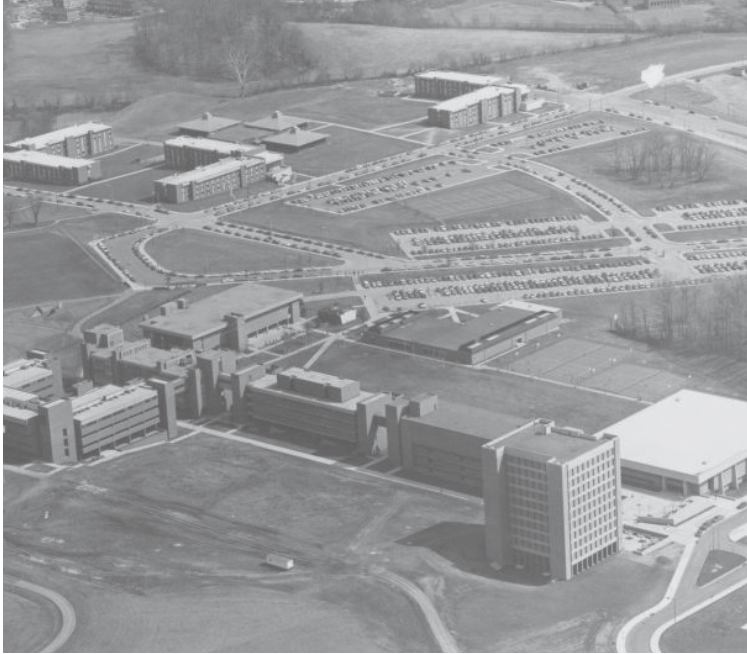




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## CONSCIOUSNESS: THE EVOLUTION OF COLLEGIATE ACTIVISM IN MARYLAND

As the news of uprisings and civil unrest in Baltimore City reached the television screens on the University of Maryland, Baltimore County campus in April 2015, high tensions and strong emotional responses quickly appeared in the energy of the community. Some reactions were of visceral anguish, while some were of intense anger. As an engaged member of this campus, I had both the pleasure and frustration of observing both the conversations and feelings of these students, and their intentional actions and responses. While observing these emotional responses, it seemed that the undergraduate population was not well prepared to be civically engaged activists and change agents in the surrounding community. As citizens of Maryland, a state filled with diverse ideologies, socioeconomic backgrounds, and ethnicities, the state's collegiate activists are afforded an opportunity to learn from, pursue, and engage with social justice movements. This paper analyzes and discusses the progression of collegiate engagement in social justice movements by following two organizations: Students for a Democratic Society and the Baltimore Algebra Project.

**[LEFT]** 2014. Photograph by UMBC Creative Services.

**[RIGHT]** Aerial view of UMBC Campus, 1973, University Archives, Special Collections, University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC).

## INTRODUCTION

University students have played a significant role in the ongoing struggle against social inequality (Ohrenschall, 2012). The energy, failure to accept disillusionment, and idealistic values held by many students has supported national social justice movements immensely. As a result, many young men and women can recount demonstrations occurring on their campuses, in nearby restaurants and establishments, and on neighboring streets led exclusively by passionate and ambitious university students.

Though collegiate activism has played a large part in the social justice development of the U.S., it is also important to note that this activism is changing. One key factor in the change in collegiate activism has been a significant increase in the value of education. Recent studies have shown that, though the United States consistently has displayed the highest quality of education available, rising fees and increased student debt accompany unreasonably high expectations of educational attainability (The Economist, 2012). As such, students find themselves preoccupied by their education, detracting them from social issues surrounding political activism and engagement.

Two collegiate student organizations, Students for a Democratic Society and the Baltimore Algebra Project, are both relevant and integral to understanding the state of collegiate activism in Maryland. These organizations bear similar political alignments by encouraging accurate representation of underprivileged groups, and discourage excessive militarization in the government. Additionally, these organizations are both. These ideological similarities allow us to control for political differences that may affect an organization's views on the administration of social justice organizations. Secondly, the two organizations have similar relationships between chapters and the national organization, in that both organizations draw from the ideals and principles of the national organization, while heavily focusing their local agenda on meeting the specific needs of the local community. Lastly, these two organizations' memberships exclusively consist of young people, which is key in the discussion of collegiate activism.

