

# **THE KERNER REPORT: 50 YEARS LATER**

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**Revisited by the 2018  
Humanity in Action  
Fellows in Detroit**

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Detroit 2018

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# ABOUT HUMANITY IN ACTION

Humanity in Action is an international organization that educates, inspires and

connects a network of university students and young professionals committed to promoting human rights, diversity and active citizenship in their own communities and around the world.

Humanity in Action has educated over 2,000 young leaders in their 20s,

30s and 40s who now form a unique international network. Through its programs and partnerships with outstanding civic and educational organizations including the

National Center for Civil and Human Rights and The New School, Humanity in Action

contributes in innovative ways to advance human rights and democratic freedoms.

Humanity in Action's annual fellowship programs bring together more than 160 European and American university students, graduate students and

young professionals each summer in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Denmark, France, Germany, Poland, the Netherlands and the United States to discuss, learn and

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CITIZENSHIP.***

research in international groups. Humanity in Action Fellows meet leading experts and activists to study the Holocaust and contemporary challenges to minority rights. Fellows write research-based articles and develop teaching tools to share what they learned in their programs.

Humanity in Action selects Fellows from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Poland, the Netherlands, Turkey, Ukraine and the United States. Humanity in Action supports all Fellows financially for the duration of their programs, allowing for the merit-based selection of diverse applicants. Humanity in Action also provides professional development opportunities. It maintains an international network of students, young professionals, established leaders, experts and partners for which it organizes a range of educational and career opportunities, including seminars, workshops, study trips and fellowship positions at leading civic and political institutions, such as the European Parliament, the U.S. Congress, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the American Civil Liberties

Union (ACLU) of Ohio. These opportunities encourage emerging leaders to develop their professional abilities and introduce established leaders to the ideas of the younger generation.

Humanity in Action's network of leaders is a valuable resource to policy-makers, diplomats, educators, business leaders and civic-minded individuals and organizations. By the end of the decade, Humanity in Action will connect over 2,500 professionals working in all sectors, on a range of critical issues, in countries around the world.

Humanity in Action is a non-profit, non-partisan organization with governing and advisory Boards in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland and the United States. Humanity in Action's international headquarters are in New York City. Major supporters of Humanity in Action have included the Ford Foundation, Mellon Foundation, the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund, Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and Future (EVZ), the Dutch Ministry for Health, Welfare and Sport and the U.S. Department of State.



# 2018 HUMANITY IN ACTION FELLOWSHIP IN DETROIT

The Humanity in Action Fellowship in Detroit is an immersive educational program about inequality, development and opportunity. The Fellowship explores the biography of Detroit -- a city deeply emblematic of the tensions of massive urban, economic, political and cultural change in 20th and 21st century urban America.

The Detroit Fellowship brings together a group of 22 promising young people who are passionate about public service, social justice and human rights. The Fellows are university students and young professionals. They come from Detroit, elsewhere in Michigan and the United States, and from Europe.

Over four weeks, the Humanity in Action Fellows take part in an

expansive and interdisciplinary program that examines the promise, failure and possibilities of social and economic progress in Detroit. After the Fellowship, the Fellows develop Action Projects in their home communities and join Humanity in Action's international network of more than 2,000 Fellows and Senior Fellows.

In Detroit, the Fellows meet with community leaders and expert observers to discuss the most critical issues in Detroit, including education, employment, public health, housing, transportation, policing, and business and entrepreneurship. Together, Fellows, staff and invited speakers investigate the histories of injustice and inequality in Detroit, current issues and

policies, and models for civic engagement to build a more equitable, just and sustainable community.

Humanity in Action established the Fellowship in Detroit in July 2017 -- on the 50th anniversary of the 1967 rebellion. In its second year, the Fellowship turns to examine a second 50th anniversary, that of the 1968 Kerner Commission Report on the rebellions in Detroit, Newark and other U.S. cities. The Fellows will investigate the course of progress and regression on four of the major issues laid out in the landmark report -- inequalities in education, employment, housing and policing.

Humanity in Action is fortunate to work closely with the Detroit Institute of Arts and the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History. Through collaborative programming and in-depth discussions, the Fellows gain insight into the impact of two of Detroit's most important anchor institutions.

Humanity in Action and its Fellows benefit immensely from the generous hospitality and advice of many friends in Detroit and beyond. Among them are Marsha Battle Philpot,

Richard and Susie Lord, Heather Lord, Charles Ezra Ferrell, Juanita Moore, Salvador Salort-Pons, Annmarie Erickson, Jennifer Czajkowski and Asha Shajahan.

The fellowship was built upon the model of Humanity in Action's Philanthropy and Social Enterprise Fellowship, a 2015 research program for Humanity in Action Senior Fellows. In 2017, it joined Humanity in Action's John Lewis Fellowship in Atlanta as the second U.S.-based annual Fellowship, along with annual European Fellowships in Amsterdam, Berlin, Copenhagen, Sarajevo and Warsaw.



2018 Humanity in Action Fellows in Detroit with Marsha Music and Heather Lord

# INTRODUCTION

**Anthony Chase & Whitney Sherrill**

In 2018, the Humanity in Action Fellowship in Detroit examined the 50th anniversary of the 1968 Kerner Commission and its blistering report about the origins of the “race riots” of the prior year. The Kerner Report identified abuses in policing, unequal education and discrimination in housing and employment, among other factors, as causes for the violence of 1967 in Detroit, Newark and other cities. The report represented a rare bipartisan critique of stark inequality and racism as defining features of American cities. The Kerner Report was an acknowledgement of the architecture of urban and social disaster upon which American cities were built. The Commission famously wrote that the United States was “moving toward two societies, one black, one white -- separate and unequal.”

We gave the 22 Humanity in Action Fellows in Detroit the important task of investigating the course of progress -- and regression -- on the Kerner Commission Report 50 years after its release. Over four intensive weeks, they focused on four of the critical areas the Commission identified -- education, employment, housing and policing. The Fellows measured the inequities evident today in the classrooms and streets of Detroit. And they evaluated models of civic response, through activism, entrepreneurship, community engagement and public policy, in a city of enormous need.

The 22 Humanity in Action Fellows hailed from Detroit, the surrounding metro region, from other U.S. states and from Europe. The cohort was diverse in background, academic discipline, professional ambitions and life experiences. The Fellows met with a broad range of community leaders to understand better the complex dynamics of social progress in Detroit.

We divided the cohort of 22 Fellows into four groups dedicated to employment, education, housing and policing. Each of the four groups conducted substantial research, engaged in service learning

with partner organizations and wrote a concise analysis evaluating today's inequalities on their assigned issue.

Taken together, the four chapters form a new report -- 50 years later, reflecting the urgency of today's inequalities, anticipating future challenges, and channeling the voice of young people devoted to public service, social justice and human rights.

## SERVICE LEARNING

Throughout the program, each of the four Collaborative Project groups engaged in service learning with partner community organizations that address the issues outlined in the 1968 Report. The service learning component broadened the Fellows' understanding of strategies for civic intervention and introduced them to Detroit residents who are working to secure a more just future. The four groups conducted service learning with the following organizations:

- Education Group: Wash & Learn, a project of Libraries Without Borders and Detroit Public Library
- Housing Group: United Community Housing Coalition
- Employment Group: Cass Community Social Services
- Policing Group: Prison Creative Arts Project, a University of Michigan initiative

## RESEARCH

The chapters included in this report are based on community-based and data-driven research. The chapters are also informed by the Fellowship meetings with Detroit leaders as well as interviews with city residents, media and scholarly reviews and the Fellows' own observations in Detroit.

The Fellows were aided greatly in their research by the resources and expertise of the University of Michigan. Humanity in Action collaborated with Dr. Elisabeth Gerber, one of the scholars behind the Detroit Metropolitan Area Communities Study (DMACS) -- a major ongoing opinion research project of the University of Michigan. DMACS is an innovative survey tool to support Detroit community development decisions with reliable data on the life outcomes and views of residents. Through DMACS, Detroit leaders and the Fellows alike have access to powerful new results about the opinions of Detroit residents concerning economic development

issues as well as the issues outlined in the Kerner Commission Report.

## ANTICIPATING THE FUTURE -- TECH DISRUPTIONS IN EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION, HOUSING AND POLICING

In building their reports, the Fellows looked to the future and anticipated how technological and economic advancements will transform the issues of education, employment, housing and policing.

Through a special workshop with Susannah Shattuck, a Humanity in Action Senior Fellow and member of IBM's artificial intelligence unit, the Fellows considered how innovations like Artificial Intelligence, the Internet of Things and Bitcoin may both exacerbate social issues in Detroit and provide new resources for activists and community members.

## PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS

On August 2, 2018, the Fellows presented their reports at a public event at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History. As part of the Wright Museum's series "Millennial Conversations," the event engaged the Fellows' peers in a broader discussion about how young people can get involved and take charge on the injustices and inequalities their communities face. Humanity in Action has released the New Kerner Report online and in print widely -- to educate, connect and inspire others to action.

We are proud to share this work of the 22 Humanity in Action Fellows in Detroit. It is our hope, and the hope of the Fellows, that this report serves as the basis for dialogue and action to advance equitable social and economic progress in Detroit.



2018 Humanity in Action Fellows in Detroit at Rivera Court in the Detroit Institute of Arts

# PREFACE

## The 2018 Humanity in Action Fellows in Detroit

We are 22 fellows from nine countries, seven U.S. states, eight Michigan cities, including three fellows from Detroit. All of us have come to Detroit to learn about the history and resilience of the city and its people. We all share a keen interest in human rights yet do not always agree on how they should be realized.

For the past four weeks, we have been welcomed into the culture and uniqueness of the city of Detroit. Through the Fellowship, we had the opportunity to hear and analyze the diverse narratives shared with us. In this report, we use our limited time and knowledge to revisit the Kerner Report fifty years after its publication.

We are deeply grateful to the Detroiters who have shaped our learning over the last four weeks. In consideration of the extensive legacy of activism in Detroit, we recognize that knowledge about solutions to the issues we describe already exists in communities.

We hope you find that our analysis is an insightful interpretation of issues present in the city and that it contributes to the uplift of the people of Detroit.

We enthusiastically welcome community feedback, and though no Detroiters owe this labor, we believe in being held accountable for our report.

It is with deep humility and deeper appreciation that we offer our words. Thank you.





2018 Humanity in Action Fellows in Detroit at Ella Fitzgerald Park with Caitlin Murphy.

# EDUCATION

**Labiba Ahmed, Alexis Brown, Katja Molinaro,  
Akash Raje, Anastasia Siapka & Emma Yip**

The Kerner Report ranked inadequate education as number four of the twelve causes of the 1967 rebellion. The school system failed to “equip children to develop their potential and to participate fully in American life,” particularly minority youth. The Commission believed integration, more federal funding, early childhood development, vocational training, and bringing test scores up would help solve this problem. In 2016, 35% of Detroiters under the age of 35 ranked educational improvement as the highest priority for the city,<sup>1</sup> thus demonstrating the persistence of this problem in public discourse. Increased privatization, mismanagement and destabilization of Detroit Public Schools Community District (DPSCD), and systemic racism have led to serious injustices within the educational system. In this chapter, we discuss the lack of access to an equitable education for Detroiters, while providing recommendations for future initiatives. By equitable education we mean that students should be supported differently based on varying levels of need to engage in the process of building one’s capacity to fully and effectively participate in society by providing avenues for one to become who they truly are.

