able to colonize the ideas that the community and larger public have about Black people. This includes Black people who are more connected to white social and professional networks than they are with the Black people who are typically served by the human/social service sector.
Andrew Billingsly, a Black sociologist, critiques the widely circulated, and in many mainstream sociological circles well regarded, 1965 Moynihan Report that offered a perspective on the condition of Black people during the 1960's. Billingsly says:

"It is nearly five years since the "Moynihan Report" concluded that the structure of family life in the black community constituted a "tangle of pathology... capable of perpetuating itself without assistance from the white world," and that "at the heart of the deterioration of the fabric of Negro society is the deterioration of the Negro community at the present time."

This was an incorrect analysis of the relationship between black families and white society."

- (Billingsly 1968)

To describe the Black community as a “tangle of pathology” can only make sense to a social scientist of Moynihan’s caliber in an intellectual environment that, as the earlier Davidson quote mentioned, produces “volumes discussing the ‘social pathology’ of the Black community” that has the effect of “reinforcing the negative beliefs, attitudes and practices held by the dominant racist white society.” The intellectual foundation not only has produced white social scientists and practitioners who believe in the notion of Black people being inherently pathological, but it has produced Black professionals that perpetuate this thinking and practice. Na’im Akbar on page 57 his book, Papers on African Psychology says:

“The formulations of such notable thinkers who have shaped the thought of Euro-American psychology such as Sigmund Freud (1953), G. Stanley Hall (1904), Carl Jung (1953), William McDougall (1908) and B. F. Skinner (1971) have all directly or indirectly asserted the superiority of European races over non-European races. Despite the diversity of the so-called "Schools" of Western psychology, they seem to merge unequivocally in their assumption of the Euro-centric point of view and the superiority of people of European descent. It is not surprising that the conclusions reached from the application of their concepts and methods have concluded the invariable inferiority of non-Caucasian peoples. The use of this Eurocentric reference point by non-European (Caucasian) observers has resulted in many non-Caucasian observers having become advocates of their own inferiority. It is for this reason that many so-called "black psychologists" have been identified with the same racist tradition that has characterized the majority of Western psychology and its research findings. Such findings have obsessively dealt with the alleged self-rejection, inferior intellect, defective families and contorted motivations of African Americans."

- (Akbar, Akbar papers in African psychology 2003)

This intellectual foundation that has produced research and professionals that perpetuate notions of inherent Black pathology has set the stage for the kinds of ideas that are prevalent in the media and inform public policy. Tommy Curry in his book The Man-Not says on page 113:
The term super-predator should be a familiar term used to justify the tough on crime policies (i.e., mandatory minimums, sentence enhancements, over-policing, three strikes) that has led to the proliferation of mass incarceration. This same logic of inherent Black pathology that has fueled mass incarceration is the central worldview that undergirds the research and the training protocols for professionals in the human/social service industry. The earlier Tom Burrell quote that describes the constant bombardment of negative images and narratives of Black people create a frame that reinforces the pathologizing of Black people that serves as a justification for the belief that Black people are inherently inferior. In fact, major leaders in the human/social service sector have access to platforms that allow them to perpetuate their white supremacist paradigm of human service. David Brooks of the New York Times wrote an op-ed praising Thread in July of 2018. He exalted Thread as a model for dealing with the challenges that are faced by American cities.
The constant bombardment of research and discourse that perpetuates these notions of inherent Black pathology create a context where those who observe and attempt to work in the Black community (including Black people ourselves) do not have the ability to see anything in the Black community but overwhelming pathology. Andrew Billingsly, in the same essay cited earlier, quotes the conclusions of a social scientist who spent time observing the Black community. Billingsly says:

“*This, nearly five years later, two white liberal social scientist- who call themselves “militant integrationists”- have published a book based on their observations during a nine-month sojourn in a black community (Etzkowitz & Schaflander, 1969). It includes a chapter titled “The Negro Ghetto Non-Family”; it perpetuates the incorrect analyses made so famous by Moynihan, and which has been thoroughly discredited by more careful social analysis. The authors state very candidly their own view and evaluation of black people: “It is our own belief that there are practically no pluses in Negro ghetto culture... We see nothing but bitterness and despair, nihilism, hopelessness, rootlessness, and all the symptoms of social dis-integration in the poor speech, poor hygiene, poor education, and lack of security resulting from a non-family background in which the stabilizing paternal factor is absent.”*

- (Billingsly 1968)

The belief that there are “no pluses in Negro ghetto culture” is a core belief of the human/social service sector in Baltimore. Two examples of this that are representative of the ideological and methodological mainstream in Baltimore are The Boys of Baraka and Thread.

The Baraka School was a school started in 1994. According to a February 7th, 2006 article in the Baltimore Sun, a group of principals wanted to create a program that relocated 5 to 10% of the most disruptive students. Robert “Bob” Embry, president of the Abell Foundation and businessman George Small who owned a ranch in Kenya, started the school.

The Sun article goes on to explain that:

“*Each year from 1996 to 2003, 40 or so boys, most of them from fatherless homes, volunteered to leave Baltimore to study at Baraka. There, the typical class size was seven, counselors could watch them constantly, and East Africa’s luminous skies, wild terrain and languid pace replaced the drug dealing and violence that formed the backdrop of their lives at home.”*

- (Pitts 2006)

There was also a documentary created in 2005 by white filmmakers called “The Boys of Baraka” which followed the life of a group of Black boys from Baltimore who attended The Baraka School. The Baraka School and the documentary are quintessential examples of the hegemony and normalization of notions of inherent Black pathology in the human social service sector. Before breaking down the elements of Black pathology that are central to The Baraka School and the documentary, it is important to make the case that this is not a random film that had a fringe listening audience.
It is important to note that Bob Embry represents the mainstream of the human/social service sector in Baltimore. His money and influence created this program. According to The Baltimore Sun, Judge Katie Curran O’Malley, wife of former Mayor Martin O’Malley urged her husband to see the documentary, after which he had a screening of the movie for his entire cabinet. The CEO of the school district at the time, Bonnie Copeland, moderated a talkback after the screening of the film at the Charles Theater. The company that distributed the film supported 600 students’ participation in film screenings during the school day. The film also won the Audience Award Best Feature Film at the 2005 Silverdocs Festival. It won a Gold Hugo at The Chicago Film Festival and won an NAACP Image award. The fact that this film was supported by city leaders and very powerful philanthropic institution (such as the Abell Foundation), was screened widely, and won national awards demonstrates that this film affirms the worldview of leaders in the human/social service industry in Baltimore.

As was stated earlier, the film emphasized images of pathology as it showcased the communities in which the boys came from. The families and community members were represented primarily as problems and impediments to the boys in the film. The rendering clearly crosses the line of being carnivalesque, even down to the use of subtitles in moments where the boys were entirely intelligible without them. The approach to the crafting of the narrative and visual experience of the film was very voyeuristic in its style.

Be very clear that I am not saying that we should not talk about, document, or research the problems that exist in our communities. There is utility in developing an understanding of the sociological forces that impact the community. There are two fundamental conceptual problems at play here. The first is the misunderstanding of where the problem begins. Billingsly, again, explains in his critique of Moynihan, the issue of understanding what the actual problem is. He says:

"It is not weakness in the family which causes poverty and racism—the true tangle of pathology which afflicts black people; it is quite the other way around. The family is a creature of the society. And the greatest problems facing Black families are problems which emanate from the white racist, militarist, materialistic society which places higher priority on putting white men on the moon than putting black men on their feet on this earth."

- (Billingsly 1968)

Put simply; Black people are not a problem. The issue is not about how to fix us so that we can cease engaging in pathological behavior. The problem is the system of white supremacy and the fact that Black people are experiencing the ravages of such a brutal and inhumane system. We have entered a time where conversations about institutional racism and conversations about racial equity have now become more commonplace in the sector. It is important to note that this was not something that came about as a result of a major revelation by those in positions of power in the sector. This revelation was largely ushered in as a result of the 2015 Baltimore Uprising that was sparked by the killing of Freddie Gray in police custody. The Uprising has created an environment where conversations about institutional racism have become less threatening in mainstream spaces in the human social service sector.

The other major conceptual problem that has the effect of nullifying the progress made in the mainstreaming of conversations about institutional racism is the inability to see the strengths and challenges of the Black community in a balanced way. In watching the documentary, there is no emphasis on aspects of what was
being filmed that demonstrate strength and intellect. For example, at the beginning of the film, there was a scene where an adult is trying to give instructions to students gathered around a lunch table. They appear to be engaged in some group activity that causes them to ignore the instructions of the adult. The cinematic impact seems to create a feeling of chaos and demonstrate a collective act of defiance toward authority. What I see when I watch that scene are students who in spite of the tumult of their surroundings have created a communal environment to bring a sense of collective joy to an environment that sees them as subhuman. Instead of the scenes cutting back and forth to the circle of students and the adult trying to get their attention, I would be more interested in what they were talking about, what brought the kids together in the first place, and how often do the young people circle up that way? It appears to me that the circle provides a space of joy that as a former teacher, I would attempt to incorporate into my curriculum design. Unfortunately, many of the professionals that are trained to deal with young people do not have the capacity to look at the scene and see anything but chaos and defiance. With a methodology that recognizes the humanity of Black people, it is possible to recognize the challenges that exist in the community while also being able to see the strengths and intelligence in the community as well. The Boys of Baraka documentary did not capture the strengths and intellect of the community.

I am not the first person to make this observation of this program and this documentary. Sabina Vaught in her book *Racism, Public Schooling, and the Entrenchment of White Supremacy* offers the following analysis of “Boys of Baraka” on pages 20-21:
The earlier analysis of the film having a voyeuristic style is confirmed by Vaught's interpretation of the filmmaker's own words. It is clear that the filmmakers have no substantive understanding of the community that they have been given access. Going back to Billingsly's quotation of so-called "militant integrationist" (which probably describes the worldview of the documentarians and those who created the concept of the school itself) it is clear that she sees "no pluses in Negro ghetto culture." The "difficult households, drug-infested blocks and overcrowded classrooms" are the spectacular (in the negative sense of the word) aspects of the lives of these boys and their communities, with no real sense that they value the humanity of the people being filmed. The logical conclusion that someone would draw from watching the documentary and the words of the documentarians is that the communities from which the boys come from are a "tangle of pathology" and that the further the boys are able to get away from their community (culturally, geographically and otherwise), the better off they are. In the context of these lines of thought, notions of Black inferiority are rational. Vaught mentions the idea of "false empathy" in the earlier quotation. The empathy that is often accompanied by the support of people who celebrated the documentary is one of the most powerful drivers
of the system of white supremacy and notions of Black inferiority. People who work in the human/social service sector often describe themselves as being passionate about helping people. The question is, what is underneath the so-called empathy that undergirds this passion?
Sadiya Hartmann, in her book *Scenes of Subjection*, provides an insightful analysis of the ways in which white audiences’ relationship to images and narratives of Black suffering in a white supremacist society dehumanize Black people. She says on pages 20-22:

“So, then, how does suffering elude or escape us in the very effort to bring it near? It does so precisely because it can only be brought nearby way of a proxy and by way of Rankin’s indignation and imagination. If the black body is the vehicle of the other’s power, pleasure, and profit, then it is no less true that it is the white or near white body that makes the captive’s suffering visible and discernible. Indeed, the elusiveness of black suffering can be attributed to a racist optics in which black flesh is itself identified as a source of opacity, the denial of black humanity, and the effacement of sentience integral to the wanton use of the captive body...