Through organizations such as the University of Maryland College Park (UMCP) Chapter of Students for a Democratic Society, Maryland students had the opportunity to engage in activism during the Civil Rights Era. Currently, activism for millennial collegiate students, those born between 1981 and 1997, is seen within grassroots organizations like the Baltimore Algebra Project (Fry, 2015). By evaluating the strengths and challenges of these two organizations, the following is designed to allow collegiate activists a better understanding of how to develop an organization's longevity, effectiveness, and replicability.

## **STUDENTS FOR A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY**

Founded in 1959, the Students for a Democratic Society identified itself as a politically left, radical organization originating from the educational foundation, League for Industrial Democracy (Students for a Democratic Society, 1960). The national organization was perceived to be rabblerous and audacious, receiving a great deal of negative press coverage. In one article published by U.S. News & World Report (1969), the words "communist," "anarchist," and "extreme left" were used to describe this organization. In the wake of American McCarthyism, which was characterized by a deep and sincere wariness of Communist ideals, such characterizations were considered to be serious indictments on the validity of the organization (Schrecker, 2002).

Students for a Democratic Society worked alongside many other student organizations and contributed to the collective voice of a generation of young people determined to promote the ideals and principles of pacifism, civil rights, and equality. Reaching over 100 chapters nationwide at its highest point, the connections and ideas created by this organization reverberated throughout the Civil Rights movement. Many students desired broad arching societal change for the issues affecting the nation's racial and political minorities, and Students for a Democratic Society was willing to provide solutions in a way that resonated with the general student body (Students for a Democratic Society, 1967b).

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

During the Vietnam War, (1955 -1975), issues with African American civil rights came to the forefront of the nation's consciousness. Many Americans recognized that the legal segregation of African Americans was not in the best interest of the nation. During this time period, coverage of the Vietnam War, which had very little public support, became accessible (Barringer, 1998). As shown by these grievances with the U.S government, it would appear that many Americans felt a sense of powerlessness against a government that was perceived to be disregarding the interests of its citizens. This is reflected in Students for a Democratic Society's vision of a "society in which men have, at last, the chance to make the decisions which shape their lives" described in several publications (Students for a Democratic Society, 1967b, para. 1).

Opposition of the U.S. draft was often a topic of public discussion addressed by Students for a Democratic Society. At the time of organization's charter on the UMCP campus, the American public began to realize that the effects of the draft were disproportionately directed toward lower-class to middle-class citizens, while the affluent could successfully defer service (Barringer, 1998). About 76% of all Vietnam War draftees were of lower-class and middle-class status, and about 25% of all inductees were below the poverty line (as compared to the country's 12.6% poverty rate) (Littman, Shelburne, & Simmons, 1971; World History Project, USA, 2007). This inequity was often challenged by the national SDS organization, and was a core component of the organization's platform until the U.S. adapted a lottery style draft system.

During this time period, the American people's perception of the Vietnam War was influenced by the media. For the first time in history, the relatively optimistic and positive accounts of war posed by previous accounts were countered by the candid and uncensored images of the current television and journalism (Hallin, 1989). By the year 1960, over 90 percent of the American population had a television in their home and had convenient access to graphic and grotesque images of war (Hallin, 1989; Harvey, 2001, para. 1). Similarly, news stories affiliated with civil rights issues were viewed heavily by the public; images of violent responses to nonviolent protests were aired on a consistent basis. Most candid and personal television news reports for high profile cities like Birmingham were done by those outside of the city, giving the news of police violence and political protest a much larger audience than before (Hallin, 1989; Klibanoff,

2013). Additionally, public support for American troops remaining in Vietnam decreased as pacifist ideologies gained traction throughout the 1960's (Kindig, 2008).