## EDUCATION IN DETROIT TODAY

Poor access to equitable educational resources restricts Detroit’s citizens’ self development and civic participation. Due to deep rooted continuities of state-sanctioned violence, as seen through racism and segregation, black Detroiters face discriminatory barriers to literacy and adequately funded schools. We center our analysis on these two issues, highlighting the strategic positioning of city and state governments, educational nonprofit organizations, and local institutions.

## Literacy

Unacceptably low literacy rates deny Detroiters access to liberty and nondiscrimination in American life. As the ongoing federal appeal to the class action suit *Gary B. v. Snyder*<sup>2</sup> claims, the State of Michigan is depriving Detroit's school's students—97 percent of whom are students of color— to function properly in society. We see this as a manifestation of the many afterlives of slavery in the United States. This case in Detroit schools marks a critical point in American civil rights initiatives in the 21st century.

The Metro Detroit region contacts the most segregated school district border in the country between DPSCD and Grosse Pointe.<sup>3</sup> The State of Michigan justifies this de facto segregation with neighboring Grosse Pointe through the lack of evidence that different conditions stem from race and thus do not violate the equal protection clause.<sup>4</sup> This hypocrisy marks the self-serving positioning of state government entities, which continue the educational discrimination identified in the Kerner report through poor enforcement of established legal protections, such as Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The five lowest performing schools in Detroit, which comprise the Plaintiff in *Gary B. v Snyder*, were assigned grades of Fs and Ds by the non-profit organization Excellent Schools Detroit. These schools, along with the districts at large, lack effective literacy programs and curricula to teach literacy, or to remediate when students begin to lag behind. Students in the DPSCD are, on average, 2.3 grade levels below their actual grade level in basic reading proficiency.<sup>5</sup>

The outcomes of illiteracy span beyond mere civic participation and unconstitutionality; they hold specific outcomes in stable livelihoods. Forty-three percent of adults with the lowest levels of literacy live in poverty, as compared to only 4% of those with the highest levels of literacy.

The State of Michigan's disregard for Detroit's students deprives the next generation of liberty and human dignity. Educational non-profits work to communicate this information and create grassroots organizations to pool together resources and activism against racial inequities in education.

## Inadequate Funding

To ensure access to equitable education, students first require basic educational resources. This includes, but is not limited to adequate school buildings, up-to-date and relevant textbooks, necessary supplies and qualified teachers. DPSCD students have been denied these most basic resources.<sup>6</sup>

Of the 103 operating school buildings today, 30% are in unsatisfactory condition and 20% are in poor condition, six times the amount of unsatisfactory conditioned buildings in the nation. These unsafe conditions deter access to safe learning environments and, thus, contribute to the many disadvantages students of color are facing in this school district.

Poor administration by city council has led to unorganized and unstable instructional environments. In June 2016, the state passed legislation explicitly and solely for Detroit Public Schools allowing non-certificated teachers to educate in the district. While employed, these teachers were supplied with out-of-date material, oftentimes being forced to contribute from their own low salary to provide students with necessary supplies.

Trying to correct this wrong, in July of 2018 DPSCD Board of Education approved a hiring plan for teachers, who have certification but no classroom training. Although this addresses one issue, it perpetuates Detroit Public Schools' maladministration of providing band-aid solutions to systemic issues.

### **Role Of Local Institutions**

DPSCD recently launched the Arts Cultural Passport program to improve access to the arts for Detroit students. In its pilot year this initiative aimed to facilitate a partnership between the Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, and Michigan Opera Theatre, to improve and widen Detroiters' connection to arts institutions. The Passport program has faced significant challenges in efficacy due to their exclusive approach to arts education. In failing to properly include community perspectives in the programming, the initiative struggles to meet students' needs and interests. This devalues students' experiences and perpetuates class divisions.

Many organizations serve as intermediaries and educational alternatives that connect the community with necessary resources, as exemplified by the work from Freedom Schools, the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, and Focus: HOPE, among others. As evident by the analysis below, the success of these organizations stems from seeing community needs and involving the community at every step of the way.

## **EDUCATION ORGANIZATIONS AND INITIATIVES**

There are many organizations taking steps to bring Detroiters access to equitable education. Some of these are discussed below.

## **Detroit Public Library**

The Detroit Public Library system has 22 branches within the metropolitan area. Aside from free book lending, they also offer resources such as computer and wifi access, printing, after school classes for youth, and remedial/skilled training for adults. Of note, their push to offer classes on coding and digital literacy enhances skill-building and is of great value to the community. Their “Wash and Learn” partnership with Libraries Without Borders, which consists of a pop-up library model in laundromats, has become a national blueprint for spreading resources in underserved areas.

## **Detroit Community Technology Project**

The Detroit Community Technology Project (DCTP) is a coalition of community leaders and nonprofits bridging the digital divide through the Equitable Internet Initiative. With engagement from locals in each community, DCTP installs high-speed internet and provides digital-literacy training to underserved neighborhoods.

## **Downtown Boxing Gym Youth Program**

Having “Books before boxing” as a motto, the organization offers holistic educational services for children ages 7-18. Thanks to its free, after-school classes and activities in academic enrichment, college and career readiness, community engagement, health/wellness and STEAM,<sup>7</sup> its patrons perform better at school,<sup>8</sup> strengthen their mental and physical fitness and are encouraged to be active members of their community. Specifically, the organization takes pride in a 100% high school graduation rate over the last 10 years and in 2017 their students’ math skills improved by 227% after participating in their program.<sup>9</sup>

## **482Forward<sup>10</sup>**

482Forward is a citywide education organizing network in Detroit comprised of neighborhood organizations, parents, and youth. Committed to equitable education, educational justice, and community self governance, 482Forward works with existing neighborhood-based organizations to build education organizing programs to address these issues. Through grassroots campaign processes, 482Forward has developed research and policy with significant victories in addressing chronic absenteeism, school closures, and equity and accountability.

## **Detroit Independent Freedom Schools**

The Detroit Independent Freedom School movement draws from community expertise and resources to provide free, African-centric education through tutoring and cultural learning activities for Detroit youth and adults. The curriculum focuses on the needs and

interests of students and aims to build confidence and self-determination.

### **Escuela Preparatoria Academia de las Américas / Academy of the Americas**

Part of DPSCD, the Academy of the Americas provides elementary and middle school public education that supplements district requirements with a bilingual program in English and Spanish. Students begin their early instruction almost entirely in Spanish, gradually phasing to 50% in Spanish and 50% in English.

More organizations working in this field include Hantz Foundation, Boggs School, Focus: HOPE, Michigan Science Center, Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, Paul Robeson Malcolm X Academy, and Grand Circus Coding Bootcamps.

## **EMERGING AND FUTURE TRENDS**

Virtual Classrooms, Cloud Computing, Open-Source Software (OSS), Mobile Learning, Internet of Things (IoT), Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Blockchain technologies can potentially lessen educational barriers resulting from disabilities or geographical location and lack of available educational resources, while simultaneously enhancing the classroom experience. Nevertheless, if the current digital divide remains unaddressed, this increased dependency on technology will worsen existing socioeconomic disparities. Apart from practical difficulties in integrating these technologies into the curriculum, we are forced to reconsider the role of educators in learning as well as the ways in which human interaction and emotional development are fostered through education.

The automation of administrative tasks by AI could release funding and time for teachers to focus on refining equitable pedagogies. Due to AI's potential impact on the workforce, educational methods need to prioritize skills irreplaceable by machines, such as critical and cross-domain thinking, creativity and social skills. Additionally, the utilization of algorithms and Big Data by AI implies more accurate insights on students' needs, competencies and interests, which can thereby catapult individualised and engaging learning. However, this aggregation of learning analytics raises privacy concerns, especially for minors, and could exacerbate a surveillance culture in schools. Similarly, if the data used to train an AI system are biased in terms of race, class, gender, etc., the same biases will be perpetuated in the tutoring and insights originating from AI.<sup>11</sup>

Faced with the ongoing privatization of schools and educational resources, OSS and Blockchain could democratize learning and instill accountability in the educational system. Specifically, open textbooks require less funding to be updated and, as a product of co-creation and co-ownership, are subject to more transparent review processes, whereas Blockchain could decentralize the storage of student records<sup>12</sup> or be used for issuing tokens to fund educational activism.<sup>13</sup>

## RECOMMENDATIONS

We acknowledge the chronic systemic racism and destabilization by educational mismanagement and policies in Detroit. Therefore we recommend the following to assist with reshaping the educational landscape and facilitating universal access to education:

- *Equitable funding per student.*

To this day, socioeconomic status and geographic location continues to determine academic success rather than student capability and interest. The state must allocate funding based on student need (taking into account race, disability, and socioeconomic status, among other factors), and redirect funding to schools of need.

- *Early childhood development.*

Equitable education begins in early childhood development. Public schools must provide children with opportunities for school preparedness, basic literacy, and personality development to supplement existing initiatives from community civic organizations.

- *Provide for the needs of the students.*

It is crucial for public schools to recognize the various struggles students face on a daily basis, such as food insecurity, barriers to health and hygiene, and family responsibilities. Therefore the school's infrastructure must include laundry, food, and school supplies among other essential services.

- *Reorganize the school system and the schools.*

In order to hold the city, the district, and schools accountable to the needs of the community, 482Forward<sup>14</sup> recommends establishing a Detroit Education Commission, a regional council for each district, and empowered school leadership teams involving parents, students, staff, and community members. Additionally, barriers to start a charter school need to be standardized and ,instead of being arbitrary, be part of a broader theoretical framework.

The following ideas can be considered the next steps in further developing Detroit Public School Community District, while universal access as a foundation is the necessary first step.

- *Equitable access every step of the way.*

Barriers to equitable access to education obstruct the development of students at every step of the way. Literacy must be declared a constitutional right in the United States. Schools must become the center of the neighborhood community as a place to learn, teach and participate in the community and the greater society. Public transit must be expanded throughout Detroit's neighborhoods in order to enable students' access to educational programs throughout the city. Resources must be directed toward digital justice initiatives that provide sustainable digital-literacy training.

- *Inclusive Curriculum and Practices.*

Current educational materials and practices are rooted in white supremacy as they emphasize white standards of knowledge and historical contributions by primarily white, middle class men. This curriculum excludes and miseducates students everywhere, but is especially destructive to black student populations, in Detroit and in other black-majority cities. Educational organizations must collaborate to fund and elevate Black and non-dominant narratives and promote relevant, culturally-influenced education and self-determination for minority communities. And research must be conducted to formulate new standardized tests that are free of racial bias.

- *Unrestricted Personal Development.*

Equitable access to education means that each student is able to shape their future without constraints based on their environment or identities. Students in underserved communities are especially targeted by the excessive presence of police and security in schools as well as punitive and racist codes of conduct, leading to a disproportionately higher number of incarcerated youth from marginalized communities. It is imperative that this school-to-prison pipeline be dismantled through a strict separation of policing and punitive police practices from the place of education known as school. Punitive policies and security measures must be replaced with positive reinforcement and preventative policies. Codes of conduct must be evaluated to determine how they target students of color, and remedied or dismantled.



## NOTES

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# EMPLOYMENT

**Antonela Kotsoni, Jasmine Paul, Ada Rachfalska, Lutalo Sanifu & Alma Tutic**

In 1968, the Kerner Report recognized employment status as a high priority issue which contributed to the cause of the 1967 Rebellion. The report states, “[Employment] not only controls the present for the Negro American but, in a most profound way, it is creating the future as well”<sup>1</sup> which we find to be still true today. The division between the white suburbs and the black city exacerbated the deeply racist housing policies of the time, and we still see the ramifications affecting employment opportunities in both localities. Additionally, the 2008 financial crisis and the collapse of the U.S. auto industry and fiscal mismanagement drove Detroit to declare bankruptcy in 2013. Ever since then, many stakeholders in Detroit have been working on ensuring inclusive, equitable and sustainable growth, but have been met with obstacles. On the 50th anniversary of the Kerner Report of 1968, we review the current state of employment in Detroit, including what government and community organizations are doing to influence employment and the future of labor in the city.