Moreover, we need to consider whether the identification forged at the site of suffering confirms black humanity at the peril of reinforcing racist assumptions of limited sentience, in that the humanity of the enslaved and the violence of the institution can only be brought into view by extreme examples of incineration and dismemberment or by placing white bodies at risk...

Empathetic identification is complicated further by the fact that it cannot be extricated from the economy of chattel slavery...

Put differently, the fungibility of the commodity makes the captive body an abstract and empty vessel vulnerable to the projection of others’ feelings, ideas, desires and values...

Thus, the desire to don, occupy, or possess blackness or the black body as a sentimental resource and/or locus of excess enjoyment is both founded upon and enabled by the material relations of chattel slavery...

The scenes of subjection considered here—the coerced spectacles orchestrated to encourage the trade in black flesh; scenes of torture and festivity; the tragedy of virtuous women and the antics of outrageous darkies—all turn upon the simulation of agency and the excesses of black enjoyment. The affiliation of performance and blackness can be attributed to the spectacularization of black pain and racist conceptions of Negro nature as carefree, infantile, hedonistic, and indifferent to suffering...”

- (Hartman 1997)

Hartmann’s analysis is constructive in an effort to draw connections between many of the dynamics associated with notions of inherent Black pathology and the empathy that is often associated with projects like the Boys of Baraka. The prevalence of the notion of Black inferiority reduces Black people who are associated with pathology to a status of being sub-human (i.e., super-predator). The propaganda campaign that Tom Burrell refers to in an earlier quotation of convincing the world of the notion of Black inferiority was carried out during the initiation of European domination of the world in order to justify chattel slavery and colonialism. The campaign to prove the idea that Black people are inferior and sub-human was used to reduce Black people to objects of white people’s desires. This allowed white people to rationalize ideas like slavery was good for Black people. John Calhoun, 7th Vice President of the United States and former South Carolina US Senator, once said in a February 1837 address that “never before has the black race of Central Africa, from the dawn of history to the present day, attained a condition so civilized and so improved, not only physically, but morally and intellectually.” When Hartmann is describing that the dynamics pertaining
to representations of Black suffering are “enabled by the material relations of chattel slavery” she is bringing attention to the fact that reducing Black people to a collective status of sub-human allows for Black people to be reduced to commodities that “makes the captive body an abstract and empty vessel vulnerable to the projection of others’ feelings, ideas, desires, and values.” For Calhoun to say that slavery was good for Black people is an example of the projection that Hartmann is talking about that would allow him to express this sense of false empathy.

Similarly, those who celebrated, and supported the Baraka School and the Boys of Baraka documentary were affirming their belief in notions of Black inferiority through the “spectacularization of black pain and racist conceptions of Negro nature as carefree, infantile, hedonistic, and indifferent to suffering.” In other words, the kind of empathy it takes to affirm this documentary as a meaningful commentary about Black life in Baltimore requires a belief in the notion of Black inferiority. Another way to think about this is that the affirmation of this film and its rendering of Black life as inherently pathological has the effect of reifying white supremacy.

What is tricky about this is that many people are used to having the idea of racism associated with overt acts of intentional harm. A subconscious (or conscious) belief in Black inferiority can have the effect of turning what would otherwise be compassionate impulses into harmful acts of oppression. This brings us full circle, back to the harm that social scientists have done by producing research, from a perspective rooted in notions of Black inferiority, that has the effect of supporting negative beliefs and attitudes about Black people. It allows institutions to produce professionals, that in their interactions with Black people, reinforce the internalization of Black inferiority amongst the people that they serve. Dr. Joanne and Elmer Martin in their book Social Work and the Black Experience on pages 72-73 describe the ways in which social workers have engaged in this kind of practice:

“Mowrer (1927) wrote that the sort of facts that caseworkers tended to select in regard to desertion cases involving tribeless men reveal “the lack of any comprehensive attack upon the problem.” Lacking any understanding of the cultural, psychological, and emotional life of tribeless men, social workers, Mowrer stated, usually defined their problem in respect to the following moralistic and pejorative descriptions:

- laxity of ideals in relations with women
- laziness or shiftlessness
- intemperance
- intemperance combined with gambling or laziness or some other bad habit...

After a while, according to Mowrer, caseworkers would simply define the problem as “hopeless” and develop the attitude that the best course of action is not to help these men, but to lock them up.

There is no question that the tribeless black men during the 1930’s fit well the category of the hard-core unemployed described by sociologist in the 1960’s and the black underclass described by sociologist in the 1990’s. The moralizing continues, more prisons are built, and now not only is the situation of modern-day tribeless men viewed as hopeless, but these men themselves are seen as part of a “permanent” underclass, doomed to low-life existence forever.”

- (Martin and Martin, Social work and the Black experience 1995)
Drs. Martin's use of the term tribeless men describes the impact of enslavement and Jim Crow on the psychology of Black men during the Great Migration. Without an understanding of the historical forces that impact the behavior of a people, this can lead to the "moralistic and pejorative descriptions" that perpetuate notions of inherent Black pathology. This does not require ill intention on the part of the caseworker; it is a function of a society that has widespread ignorance about the system of white supremacy. Again, without an understanding of the nature of the system of white supremacy and the history of European colonialism, notions of inherent Black pathology are rational.

Dr. John Henrik Clarke in a March 1996 debate about a book called Not Out of Africa describes an experience from his childhood that serves as a good example of how good-intentioned people can unknowingly perpetuate notions of Black inferiority. Clarke says:

After leaving Georgia a white man that I worked for, if he is alive today, he’s a liberal with a capital “L” his name is Jack Snyder, I asked him about some books on the African people in ancient history. And in the language of the South he let me down slow, I mean he spoke kindly, he said, you know John I am sorry that you came from a race that has made no history, but if you persevere, if you obey laws and study hard you’ll make history some day and you personally might one day be a great Negro like Booker T. Washington. Booker T. Washington was the one thing whites approved of at that time.

- (Clarke 2019)

This experience that Dr. Clarke relays demonstrates how a well-meaning white person, who truly believes that they are doing something good can be a purveyor of the notion of Black inferiority. Mr. Snyder’s statement to Dr. Clarke that “you came from a race that made no history” is a belief that would lead to the idea that there are “no real pluses in Negro ghetto culture”; hence a belief in the notion of inherent Black pathology. Mr. Snyder’s beliefs should not be reduced to a function of his own bigotry, but instead, focus on the fact that he was socialized in a society that is invested in the notion of white supremacy and Black inferiority.
It was astonishing to watch in the film the ignorance and the mediocrity of the leadership of The Baraka School. The white teachers and administrators of the school demonstrate no rigorous knowledge or apparent expertise on the history, conditions, culture from which the students come. It is as if professing to care about the boys is enough to justify allowing someone to be an important part of the socialization of these boys. Someone who has not, at the very least, disabused themselves of the belief in the idea of inherent Black pathology, is not fit to serve our community. Asa Hilliard on pages 112-113 says:

“... Deficient overall curricula are followed by deficient teacher education curricula with “foundations” coursework in psychology, anthropology, sociology, history, philosophy, linguistics, and research, etc. They are essentially devoid of meaningful materials about African people. Further, many of these disciplines convey false, distorted and defamatory information about Africans, with the little Information that is presented. There is an implied universality about the curriculum in the traditional foundations’ courses, even as most of it applies mainly to student or school environments reflecting European American culture. It borders on professional malpractice to continue to offer teacher training that is unaffected by the academic knowledge base about African people.”

- (Perry, Steele and Hilliard 2003)

Using Hilliard’s analysis in this quotation, the leadership and instructors at The Baraka School were engaged in professional malpractice. There was no information presented that demonstrated an in-depth knowledge about the history and culture of Black people. The “distorted and defamatory information about African people” that Hilliard is referencing produces the societal beliefs in notions of Black inferiority. The boys were in the care of adults who are products of teacher training experiences that amount to what Hilliard describes as professional malpractice. The support and celebration of The Baraka School and the “Boys of Baraka” documentary at the time of its release is demonstrative of the professional malpractice that is rampant in the human/social service sector. Although there is an increase in the conversation about institutional racism in mainstream elements of the sector, this progress is being nullified by white institutions that will talk about racism, but will maintain the same beliefs in notions of Black inferiority and maintain the same institutional arrangement where Black people are dependent on white led and controlled institutions and their benevolence.

Thread is a program that was founded by a white woman named Sarah Hemminger from Indiana who happened to be a Ph.D. student studying biomedical engineering at Johns Hopkins University. She developed a program based on her own experiences with social isolation. As a young person, she experienced feelings of alienation from her community. An experience of social alienation does not equate to meaningful knowledge of what it takes to have a transformative impact on the lives of Black youth and their communities in Baltimore.

Her approach to youth development, which led to the creation of Thread, wasn’t based on any rigorous study of the majority Black city of Baltimore and its history of service to young people. She merely had an idea that she wanted to implement in Baltimore; subsequently, she has been able to lead an organization that is well-regarded enough to have a New York Times article written about it.

Bob Embry, of the Abell Foundation, was integral in the growth and expansion of Thread. It is interesting that he also helped to establish The Baraka School. The Abell Foundation and Bob Embry, in particular, seems
to have a penchant for supporting programs that embody the white saviorism that allows white people to be responsible for the socialization of Black youth.

If we look at the state of education of Black children over the last 50 years, we can see that white institution’s intervention into dealing with issues facing Black children has had an overwhelmingly negative impact on Black Children. In 1998 Dr. Asa G. Hillard III in his book *SBA: The Reawakening of the African Mind* describes many of the adverse effects that have come from a post-Brown vs. Board society where white institutions dominate the education reform and youth development arena. These negative impacts include excessive school discipline, an increase in Black children described as mentally challenged, more teachers that are disconnected from the communities that their students come from, and the proliferation of ideas of the inherent pathology of Black youth. What is even worse is the billions of dollars that are given to white institutions to research, develop, and operate programs for Black youth that have created an industry based on one’s ability to capitulate to the narrative of Black pathology.

The problem is that regardless of how well-intentioned the volunteers and mentors at Thread are, they are still operating under a framework that sees integration as a solution to the problems facing young Black people and that proximity to white people is a magical elixir that leads to empowerment. They say in their philosophy that “Thread believes that by cultivating relationships that transcend racial and socioeconomic barriers – and by creatively building unconventional families and communities not defined by DNA and addresses – we can overcome the poverty of isolation and, in its place, establish a wealth of human connection permanently linked by unconditional love and support.” This is a veiled way to say that they want Black kids to build familial relationships with white (and other non-Black) people. Again, Thread’s description of itself assumes that simply having adults that care for Black youth can “transcend racial and socioeconomic barriers.” This is a harmful methodology of service delivery that is rooted in the notion of inherent Black pathology.

The harm done is that Black youth are disconnected from the traditions and cultural resources that reside in their communities. They are socialized to see their own community as merely a source of pathology and to see success as a quest to be more like white people or the Black people that are acceptable to white institutions. I have seen this first hand in Baltimore where Black youth have experiences with white people who will feed and house them in the absence of their parent’s ability to do that. Then youth will internalize the notion that their parents and the communities that their parents come from are just mired in pathology, without understanding the social and economic context that impacts the community. Black Youth see opportunities and compassion coming from white people, and Black people that are acceptable to white people, and this further pathologize the community that is usually being served by the human/social service sector.

The kindness (or false empathy as Vaught and Hartmann have explained earlier) that is the basis for the operation of the human/social service sector in Baltimore affirms the notion of Black inferiority, white supremacy, and creates the justification of socializing Black people to render invisible our cultural gifts.