The issue of civil rights was in the forefront of the minds of many community organizers, clergy, professors, and students (Davis, 2014). In the landmark Supreme Court case *Brown vs. Board of Education*, the longstanding precedent of “separate but equal” education for Black and White children was overturned, much to the encouragement of civil rights activists (United States Courts, n.d.). With the overturning of this precedent, many Black students felt encouraged to envision higher, more equitable standards for their educational system by taking part in the sit-in movement (Independence Hall Association, 2014). This also encouraged students, both Black and White, to challenge the prevailing systems of segregation that existed throughout all components of society. Other high profile events, such as the first sit-ins orchestrated by North Carolina Agricultural and Technical college students, turned the nation's eye toward the need for integration (Davis, 2014). In this way, many students felt empowered to become civically engaged, and to raise the standard of expectation for the United States as a whole, particularly in its relations with race.

As college students began to recognize their power and agency individually, organizations such as Students for a Democratic Society became pivotal in the progression of civil rights. Starting in 1960, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), was responsible for a host of nonviolent demands for Black men and women to seat themselves at non-segregated lunch counters (Independence Hall Association, 2014). From 1960 to 1961 the Congress on Racial Equality (CORE) led large groups of people on “Freedom Rides,” unsegregated public bus rides across the country, which were often met with fear and fierce opposition by townspeople and even public officials (Mack, 2001). Additionally, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) helped to organize the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in 1968, which was the single largest public demonstration for human rights in the history of the United States (Official Program for the March on Washington, 1963). Amid all of these large scale events, each organization continued to play a significant role in directing grassroots and community level change (Ohrenschall, 2012).

While a variety of tactics were used over the course of the Civil Rights Movement, the product of Freedom Summer, propelled the movement's success significantly. Freedom Summer, a three-month flurry of nonviolent direct action activity in 1964, turned the attention

of the media to the protests, nonviolent actions, and demonstrations of college students (Ohrenschall, 2012). Candid photos were taken of violently opposed marches, demonstrations, and attempts by Black students to eat at White lunch counters (Ohrenschall, 2012). Wide circulation of the photos and video of these students allowed the United States to become aware of and more sensitive to the daily social injustices experienced by people of color. These demonstrations were disrupting social norms, and many students from these student organizations were in the midst of it.

## NATIONAL CONSTITUTION

One of the ways that the national organization of Students for a Democratic Society encouraged each local chapter to autonomously pursue the needs of each respective community was with the use of nonrestrictive and empowering language in its guiding documents (Students for a Democratic Society, 1960; Students for a Democratic Society, 1962b; Students for a Democratic Society, 1967b). The guidelines set by the constitution for chartering a new local chapter was a noticeably uninvolved process. Article IV of Students for a Democratic Society's national constitution states that high school, collegiate fraternal organizations, or associated groups needed to submit the following items to be chartered: a membership list of at least five people, a statement of principles adherent to the "broad aims and principles" of the national organization, and a notice of an elected representative for the national council (Students for a Democratic Society, 1962c). In this way, the organization was easily developed by anyone who had a sincere interest in it.

This structure fostered greater accessibility to the organization and less bureaucratic obstructions to the productivity of the chapters. Because the individual chapters were student run and therefore in a constant rotation of membership due to graduating students, it was necessary to create and administer a chapter organization relatively quickly. Students new to social justice work could use the setting of a local chapter comprised of familiar faces and relationships to discover how they could most effectively express their ideas, with the backing and resources of a national organization. With these national, overarching ideas, each individual chapter had an opportunity to mold and shape their programs in accordance with the needs of the respective community.

## NATIONAL AGENDA

On a national level, Students for a Democratic Society promoted five core values. These core values were racial equality, disarmament, jobs and abundance, civil liberties, and liberal education. To promote this agenda, the national organization encouraged tactics like nonviolent protests, labor strikes, bulletins promoting peace and economic/racial equality, the transcription of original works, and calls to arms. One author, Barringer (1998), makes note that Students for a Democratic Society “provided an important link between the two defining causes of the decade,” which were racial equality and antiwar protests. The unique ability for Students for a Democratic Society to bridge gaps between paralleling social movements was especially helpful for them, as they garnered the attention of many potential members by appealing to their vast array of interests. Through the direction and vision of the national organization’s agenda, chapters such as UMCP were given the opportunity to develop themselves and create their own ideological principles that reflected the needs of the broader community.