## EMPLOYMENT IN DETROIT TODAY

When discussing employment in Detroit and Wayne County, especially in comparison to its neighboring counties, race is an important factor to consider. Historically, due to numerous racist policies such as school and housing segregation, African Americans had much greater difficulty acquiring and accumulating wealth. Surveys show that Macomb and Oakland Counties are overwhelmingly white counties, 97.6% and 96.8% respectively, and the city of Detroit is almost 80% African-American.<sup>2</sup> The unemployment rate in Detroit is 3.5 times higher than in Oakland County, and 3 times higher than in Macomb County.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, residents of Detroit are more than twice as likely to work in service occupations than the residents of Oakland County, while the majority

of residents in Oakland and Macomb counties work in management, business, science, and arts occupations. Moreover, median household income in Detroit is \$28,099, lower than the Wayne County median of \$43,464, and significantly lower than the median incomes in Macomb (\$60,143) and Oakland Counties (\$71,920)<sup>4</sup>. However, this is not a new trend. The 1968 Kerner Report recognized a pattern of severe disadvantage for African-Americans in comparison to whites as an important social and economic condition that played a major role in the 1967 rebellion. Fewer African Americans had attended high school and had less years of education as compared to whites, furthermore, they were twice as likely to be unemployed; underemployment also added greatly to the already existing social grievances.<sup>6</sup>

Today, we can trace the historical inequalities to the so-called talent gap. To a certain extent, some of the employment issues are due to the disparity between the skills of the labor force in Detroit and the skills required by employers. Almost 22 percent of Detroit adults have not completed high school and find themselves at a poverty rate of 52 percent, whereas the poverty rate for those with a bachelor's degree is above 12 percent. In regards to educational attainment, the gap between Detroit and Wayne County is not as wide in comparison of Wayne County to Macomb and Oakland Counties. Statistically, 9.3% of Wayne County residents have a graduate or a professional degree (5.9% in Detroit), whereas that number doubles in Oakland County (19.8%).<sup>7</sup> Similarly, both in Macomb and Oakland, a higher percentage of residents have a bachelor's degree than in Wayne County.

Despite being the overwhelming majority in the city, African Americans are currently only employed in 33% of the city's jobs.<sup>8</sup> With so many people employed outside of the city, transportation becomes incredibly important. Although strides have been made in public transportation in recent years, there is still room for improvement in order for the transportation system to meet the needs of all residents. Many workers from Detroit are dependent on the current transit system, as 25% of Detroit's households do not have access to a private vehicle.<sup>9</sup> Still, with less than 1% of residents in either Macomb or Oakland County using public transportation<sup>10</sup>, the apparent lack of interest in a regional transit system has led to opposition and resistance towards offering more inclusive access to the Metro Detroit area.

## EMPLOYMENT ORGANIZATIONS AND INITIATIVES

Government, businesses, education systems, and residents are all stakeholders in employment issues. The most important actors however are the labor force participants — the employees and the

unemployed. Government policies, especially at state and local levels, play an essential role in ensuring fair and equitable employment practices. As a key stakeholder, the government has initiated certain programs and implemented different initiatives to tackle the issue of unemployment and underemployment.

To address the talent gap, organizations are implementing training initiatives and improved recruitment processes. One example of a government initiative is the City of Detroit's workforce agency, Detroit Employment Solution Corp (DESC), which focuses on connecting job seekers with employers seeking talent. Through partnership with community-based and religious organizations and other foundations, DESC offers training programs to help prospective employees develop their talents.

Through Skilled Trades Employment Program, the City of Detroit partners up with local unions and their Joint Apprentice Training Committees in order to increase their memberships. Furthermore, the City enforces hiring requirements. Developers and contractors on publicly-funded construction projects in which the City or its affiliated entities participate in with over 3 million dollars are required to hire a workforce that includes 51% of Detroit residents.<sup>11</sup> Otherwise, they are required to make a contribution to the Detroit Workforce Development Program which would be then used for job training programs.

To address issues of hiring formerly incarcerated workers, Michigan Department of Corrections offers a program called Vocational Village through which Michigan inmates can get job training. The program provides housing and full days of training and instruction leading to state and nationally-recognized certifications in their trade.

To address the specific needs of localized communities, programs like Fitz Forward (focusing on neighborhood improvements) and Cass Community Social Services (which is a grassroots organization) both work to improve employment opportunities. Fitz Forward is a neighborhood revitalization initiative which seeks to offer opportunities through transforming urban spaces. For example, they partner with other workforce training and development organizations in Detroit to hire local artists, urban planners, and landscape or construction workers to contribute to the creation of new parks and green spaces.

Cass Community Social Services is a community-based organization that addresses unemployment through their Green Industries program which offers jobs for people with significant barriers to employment, including adults with developmental

disabilities, mental illnesses, physical restrictions, illiterate individuals, or those who have formerly experienced homelessness, war, or prison. Green Industries links employment to sustainability. Some of their initiatives include producing mud mats and planters made of recycled tires, removing more than 30,000 tires from polluting the city; shredding sensitive documents for offices, recycling tons of paper, producing coasters from recycled glass and repurposed wood, and portraying imagery from the graffiti covering the wall near 8 mile and Wyoming in Detroit. Through sales of the repurposed items, Cass employs 85 workers who previously had difficulties finding a job.

## EMERGING AND FUTURE TRENDS

Technological development is reshaping the labor market and automation of work will be an important twofold factor in this change. It will bring more efficiency and lower costs to many jobs, ultimately leading to the displacement of those jobs (e.g. drivers, manufacturers, customer care, data analysts among others). Technological advancement will foster entrepreneurship and commerce. For example, new educational organizations offering training in IT skills are helping people respond to market's demands. However, not many programs yet exist because although the majority of Americans believe that technology will change the workforce, the minority actually believe it will affect their own jobs. At the same time, the digital divide in Detroit is greatly unacknowledged—four in ten people in the city do not have access to broadband Internet at home. In a society where job applications, the news, access to social communities, and educational opportunities can be found online, the digital age has imposed an even deeper divide between those who have Internet and those who do not. In this way, technology reinforces existing social determinants and inequities.

On a larger scale, automation poses a threat to a lot of workers whose jobs could be done in less time for less money. For example, radiologists may be replaced by computers that can read and flag CT scans with higher precision and at a faster pace. In the meantime, radiologists will still need to help program the computers and make the final calls in their diagnoses, but their jobs may on the front line facing automation. New jobs could be created in programming artificial intelligence to do these tasks, or teaching how to use the machines, but eliminating the human factor from the workforce will likely result in greater economic disparities.

One possible approach to the question of how we might anticipate and prepare for the upcoming demands of the technology-oriented job market could be a change beginning with education. Technology, education, and employment are interconnected—both

younger and older generations will need to know how to access and handle the digital age. Another possible way to address the disparities is Universal Basic Income (UBI).<sup>12</sup> As a form of redistribution of wealth, UBI could provide financial safety in case of job loss.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Because employment does not exist in a vacuum, its prospects depend heavily on the improvement of education, training, transportation, and equitable development in business and public services. In regard to these sectors, here are the improvements that we would like to see in the near future:

**Education administrations:** offer alternative career pathways. K-12 school administrations should expand their understanding of what it means to be prepared for the job market after high school. Retention and graduation rates are important, but they are not necessarily indicative of readiness in the job market. A resurgence and investment in vocational and technical training may allow students to graduate with practical skills, including mechanical and digital. Alternative pathways to a four year degree may allow students to limit the amount of debt accrued while giving them more practical jobs where the market offers.

**Regional Transit Authority:** Increase accessibility throughout neighborhoods and suburbs. With over 300,000 people commuting between the city and suburbs for work, access to reliable, affordable transportation is a major factor in Detroiters' employment. The RTA should continue its fight to create more public transit throughout Detroit and the surrounding suburbs.

**New and old businesses:** Maintain social equity and sustainability as a pillar for new business models. With a rapidly changing job market, businesses must include social equity and sustainability in their business models; potential impact on their employees and their surrounding communities should be a core value of their business. Economic and social development should work with a community, not just in it, around it, or among it.

On a larger scale, the consequences of unemployment are simultaneously the result and the cause of inequalities, the lack of resources, and sufficient means of living. Historically disparate housing and educational opportunities and therefore employment opportunities ultimately contribute to a cycle of institutionalized poverty and disadvantage. In the near future for, business should be incentivized to hire locally and to implement inclusive price points in which the price of their products/service matches their neighborhood's income level. In terms of larger scale policy change,

a social safety net—universal affordable healthcare, inclusive unemployment assistance, housing security and assistance, child care assistance, better transportation—would alleviate some of the extreme burdens of poverty.

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## **Humanity in Action sessions:**

### **July 16, 2018**

The Fitzgerald Revitalization Project: Michelle Bolofer, India Solomon, Caitlin Murphy

### **July 17, 2018**

Kwame Simmons, Director of Education and Strategist, Hantz Foundation

### **July 19, 2018**

Rev. Faith Fowler, Executive Director, Cass Community Social Services

Jeffrey Brown, Manager, Future of Work & Artificial Intelligence, Bertelsmann Foundation North America

Chioke Mose-Telesford, Deputy Director of Workforce Development for the City of Detroit

Aniela Kuzon, Global Lead, Ford City of Tomorrow Challenge

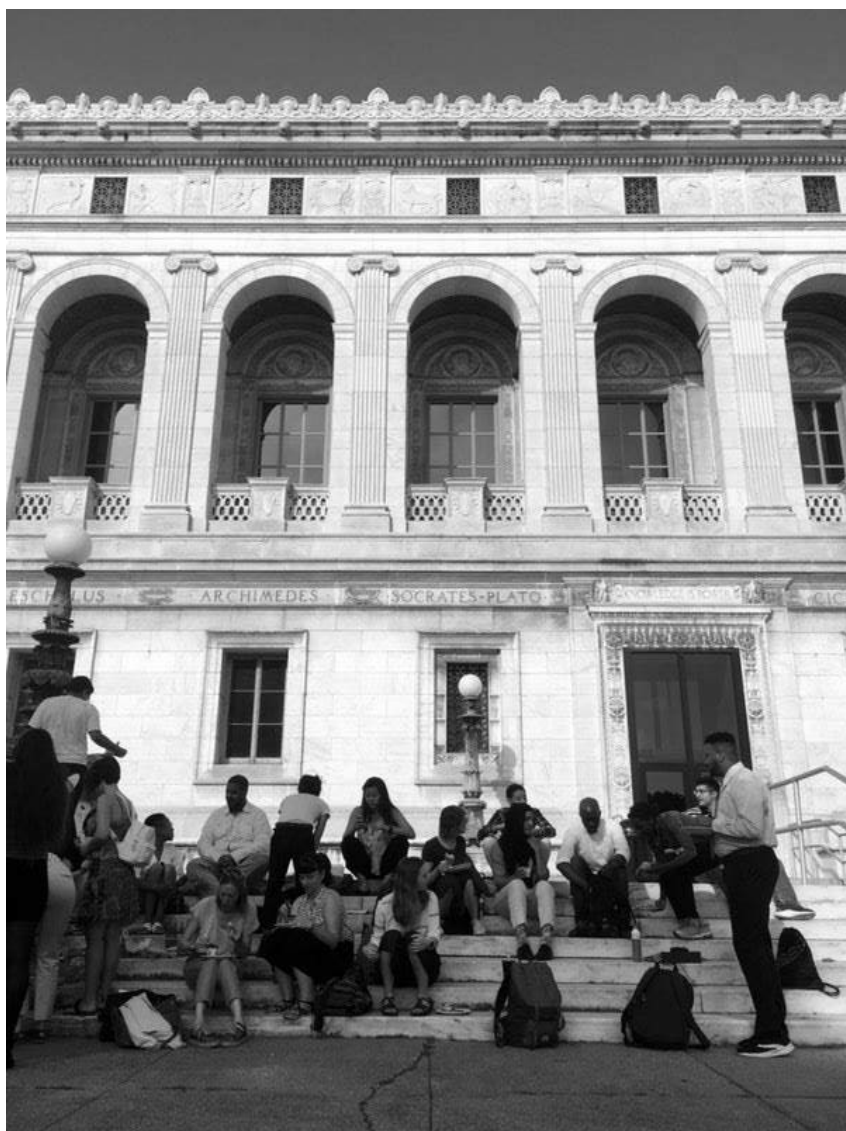
### **July 20, 2018**

Elisabeth Gerber, Professor, University of Michigan; Vice Chair, Regional Transit Authority of Southeast Michigan