It is also important to note that these programs are just two examples of what is prevalent in the human/social service sector in Baltimore. The purpose is not to disparage these programs; the goal is to use the critique of these programs to provide clarity of the dynamics that are core elements of the human/social service sector in Baltimore.
A point that is important to emphasize is the failure of the human/social service sector in Baltimore. Over the past 50 years, the general network of white led institutions that have increasingly involved themselves in efforts to address issues that Black people face have been ineffective. When we look at the data mentioned before regarding poverty, we see that wealth disparities have gone virtually unchanged in any significant way.

Additional information regarding the quality of life metrics such as child poverty and homelessness have not significantly changed. Child poverty in Maryland over the past 15 years has remained between 10%-14% according to the Governor's Office for Children. The number of Baltimore City Public School students who have experienced homelessness has gone up 14% since 2011, according to Healthcare for the Homeless. This is just a snapshot of the data that demonstrates the failure of the sector. The thought leadership of the sector must be held accountable for its failure. This accountability should not happen on their terms. The communities that have been negatively impacted by this sector should set the terms for this accountability.
Section 3: Methodologies of Liberation

The marginalization of methodologies that draw from the cultural and intellectual bodies of work produced by independent Black formations is a significant dynamic that perpetuates the system of white supremacy in the human/social service sector. Methodologies are the substance of our professional socialization. The nature of a person’s training, whether formal or informal, constitute the tools that are at their disposal to effectively carry out their work. It is important to interrogate the methodological basis of the institutions tasked with training the professionals that work in the sector. The methodologies that serve as the basis for the professional socialization of leaders in the human/social service sector not only perpetuate the system of white supremacy, but also frame out methodologies that in many cases are more effective than those that are endorsed by the mainstream.
It is undeniable that the intellectual foundations of the disciplines that are commonplace in the sector are rooted in white supremacy. Na’im Akbar on pages 35-36 of his book *Papers on African Psychology* says:

"The paradigm that has operated throughout much of the Euro-American history of social science has been the affirmation of the normality of the male, Caucasian of European descent and his relative superiority to other peoples. This paradigm delimits the array of questions that may be raised in investigating the human being in their varied forms and sundry environments. Whether the investigation is anthropological, sociological or psychological, the nonnative model is the male Caucasian of European descent. Even the U.S. Census statistics have been broken down into the categories of "whites" and "non-whites," that implies a racial identity only relative to the "norm." White is assumed to be "normal" and anything else is a deviation from that norm, and therefore designated as non-"white." The model dictated by this paradigm is one that has been identified as a "Eurocentric model" (Baldwin, 1976, 1980).

The more one approximates this model in appearance, values and behavior, the more "normative" or "normal" a person is considered to be. The problem created for African American communities by such a model is that implicit assumption of deviance on the part of anyone who varies from this model. As early as 1840, medical researcher, Dr. Samuel Morton (Stanton, 1960) concluded from his craniometric research that the brain of various races of man became successively smaller as one descended from the Caucasian to the Ethiopian. Dr. Morton continued: 'The brain differential accounted for those primeval attributes of mind, which, for wise purposes have given our (white) race a decided and unquestionable superiority over all nations of the earth." A brief look at the models of prominent figures of Euro-American psychology reveals the prominence of the paradigm of white supremacy. G. Stanley Hall, founder of the American Journal of Psychology and first president of the American Psychological Association states in his classic 1904 textbook entitled Adolescence that: Certain primitive races are in a state of immature development and must be treated gently and understandingly by more developed peoples. Africans, Indians and Chinese are members of adolescent races in a stage of incomplete development. Carl Jung (1935, 1968) in a similar implication of "primitiveness" stated "he (the Negro) has probably a whole historical layer less (in the collective unconscious) than you (Caucasians). The different strata of the mind correspond to the history of the races."

A perusal of the traditional social science literature reveals consistent assumption of white supremacy. Almost without exception, the research that has been conducted on black bodies, minds and groups within the model of traditional western science shows blacks to be categorically inferior to whites. The mere fact that blacks are only studied in comparison with whites reveals that the underlying model is whiteness. McGee and Clark (1973) appropriately observe that: Where there is equality between things, there are no differences and therefore no psychological research. The way a person frames a question determines the limits within which his answer can possibly fall."

- (Akbar, Akbar papers in African psychology 2003)

When the legitimacy of the major fields of study go unquestioned, it makes invisible the ways in which notions of white supremacy are embedded in the methodologies used to study and practices used to serve Black people. There are certain questions that are framed out of the nature of the inquiry that would illuminate the way that the so-called scientific studies of Black people were structured to produce outcomes to justify the societal order. The methodologies that are used in the socialization of professionals by mainstream
institutions are often able to use the guise of being the most scientific to justify the legitimacy of their methodology. Again, Akbar explains this dynamic on pages 42-43 of his book *Papers on African Psychology*:

*The method confirms the model; then the model is perpetuated in the modalities of implementing the research findings. The modalities are the ways in which the research findings are implemented. Based upon a firm adherence to the methodology described above the researcher systematically chooses the behaviors, the subjects and the instruments that assume a particular model of community and of the human being. The results of the investigation are then interpreted in the light of the pre established model from which the observer began. The cycle is almost complete, except for the perpetuation of the model by research-based programmatic interventions. With the legitimization of "science," the policy-makers are equipped with the kinds of conclusions that continue to establish the conditions that maintain their idealized human model. Of course, in the instance of traditional American social science research, these policies perpetuate the white supremacy paradigm...

Unfortunately, the modalities chosen for the implementation of traditional research findings are ones that encourage Black or other non-White groups to become more in accord with the original paradigm of masculine Caucasian, middle class American behaviors. As Glazer and Moynihan (1963) conclude: "The Negro is only an American and nothing else. He has no values and culture to guard and protect." But, such a conclusion is utterly dehumanizing as is suggested by Andrew Billingsley (1968), when he observes: To say that a people have no culture is to say that they have no common history which has shaped and taught them. And to deny the history of a people is to deny their humanity. Denial of the African American's humanity simply confirms the original thesis that being human means that one is necessarily a male, Caucasian of European descent.*

- (Akbar, Akbar papers in African psychology 2003)

Methodologies are informed by the questions and issues that the researcher (or institutions) is trying to address. As Akbar says “the researcher systematically chooses the behaviors, the subjects and the instruments that assume a particular model of community and of the human being.” This means that tools that compromise the research methodologies that are the intellectual basis of the practices taught to professionals assume notions of white supremacy that are understood to be normal and scientific by mainstream society.

For the purpose of analytical precision, it is important to directly answer the question, what makes a methodology white supremacist? There are three major elements that make a methodology white supremacist. The first is an approach the believes that an individual can be understood as disconnected or unrelated to the society and community from which that individual is situated. The Robin DiAngelo quote from earlier explains the way that white people invoke notions of individualism to avoid addressing their “racial positions.” Individualism frames out the discussion of systems and structures that produce the system of white supremacy, which helps to perpetuate the invisibility of white supremacy. The invisibility of white supremacy allows for the system to go unchallenged.

Amos Wilson in his book *Black on Black Violence* describes on page 171 the ways in which the individualism impairs our ability to develop strategies for empowerment for Black people. He says:
“A drastic reorganization of priorities and re-examination of values: development of Afrocentric cultural, political, economic programs; and Afrocentric ethical renewal, must be undertaken if disaster is to be avoided and our survival secured. This requires a thorough understanding of the oppressive, Imperialistic functioning of the ideology of Eurocentric Individualism when it is unwittingly and unmodifiedly accepted and practiced by subordinated African peoples. Africans must recognize that “individuality” is a collective epiphenomenon that radiates from group power and prestige. There are no “individuals” who belong to powerless, degraded groups: only notorious stereotypical exceptions to a very general racist rule. Individual choice and distinction are a fringe benefit of those who belong to dominant or autonomous groups. The route to individual power is that of group empowerment. All other “individual” power is illusory and ultimately a form of self and other-destruction.”

- (Wilson 2011)

He goes on to say on pages 175-176:

“The refusal of Black America to perceive itself as a national entity (being under the influence of “American individualism”) and develop an economic system and a coherent economic policy both nationally and internationally, means that it will remain psycho-economically dependent, economically dis-invested, and will not be respected by other ethnic groups.”

- (Wilson 2011)

This passage from Amos Wilson makes very clear that methodologies based on individualism undermine the ability to recognize that collective Black empowerment is the only substantive way to empower Black individuals. The only people that have the privilege to behave solely as individuals are those that “belong to dominant or autonomous groups.” Treating Black people primarily as individuals has created an environment where Black people are “psycho-economically dependent, economically dis-invested and will not be respected by other ethnic groups.”

The second element that makes a methodology white supremacist is the notion that the scholarly basis or the intellectual foundation of any program for training human/social service professionals can ever be entirely objective and scientific. Objectivity assumes that there is the possibility that a researcher or practitioner can ever be entirely objective. The notion of objectivity has historically been used to justify Eurocentrism.

Akbar explains on pages 39-40 in his book Papers on African Psychology that objectivity is regarded as the highest value in traditional research methods. This value mask the way in which the beliefs of the researcher are masked by the supposed adherence to objectivity and carried into the actual research process. He says:
"Objectivity is assumed to be the greatest virtue of the scientific methodology (which is the method of choice in traditional Western research. Several writers have questioned the limitations of objectivity (Akbar, 1981; Carruthers, 1972 and Clark, et al., 1976). This author (Akbar, 1981) has argued elsewhere that one fact often denied is that the use of an "objective" approach is a value. When an observer chooses to suspend from his observations certain dimensions of data, then a value judgment is made. This is, in fact, a very important value because implicit in this decision is the choice to ignore certain sources of information which could critically alter one's observations and conclusions. Particularly, the social scientists create an unreal and unnatural situation by assuming that the observer is not a participant in his observations and that the observer or his surrogate (in the form of observational instruments) does not generate a reaction to the characteristics of her/himself. As noted above, the surrogate of the observer is the instrument used to collect observational data."

- (Akbar, Akbar papers in African psychology 2003)
Regardless of how detached an observer attempts to be, their beliefs, ideas, feelings, and relationship to the subject being observed will impact the nature of the conclusions that are produced by the scientific endeavor. The notion of objectivity is used to normalize the worldview of the dominant society. This leads to producing ideas and methodologies that lend themselves to notions of white supremacy and Black inferiority. Kathleen Shaw in a 2004 article entitled “Using Feminist Critical Policy Analysis in the Realm of Higher Education” describes the way in which public policy is impacted by ruse of objectivity. She says:

“The methods and theoretical frameworks that dominate current policy analysis have been developed and implemented by those in power who, particularly in the world of policy formation and analysis, are overwhelmingly white, male, and well educated. Thus, traditional policy research has, according to Marshall, reflected the assumptions, worldview, and values of this group. As is the case with much mainstream research in the social sciences, traditional policy analysis can be characterized by the following elements. Among the most important are a belief in a single concept of truth (truth with a capital "T"); the assumption that objectivity on the part of the researcher is both achievable and desirable; the assumption that all research subjects share the same relationship to their social environment, thereby rendering such particularities as gender, race, social class, and sexuality unimportant; and the practice of evaluating women on the basis of male norms (Bensimon & Marshall, 1997, p. 7-8).

Since this positivist paradigm is so widely accepted in the policy world, it allows policy analysts to assume a dispassionate, objective stance and at the same time encourages the broader policy community to perceive the research enterprise in this way. Thus, traditional policy analysis willfully ignores the inherently political nature of all research, and policy research in particular. As Marshall states, "Traditional policy analysis is grounded in a narrow, falsely objective, overly instrumental view of rationality that masks its latent biases and allows policy elites and technocrats to present analyses and plans as neutral and objective when they are actually tied to prevailing relations of power" (1997a, p. 3)."