## UMCP CHAPTER OF STUDENTS FOR A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY

When the UMCP chapter of Students for a Democratic Society was founded in 1962, the developed agenda of the chapter required the participation of both students and administrators. This chapter advocated for the principles of the national organization’s agenda through teach-ins, nonviolent demonstrations, and conferences. In particular, the chapter focused on several policies administered by UMCP that were perceived to be incongruent with civil rights and pacifism, such as a Reserve Officer Training Core (ROTC) program and the lack of equal access to healthcare for all staff (Students for a Democratic Society, 1967a). The UMCP SDS chapter also played a role in the formation of other local chapters in the Baltimore-Washington metropolitan area, through hosting events like conferences and forums (Students for a Democratic Society, 1967).

Much of the agenda setting, alignment, and social capital of the chapter was orchestrated by the national organization (Students for a Democratic Society, 1962b). Nonetheless, the unique events, programs, and campaigns of the UMCP chapter were tailored to match the needs of the campus. In this way, the chapter was able to remain congruent with the national organization while still connected



and engaged with issues specifically affecting the UMCP community. However, this top-down approach also posed challenges to the local chapter. Since the national organization was under heavy political scrutiny, sources of support for both the national organization and its local chapters were inconsistent.

In addition to the national difficulties faced by the organization, the UMCP chapter also faced difficulty with its home university. The UMCP chapter was suspended by the university in 1970 after the chapter facilitated unauthorized demonstrations and made use of university space without a required reservation. The local chapter was suspended from operation on May 9, 1969 by the Central Student Court, and was unable to reopen for the duration of the fall semester (Metz, 1969). After this suspension, official representatives of the chapter organization could not be identified or contacted concerning reauthorization of the university chapter, or of its constitution (Metz, 1970). Consequentially, the local SDS presence at UMCP ceased by the spring of 1970.

## UMCP CHAPTER CONSTITUTION

The preamble of the UMCP SDS Chapter constitution begins with one succinct and forceful sentence: “This organization is under the rules and regulations set forth by the Student Government Association, and the Faculty Senate Committee for Student Life” (Students for a Democratic Society, 1964, para. 1). This one sentence is different from the constitutions of other student organizations that existed at UMCP, which generally made mention of more than sheer obligation to the rules of the campus’ administration for the development of a constitution. This absence of in-depth mention of the purpose and mission of the chapter in its constitution was indicative of the UMCP chapter’s culture. Rather than engaging in excessive formalities, political appearances and bureaucratic relationships with the university administration like with chapter constitutions, this chapter intentionally focused on mobilizing and rallying individuals towards the vision of their organization.

Other structural formalities such as the identification of a chairperson, vice chairperson, secretary, treasurer, and staff advisor positions were satisfied within the confines of the two-page document (Students for a Democratic Society, 1960). Of these identified positions, no role was granted more administrative power than another, and each fee-paying member of the organization had an equal vote on its officers. In this way, each member who gave an equal contribution

was allowed equal say in the trajectory of the organization (Students for a Democratic Society, 1960). This is reflective of the chapter's core political principles, which were democracy and equal representation. (Students for a Democratic Society, 1962c).

There is a stark difference in tone between the constitution of the UMCP SDS chapter and national SDS constitution. While the UMCP Chapter of Students for a Democratic society keeps a more passive, conciliatory tone that allows opportunity for compromise, the national constitution unapologetically stated that it is “clear in its position [to condemn] any totalitarian principle as a basis for government or social organization. Advocates for such a principle are not eligible for membership. (Students for a Democratic Society, 1962c, Article 3) This is indicative of the national organization's desire to progress the idea of democracy as it was known and understood by the national organization.

The clearest vision of the purpose and goals of this chapter are not located in the constitution. The promotional materials describe the detailed agenda of the organization, allowing prospective participants to gain a sense of the chapter. For example, a promotional flyer titled “How Free Are You” defines in great detail the perceived mistakes of UMCP as well as the larger national issues like debt and the unnecessary bombing associated with the Vietnam War (Students for a Democratic Society, 1967c). These passionately written works were designed with the purpose of inciting action. In another advertisement for a meeting during the fall of 1967, the chapter stated the following:

*On campus we find our university organized and run along the lines of a giant factory. The major commodity: well-trained technicians to fill the jobs in the military-industrial-government complex. This structure uses their skills for its own ends, NOT to create a fulfilling life for all the people (Students for a Democratic Society, 1967a, para. 9).*