Laura J. Trudeau (Principal, Trudeau Consulting)

Ruth Johnson (nonprofit consultant and social justice advocate)





2018 Humanity in Action Fellows in Detroit

# HOUSING

**Malou Astrup, Celeste Goedert,  
Mark Haidar, Hira Majeed,  
Antonio Regulier & Sharon Villagran**

The population of Detroit, at its peak in the mid-twentieth century, was nearly 2 million. Today, there are roughly 770,000 people, of which over half are renters.<sup>1</sup> Much of this decline in population was aided by racially-motivated federal and state policies that promoted segregation.

Race relations have significantly impacted the current state of housing in the city of Detroit. Once known as the city with the highest number of Black homeowners in the country,<sup>2</sup> Detroit is now a city where homeownership rates for African-Americans are nearly thirty percent lower than their white counterparts.<sup>3</sup>

Extreme disparities in homeownership among black and white Detroiters is a direct result of a longstanding tradition of discriminatory practices. In addressing this housing crisis, public, private, and philanthropic stakeholders throughout the city have engaged in intense debate about how best to respond to housing instability. From this conversation, the debate over rentership versus ownership has become contentious.

This chapter of the report discusses discriminatory policies and practices that force primarily African American residents out of their homes. These policies have been and continue to bar long-time Detroit residents from homeownership. We recognize key actors who are involved in achieving affordable housing in the city, and we offer recommendations that can be considered.

## DISCRIMINATORY POLICIES

A number of policies have contributed to the current housing crisis in Detroit. These include but are not limited to: lack of poverty tax exemptions, over assessment of properties, residents not receiving bills, overpriced water utilities, and predatory lending practices. The

2008 financial crisis further exacerbated the state of housing in Detroit.

African-Americans have been systematically excluded from federal programs meant to increase homeownership across the country. Since World War II, the Federal Housing Administration actively enforced neighborhood segregation through racially-restrictive covenants, rezoning, the construction of expressways, redlining, and blockbusting that contributed to white flight.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, more recent private developments and investments in the downtown and midtown areas have created an increase in property values, which has contributed to the segregation of the city.<sup>5</sup> Residents earning lower wages could not afford their property, concentrating them to specific areas of the city. Data Driven Detroit has published a report illustrating what neighborhoods have are at greatest risk of “neighborhood change” by forecasting changes in property values.<sup>x</sup>

Tax foreclosure is a key housing issue in Detroit and plays a significant role in causing people to leave their homes. Between 2011 and 2015, approximately 100,000 properties have been seized by Wayne County for unpaid taxes.<sup>6</sup> This year alone, 4,800 properties in the city are at risk of being foreclosed.<sup>7</sup> To put this in perspective, about 1 in 4 Detroit properties have been foreclosed from 2011 to 2015.

In 2008, market value of properties in Detroit depreciated because of the Great Recession. The Assessment Division of Detroit failed to update property values in the city and assessors did not undertake site visits to properties. Many Detroiters thus paid inflated property tax bills based on overassessed values of their homes. Property taxes are calculated by multiplying the assessed value of a property (minus any exemptions) by the property tax rate. The Michigan Constitution states that properties cannot be assessed by more than 50 percent of their market value; yet, in Detroit, 55 to 85 percent of residential properties were assessed by more than 50 percent of their market value between 2009 and 2015.<sup>8</sup>

Currently when Detroit residents are unable to pay inflated property tax bills, the Wayne County treasurer covers these bills and pays the city. In doing so, the Wayne County treasurer receives the right to foreclose a delinquent property. In the third year of delinquency, after March 31st, Wayne county can begin the foreclosure process on said property.<sup>9</sup>

African-American Detroiters have faced the greatest burden of the tax foreclosure crisis.<sup>10</sup> Certain foreclosures due to unpaid property taxes also should not have occurred because a number of residents should have qualified for the State of Michigan’s poverty tax

exemption program. This exemption reduces or removes taxes for lower-income homeowners. Many Detroiters were not notified of this exemption or did not have the resources to apply because of unduly difficult requirements and procedures.<sup>11</sup>

Between 2014 and 2017, the City of Detroit underwent a project to reassess 255,000 residential properties. The results showed assessment reductions of 10% or less for 53% of residential properties and assessment increases of 10% or less for 41% of the properties. In terms of property tax bills, 144,000 properties will pay an average \$263 less and the other 112,000 properties will pay an average \$80 more. There are other properties in the city that will have even further tax reductions depending on the neighborhood. The reassessment project was conducted using high resolution aerial images, field visits to approximately 11,000 residential properties, and property sales data from October 1, 2014 to September 30, 2016. This project is the first of its kind in over 60 years; it is hopefully a first step to providing more accurate residential assessments in the city.<sup>12</sup>

In 2016, the ACLU of Michigan, along with the United Community Housing Coalition, filed a lawsuit against the city of Detroit for the imposition of unfair property taxes on the poor that led to high rates of foreclosures. At the beginning of July 2018, the ACLU reached a settlement with the city that gives low income homeowners with homes in foreclosure (who likely would have been eligible for poverty tax-exemption) the opportunity to buy back their homes from the county for as low as \$1,000.<sup>13</sup> The repurchase is facilitated through a law called the “Right of First Refusal,” whereby the city purchases the homes back from Wayne County in order to re-sell them to foreclosure-threatened residents. To carry this out, the city has entered a cross-sector collaboration with QuickenLoans’ Community Investment Fund and United Community Housing Coalition. Before the city started invoking their Right of First Refusal, residents and organizations such as UCHC’s only option was to bid on the houses in competitive online foreclosure auctions open to the public.

Additionally, the settlement has forced the city to streamline its Homeowners Property Tax Assistance Program in an effort to improve the time consuming and confusing procedures that act as a barrier to low-income residents.<sup>14</sup> Through this remodeled program, the city must inform those who qualify for the poverty tax exemption by mail and allow them the opportunity to apply for the program online.<sup>15</sup>

The city’s reassessment process, improved access to the poverty tax exemption program, and home buy-back programs are a constructive move toward increasing homeownership for long-time Detroit residents, although further efforts are necessary.

## EMPLOYMENT ORGANIZATIONS AND INITIATIVES

In seeking to understand the complexity of this issue, we have outlined the work of organizations throughout the city into three broad categories. These three categories are rent, homeownership, and a rent-then-own program. They are informed by the priorities of the organizations, the constraints of funding opportunities, and relationships with residents. Each category operates in connection to the public, private, and philanthropic sectors of development in Detroit.

### **Rent: The City of Detroit Affordable Housing Strategy**

Last year alone, 249 individuals experienced chronic homelessness as documented in a recent report.<sup>16</sup> The City of Detroit has established a plan for affordable housing that includes mixed-income developments. The goal is to produce 2,000 affordable housing units by 2023 and preserve the affordability of 10,000 units.<sup>17</sup> The preservation of these properties prevents displacement. The City has traditionally relied upon federal monies from Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to support such projects; however, there is growing interest among the philanthropic and private sector in housing development.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, the city is making a shift from single-family to multi-family homes; multi-family homes are more amenable for Detroiters who have blended families, live with extended relatives, or live with non-related individuals.

The Detroit Housing Commission has embarked on a Housing Choice Voucher Homeownership Program to transition renters to owning. To qualify, applicants must meet certain requirements such as having personal savings and gainful employment.<sup>19</sup> While initiatives like this are vital, further efforts need to be taken to help individuals who are not eligible for the program. We recommend broader perspectives on the program, in order to make it accessible for more people.

### **Homeownership: The United Community Housing Coalition**

The United Community Housing Coalition (UCHC) is a grassroots nonprofit organization that works to combat homelessness and increase home ownership in Detroit, especially for individuals whose homes are under threat of foreclosure. Beyond their collaboration with ACLU and the buy-back program, UCHC works with renters and homeowners to negotiate agreements to prevent foreclosure and increase the length of time allotted before displacement.<sup>20</sup>

The organization has limited resources, and more houses are being foreclosed upon than they have the power to help owners buy back. Speaking from a limited perspective, we cannot overstate the importance of their work in addressing housing inequality in the city of Detroit. We recommend an expansion of and increased support to

programs that focus on increasing home ownership for long-time residents.

### **Rent-then-Own: Cass Community Social Services**

The relationship between rentership and home ownership is of considerable importance to the city of Detroit. Just last year in 2017, renters outnumbered homeowners for the first time since 1950.<sup>21</sup> While most efforts have focused on either creating a stronger rental market in the city, or preventing the eviction of homeowners experiencing foreclosure, fewer have made the connection between renting and owning. Cass Community Social Services has been a leader in developing a program which addresses both sets of challenges.

Cass Tiny Homes is an initiative which focuses on building scaled-down homes for homeless and lower-income Detroiters. By allowing renters to buy their homes after seven years of renting, the program prioritizes the “rent-then-own” model, while also promoting the building of generational wealth.<sup>22</sup> Additionally, the homes are constructed as green and environmentally responsible.

The initiative seeks to build twenty five Tiny Homes, averaging a cost of around fifty thousand for each home. In considering expanding the program, the topic of funding is a primary concern. The program has largely depended on private and philanthropic and charitable donations, such as the Ford Motor Company, GM Foundation, and faith-based donations.

## **TECHNICAL HOUSING SOLUTIONS**

From our conversations within the program, we have identified some measures that may be taken to help address the issue of housing affordability. We have chosen to highlight two measures that are particularly promising.

### **Environmentally friendly house development**

Access to homeownership can also be achieved through developing more sustainable homes. Building and upgrading houses in a way that reduces energy waste not only benefits the environment, but also results in lower utility bills.

Expensive energy bills have played a central role in tax foreclosures in recent years, so reducing these expenses could help reduce new foreclosures. We recommend increasing investment into programs that educate homeowners on how to increase the energy efficiency of their homes, as well as tax credits or subsidies to help address the upfront costs entailed.

For any solution, it is crucial that it is rooted in the neighborhoods and the community itself. Homeowner associations, community organizations, and the like would be a natural place to start the work on environmental updates on homes.