- (Shaw 2004)

Shaw provides an essential explanation for the way that the notion of objectivity has been used as a mechanism to assert white society’s perspectives and ideals as more legitimate and normalized. The methodologies of researchers and practitioners should be fair-minded, balanced, and transparent about the things that inform the worldview of the researcher/practitioner, but should not claim ever to be fully objective, because such a posture runs the risk of producing certain conceptual blind-spots that usually produce white supremacist outcomes.
The third element that makes a methodology white supremacist is the act of drawing uncritically from intellectual and professional bodies of work that are rooted in White supremacy. It is important not to understate the extent to which European colonialism has shaped the collective psychology and intellectual landscape of the world. Asa Hilliard on pages 114-115 of his book SBA puts in context the importance of European colonialism to our contemporary moment. He says:

"Massive denial makes the problem of white supremacy difficult to discuss. Still, it has been a central fact of Western Civilization for the past two hundred years, at least. The typical discourse on "human relations," "diversity," "multiculturalism," etc., do not begin to illuminate the structure and function of white supremacy. This problem intrudes into teacher education at every point. It must be examined honestly, courageously and completely. There is a body of literature appropriate for this purpose (Ani, 1994; Bengu, 1975; Blyden, 1994; Hodge, Struckmann & Trost, 1975; Wilhelm, 1971; Wobogo, 1990; Weinberg, 1977). We may argue about the causes of white supremacy or about its age, but what really matters is understanding how it works, especially through the schooling process (Wobogo, 1990). Precisely, what are its methods, strategies and techniques? (Almaguer, 1994).

The only way to defeat white supremacy is to first become conscious of it. Today, we are aware that white supremacist systems define others as "uncivilized," "pagan," "nonhuman," "not capable." White supremacy is a system of domination that feeds class, racial and gender oppression. We know that through white supremacy, oppressed populations, and especially their leaders, are demonized. We know that the history and culture of oppressed people is suppressed, distorted and destroyed. We know that a variety of divide-and-conquer tactics are used. The list of the destructive nature of white supremacy goes on and teachers are bound ethically to study white supremacy in the schooling process.

When we ignore white supremacy, we fail to acknowledge its influence on the political and economic arrangements imposing themselves on the context of teaching and learning."

- (Hilliard, SBA: The reawakening of the African mind 1998)

White supremacy is so central to the nature of the society that we live in that we have to be intentional about the intellectual resources we use to structure research and professional developments.
On pages 184-185 Asa Hilliard’s book *The Maroon Within Us* he provides insight into the way that mainstream scholarship has oriented itself toward white supremacy. He says:

“It is very interesting that while Martin Bernal’s thesis has made a stir, most of the reaction, positive and negative, seem to be focused on the questions of origin and influence of the Kemets on the classical world, not on the political sociology of academic inquiry. Significantly, I know of no one who has challenged Bernal on the racist and biased scholarship issue. There seems to be an extreme reluctance and lack of interest by academics to delve into these highly sensitive matters at all, an area which when exposed has the capacity to undermine the foundation of racist thought in the academic world.

Generally speaking, Africa is the home of Black people, and generally speaking, Europe is the home of White people. There is nothing inherently in those two realities that generates tension between individuals or among peoples. However, place a great civilization on the African continent, place native Africans at the root and branches of that civilization, show that that civilization occupied a leadership role in the world for centuries, do that in the context of a European White Supremacy belief systems and world view that has for centuries painted Africans as inferior beings, and you then have the makings of a situation in academe where truth becomes a scarce commodity...

Few Americans have any idea just how intentional systemic, intensive, prolonged and widespread was the defamation process directed toward African people and the descendants of African people all over the world during the slavery, colonial, and racism periods. They are generally unaware of the role that scholarship played. Bernal was right about the racist context for scholarship, then and later.”

- (Hilliard, The maroon within us: Selected essays on African American community socialization 1995)

Hilliard is referring to Martin Bernal’s book *Black Athena*, where he argues, among other things, that ancient Egypt (Kemet) provided the intellectual and cultural foundation for ancient Greek civilization. This is a controversial idea in light of the historical orthodoxy of the West that has made an intentional effort to propagate the idea that Africans have no significant ancient history. This effort was a part of the propaganda used to justify European colonialism. Bernal’s book was a challenge to this propaganda. Hilliard points out that classicist would question the origin and influence of Kemet on the classical world but “not the political sociology of academic inquiry.” This political sociology of academic inquiry is referring to the way that white institutions tend to produce material that justifies the white supremacist ideas of the status quo. Many of the traditional social science text is based on claims of Black inferiority, and present a distorted view of the world that reifies the system of white supremacy.
Methodologies that challenge the system of white supremacy are often described as “deviant” as Akbar indicates in the earlier quotation and therefore less scientific and less legitimate. This dynamic is described by Dr. Elmer and Joanne Martin in their book *Spirituality and the Black Helping Tradition in Social Work*. They say:

“Because spirituality in the Black helping tradition is oriented toward developing a positive racial self-concept and communal caregiving, it is oppositional to the mainstream social work’s use of secular tools solely on the basis of empirical explanations that exclude spirituality, advance a mythical color-blind perspective, and take an individualistic approach. Mainstream social work feels uncomfortable in incorporating spirituality into the helping process, inadequate in addressing the highly sensitive issue of race, and reluctant in calling for collective approaches to build viable families and communities.”

- (Martin and Martin, *Spirituality and the Black helping tradition in social work* 2002)
Drs. Martin later on in the book identifies an African-Centered approach and a Black Experience-Based approach to social work as two alternative methodologies that draw from the intellectual and cultural resources of people of African descent. They provide descriptions of each methodology; they are:

**“African Centered approach to social work:**

Jerome H. Schiele, a Black social work educator and scholar, is the leading exponent of the African-centered perspective in social work. Taking the lead from African-centered psychologist, Schiele’s (2000) Human Services and the Afrocentric Paradigm provides a ground-breaking application of Afrocentric principles to social work education and practice. According to Schiele (2000), the Afrocentric paradigm of human services is particularistic in that it addresses the distinctive liberation needs of African people and universalistic in that it fosters “the spiritual and moral development of the world.” Although Schiele’s Afrocentric paradigm is centered around culture—the celebration of cultural differences, the promotion of cultural pluralism, and the struggle against cultural oppression—culture is never separated from a focus on spirituality. Schiele’s definition of spirituality is consistent with the traditional African spiritual worldview that endows people, nature, inanimate objects, worldly and other worldly forces with spiritual essence, connecting them to an ultimate supernatural source. He believes that the positivistic, materialistic, secular Eurocentric worldview has “bastardized” spirituality and has created a cultural climate that has made helping professionals apprehensive in using it as a tool of intervention. This climate has also made them “conceive of the soul as something to avoid when planning social and mental health services.” ...

*Schiele maintains that after human services professionals recognize the soul as an unseen, transdimensional, natural element connecting human beings to a transcendent source, they will be able to design services “to help tap into an often-unexplored source of power and self-affirmation.”*

Spirituality is a central theme that runs throughout Schiele’s Afrocentric paradigm of human services and social work. He also sees the integral connection of spirituality to African identity and community. The spiritual self, the racial self, and the communal self-discussed throughout with study are talked about in Schiele’s Afrocentric paradigm in terms of “African self-consciousness” or the state awareness that gears Black people toward fostering the collective survival, advancement, and prosperity of African people on the continent of Africa and throughout the African Diaspora.

**Black Experience Based Social Work:**

Black experience-based social work, developed by Martin and Martin (1995), rests on the belief that Black people in today’s society are lacking a dominant, unifying worldview that is powerful enough to counter the vicious, racist propaganda that saps them of self-esteem and causes them to identify with their oppressors. It mourns the fact that myth of Ethiopianism that gave inspiration, hope and divine assurance to countless generations of 19th-century and early 20th-century Blacks has been effectively destroyed by contemporary versions of the Holy Bible. If we recall, the Ethiopian myth was based on Psalms 68:31 of the King James Version of the Holy Bible, which simply reads: Princes shall come out of Egypt, Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.” Modern versions of that statement give the biblical passage all kinds of interpretations.”

- (Martin and Martin, Spirituality and the Black helping tradition in social work 2002)
These are two methodologies that have entire books committed to them. They are rooted in the cultural and intellectual resources of people of African descent yet are given very little reverence and attention in mainstream human/social service sector spaces. One of the impacts of the system of white supremacy and notions of Black inferiority is that it produces disbelief in the intellectual capabilities of Black people to produce in-depth rigorous and highly effective intellectual ideas and methodologies that are not reliant on the backing of mainstream white intellectual conventions. Jacob Carruthers in his book Intellectual Warfare on page 154 references a speech by Black sociologist E. Franklin Frazier called “Failure of the Negro Intellectual” that explains the disregard that exists for intellectual or methodological work that is rooted in Black culture, Carruthers says:

*The current commentary is part of a continuous dialogue which surfaced in the 1960’s, especially in the wake of the Black Studies movement. It is appropriate to begin with a statement issued by E. Franklin Frazier in a talk which was published in 1962, a little before the Black Studies eruption, but after the Black Student movement proper began. Frazier’s discourse was entitled “The Failure of the Negro Intellectual.” In that speech, he argued that “Negro intellectuals,” with exceptions, had failed to address the “Negro” tradition because they were obsessed with integration and the approval of white intellectuals: “American Negro intellectuals… imbued with an integrationist point of view were… unconscious of the important question of the relation of culture and personality and human destiny.

Speaking of this persuasion Frazier continued: “In its hope to achieve acceptance in American life, it would slough off everything that is reminiscent of its Negro origins and its Negro folk background.”

- (Carruthers 1999)*

Carruthers is using Frazier’s speech to describe the way that the notion of Black inferiority caused Black intellectuals to be fixated on white people’s approval and to “slough off everything that is reminiscent of its Negro origins.” This helps provide a basis for understanding why it is difficult for many people to conceptualize Black people’s culture and community as a resource for developing solutions to problems.
Joyce King in her book *Black Education: A Transformative Research and Action Agenda for the New Century* on page 7 describes the way that Black methodologies are marginalized in professional education spaces. She says:

“Functioning like Kuhn’s (1970) “normal science paradigm,” by “blaming the victim,” this establishment research regime has generally not acknowledged the ways that Black education and socialization have been destabilized and undermined through the processes of schooling (King & Lightfoote-Wilson, 1994; Shujaa, 1994), hegemonic processes of teacher education (Meacham, 2000), and research itself. For instance, Lee demonstrates in Chapters 3 and 4 that much of the research that she and Michele Foster reviewed for the Commission, which regards African/African American cultural practice as an asset to be used in the design of education interventions and pedagogical practice, is marginalized and remains “on the fringe” of education research discourse.

Another example of how this “normal science” paradigm functions is the National Research Council (NRC) publication, “Improving Student Learning: A Strategic Plan for Education Research and Utilization.” Introduced to the public with great fanfare at the 1999 AERA annual meeting, this prestigious state-of-the-knowledge report shows how establishment research, by conceptualizing Black students as “disadvantaged” and “at risk,” can have the colonizing effect of “othering” these students by placing them outside a normative standard. This is not an inclusive, universal standard; rather, it is culturally specific and ethnocentric: It represents the generic White middle-class norm that Sylvia Wynter refers to as the category of “ethno-class ‘Man’. ‘Of course, the use of such concepts by the National Institute on the Education of At-Risk Students, sponsored by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), reflects the conceptual framework of the sponsoring agency.