### **Re-thinking the current tax foreclosure system**

Given the immensely debilitating effects tax foreclosure can have on a family (e.g. financially, psychologically, emotionally), the use of tax foreclosure should be minimized as much as possible. Matthew Desmond's book "Evicted", for example, helps illustrate these adverse effects by showing how housing displacement can result in a spiral downward into even deeper poverty.<sup>23</sup>

We recommend that policymakers consider more constructive alternatives to helping people pay their property taxes as opposed to tax foreclosure. Our service-learning experience with the United Housing Community Coalition showed us that the current system has many spillover costs, such as homeless shelter services, post traumatic stress, mental health services, loss of employment, and an increase in vacant land. In light of this, perhaps the City of Detroit could forgive some unpaid debt, increase the number of years of delinquent taxes before taking action, or look to less punitive actions rather than foreclosure.

### **RESEARCH NOTE**

We recognize that our understanding of this topic has been shaped by the valuable insights of organizations not included in this report but has contributed to our understanding of affordable housing.

United Community Housing Coalition

Cass Community Social Services

Fitzgerald Project

Fitz Forward

Century Forward

Live6

Mexicantown Community Development Corporation

City of Detroit, Housing & Revitalization Department

Detroit Future Cities

Richard Rothstein

Elizabeth Rothstein

Eric Dueweke

Adam Hollier

Nathan Bomey

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2018 Humanity in Action Fellows in Corktown

# POLICING

Sophia Burns, Coline Constantin,  
Kristina Perkins, Kwabena Sarfo-Panin  
& Jacqueline Tizora

## PART I: INTRODUCTION

"If we were to look at the larger-scale riots that we know of in our recent history—from Rodney King, to the Detroit riot in 1967, the Newark riot in 1967, Harlem riot in 1964, Watts in 1965—every single one of those riots was a result of police brutality. That is the common thread."<sup>1</sup>

– Jelani Cobb, *13th*

According to the Kerner Commission, the relationship between marginalized communities and the police was characterized by tension. "The atmosphere of hostility and cynicism," the Commission wrote, "is reinforced by a widespread belief among Negroes in the existence of police brutality and in a 'double standard' of justice and protection—one for Negroes and one for whites."<sup>2</sup> This passive language treats 'brutality' as mere speculation, ignoring Detroit's history of police terror.<sup>3,4</sup>

Fifty years later, we want to be direct. The racialized violences of police brutality are not a widespread "belief," but an oppressive reality. Black Detroiters have lived this reality. After 1967, the Black community cited as the number one cause of the Rebellion.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, analyses of criminal justice policy must look simultaneously back toward the police's white supremacist history and forward toward an accelerating carceral state.

## THE COLONIALIST LEGACY OF POLICING

In the 1700s, colonizing Europeans feared African resistance to slavery and created slave patrols, paddy wagons, and militias to suppress rebellions and protect the interests of slaveholders.<sup>6</sup> In the 1830s, when the Underground Railroad ran through Michigan, Detroit's City Council approved a 16-man patrol to catch escaped

slaves.<sup>7</sup> This legacy persists: Detroit’s Police Department (DPD) was institutionalized after a 1863 race rebellion; the Detroit police murdered 55 African Americans in 1925 alone; “Big Four” terror squads routinely harassed Black Detroiters in the 60s.<sup>8</sup> By 1967, the Detroit police were 95% white in a 40% Black city.<sup>9</sup> Which means that, at the time of the Rebellion, the DPD was what it had always been: an occupying force, whose duty to “protect and serve” never applied to communities of color.

THE EMERGENCE OF MASS INCARCERATION

Although the racial demographics of the DPD changed when Mayor Coleman Young enforced residency requirements for police officers, mass incarceration complicated the landscape of policing in the city.<sup>10</sup> Within months of releasing the Kerner Commission Report, Lyndon B. Johnson created the Office of Law Enforcement Assistance (OLEA), which funded a rapidly growing carceral state.<sup>11</sup> As white flight increased and city tax revenue decreased, Detroit falsified crime data to receive OLEA money.<sup>12</sup> The city hired law enforcement, purchased military equipment, and trained correctional officers<sup>13</sup>

The state built 52 prisons.<sup>14</sup> Michigan’s incarcerated population increased by 538% (Figure 1).<sup>15</sup> Today, the Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC) disproportionately incarcerates Black Michiganders (49%)<sup>16</sup> and Wayne County communities (30%).<sup>17</sup>

Prison boom since 1967

	1967	2016
State prison population	7,037	41,413
Number of prisons	4	31
Michigan population	8.6 million	9.9 million
Population per inmate	1,222	239
State prison dollars	\$22.7 million	\$1.95 billion
% general fund budget	2	19.5

Source: Michigan Department of Corrections

Figure 1: A quantitative summary of Michigan’s carceral growth since the 1967 Rebellion.<sup>18</sup>

OVERVIEW

This chapter describes how policies and practices—including racial profiling, pre-trial detention, employment discrimination, and body-worn cameras—impact Detroiters’ entrance into and departure from the state’s criminal justice system. We pay particular attention to the intersection between carceral and mental health systems, highlighting how racialized policy criminalizes and stigmatizes marginalized communities in Detroit.

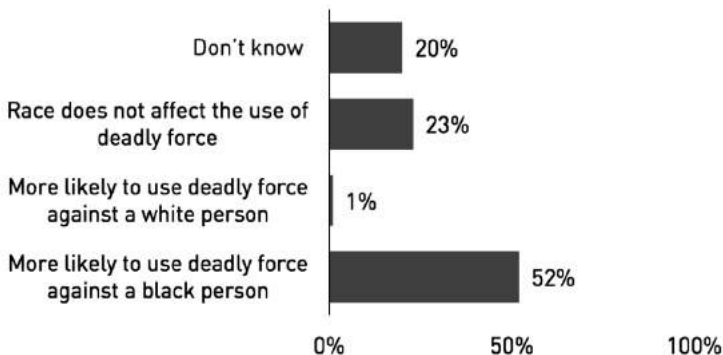
## PART II: ANALYSIS

“The communities in which Black people live become occupied territories, and Black people have become seen as enemy combatants, who don’t have any rights, and who can be stopped and frisked and arrested and detained and questioned and killed with impunity.”<sup>19</sup>

– Melina Abdullah, 13th

### ENTRY

Entry into the criminal justice system, dead or alive, is almost a rite of passage into (premature) adulthood for Black Detroiters. Police presence—and, with it, use of excessive force and practices of racial profiling—is widespread. Given Detroit’s proximity to the Canadian border and the predominantly Arab American community of Dearborn, the region has an unusually large number of FBI and ICE agents, in addition to city, state, university, campus, and drug enforcement police forces.<sup>20</sup> In 2000, Detroit’s rate of fatal police shootings was the highest in the nation.<sup>21</sup> A 2004 study found that Black drivers are 79% more likely to be stopped, cited, searched, and arrested than white people.<sup>22</sup> Public perception of racial profiling amongst Detroiters captures these dynamics well: in response to the Detroit Metropolitan Area Communities Study (DMAC)’s 2017 survey, only 1% of Detroiters believe that police are “more likely to use deadly force against a white person” compared to 52% that believe it would be the case for Black people (Figure 2).<sup>23</sup>



**Figure 2:** In general, do you think the police in and around Detroit are more likely to use deadly force against a Black person, or are more likely to use it against a white person, or do you think race does not affect police use of deadly force?<sup>24</sup>

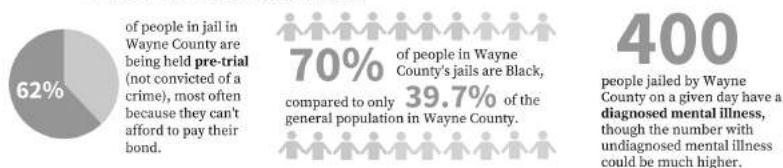
The forensic psychiatry system—or lack thereof—contributes to the criminalization of marginalized people, creating not only criminals, but repeat offenders. While Michigan once had 16 psychiatric institutions, this number has dwindled to 5.<sup>25</sup> These institutions were closed due to malpractice, but reform instead of total shutdown was necessary: people with mental illness did not just stop being ill once institutions closed. Many became homeless and re-entered the prison system systematically more than any other group of people in the nation; 25-50% of homeless people have a history of incarceration.<sup>26</sup> This major intersection between race, mental health, and class is often ignored.

After closing three-quarters of Michigan's psychiatric institutions, Governor John Engler was supposed to create community-based outpatient programs. Decades later, these programs have still not materialized.<sup>27</sup> As Tom Watkins, former Director of the now-inoperative State Mental Health Department, notes: "There is no mental health 'system' in Michigan... We have a disjointed collection of too few state hospitals, private hospitals that are seeking to profit off public patients... and too little state and community resources aimed at developing community-based programs."<sup>28</sup>

County jails, an overlooked component of today's highly profitable, highly racist prison industrial complex, incarcerate mentally ill and poor Black people at alarming rates. In recent history, Wayne County had planned to build a \$533 million dollar jail to house 2280 adults and 160 youth—even though the entire county has a maximum population of 1700 prisoners daily, which has been decreasing over the past 12 years.<sup>29</sup> Beds in these jails are constructed for Black people, seeing that they make up 70% of the jail population in the county (Figure 3).<sup>30</sup> Prioritizing jails over mental health institutions increases the likelihood that a severely mentally ill person will be sent to jail, the least therapeutic environment. As Milton Mack, Probate Court Chief Judge, says, "We are now using jails and prisons as our de facto mental health system."<sup>31</sup>

Poor people are kept imprisoned by the cash bail system. Nearly half a million people are currently being held in local jails solely because they cannot afford bail, accounting for 99% of jail growth<sup>32</sup>. 62% of people in Wayne County jails have not been convicted of a crime and are in pre-trial detention because they cannot post bail (Figure 3).<sup>33</sup> Because they cannot maintain their jobs and care for their families while sitting in jail, low-income people are systematically coerced into taking plea bargains, regardless of their guilt.

## PEOPLE BEING JAILED



**Figure 3:** Excerpt from the Detroit Justice Center's "New Wayne County Jail Fact Sheet."<sup>34</sup>

The judicial system contributes to this phenomenon: in Michigan, pleading insanity as a defense and being found not guilty due to insanity is only granted 7% of the time.<sup>35</sup> This is partly because juries think defendants use "insanity" as an easy way out of justice. The MDOC instead created the Rehabilitation Treatment Services (RTS) program, which provides in-patient mental healthcare, ironically, within prisons.<sup>36</sup> This means the system punishes people for being mentally ill.

## RE-ENTRY

Being released from prison comes with numerous restrictions, which increases the likelihood of reoffending and initiates reentry into the prison system. For example, mandatory background checks and "The Box"—a question commonly included on job applications that requires the disclosure of criminal history—halt reintegration and prevent formerly incarcerated people from gaining employment and accessing upward mobility. The Box serves no purpose other than to stigmatize incarceration and feed more prisoners back into the system for the benefit of corporations profiting off of the slave labor. The majority of those caught by the system are Black people, the same people availed the least opportunities in the job market.

## PART III: COMMUNITY-LED INITIATIVES<sup>37</sup>

"When Black lives matter, everybody's life matters, including every single person that enters this criminal justice system, and this prison industrial complex. It's not just even only about Black lives—it's about changing the way this country understands human dignity."<sup>38</sup>

– Van Jones, *13th*

The capacity of Detroit community members to mobilize themselves continues to play an important role in addressing issues neglected by governments. This is especially important when it comes to policing. The list of organizations discussed is not exhaustive and does not capture the crucial, but less visible, work being done by families and neighborhoods.

Detroit is, according to longtime community activist Ron Scott, home to the Detroit Coalition Against Police Brutality, one of the foremost organizations addressing the pervasive problem of police brutality in the U.S.<sup>39</sup> It aims to enhance communities' capacity to document and expose police violence, as well as strengthen grassroots responses to conflict through peer mediation and restorative justice.<sup>40</sup>

Services are also available once citizens enter the legal system. The Detroit Justice Center provides free community legal services based on referrals from long standing local organizations. The DJC partners with The Bail Project, recently arrived from the Bronx, which funds bails up to \$5,000 and provides reminders for the court appointment, as well as transportation and childcare when needed.

The existing network of support organizations for families affected by mass incarceration must be highlighted. This includes groups of mothers (Mothers of Incarcerated Sons Society/M.O.I.S.T) as well as support groups for families in general (groups at the Hope Community Church, Hope 4 Healing Hearts, the Detroit Parent Network with its "Beyond the Bars" program).

Once a Detroiter is released from imprisonment, various support services are available. The state and city provide access to training and other employment-related services before and after release through the Michigan Prisoner Re-entry Program and the Detroit Employment Solutions Corporation. However, these institutions are complemented by community initiatives like Man Power Mentoring Inc. which offers parolees or individuals in the MPRI program a mentor to help them through re-entry. The Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation provides the Reentry Services Case Management program and free tattoo removal. Cass Community Social Services acts on another scale, helping re-entering people access food, jobs, and housing.<sup>41</sup>

Often forgotten when discussing policing is the role of organizations helping with physical and mental health issues in order to promote successful reintegration and, consequently, low reoffending rates. Central City Integrated Health offers community re-entry services such as mental health care, substance disorder

treatment, employment and housing services, among other social services. Organizations including Abundant Community Recovery Services Inc. and Hope not Handcuffs provide assistance to people struggling with opioid addiction and related challenges experienced by families.

## PART IV: TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENT

"Systems of oppression are durable, and they tend to reinvent themselves."<sup>42</sup>

– Glenn Martin, 13th

In July 1967, military tanks rolled down the streets of Detroit. Wartime technology, rather than conflict resolution measures, were used to silence and criminalize Black Detroiters involved in the Rebellion. Since then, American police departments have become increasingly militarized and, at the same time, technologically advanced.<sup>43</sup> While this may have had benefits for individual officers and departments, the public has not experienced a comparable increase in police accountability or community control. A discussion of a more equitable future, especially for marginalized communities, must therefore address this critical gap.

### BODY WORN CAMERAS (BWC) AND POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY

The debate on police body-worn cameras (BWCs) often uplifts this technology as a key solution for police brutality. However, video footage has failed to assist victims to convict police officers in numerous trials, most notoriously in the shooting of Philando Castile in 2016.<sup>44</sup> Therefore, it is necessary to reevaluate the present and potential impact of this technology. Procedurally just practices promoted by BWCs, not BWCs alone, can increase citizen satisfaction and safety in police interactions. According to a study, officers with BWCs made slightly fewer arrests. The "civilizing effect" produced by BWCs included decreased use of force and complaints against officers.<sup>45</sup> However, these effects only occur when police officers cooperated with additional policies mandating when officers activate BWCs rather than relying on officer discretion. In fact, when departments did not clearly enforce these policies, use-of-force incidents increased.<sup>46</sup> In order for BWCs to effectively enforce police accountability, they must be implemented in a way that regulates officer behavior.



## COMMUNITY CONTROL AND DATA JUSTICE

Conversations regarding BWCs and other technologies must also recognize that it is not only police being recorded, but also community members. The Detroit Coalition Against Police Brutality and the Detroit Community Technology Project have outlined demands for widespread data accessibility for citizens, journalists, and researchers alike. Concerning BWCs and other recording technologies, community members must have a say in which data is saved, where data is stored, and how long it is stored for. The massive amount of data produced by these and other emerging technologies poses a challenge for police departments, which generally do not have the capacity to store it. This creates a market for private management of sensitive public information.<sup>47</sup> Opportunities for profit and inequitable surveillance must be combatted primarily via community ownership and decision-making.

## PART V: RECOMMENDATIONS

"We got to ask ourselves, 'Do we feel comfortable with people taking the lead of a conversation, in a moment where it feels right politically?' Historically, when one looks at efforts to create reforms, they inevitably lead to more repression."<sup>48</sup>

– Cory Greene, *13th*

## POLICY CHANGE<sup>49</sup>

Given the economic and racist (read: white supremacist) interests invested in preserving the carceral state, change is difficult and reforms are often incomplete. For total reform, we believe it is crucial to uplift the voices of those directly impacted by the rigged criminal justice system. Tied specifically to our above analyses, we propose the following recommendations to ALL stakeholders:

1. Inspired by the Movement for Black Lives platform, communities must gain control of law enforcement agencies.<sup>50</sup> Civilian oversight of hiring, firing, and general policy is necessary.
2. Abolish cash bail and provide services—for example, reminders, transport, and childcare—to help people attend their arraignment hearings. By ending cash bail, poor people and people of color will be less likely to be detained and systematically coerced to plead guilty.
3. Introduce a comprehensive forensic psychiatry system such as the model South Africa has adopted.

4. Require jury education on the insanity defense. Ensure that jurors fully understand the meaning of a “not guilty” verdict under the varying circumstances in which mental illness plays a role in criminal cases.

## RETHINKING ‘JUSTICE’

Policy change can only go so far in a society that values punishment over restoration. Total reform requires a shift in how the nation collectively understands justice.

1. Protect the criminal justice system from capitalist interests, ensuring that no company, politician, or organization profits off of incarceration. This means paying incarcerated people a fair wage, providing them with publicly funded health and social services, and abolishing for-profit prisons and prison service contracts.
2. Destigmatize experiences of incarceration. With regards to the box debate, stigma persists even if ‘The Box’ does not exist. Prior interactions with the criminal justice system should never disqualify applicants from accessing jobs, housing, and social services.
3. Invest in restorative justice. Potential improvements include: replacing correctional officers with trained social workers, increasing opportunities for education and creative expression, and exploring mediation, rehabilitative programs, and other anti-carceral models of justice.
4. Approach all criminal justice conversations—whether about policy-creation, journalistic reporting, or academic research—from an intersectional lens. This means highlighting the impact of incarceration on Black women, trans and gender non-conforming people, poor people, people of color, undocumented people and those with mental illness. We attempted applying this very lens, yet consistently focused on Black men, maintaining the discursive status quo.
5. Provide spaces for community healing. Communities need to be involved in the reintegration process, as crime destabilizes communities. This destabilization can be remedied through community counseling, mediation services, and education on how incarceration can impact those who go through the system. This will destigmatize those returning from prison and begin mending any bonds broken before or through incarceration.

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Mural at the Eastern Market ("The Definitive List of Everything That Will Keep You Safe as a Black Woman Being in America")

# OTHER ISSUES

This chapter discusses issues which were not addressed in the 1968 Kerner Commission Report yet are critical when examining inequalities and injustices in Detroit today.

## ENVIRONMENT

**Emma Yip**

Environmental justice in Detroit can't be left out of the conversation when talking about its future. Detroit is home to the most polluted zip code in the state, 48217, in Southwest Detroit--home to predominantly low-income people of color.<sup>1</sup> Soil was found heavily contaminated with lead and arsenic, contributors to this pollution include 8 oil refineries, 3 factories that produce steel, 5 asphalt plants, and 1 hazardous waste collection site.<sup>2</sup> The city as a whole suffers from 29% higher asthma rates than the rest of Michigan. But within the city, the impact of environmental racism is seen more starkly: out of 10,000 black Detroiters, 49.3 were hospitalized for asthma related attacks, while only 29.6 out of 10,000 white Detroiters would be hospitalized for the same reason in 2013.<sup>3</sup> As the city continues to grow and heal since its bankruptcy, public officials must be held accountable for fostering job creation and industry building that does not poison minority families.

## TRANSPORTATION

**Sharon Villagran & Mark Haidar**

The importance of public transportation in Detroit cannot be overstated. Despite its legacy as a stronghold of the automotive industry, the struggle for expanding public transit has been an uphill climb. A defining moment of this struggle is the less than one-percent defeat of a Detroit Regional Transit Authority ballot proposal during the November 2016 election. The ballot proposal outlined a regional

plan which would have connected residents across Southeast Michigan, specifically Wayne, Macomb, Oakland, and Washtenaw counties.

In describing the failure of the proposal, many cite regional politics as a primary cause, with leadership in Oakland and Macomb as major players in blocking regional transit. Since then, transit activists have advocated for short-term improvements to existing systems, as well as plans to address long-term need throughout the city.

Transit is hardly an issue that functions in isolation. Transit activists have--time and again--raised concerns about access to jobs, public safety, over-policing, economic growth, and overall quality of life. As recent as this month, plans to include a new ballot proposal for the November 2018 general election were thwarted, as the RTA funding committee failed to come to the necessary 5-0 decision for it to make the public ballot.

Auto insurance is another key transportation issue in Detroit. While Michigan has higher auto insurance rates than any other state, Detroit has higher auto insurance rates than any other city nationwide.<sup>4</sup> The average premium in Detroit is nearly 400 percent higher than the national average.<sup>5</sup> Often, Detroiters pay more than \$3,000 annually in car insurance alone.<sup>6</sup> These enormous costs can make car ownership prohibitively expensive and help explain how 25% of Detroit households do not have access to a car.<sup>7</sup>

This issue has received significant attention among candidates running to be Michigan governor, with all three Democratic candidates calling for an end to redlining. Redlining allows auto insurers to set rates based on factors other than one's driving record (e.g. zip codes). In Detroit, a 139 square mile city that lacks efficient public transportation, it is absolutely critical that residents have access to a car. By reducing auto insurance rates, this will be more possible.

## NEWCOMERS, GENTRIFICATION AND THE CHALLENGE OF AN INCLUSIVE FUTURE

**Coline Constantin**

In the aftermath of political, social and economic turmoil of the past decades, Detroit is once again becoming a hub for investors and entrepreneurs. This trend has both benefits and serious consequences for the city.

There are multiple effects of the investments and the increasing levels of outsiders' money in Downtown and Midtown Detroit. While the immediate concern lies with the hiring of an overwhelming majority of

newcomers, this influx directly affects all areas discussed in the previous chapters - education, employment, housing and policing, as well as transportation and entrepreneurship.

In light of these big changes, Detroiters have had mixed reactions. While some express their fear of an unwanted and imposed white gentrification excluding long standing communities, largely black Detroit communities, from this new prosperity, others see an opportunity for a diversified economy. How can a society fight for each member's equitable share of the resources while overcoming the region's racial and socioeconomic divisions and tensions?

In her poem *Just Say Hi! (The Gentrification Blues)*, the Detroit writer Marsha Music discusses gentrification and the changing demographics of the city.<sup>8</sup> She acknowledges Detroit's past and present, and emphasizes the importance of community and of recognizing its members. She does not decry the evident gentrification, but places it within the racial, social and economic context of Detroit.

*But yes, I am a celebrant of signs of new development  
And yes it's true, that I'm in love with more new shops  
and shiny stores  
and watches too, and lovely styles in newfound shops  
and peacock aisles  
I just make sure I don't forget, the ones who first did  
pay the debt*

In order to move forward in a meaningful and inclusive way, outsiders bear the responsibility of acknowledging the racist and discriminatory past ingrained in the region and its present day legacy, as well as the privileges many of them carry in moving to Detroit and building lives, careers and businesses in the city. The newcomers cannot ignore their impact, visible or not, on communities. When working towards addressing this or any other issue of local interest, it is necessary that they involve these communities as equal partners in the decision-making process every step of the way.