Regardless of the race or background of the scholars involved, use of this language and the “deficit” thinking behind it reveal the fundamental problem of epistemological bias and hegemony in research and its application. This is part and parcel of the epistemological crisis within AERA, a kind of paradigm bias that affects:

- How research in Black education is conceptualized

- Whose research agenda gets funded and supported for empirical investigation and replication

- Which research is accepted as “scientific” and validated (that is, legitimated or rejected by prestigious sponsors (like OERI, NSF) and professional associations like AERA

- What kinds of research gets disseminated widely (or not at all) and used (or ignored) in policy decision making, by practitioners as well as parents and the news media and

- How teachers, administrators, researchers, and professors are trained.”

- (King 2006)

The impact of the intellectual marginalization that King describes is tremendous. The issue of white supremacy being embedded in the mainstream methodologies propagated by status quo institutions is more
than just conflict of which ideas are given spotlight. The methodologies that are considered mainstream have the power to set the standards for the practices that are used to serve our community. As King indicates, resources are given to those who are regarded as exemplars in their fields so that they can be replicated. This also impacts the people who are tasked with, given the authority, and paid to train those who are serving our community. Given the white supremacist nature of the methodology that has been hegemonic in the human/social service sector, our community continues to suffer as a result. Drs. Martin, in their book *Social Work and the Black Experience* on page 3, describes perfectly what the impact of the status quo has been on the sector’s ability to effectively produce positive outcomes for Black people. They say:

> "Pioneering Black social workers were presented with a great opportunity to incorporate salient elements of the Black helping experience into social work practice, but they opted to take on the middle class or bourgeois outlook of the dominant culture rather than to learn from it. Furthermore, our thesis is that many of the important issues that pioneering social workers failed to resolve in the past because they did not rely on the cultural apparatus of the Black masses are still with us in contemporary society, leaving us with much of the same distorted view of Black life, culture, and history and with the same ineffectual instruments of social change."

- (Martin and Martin, Social work and the Black experience 1995)

This sector has produced “ineffectual instruments of social change” as a result of the unwillingness to learn from the cultural resources of Black people. What we are faced with is a sector that will produce solutions to our problems that reproduce the system of white supremacy. These so-called solutions come in the form of new initiatives and policies that merely are repackaging the same basic methodological foundations. In Maryland, the Kirwan Commission is a good example of this dynamic.
There are a few patterns that arise when looking at the Kirwan Commission (which is a statewide commission established by the Maryland state legislature in 2016 to produce sweeping reforms to education). The notion of raising student achievement outcomes is presented without a justification for the legitimacy of these standards. There is an assumption that the standards are relatively neutral, scientific, and contribute positively to student development. As mentioned in the Akbar and the Shaw quotations earlier, the notion that these metrics are relatively neutral and inherently desirable allow the existing prevailing (white supremacist) methodologies regarding education to go unchallenged. This is important because a report of this magnitude that proclaims to address “racial equity” must challenge the white supremacist nature of the socialization and methodologies of education professionals to be authentic to its stated desire. The fact that the legitimacy of the standardized test goes unchallenged is a concession to the hegemony of the liberal academic mainstream’s power to render the white supremacist nature of these metrics invisible. In an April 26th, 2011 Washington Post article, Marion Brady, a former teacher, and school administrator, said the following about standardized testing:

“It’s assumed that standardized tests measure test-taker knowledge. What they actually measure is something else—test-taker ability to guess what the writer of a particular test item was thinking. Standardized tests are created by and for the dominant culture. They will, then, reflect that culture. Even the sequence in which words appear in a sentence can make a difference in the ability of a test-taker reared in a subculture to guess what the dominant-culture writer of the test item was thinking. To be fair and useful, writer and reader must be culturally aligned.

- (Brady 2011)

The system of white supremacy is maintained in part by the ability of mainstream institutions to determine what people have to think and do in order to be successful. The dominant culture is able to dictate to the masses what is to be understood as high level thought. As public education began to emerge after the Civil War, there were elements to the kind of education that was directed to Black people by the dominant culture that remain with us today. Asa Hilliard in his book SBA: The Reawakening of the African Mind on page 44 says:

“After Emancipation, European Americans from the North and South soon reconciled their differences enough for the Reconstruction to take place, followed by the Black Codes, which were followed by the virtual complete disenfranchisement of Africans during the late 1800’s and the early 1900’s. Education was not withheld at this time any more than it was during slavery. But what was offered was something called “Negro Education.” Thus, there was a “special education” program under “freedom.” The “freedom” type of “special education program” had two parts to it. One part was the establishment of special barriers of various kinds to control the amount and type of education that Africans could get (i.e. certification, accreditation, head taxes etc.). The second part had to do with the development of special content. Africans were to be given “industrial education” to fix their caste position, “moral education,” for pacification, and “Western education” in order to instill in them a sense of inferiority and a belief in white supremacy.”

- (Hilliard, SBA: The reawakening of the African mind 1998)
Focusing specifically on the element Hilliard describes as “Western education,” the bedrock of mainstream curricular standards is rooted in the centrality of Western thought and culture. This foundation creates a context where students subconsciously (or in some cases consciously) understand that academic/intellectual success requires a socio-existential commitment to notions of white supremacy and Black inferiority. A deep understanding of African cultural systems and history does not result in the level of scholastic accolades that would be received by someone who is well studied in “Western education.” Western education occupies the space of universality, while African centered education is characterized as narrow and at best a worthy supplement to the standard “Western education.” This is not to suggest that the goal should be to flip the hierarchy and make African centered perspectives central to all of the educational experience of students. The point is to identify the dynamic where students are incentivized to see Western culture and society as primary, and by extension, better than all other perspectives. The metrics used to assess student success is based on their mastery of this white supremacist paradigm.

Until there is a specific commitment to developing metrics for success that are rooted in educational methodologies that are not derived from a white supremacist paradigm, there will continue to be a perpetuation of what Drs. Martin described as “ineffectual tools for social change.” Black students will continue to be in a position to have to strive to be successful in spite of the education system and the embedded white supremacist methodologies.

Asa Hilliard in an earlier quotation described the way in which teacher training protocols that are rooted in the status quo participate in “professional malpractice” by sending teachers into classrooms that have internalized notions of Black inferiority; which then leads to them engagement of Black students in ways that are dehumanizing. This is not just a question of bias, which is the frame used for the January 2019 Kirwan Commission report. This is a question of challenging the prevalence of white supremacy in the profession of education. There seems to be an attempt in the report to challenge the pathologizing language of “at-risk” and replacing that with “at-promise.” This is a tacit admission of the dehumanizing impact of the verbiage that has been used to characterize Black youth. The problem with the term at risk is not just that it presents bias, the problem with the term is that it characterizes the youth as a problem, instead of the problem being the conditions that the youth are in. Additionally, throughout the report, it emphasizes a need to provide services to address deficiencies. There is not one substantive mention of utilizing the strength of the people, history, and culture from which the students and their families come. There is not one mention of intellectual traditions or community institutions/methodologies that inform the approaches to educating and socializing the students.

If the commission that produced the report had any sense of familiarity with the methodological traditions and community-based practices of Black people in education there would be mention of things like the Watkins Institute founded by William J. Watkins Sr. in the 1820’s; or the Marifa center, an African centered independent school in Northwest Baltimore that closed just 10 years ago; or the work of Tamar Brown who founded a school for Black people in Frostburg Maryland in 1866, just to name a few. These are institutions that served Black children and families that should serve as intellectual and methodological resources for the development of a holistic educational experience for students. The report does not posit that institutions that draw from the cultural and intellectual resources of Black people are valuable for producing a “world-class” educational system. The report seems to assert that the mainstream methodological basis for educational practice is adequate, and frames “cultural competence” as a worthy enhancement.
The move from “at-risk” to “at-promise” is an attempt to move away from the pathologizing framework that is a part of the white supremacist methodological orthodoxy in the human/social service sector. This speaks to good intentions by those producing the document. As mentioned earlier, having good intentions does not mean that it will address the white supremacy in the methodology or course of action taken. In fact, this move from “at-risk” to “at-promise” is an example of a conceptual frame that reproduces notions of Black inferiority. The emphasis on changing the framing of an individual child is insufficient because it leaves intact the notions of inherent Black pathology that is attributed to the community and families from which the children come. A change in the language still embraces the individualism, which as Amos Wilson explains earlier, leaves intact the legitimacy of the white supremacist social science paradigm that justified the use of the term “at risk.”

One of the most devastating indictments on the Kirwan Commission is the fact that the National Center for Education and the Economy (NCEE) was selected to provide support to the commission. There are a couple of sentences in the executive summary of their brief called “Message to America” that clarifies the worldview that guided the work of the commission. It says:

“For well over a century, the United States led the world in providing education to its citizens. Its reward was global economic leadership and a very high, broadly distributed standard of living. Fifty years ago, that leadership came to an end…”

- (National Center for Education and the Economy 2019)

Fifty years ago, is 1969. The century prior consisted of a segregated public education system that had no regard for the educational experience of Black students. The “broadly distributed standard of living” does not consider the collective economic and social position of Black people during that time period. The fact that a document claiming to be concerned about public education in Maryland could say that “the United States led the world in providing education to its citizens” fifty years ago perpetuates the invisibility of the system of white supremacy. This brief demonstrates that an institution like NCEE is not equipped with the necessary worldview that could be the intellectual basis for education reform in Maryland that does not perpetuate white supremacy.

If we look at the issues that impact the ability for the public school system to properly serve Black Children: the prevalence of the notion of Black inferiority; the lack of culturally based methodological approaches used in teacher education programs; an inability of professionals in the sector to see meaningful assets in the communities in which the youth come from; and the metrics for achievement that do not lend themselves to the holistic development of Black children, the Kirwan Commission recommendations do nothing to substantively address any of these issues. It essentially repackages the same educational methodologies that have failed Black children, with small tweaks here and there. The crux of the work regarding the Commission had to do with the development of a funding formula that would direct more resources to school districts with concentrated poverty. While funding is an important element to substantive education reform, continuing to invest in a system of education that benefits education professionals more than it benefits Black children is an exercise in exploitation. Explicit measures to disrupt the system of white supremacy in teacher training and practice, and requiring community-based institutional formations (that are accountable to the community and not the nonprofit sector) to be involved in curriculum and evaluation design are the
kinds of recommendations that would make the report a challenge to white supremacy, instead of an extension of it.

A look at Johns Hopkins School of Public Health (JHSPH) provides an example of one of the most sophisticated forms of white supremacist methodology that is in the mainstream human/social service sector in Baltimore. Greg Carr in a talk he gave in 1998 after the passing of John Henrik Clarke describes something called incorporated resistance. Incorporated resistance is a phenomenon where white-controlled institutions incorporate progressive/radical discourses and intellectual material into an institutional arrangement that leaves white supremacist colonial power intact. A more colloquial way that Dr. Carr makes this argument is by characterizing incorporated resistance as, ‘you can talk all that Black stuff, just come to work tomorrow.’ In this arrangement, you can engage in very radical rhetoric, but you have no real power to challenge the institution itself when it oppresses Black people.