Some would say that the inclusiveness of our society cannot be measured by the equitable sharing of our resources but by the equitable power relations between its members.<sup>2</sup> In that sense, how could Detroiters hold newcomers accountable while being mindful of their opportunity to give them the benefit of the doubt? Should they? Moving toward living together in an inclusive and equitable society is probably not the most newsworthy narrative in the United States of America this present-day. What now remains to be addressed is how will Detroiters be able to balance decades of fights for their city and



against its abandonment, while aiming for inclusivity and equitability amongst all its members, old as well as new.

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# GLOSSARY

## EDUCATION

**Access:** Ability and freedom from barriers to obtain something.

**Community:** A shared fellowship with others as a result of shared humanity.

**De facto Segregation:** Segregation by practice as opposed to segregation by law.

**Education:** The process of building one's capacity to fully and effectively participate in society by providing avenues for one to become who they truly are.

**Equity:** Providing different sorts of support according to individual needs.

**Inclusion:** The process of shaping society in a way that allows everyone to have a space and voice to participate.

**Literacy:** The ability to read and write well enough to access written knowledge and communicate with the world.

## EMPLOYMENT

**Universal Basic Income:** an amount of money which covers basic human needs (estimated for a given economic environment) offered each month unconditionally to any member of a given society.

## HOUSING

**Blockbusting:** The discriminatory real-estate practice of introducing minority residents into a previously all-white block with the intention of creating anxiety within white residents that property values will decrease. Real-estate agencies then buy homes at a lower price from white residents, and sell to minority residents at a higher price.

**Over-assessment:** The valuation of a property, such as a home, as higher than its actual worth, so that property taxes are excessive.

**Racially-restrictive Covenants:** Contracts between homeowners, real estate agencies and homeowner associations, in which the homeowner is barred from selling to certain groups of people, most often African-Americans.

**Rezoning:** The practice of assigning a property to a different planning zone, so that the property is under different jurisdiction and/or subject to a new set of restrictions.

**Redlining:** A discriminatory practice meant to exclude certain residential areas from loans, mortgages, and other resources needed for attaining a home. This was a primary method by which federal loan programs exaggerated residential segregation.

**Tax Delinquency:** The failure to pay a tax, such as a property tax, by the scheduled due date.

**Tax Foreclosure:** The seizure of property by the state given a failure to pay the required taxes.

**White Flight:** The out-migration of white residents, usually to the suburbs, in response to the arrival of minority residents in their area.

## POLICING

**Carceral State:** This term refers to the way imprisonment and incarceration rates and policies have fundamentally altered the social space and public sphere in the United States. While a rigid interpretation of the term merely looks at the interactions amongst the formal institutions of the criminal justice system, a more expansive understanding of the carceral state examines how everything, from the creation and alteration of local economies centered on criminalization for instance, to voting patterns or understandings of race and identity have been altered and informed by the phenomenon of mass incarceration.

**Community Control:** A concept that suggests that individuals in a community are best poised to determine what resources said community needs, and how those resources are to be marshaled to address the issues characterizing that particular social context. It holds that community members, precisely because they are aware of the social history of an environment, are the most crucial agents in informing or developing creative strategies to achieve collectively decided upon goals.

**Criminal Justice System:** See ‘the carceral state.’

**Data Justice:** refers generally to the struggle for transparency and equity in the collection and accessibility of information, especially as it is collected by public and private entities

**Entry and Reentry:** An examination of the factors that led to persons first interacting with institutions of the criminal justice system, to the myriad barriers that potentially prevent successful and skillful re-integration into larger society.

**Forensic Psychiatry—**Seeks to determine whether, and to what extent, an actor’s behavior is motivated by mental health challenges and therefore explores how much responsibility to assign an individual for ostensibly criminal activity.

**Marginalized People:** A term that refers to a group of people who do not have social and cultural power because the law works against them instead of promoting and protecting their human rights.

**Mass Incarceration:** On a fundamental level, this term refers to the extreme rates at which people—disproportionately persons of color—are imprisoned in federal and state jails, as well as in local jails.

**Police Brutality:** This term speaks to the excessive force and violence meted out towards civilians by police. Crucially, literature reveals that persons of color are more likely to experience harassment, terror, violence and at times even death at the hands of the police force in the United States than any other racial group.

**Prison Industrial Complex:** Refers to the multiple institutions, actors and agents involved in the proliferation of incarceration in the United States.

**Prison Service Contracts:** State and federal prisons in the U.S. contract a vast majority of their services, from uniforms to food to telephone calls, to private corporations. These corporations, in turn, rely on consistent incarceration rates to make immense profits. See Prison Policy Initiative's 2017 Report, "Following the Money of Mass Incarceration," for more detailed information.<sup>1</sup>

**Procedural Justice/Procedurally Just Practices:** "Refers to the perceived fairness of justice procedures and interpersonal treatment of litigants, victims, and defendants."<sup>2</sup>

**Restorative Justice—** "Is a theory of justice that emphasizes repairing the harm caused by criminal behavior and believes this is best accomplished through cooperative processes that allow all willing stakeholders to meet."<sup>3</sup>

**War on Crime:** An initiative birthed by Lyndon B. Johnson which increased the amount of federal resources for law enforcement agents to reduce crime rates across the nation. However, given the racial biases implicit in policing, the war on crime quickly led to discriminatory and racially motivated practices where persons of color were unfairly targeted and given sentences—in a lot of instances—disproportionate to 'crimes' actually committed. This initiative, with similar ones like it in subsequent governments played a crucial role in contributing to the phenomenon of mass incarceration witnessed today.

## OTHER ISSUES

**Gentrification:** the process of renewal and rebuilding accompanying the influx of middle-class or affluent people into deteriorating areas that often displaces poorer residents (Merriam-Webster dictionary)

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2. Malangone, Danielle. *Integrating Procedural Justice in Domestic Violence Cases. Report*. [http://www.courtinnovation.org/sites/default/files/documents/DVFactSheet\\_November2016\\_IntegratingPJinDVCases.pdf](http://www.courtinnovation.org/sites/default/files/documents/DVFactSheet_November2016_IntegratingPJinDVCases.pdf).
3. "Lesson 1: What Is Restorative Justice?" Centre for Justice and Reconciliation. <http://restorativejustice.org/restorative-justice/about-restorative-justice/tutorial-intro-to-restorative-justice/lesson-1-what-is-restorative-justice/#sthash.D5M1bXJH.lywB8bSi.dpbs>.



2018 Humanity in Action Fellows in Detroit at Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History.

**BIOGRAPHIES**



### **LABIBA AHMED**

Fellow | Technical University of Hamburg | Mölln, Germany

Raised in a small town in Northern Germany, Labiba Ahmed is enrolled in the Chemical and Process Engineering course at the Technical University of Hamburg. Coming from youth participation and anti-racism projects, she is committed to university politics in order to speak out, and fight for the rights of students, and straightening the self-governing student body by empowering students, who are not yet ready to stand up for their rights. In her spare time, Labiba is active as a board member of an association, which organizes political-education-work in order to support participation (projects), and fight group-related misanthropy.



### **ALEXIS BROWN**

Fellow | Wayne State University | Auburn Hills, MI

Born in Detroit but eventually moving to Auburn Hills Alexis is a sophomore at Wayne State University with a double major in Sociology and Urban Studies. She graduated from Avondale High School, while there she was involved in many leadership building programs for young black males and disenfranchised youth. Some of those programs included Go a non-profit organization started up by her mentor and a book club for African American high school males. She also gave a TedXTalk at Oxford High School in 2016 that focused on empowering yourself and others. Following graduation she was involved with the XQ Super School project through Go. Her goal after college is to work with the youth of Detroit in a way that will empower them to believe in themselves by equipping them with the resources and skills needed to do so. She is also on the Track and Field team at WSU.



### **SOPHIA BURNS**

Fellow | Vassar College | Westville Grove, NJ

Sophia Burns holds a Bachelor's degree in Urban Studies, with multidisciplinary concentrations in Political Science and Geography from Vassar College. As a member of the Young People For (YP4) 2017 fellowship cohort, she is developing the Resilient Youth Collaborative, a network of support and empowerment for children of incarcerated parents. She looks forward to beginning her term as a Partners for Justice Advocate at the Alameda County Office of the Public Defender in Oakland, California in September.



### **ANTHONY CHASE**

Director of Programs and Detroit Program Director | Kalamazoo, MI

Anthony Chase joined Humanity in Action in 2011 -- first as a Fellow in Paris and, in 2013, as a staff member in New York. He developed the Detroit Fellowship as a new program on inequality and development in urban America. He received his BA from the University of Michigan and will begin graduate studies at the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University in fall 2018. He is a fellow with the Urban Design Forum and serves as a board member of Libraries Without Borders. Anthony is a native of Kalamazoo, Mich., and lives in Brooklyn.



### **COLINE CONSTANTIN**

Fellow | University of Edinburgh | Lyon, France

Coline is a passionate French woman committed to address social and legal injustices which can affect migrants, refugees and detainees. She first completed a bachelor degree at the socially innovative 3A business school in Lyon, where she got the opportunity to study in Madagascar and intern in Central America and India. Two years ago, she moved to the University of Edinburgh to complete an MSc in International Development and an LLM in Human Rights. There, she organized events on immigration detention, penal reform in Scotland and a project to implement MUN programs in Scottish prisons to take the debate forward on these questions. After working voluntarily with Prison Insider at its creation, she is now a member of the board of directors and secretary of this association informing on prison conditions around the world. Her work ethics stem from her leisure-time activities such as playing rugby and gathering around food.





**MARIE-LOUISE CLEMMENSEN**

Fellow | University of Copenhagen | Copenhagen, Denmark

Born and raised in Copenhagen, Malou Astrup Clemmensen just finished her undergraduate in History and Social Sciences from the University of Copenhagen. Malou's academic interest is the education and empowerment of communities and labor unions, wanting to create a sustainable change in society. Her studies have also brought on an investigation of the Civil Rights Movement and the education of activists. Malou has been the president of the Student Union at UCPH during the last two years, committing her time to the fight for equality in education and the rights of all students. Just starting her Master of history, Malou hopes to keep working with and understanding the powers of change in the future.



**CELESTE GOEDERT**

Fellow | University of Michigan | Ferndale, MI

Celeste was born and raised in Southeast Michigan. She graduated from the University of Michigan in 2017 with a degree in Social Theory & Practice and a minor in French Language & Literature. She also studied Japanese language and culture and spent her final semester studying abroad and farming in Japan. Her senior thesis focused on oral storytelling and feminist approaches to love. Celeste currently works as a nanny and intern at WDET Detroit public radio. She is a member of the Detroit chapter of the Japanese American Citizen's League. She is interested in the relationship between media, art, and social transformation. In her spare time she enjoys playing music and learning new instruments. She hopes to continue learning about love and social justice in her future academic endeavors.



### **MARK HAIDAR**

Fellow | University of Michigan | Northville, MI

A native of Metro Detroit, Mark Haidar graduated from the University of Michigan's Ford School of Public Policy in 2016. While in college, Mark interned for the Chicago Housing Authority, the White House Domestic Policy Council, and Google. He also spent a semester at the National University of Singapore, as well as participated in the Summer Venture in Management Program at Harvard Business School. After graduation, Mark worked as an Associate at Wellspring Consulting in New York, a strategy consulting firm that advises organizations in the social sector. Mark has now moved back home to Michigan and seeks to give back to the communities that shaped him to who he is today. He hopes to work for the Mayor's office following the Humanity in Action Detroit Fellowship and to later attend law school, before ultimately engaging in a career of public service in the Metro Detroit area.



### **ANTONELA KOTSONI**

Fellow | Aalborg University | Patras, Greece

Antonela likes to think she is a global citizen. With an MA in Migration and Ethnic Relations and undergraduate studies in Intercultural Education, she values tolerance, diversity management and intercultural communication. Over the last four years, she has been working with the NGO InterMediaKT in Greece on transnational projects, in a wide spectrum of topics varying from refugee integration and active citizenship to social entrepreneurship. One of her life passions is traveling and cultural exchange, as such she has lived in five different countries for studying, working, interning, and conducting academic research. She is a youth leader of a group of passionate Greek and international volunteers and she is dedicated to promoting human rights and equality.



### **HIRA MAJEED**

Fellow | Wayne State University | Saginaw, MI

Raised in Saginaw, Michigan, Hira Majeed is a rising junior at Wayne State University with a major in Civil and Environmental Engineering and a minor in Global Studies. As an intern at Detroit Equity Action Lab, Hira researches and advocates for issues facing Detroit residents such as water shutoffs, illegal tax foreclosures, and equitable development. Her other passions include sharing her Pakistani culture with others as well as raising awareness for the Syrian humanitarian crisis; she does this through her various executive roles at Wayne. After college, Hira aims to use her degree to provide sustainable infrastructure for communities in need.



### **KATHRYN "KATJA" MOLINARO**

Fellow | University of Michigan | Dayton, OH

Kathryn (Katja) Molinaro graduated from the University of Michigan in 2017 with degrees in political science, French & Francophone studies, and a minor in urban & community studies. During her time at U of M, Katja spent a year studying at Sciences Po in Aix-en-Provence, France, as well as a semester in Detroit exploring the city and its history and interning for City Councilmember Raquel Castañeda-Lopez. After graduating, Katja made her way back to Detroit and now works as a youth specialist at the Ruth Ellis Center (a residential and mental health facility for LGBTQ+ youth), and coaches Detroit Cristo Rey High School's policy debate team. She's especially interested in the intersection of art and social change and enjoys all things creative. Katja ultimately hopes to pursue a career in education in some capacity.



### **JASMINE PAUL**

Fellow | The American University of Paris | Macomb Township, MI

Completing her last semester at The American University of Paris, Jasmine has spent the last three years in Paris, France, studying International Politics and Gender Studies. She spent most of her time in Student Government as Communications Director prior to becoming Vice President, and she led an organization to provide aid for Syrian refugees and was a board member of the university's first Gender and Sexuality magazine publication. She balances her busy schedule with her passion and excitement for travel, cooking, and dogs. She is looking forward to spending the summer close to home in Michigan.



### **KRISTINA "STINA" PERKINS**

Fellow | University of Michigan | Ann Arbor, MI

Born and raised in Ann Arbor, Michigan, Kristina (Stina) Perkins is a 2018 graduate from the University of Michigan with degrees in Women's Studies, American Culture, and Writing. As an undergrad, Stina worked as a Publications Intern for the National Endowment for the Humanities, a docent at University of Michigan's Natural History Museum, and an editor for What the F, a feminist literary magazine on campus. Interested in storytelling as a means of social protest, Stina researched slam poetry movements while studying human rights abroad in Nepal, Jordan, and Chile through the International Honors Program. Stina currently serves as an Engelhardt Social Justice Fellow for the Prison Creative Arts Project, where she facilitates theatre and creative writing workshops in Southeast Michigan correctional facilities and pursues her passion for arts-based restorative justice.



### **ADA RACHFALSKA**

Fellow | Warsaw University | Kozienice, Poland

Ada is a graduate of the Warsaw School of Economics (BA in Finance & Accountancy, MA in Management) and will soon graduate from the University of Warsaw where she's doing BA in cultural studies at the American Studies Center. She started developing interest in human rights at her second university, however earlier she took part in Chinese-Polish Partnership for Development and coordinated Israeli-Polish Forum of Dialogue, both voluntary student exchange projects at her alma mater. She spent one semester studying in Germany at TU Dortmund. She also worked at Google StreetView team for over a year. Ada's interests revolve around gender, racial and economic inequalities. She is also a huge music fan, a regular attendee at various music shows, and a member of a small independent art collective based in Wrocław (Poland), writing and helping with zine production.



### **AKASH RAJE**

Fellow | University of Virginia | Detroit, MI

Born and raised in Farmington Hills, MI and later Midlothian, Virginia, Akash Raje is a rising fourth year at the University of Virginia double majoring in African American & African Studies and Foreign Affairs. Influenced by his upbringing in Metro Detroit's vibrant cultural communities, Akash is interested in studying the Indian American identity and multiculturalism in the United States. He spent last summer in rural Maharashtra, India teaching math, reading, and writing to children at Snehalaya NGO. At the University of Virginia, Akash is active in music and community building, serving as the President of the Student Hip Hop Organization and as a DJ for WXTJ Student Radio. He also works with the Inter-Fraternity Council and UVA Multicultural Student Services to pursue opportunities for inclusion and empowerment of minority students. At his core, he is a lover of music and believes in the power of music to build compassionate communities.



### **ANTONIO REGULIER**

Fellow | State University of New York at Fredonia | Roosevelt, NY

Antonio Regulier is revered as a transformational leader by his family, peers and colleagues. He is leading Project M.O.V.E. (Mobilizing Opportunities for Volunteer Experience) Buffalo — an AmeriCorps program under Corporation for National and Community Service — in the Office of the Mayor, in the Division of Citizen Services. This anti-poverty initiative builds on neighborhood revitalization through beautification, outreach, and community development. Born in Haiti, Antonio was raised on Long Island, New York. He was conferred concurrent degrees in Social Work and English from the State University of New York at Fredonia. A Graduate Diversity Fellow at Buffalo State, he is a candidate for a Master of Public Administration degree and a senator in student government. Antonio has research interest in mental health, culture and identity, and arts integration for social change. A classically trained dancer and aspiring writer, he enjoys fitness, reading, and traveling.



### **LUTALO SANIFU**

Fellow | University of Michigan | Detroit, MI

Lutalo Sanifu is a native Detroiter, and Rackham Merit Fellow, who will be graduating from the University of Michigan with a Master's of Urban and Regional Planning in December 2018. A recent graduate of Morehouse College (Urban Studies 2017), Lutalo provides stakeholders in neighborhood development a comprehensive understanding of how to create an inclusive process through his ability to communicate each individual neighborhood's context from his diverse experience in real estate (Amrock, TSI Appraisals), urban planning, and government (Wayne County Register of Deeds) in Detroit. His affiliations include the Osakwe Ndegwa Jahi Scholarship (founder and board member), the Black Slate (board member), Rackham, Planning For Inclusion Initiative (student recruitment coordinator) and Humanity in Action. He would like to study methods for creating inclusive development in Detroit through transportation, education and training. After graduation, Lutalo intends to return to Detroit to work in local government.



## KWABENA “KOBI” SARFO-PANIN

Fellow | Union Theological Seminary | Accra, Ghana

Kobi is a student at Union Theological Seminary, where he explores how religion can be used as instrument to achieve social and economic justice in Ghana in particular, and more generally in Sub-Saharan Africa. He also loves to play soccer.



## ANASTASIA SIAPKA

Fellow | King's College London | Kilkis, Greece

Anastasia Siapka is the co-founder of “Code it Like a Girl” and “Geek Islands,” both awarded initiatives that bridge the digital divide in Greece among women and residents of remote areas, respectively. For her social impact, she has been awarded the Angelopoulos-Clinton Fellowship and has served as an International Exchange Alumna of the US State Department as well as a Women’s Entrepreneurship Day UN Student Ambassador. She has interned at the TechConnect Department of the New York Public Library and at the Press and Communications Office of the Embassy of Greece in London, while she has previously worked with the Eugenides Foundation, Microsoft Hellas, The Huffington Post, etc. Anastasia has studied Law at undergraduate and Public Administration at postgraduate level and is currently pursuing an MA Philosophy at King’s College London. Her academic and professional interests lie at the intersection of ethics, technology and digital policy.



## WHITNEY SHERRILL

Associate Program Director  
Detroit, MI

Whitney Sherrill is the Associate Program Director for the Detroit Fellowship with Humanity in Action. She recently graduated from University of Michigan’s Master of Urban and Regional Planning program with a concentration in Housing, Community, and Economic Development. She is passionate about using education, and her expertise, as a platform to uplift local communities and assist with reimagining community ownership of neighborhood development. As she returns to Detroit, Whitney is looking forward to supporting local advocacy efforts around food and water justice, as well as supporting sustainability initiatives in partnership with local grassroots organizations. In addition to co-creating content for the Humanity in Action Detroit Fellowship, Whitney enjoys dancing, reading, writing, learning, spending time with close friends and family members, meeting new people, traveling to new places, hiking, and checking out local art and live music exhibits.



### **JACQUELINE TIZORA**

Fellow | University of Amsterdam | Mutare, Zimbabwe

Jacqueline is Zimbabwean born and South African bred Black radical feminist with a keen interest in African feminist thought and affairs. Currently studying Communication Science at the University of Amsterdam, Jacqueline is also a part-time consultant at Recipes for Self Love as well as a freelance journalist. She is also a member of the University of Colour, an Amsterdam-based collective that aims to decolonise institutions, and as member has been invited to give speeches at events like the Dutch Premiere of the Winnie Documentary and participates in regular public panel discussions and debates on various issues. Being passionate about African affairs and well-versed in world politics has inspired her to make plans to pursue a Master's degree in Public Policy or International Relations in 2019, a practical way to marry the two passions.



### **ALMA TUTIC**

Fellow | University of Sarajevo | Bihac, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Alma was born in 1991, just one year before her hometown of Bihac fell under a 3-year-long siege during the 1992-1995 war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. She graduated from University of Sarajevo with a BA in English Language and Literature and Sociology, and she is currently pursuing an MA in Translation Studies and Sociology. Her areas of interest are gender equality, gender-based violence and wartime sexual violence related to Bosnian society and the country's turbulent history.



### **SHARON VILLAGRAN**

Fellow | Princeton University | Los Angeles, CA

Sharon is a Senior Fellow at Humanity in Action, having participated in the 2015 John Lewis fellowship. She is a first year graduate student at Princeton University. She is pursuing her doctorate in the department of sociology and is broadly interested in international migration, urban sociology, and ethnography. As an undergraduate student at UCLA, Sharon conducted an ethnography of bus riding in Los Angeles. In doing her fieldwork, Sharon focused on dependency on public transportation as a potential measure of quality of life. Within this discussion, job equity, bus equity, and public harassment were all salient concerns in exploring how the mobility of residents within communities like South Central Los Angeles experience limited mobility. Sharon is originally from South Central Los Angeles, and has volunteered extensively with organizations in her community. This has largely been with a focus on immigrant rights, as well as outreach programs for youth within the area.

**EMMA YIP**

Fellow | University of California, Berkeley | Napa, CA

Emma grew up in California and went to community college in Seattle, Washington. She graduated from UC Berkeley with a degree in Society and Environment at the end of 2016. While there she worked at the Center for Environmental Health in Oakland, founded Students with Standing Rock at Berkeley, and wrote a thesis on land grabs in the cacao sector of Indonesia. Upon graduation, Emma was awarded a grant to pursue a social-justice project to foster environmental awareness in predominantly conservative states in America. Today, she continues to work on that project, Delta Collaborative, with a traveling environmental museum based out of New Orleans. Emma intends to pursue a masters in political ecology and social change-making in the near future, after-which she will continue her career in environmental pedagogy. Emma is a 2017 Humanity in Action Senior Fellow.



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# SUPPORTERS

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