During the Black Student Movement and the rise of the Black Power Movement, there was an effort to bring Black Studies to major universities. Many of the leaders of the Black Power Movement saw Black studies as an attempt to change the material conditions of Black people. Joyce Ladner in the introduction to her 1973 anthology called Death of White Sociology says:

“Black sociologists must develop new techniques and perspectives, as those which are no longer functional are discarded. One of the dominant themes the authors in this anthology address is that there must be a conciliation between culture (theory) and politics (practice), or, as Nathan Hare has described it, the “uniting of the Black academy and the street.” Hence, Black sociology must become more political than mainstream sociology has been. Black sociology must also develop theories which assume the basic posture of eliminating racism and systematic class oppression from society. The myth of “value-free” sociology becomes relevant to the Black sociologist, because he must become “pro-value,” by promoting the interests of the Black masses in his research, writings and teachings.”

- (Ladner 1998)
Ladner expressed the desire for Black sociology (Studies) to “assume the basic posture of eliminating racism and systematic class oppression from society.” Black Studies was used by white liberal academic and philanthropic institutions to accomplish different goals than the proponents of Black Power. Tommy Curry, in his article “Black Studies, Not Morality,” says:

> As Joy James (2000) observes, “In academe, a self/text preoccupation and careerism may marginalize or psychologize political struggles. In the present form of Black Studies, it is not unusual to find writers advocating for the intellectual-interrogator as more enlightened than the activist-intellectual (we also find the inflation of literary production into a form of political ‘activism’ without analysis of the relation to community organizing. Professionalizing progressive discourse validating it within academic conversation, has a lot to do with the commodification of not only Black Studies, but Black radicalism within Black Studies” (p.155). This analysis is not all together surprising given the research of Fabio Rojas’s (2007) From Black Power to Black Studies which argues that the corporate foundations like Ford and Carnegie directly influenced and deradicalized the course of Black Studies departments in the years following the Civil Rights movement from paradigms focusing on material-nationalist-radicalism accounts of racism to poststructuralist-integrationist-reformism accounts of identity through post-doctoral fellowships and grants. In contrast to our present-day articulations of neoliberalism, or more appropriately the neoliberal crisis in relation to Black Studies, we are not only bringing attention to the externality of a white supremacist corporatism which devalues Blackness, but the reification of neoliberal axioms in the production and commodification of Black radicalism by Black scholars in Black Studies.”

-(Curry, Black Studies, Not Morality: Anti-Black Racism, Neo-Liberal Cooptation, and the Challenges to Black Studies Under Intersectional Axioms 2014)

In its strategic plan, JHSPH describes itself as an institution that wants to advance social justice. It often states its desire for “inclusion of marginalized groups,” and partnerships with the surrounding community. This version of social justice locates intellectual hegemony in JHSPH, which fuels the mechanisms of incorporated resistance. In order for JHSPH to truly challenge the system of white supremacy, it would have to eliminate its intellectual hegemony and seek to support the community’s ability to institutionalize approaches to public health that exist outside of the white liberal corporate intellectual mainstream. Things like African Centered rites of passage and indigenous forms of mindfulness are the kinds of approaches to public health that should replace the hegemonic status that JHSPH has in the field. Otherwise, the inclusion of “marginalized groups” will lend itself to the kind of incorporated resistance that will allow the leadership of JHU to curate the voices of resistance that are able to have a platform. Usually, those hand-picked voices, as Curry mentions in the earlier quotation, tend to be more reformist than revolutionary. Institutions like JHU tend to pick voices that will make accommodations to them that leave intact the perception of JHU as a thought leader.

Over the past decade, JHSPH has begun to popularize things like social determinants of health and community-based action participatory research. Social determinants of health are simply a framework of engaging public health from the perspective of looking at the impact of social inequities on health. It contends that sociological forces are the most significant predictor of health outcomes. Community-based action participatory research is an approach to studying social context by incorporating the community being considered into the research endeavor. Traditionally, the idea is that if the object of study has any
involvement with the trajectory of the study, it would then be seen as undermining scientific validity of the study (refer to the earlier Akbar quotations). Community-based action participatory research is an attempt, within the mainstream academic world, to challenge the ways that traditional social science has been oppressive.

Although these seem to be a good faith attempt to address oppression, these two innovations with JHSPH are quintessential examples of incorporated resistance. Neither social determinants of health nor community-based action participatory research challenges the hegemony that JHSPH has to determine which critical questions are studied and supported by the institution. These innovations open up spaces for critical inquiry, but JHU is able to claim the radicalism/progressivism of its discourses to justify its oppressive efforts elsewhere. Additionally, this allows JHSPH to lead discussions regarding social inequality that will obscure the centrality of white supremacy and continue to incorporate “marginalized voices” into an institutional arrangement that ultimately gives JHU more power.

The absence of any conversation about the system of white supremacy in the strategic plan perpetuates the invisibility of white supremacy. This is manifested by the fact that JHU does not take any responsibility for the way that it has participated in the dehumanization and exploitation of Black people. By minimizing the displacement of Black residents of East Baltimore, the history of medical experimentation, the billions of dollars generated from the cells of Henrietta Lacks, and many other instances of Black dehumanization, JHU remains able to obfuscate its efforts via the incorporation of radical discourses. In other words, the progressive/radical rhetoric that JHSPH is willing to incorporate allows for JHU to justify its continued colonial presence and activities.

I want to highlight two examples of methodologies that draw from the cultural and intellectual resources of Black people that could and should be emulated into the standard approaches to human/social service approaches in Baltimore.

First, the human development methodology of Elijah Muhammad. Elijah Muhammad founded the Nation of Islam (NOI) in Detroit in 1935. The NOI is a controversial organization for a variety of reasons, one of which is its theology that cast white people as “devils.” This organization was popularized in the American mainstream by Malcolm X and was most known for its opposition to integration as a solution to the problems that Black people face in American. The NOI advocated for the development of a separate land and territory within the continental United States that would form a nation for Black people in America. This perspective was at odds with the Civil Rights establishment’s call for integration into white society.
DeReef Jamison in a 2012 article titled “I’m Trying to Get You Free: Na’im Akbar, African Psychology and The Reconstruction of The Collective Black Mind” provides important insight into the methodology of Elijah Muhammad:

“For Akbar, these new procedures and guidelines must be culturally and historically grounded; and applicable to the lived experiences of people of African descent.

**Historical Memory**

For Akbar, psychological analysis must take into consideration the historical antecedents or determinants of the behavior. At the core of Akbar’s understanding of historical memory is his understanding of the power of cultural mythology. Akbar (1994) argues: every ethnic group shares a unique psychohistorical experience which has been shaped by their special experiences as a cultural group. Out of this unique experience emerges a cultural myth which serves as the foundation which unites that group and lays the foundation for their particular worldview...they are empowered by the noble self-image that they share... (p. 262)His understanding of historical memory was heavily influenced by his involvement with the Nation of Islam. As a member of the Nation of Islam, Akbar worked in the Office of Human Development at the national headquarters in Chicago. Akbar (2008) states that the “Impressive educational system, economic and business development as well as the effective self-help program that characterized the Nation struck me. These accomplishments were things that we had concluded in my Black Psychology classes were vitally needed if we were going to advance as a people” (Akbar, p. 413). He successfully blended the socio-religious teachings of Elijah Muhammad with the intellectual leanings of ABPs.

For Akbar, the Nation of Islam *was the* ‘post-doctoral training’ in ‘Black Psychology that I so desperately needed” (Akbar, 2008, p. 413). He further elaborates that “In addition to the support of the Association of Black Psychologists influence...the Nation of Islam became the most powerful influence on my development as a Black man and as a Black Psychologist” (Akbar, 2008, p. 414).

Akbar identifies Elijah Muhammad as an example of a thinker that understood the importance of using cultural myths as vehicles for psychological empowerment. He asserts that Elijah Muhammad “created a new cultural myth to match our current situation and built allegories out of our particular experience” (Akbar, 1994, p. 263).

According to Akbar (1994), “the devil (evil personified) was no longer a metaphysical creature out of a European medieval image but a ‘kind of man’ whose demonic qualities could easily be demonstrated within the recent historical experiences of any Black man or woman in America” (p. 263). For Akbar, it does not matter if the story is true or false, or whether it can be empirically validated, or if it is significant at the .001 level. What is significant to Akbar is the function the myth serves in the lives of people. In other words, what would happen if Black people acted “as if” white people were the devil? What type of psychological and behavioral changes would take place? According to Akbar, people of African descent would be motivated and empowered, out of dialectical necessity, to start their own farms, schools, businesses and banks. Akbar conceptualizes mythology as a construct that can be utilized as a catalyst for cultural, psychological and economic self-determination. In conjunction with Akbar, Amos Wilson suggests that “the Honorable Elijah Muhammad was the greatest psychologist we ever had, and many of us still have not come to understand that yet. Some of us thought that we were doing our ‘intellectual thing’ when we got caught up trying to point out his ‘mythologies’....We must look at function (Wilson, 1993, p.27).”

- (Jamison 2012)
Due to the prevalence of the notion of Black inferiority, many people ridicule Elijah Muhammad as a random guy with a creepy religion. You would be hard-pressed to find serious treatment in mainstream institutional spaces of the methodology developed by Elijah Muhammad. If we put him in his proper context, he developed an institution that was guided by a methodology that was able to fundamentally transform Black men who had been petty criminals and trapped in the revolving door of the criminal justice system into highly disciplined impactful members of society. James Baldwin and Bayard Rustin would often refer to the Nation of Islam as having been able to engage Black people (and Black men in particular) in ways no other organization at the time was able to. Jamison describes how Akbar says that the Nation of Islam was the most influential force on his development as a Black man and as a Black Psychologist. Akbar described his experience in the Nation of Islam as the “post-doctoral training that I needed.” Akbar’s commentary is a testament to the potency of the methodology of Elijah Muhammad.

Muhammad developed a theology that was able to instill a sense of self-worth and self-respect that moved Black men that had been petty criminals to business owners who take care of their communities and inspire other brothers. The idea that God is a Black man and not a mystical celestial figure and the idea that white people are devils were aspects of a system of human development of Black people. The idea of the Black man is God allowed for Black people to see ourselves and our lives as sacred. It opened Black people’s eyes to the idea that our presence in the world is divine. The idea of White people being the devil is often used to demonize the Nation of Islam. But if we understand the time period in its proper context, White supremacy kept many Black people from recognizing the evil being perpetrated on them by White society. These images of White Jesus kept many Black people from seeing White people as being evil. This idea of White people being devils was an extreme statement that was necessary in order to shake the deification of White people that Black people had been indoctrinated into.

These two tenets, along with other aspects of Elijah Muhammad’s methodology, were effective, particularly in transforming the lives of Black men. There are very few programs that can claim the track record of personal transformation, particularly for Black men, that the Nation of Islam has had. Yet, there are very few schools that produce “experts” in human development that can speak intelligently on the methodology of human development produced by Elijah Muhammad. My intention here is not to proselytize or to make Elijah Muhammad out to be a guide star to Black liberation. My point here is that we must begin to look at the people within our own history as having developed methodologies that we can use and appropriate in order to develop our own systems for human development.

In the arena of education, Fannie Jackson Coppin is a significant figure whose methodological approach to education is often overlooked. Fannie Jackson Coppin was born in 1837 in Washington, D.C. as an enslaved African. Her aunt worked to save enough money to buy Fannie Jackson’s freedom. She eventually became a student at Oberlin College, then became a teacher there. She then went to Philadelphia in 1865 to work at and then in 1869 run the Institute for Colored Youth for almost 40 years. Her husband, Levi Coppin, and many of her friends constantly urged her to write about her approach to teaching and education. After her death, her husband published her book in 1913 called Reminiscences of School Life, and Hints on Teaching. This book is still worth reading. From this text are methodological approaches to teaching that are still useful today.

One of the innovations that she advanced during her time as the principal of the Institute for Colored Youth was her use of an exhibition to garner financial and social support for the school while giving students a way to test their mastery of the skills that they have learned. The school put on an exhibition where the students
of industrial education were able to have the things that they produce available for the general public to inspect and to buy. This helped motivate the students as they were engaged in their assignments, providing useful services to the community, and demonstrating the quality of the work that the students were producing. This is one of the most impressive applications of praxis, where the work that students are doing is directly connected to the welfare of their community.

She had an approach to teaching that is reflective of a very thoughtful approach to education. She says:

"I am always sorry to hear that such and such a person is going to school to be educated. This is a great mistake. If the person is to get the benefit of what we call education, he must educate himself, under the direction of the teacher."

- (Jackson-Coppin 1913)

She also says:

“Again, we want to lift education out of the slough of the passive voice. Little Mary goes to school to be educated, and her brother John goes to the high school for the same purpose. It is too often the case that the passive voice has the right of way, whereas in the very beginning we should call into active service all the faculties of mind and body. Unfortunately book learning is so respectable, and there is so much of it all about us, that it is apt to crowd out the prosy process of thinking, comparing, reasoning, to which our wisest efforts should be directed.

Now, when we consider how much is lost by those who lose the benefit of the elementary development, and are therefore unable to pursue the higher branches with any degree of success or comfort to themselves or others, it is evident that this subject is worthy of a wise investigation and we must ask ourselves, how far are we responsible for this condition of affairs? I fear that the reason that so many are unable to keep up when they begin the higher studies is because they never mastered the elementary principles."

- (Jackson-Coppin 1913)

Coppin’s approach to education is rooted in the importance of the student as the driver of their own educational experience. The students are not empty vessels to be filled with elite knowledge. That traditional, mainstream approach to education is called the banking model of education as described in Pedagogy of the Oppressed by Brazilian radical education practitioner and advocate Paulo Freire. Almost 100 years before Freire’s groundbreaking work to identify the oppressive nature of the banking model of education and the liberatory potential of what he called the student-centered approach of the problem-posing model, Fannie Jackson Coppin was laying down a student-centered approach to education that is still instructive for today’s education professionals. Again, her emphasis on praxis in the place of the exclusive focus on “book learning” demonstrates a pedagogy rooted in empowering the student to impact the world around them.
In her book, she has different sections that explain her approach to teaching various subjects. Here is an excerpt from the section of her book called “How to Teach Reading and Spelling”:

There are now so many new ways of teaching reading and spelling that teachers can have their choice and take whatever plan they find the most effective.

To learn to read, write and spell one word the first day, will be found to be very interesting to the children. The word "man" is a good word to begin with, because day after day by the addition of one more letter each day we can form a sentence. Words are more interesting than letters, and sentences are more interesting than words. So that as soon as possible the teacher wants to make a sentence. But it is not supposed that we should omit to teach the alphabet in order, for we know that this is necessary. But by no means allow this to be done mentally. Have the book or the chart with the letters large and distinctly made, and have the children's eyes follow the work as the teacher points to each letter and calls its name. There are many little devices that a teacher can use to get the children interested in the work. Among them may be picking out the printed letters that they have learned when they see them in a book or paper, and sometimes the teacher will have them in a little box and the children are asked to pick out such and such a letter and bring it to the teacher. The movements of the hand and arm in making letters should be frequently practiced by the pupils, and this is a wonderful help when they come to make the letters on the board or on the paper.

The pupils are thus led along skilfully until they are ready to take the first lessons in their readers; then, how the work will jump! No drawling tones will be heard then, for their preparations will make them feel that they know the whole book. The articles a and the having been pronounced naturally as "a[WITH BREVE]h," "the[WITH CARON]," the child will read, "The[WITH CARON] boy has a[WITH BREVE] dog." And not, "The boy has a[WITH MACRON] dog. Sometimes it is very hard to break up this unnatural way of reading. As the child's writing has kept pace with its reading, one child can copy a letter on the board while the teacher hears the others read. When the writing is finished, the whole class turns to the board to correct whatever has been written, and then they have a lively time.

- (Jackson-Coppin 1913)
In each section, you can see the practical application of her emphasis on a student-centered approach to teaching. Given the fact that she was teaching and running the Institute for Colored Youth during Reconstruction and Jim Crow, and the open and blatant disregard for the intellectual abilities of Black children, her ability to become such an effective educator in an adverse social climate makes her approach to education tremendously valuable. Additionally, the idea that Black schools before Brown vs. Board could be sources of educational best practices is something that many mainstream educational professionals could not even fathom due to their internalization of the notion of Black inferiority. In fact, Dr. Brian Morrison of the Watkins Institute in Maryland explains how this dynamic has manifested itself in Baltimore. During a panel at a June 2019 Malcolm X talk hosted by Leaders of a Beautiful Struggle, Dr. Morrison said the following:

“When Brown vs the Board of Education was instituted the NAACP and Black folks said we are going to go with choice we are not going to force our kids to go to these white schools. And the reason... This guy from University of Maryland who wrote this book (Brown in Baltimore by Howell Baum) could not understand why they choose that, why didn’t they say, hey yea lets send our kids to white schools. It was because since the early 20th century up until Board vs Board of Education the Black community had been building Dunbar, and Douglass and Booker T. Washington and putting their own teachers into those schools teaching our own children. And that’s what we need. One of the reasons I did my research was because people would always say it was better when we had our own schools, when it were segregated. I said “man that doesn’t really sound right” until I did the research, and, its true.”

- (Morrison 2019)

There are very few studies in the human/social service sector in Baltimore (if any at all) that have looked to Black educational institutions in the pre-Brown era as a source of information that could be instructive for addressing the problems of public education. This dynamic is an example of the sector’s general embrace of the notion of Black inferiority.
Elijah Muhammad’s approach to human development and Fannie Jackson Coppin’s approach to education are just two of many examples of methodologies that draw from the cultural and intellectual resources of Black people that are marginalized as a result of the system of white supremacy and the societal belief in the notion of Black inferiority. Just imagine all of the useful approaches to social transformation and human services that have been rejected in service of the system of white supremacy.
Section 4: The Confrontation

Ultimately, there are two major courses of action that are necessary to begin to shift the human/social service sector in a direction to reverse the harm that it has done to Black people. The status of thought leadership in the sector must be taken away from those who are in positions of power. Those who have embodied the traditional approach to human/social service described in this essay must be publicly discredited. This is not a call for public humiliation. The intellectual and social capital that is acquired through being in a position of thought leadership has been monopolized by white liberals who have endeavored to socially engineer Black progress. They have monopolized this acquisition of social capital by controlling the frameworks that the public sector uses to deliver services to Black children and using the expert position of those in the philanthropic and university spaces to assert notions of what constitutes best practices. The position as a thought leader of the network of traditional human/social service leadership has allowed them to shape the Black community in ways that have allowed people to make careers out of managing Black suffering. Only a decisive and public denouncement of the current thought leadership in the sector will open up space for the kinds of Black methodologies mentioned earlier to emerge at the forefront of the sector.

Frank Wilderson in his Memoir *Incognegro* describes an incident where he writes a letter to the faculty at Cabrillo College criticizing their tacit endorsement of a (white) student center leader deciding that instead of spending money on 30 students of color to go to a conference on race, that he would spend the money on T-shirts. He uses this incident to write an overarching criticism of the institution. He was frustrated with the way that liberals would hide their institutionally racist actions behind “progressive” gestures and rhetoric. The following are excerpts from this letter:
“The claim of “balance and fair play” forecloses upon, not only the modest argument that the practices of the Cabrillo Student Senate are racist and illegitimate, but it also forecloses upon the more extended, comprehensive, and antagonistic argument that Cabrillo itself is racist and illegitimate. And what do we mean by Cabrillo? The White people who constitute its fantasies of pleasure and its discourse of legitimacy....

White people are guilty until proven innocent. White people are guilty of being friends with each other, of standing up for their rights, of pledging allegiance to the flag, of reproducing concepts like fairness, meritocracy, balance, standards, norms, harmony between the races. Most of all, Whites are guilty of wanting stability and reform.

White people, like Mr. Harold and those in the English Division, are guilty of asking themselves the question, How can we maintain the maximum amount of order (liberals at Cabrillo use euphemisms like peace, harmony, stability), with the minimum amount of change, while presenting ourselves—if but only to ourselves—as having the best of all possible intentions. Good people. Good Intentions. White people are the only species, human or otherwise, capable of transforming the dross of good intentions into the gold of grand intentions, and naming it “change.”

These passive revolutions, fire and brimstone conflicts over which institutional reform is better than the other one, provide a smoke screen—a diversionary play of interlocutions—that keep real and necessary antagonisms at bay. White people are thus able to go home each night, perhaps a little wounded, but feeling better for having made Cabrillo a better place...for everyone...

White people love their jobs, they love their institutions, they love their country, most of all they love each other. And every Black or Brown body that doesn't love the things you love is a threat to your love for each other. A threat to your fantasy space, your terrain of shared pleasures.

Passive revolutions have a way of incorporating Black and Brown bodies to either term of the debate. What choice does one have? The third (possible, but always unspoken) term of the debate, White people are guilty of structuring debates which reproduce the institution and the institution reproduces America and America is always and everywhere a bad thing—this term is never on the table, because the level of abstraction is too high for White liberals. They’ve got too much at stake: their friends, their family, their way of life. Let’s keep it all at eye level, where Whites can keep on eye on everything. So the Black body is incorporated. Because to be unincorporated is to say that what White liberals find valuable I have no use for. This, of course, is anti-institutional and shows a lack of breeding, not to mention a lack of gratitude for all the noblesse oblige which has been extended to the person of color to begin with. “We will incorporate colored folks into our fold, whenever possible and at our own pace, provided they’re team players, speak highly of us, pretend to care what we’re thinking, are highly qualified, blah, blah, blah...but, and this is key, we won’t entertain the rancor which shits on our fantasy space...

We’ve killed too many Indians, worked too many Chinese and Chicano fingers to the bone, set in motion the incarcerated genocide of too many Black folks, and we’ve spent too much time at the beach, or in our gardens, or hiking in the woods, or patting each other on the literary back, or teaching Shakespeare and the Greeks, or drinking together to honor our dead at retirement parties .... too much time White-bonding in an effort to forget how hard we killed and to forget how many bones we walk across each day just to get from our bedrooms to Cabrillo...too, too much for one of you coloreds to come in here and be so ungrateful as to tell us the very terms of our precious debates are specious.”

- (Wilderson III 2015)
As you can imagine, this letter was not well received by many of his colleagues, and he was even told by one of his friends that he would be blacklisted because of this letter. It is intuitive why this kind of message would be so controversial. Institutions have a way of keeping certain discourses out of their purview so that they do not have to engage them. As Wilderson says, institutions structure debates reproducing the institution. They set the terms of debate so that reforms that are understood to be controversial divert from the conversation about the very legitimacy of the institution itself. The ability to impact the livelihood of those engaged in mainstream conversations allow those in positions of leadership to curate what discourse is allowed to exist in mainstream spaces. This is the case for the human social service sector in Baltimore. We have to openly challenge the terms of the social capital that is trafficked by mainstream institutions ability to assert themselves as thought leaders. We have to be engaged in intellectual and political warfare within the sector in order to create space for new possibilities in Baltimore. We cannot be content with rearranging the deck chairs of the Titanic; we have to jump ship altogether.

An arena where Black scholars had to engage in intellectual warfare against an established class of thought leaders was the battle over the racial identity of Egyptians. Asa Hilliard in his book *The Maroon Within Us* comments on this battle. He says:

> It is important to note that when Dr. Cheikh Anta Diop of Senegal and his colleague Dr. Theophile Obenga of Congo, finally got their opportunity, on neutral ground, to present their data in support of native Black Kemet, their rock solid arguments shook the traditional Egyptological establishment. It has never been the same since that time. The official report of the details of the meeting said the following:

> “Although the preparatory working paper sent out by UNESCO gave particulars of what was desired, not all participants had prepared communications comparable with the painstakingly researched contributions of Professors Cheikh Anta Diop and Obenga. There was consequently a real lack of balance in the discussions.”

> It is hard to imagine a more telling conclusion. What type of empirical data had supported the age old idea of a White Egypt? Did the traditional Egyptologists expect to prove a case for it by relying on their prestige? What other data and interpretations can be challenged when the door is opened for new topics and for scholarly opinion that is normally ignored or excluded?"  

> - (Hilliard, The maroon within us: Selected essays on African American community socialization 1995)

Diop and Obenga’s challenge to the Egyptology establishment changed the nature of the kinds of scholarship that was deemed acceptable in mainstream intellectual circles. The discipline of Egyptology was brought into existence by racist scholars of the European Renaissance who needed to culturally remove Egypt from Africa to justify the notion of Black inferiority and in order to facilitate enslavement and colonialism. The challenge to the Egyptology establishment’s white supremacist ideas created space for the emergence of Afrocentricity, African centered scholarship, and Pan-African studies as more viable intellectual enterprises in the public mainstream. This essay is an attempt to do to the human/social service in Baltimore what Diop and Obenga did to the Egyptology establishment at the 1974 UNESCO conference.

Unfortunately, there are Black people who have internalized the notions of Black inferiority and have unknowingly become stewards of the system of white supremacy. There are many Black people who have been trained in Eurocentric models of social sciences that reproduce the system of white supremacy. Na’im
Akbar in his essay “Afrocentric Social Sciences for Human Liberation” which appears in a compilation edited by Ama Mazama, says:

“Unaware of the ethnocentric assumptions of Western social science, many African scholars have become advocates of their own inferiority by utilizing these theories and their implicit norms. The research and scholarship of these African American social scientists have confirmed the negative assertions of their Euro-American counterparts. It has led to a preoccupation with deviance, deficiency, and an excessive involvement with “victim analysis.” Native African scholars have often taken on the position of the neocolonialist scholar advocating the “improvement” of his or her people by the adoption of European personal traits and social patterns (see Fanon, 1967, 1968). African-American scholars have become the neo-slave master and neo-oppressor by advocating success by identification or integration with Euro-Americans as the only basis for success. Our position is not one of minimizing or denying the presence of rampant social and personal problems as a consequence of decades of colonialism and/or oppression and slavery. Such extreme human suffering is undeniable. The problem is that we are extremely limited in the capacity to alter any of these conditions because of the “conceptual incarceration” that Nobles has described and that we identify in this discussion as a kind of paradigmatic stagnation.”

- (Akbar, Africentric social sciences for human liberation 1984)

Just being Black does not qualify someone to be a meaningful contributor to policy and practices that will improve the quality of life of Black people. One of the ways that white supremacy manifest itself is that there are people who will assert themselves as experts on issues relating to Black people who have not been engaged in the rigorous study of the history and culture of Black people. As articulated in the previous Akbar quote, Black scholars (and for our purposes, Black people in the human social service sector) that are typically elevated to positions of leadership by white institutions, are professionally socialized in an approach to human/social service that is rooted in “advocating success by identification or integration with Euro-Americans as the only basis for success.” That happens because of the lack of respect there is for the intellectual capacity of Black people. It is as if there is not much to master as it relates to Black people’s scholarly output toward our liberation.
Noliwe Rooks gives an example of this in her book *White Money Black Power*. She describes an exchange she had with the English department at the school that she was working at. She says:

"I got myself on the agenda of the school’s curriculum committee to propose two new literature courses I thought would be useful for both the English department and the new program in African American Studies. One course was a survey of African American literature from the Harlem Renaissance through the 1980s. The other was a course on African American women’s literature. At the same time, I wanted to put the curriculum committee on notice that I would be back at the next meeting with proposals for two African American history courses.

I presented proposals along with a sample syllabus for each of the two literature courses, and I outlined how both courses would fulfill distribution requirements and be easily incorporated into the existing curriculum of the English department. When I finished my presentation, there was a very long silence, along with quite a few looks exchanged between the members of the committee. One cleared his throat and said, almost to himself, “I wonder if we aren’t moving a bit too fast.” I waited patiently to hear how exactly it was that the material I had presented constituted moving too fast. I was just about to ask for clarification when another committee member broke in to say, “Well, the real problem here is she seems to be suggesting that Blacks have written enough books to be taught in two separate classes. I mean, do all of you really believe that Black people wrote all the books listed here?” The meeting degenerated from there.

The upshot was that I was told they would approve one of the classes, the one on Black women, because they thought Black students might like taking a class on Black women’s literature from a Black woman, and besides, “Toni Morrison is certainly someone we can all agree is a really good writer.”"  

- (Rooks 2006)

The levels of ignorance that exist about the depth of the intellectual work that Black people have done exist in the highest realms of society. The quote from Rooks illuminates the larger societal belief that there is not much to study about Black people. This is a belief that has been internalized by Black people, particularly Black people in spaces where they are one of a few Black people in those spaces.

There are many circles where being Black and smart is enough for someone to be understood as an authority on Black people and issues of racism. The societal disregard for the full range of cultural and intellectual resources of Black people allows white people to curate methodologies in which Black people are then heralded as experts. Another way of saying this is that if anyone who is passionate about causes related to Black people are seen as legitimate, then white institutions can select Black leadership that does not threaten the thought leadership of those who are in power in the sector. This is not to say that people who have not engaged in a rigorous study cannot have legitimate opinions. The issue here is the question of having an authoritative perspective that should constitute thought leadership in a particular field. Black people deserve for those who put forward demands in regard to our condition to take seriously the importance of studying our people as the price for admission into thought leadership in major industries in civil society.

Part of what has emerged in the human/social sector recently is the idea that organizational leadership should be reflective of the community most directly impacted. This is an important principle that highlights
the need for service providers, and the human/social service sector more broadly, to be accountable to the
communities that they serve and to respect the right of the community to shape the institutions that govern
their lives. What has happened in some quarters is a paternalistic iteration of this principle where people,
by virtue of being poor or formerly incarcerated or Black, are told that they are automatically experts because
of their experience. They are experts on their experience and can speak authoritatively on the impact that
these experiences have on them, but this is not the same thing as developing a comprehensive
understanding of the nature of how larger systems and institutions work. That requires a study that cannot
be simply done by osmosis. Again, this is about thought leadership in a particular arena of civil society. The
purpose of the principle of those most directly impacted being represented in the leadership of institutions
is that it serves as a check on making sure that those in positions of thought leadership are actually
producing results. It is similar to what an ideal relationship is between a patient and their doctor. The patient
may not understand all of the complex medical dynamics that are at play regarding their body, but it is the
doctor’s job to make sure that the patient is satisfied with their service. At any time, the patient can seek
out a new doctor who will have the responsibility of convincing the patient that they can effectively satisfy
their medical needs. Similarly, the community should be in the position of the patient who gets to determine
which thought leaders operate within the institutions that govern their lives.

Those who are most directly impacted by systems of oppression can become thought leaders and experts.
People like Malcolm X, Maya Angelou, and Frederick Douglass did not have any advanced academic degrees.
But the rigor of their work and training outside of formal academic institutions demonstrate the kinds of
expertise that is available to those who are most directly impacted by systems of oppression that would make
them suitable for being understood as thought leaders in their field.

There are two reasons why the discussion of the ways that Black people internalize white supremacist
methodology and the paternalistic rendering of Black community leadership is important. The first is that
there is an age-old strategy of putting Black faces at the head of major institutions while leaving the white
supremacist structure intact. As the previous Akbar quote describes, there are neo-slave masters who have
internalized and developed a commitment to the institutions of the status quo and who personally benefit
from their intellectual, social, and political proximity to white institutions. They are used as instruments for
maintaining the system of white supremacy. The move in Baltimore to increase Black presence, and in some
cases leadership, in their institutions is not an attempt to address the issues of racism/white supremacy.
Rather, it is an attempt to provide symbolic gestures toward racial justice in order to maintain the institutional
arrangement of the status quo. In order to change the structure of the human/social service sector, there
must be a substantial shift in the thought leadership that serves as the architecture of the institutions of the
status quo.

Secondly, we must demand that those who are thought leaders regarding programs, methodologies, and
institutions that serve the community respect the humanity of Black people enough to require of themselves
rigorous practical and methodological expertise. John Henrik Clarke once described the phenomenon of ego
starvation. This is a phenomenon where Black people, as a result of the white supremacist propaganda of
the mainstream white supremacist society, has produced feelings of inferiority, particularly intellectual
inferiority. This creates a sense of intellectual insecurity that white leaders of institutions take advantage of
in elevating Black people who want to be understood as leaders. Everyone who is in a position to serve as a
thought leader in a particular area must be willing to subject themselves to vetting and criticism. This is
often difficult because of the tendency for people to take criticism personally. This can also inflame the
insecurities and bruise the egos of people who are suffering extreme bouts of ego starvation. It must become
understood as an essential aspect of thought leadership in the sector that every one that is considered a thought leader must be subject to questioning by the broader community. Those who sincerely wish to transform the sector must seek out opportunities to stand before the community and be held accountable for their work, even amongst people who may disagree.

Due to the ubiquitous nature of the system of white supremacy, explicit challenges to the notion of Black inferiority and white supremacy are essential to any strategy that is attempting to improve the conditions of Black people. Theresa Perry, in the earlier quoted book Young, Gifted and Black, says on page 96:

"In the Pre-Civil Rights era, African-American children and youth lived in communities, attended schools and churches, and were members of organizations that, in response to the larger society’s explicit ideology about African Americans’ intellectual competence, communicated a counternarrative about their intellectual capacity. Today, few individuals, organizations, and institutions acknowledge or pay attention to the reproduction of the ideology of Black inferiority and its potential impact on African-American students."

- (Perry, Steele and Hilliard 2003)

The institutional formations that existed in the Black Baltimore community during the Pre-Civil Rights era have been decimated by Black and white flight from Baltimore. As Perry describes, there was an explicit message that was a part of the socialization of Black youth in the Pre-Civil Rights era that challenged notions of Black inferiority. The socialization of Black youth today involves approaches to human/social service that perpetuates notions of Black inferiority, as noted in the earlier section of this paper. It is important to draw inspiration from these Pre-Civil Rights Black organizations to develop practices and procedures that can affirm the humanity of Black people, which is an essential aspect of improving the condition of Black people.

Political organizing is necessary to create the organizational capacity to take on the roles that should be relinquished by the current leadership in the sector. I will not go into detail about the nature of that work here because that conversation is one that is directed toward Black people. I mention this here because it is important that it is clearly understood that the role of producing new leadership of the sector is an endeavor that should not be mediated by the mainstream human/social service sector. In this paper, I lay out an argument for changing the nature of the leadership currently in the sector. But the role of producing new leadership is something that must be done in independent Black formations that are not controlled by white people/institutions. The purpose of this essay is to address the human/social service sector in Baltimore, and so we will leave the development of new leadership to a conversation outside of the scope of the sector.
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