As the chapter began articulating its positions on Civil Rights as well as the Vietnam War, it recruited like-minded members from the general student body to organize in protest of campus programs that did not align with the chapter vision. Often, to the frustration of the campus administration, this chapter devoted a large portion of its agenda to challenging the Reserve Officer Training Core (ROTC) program, which prepared and transitioned students into roles in various branches of the military. Additionally, Students for a Democratic Society was critical of the quality of healthcare policies

for employees of the university, which did not cover and represent staff members of all ethnicities equally. Furthermore, the members of the chapter were also critical of the university's partnerships with companies that benefited from the United States' involvement in the Vietnam War, a relationship that was perceived to be self-serving and unethical (Boswell, 1968; Students for a Democratic Society, 1967a). The tactics applied by this chapter, though markedly adversarial, were successful in commanding the attention of the administration. In a correspondence with the university president, one administrator wrote:

*I am concerned about the many students who identify with the message from SDS of dissatisfaction with the institutions and directions of our society, as I share their concern. I also share their frustration that so many protectors of the status quo have developed techniques to avoid meaningful discussion. Young leaders who desire the opportunity for constructive change are disillusioned about the opportunities to alter an inflexible establishment. (Boswell, 1968, para. 3)*

This message is indicative of a sincere effort on the part of the university administration to listen and recognize the growing concerns of the student body. Although the increasing the university administration's attentiveness to the concerns of students was a primary goal of the chapter, several aspects to the approach of both the national organization and the local chapter are not without criticism.

## CRITICISMS

By 1970, the momentum of the national organization had begun to dissipate. During this year, the national organization began to dissolve into factions (New York University, n.d.). This dissolution was not wholly unique; other organizations such as SNCC lost much of its following and, consequently, funding as well (Chung, 1997). Also, the public's interest in addressing the combat in Vietnam waned, organizations such as Students for a Democratic Society lost membership. This loss in the public support of the national organization furthered the university administration's inclination to consider the chapter as countercultural, rather than as a serious and well-intentioned organization. Director of UMCP's Urban Research and Development Center Harry Boswell corresponded with the president of the university concerning a statement made by the student organization that Boswell perceived to be libelous. His particularly blunt conclusion was as follows:

*Only clowns communicate with clowns, and as the SDS at Maryland are a peculiar mixture of clowns and dangerous anarchists, and this statement is replete with distortions and misstatements, I agree and urge you not to answer. I believe, however, that greater efforts must be made for passionate as well as logical discussions between responsible students, faculty, administration, and regent (Boswell, 1968).*

By asserting to fellow colleagues that SDS is an organization of “clowns,” relationships that may have existed between SDS students and key faculty members such as Harry Boswell were severely torn and broken, leaving little room for productive negotiation and compromise between the chapter and the university.

Though UMCP’s chapter faced several challenges that ultimately hindered its progression, both the chapter and the national organization of Students for a Democratic Society contributed to future organizations by allowing new activists to learn from the experiences of the national and local organization. In a spirit akin to Students for a Democratic Society, many organizations have continued with a vision of youth agency and autonomy, representative democracy, and liberal education.

## **BALTIMORE ALGEBRA PROJECT**

The Algebra Project, now boasting of chapters in over 11 cities, is a national organization aiming to increase mathematic literacy in secondary education, particularly for low-income students and students of color. This organization recognizes math literacy to be a predicator for college preparedness and general self-sufficiency. This nonprofit organization uses professional teacher development, coalition work, and extracurricular materials to develop this mission of empowering youth through education since its founding in the 1980s (Algebra Project, 2015).

For the Baltimore Algebra Project, the principles of youth agency and autonomy are not foreign. Chartered by Robert A. Moses in 1990 independently of the nationwide Algebra Project, the Baltimore Algebra Project takes the principles of autonomy and self-determination and connects them to a core subject taught in all schools: mathematics. This self-sustaining, youth-led organization is designed to embody a simple slogan: “No Education, No Life” (Baltimore Algebra Project, 2015). This slogan is manifested in tutoring programs developed to remedy a seemingly weak educational system with peer mentoring, scholarship, advocacy, and nonviolent direct action designed to advocate for the advancement of Baltimore

City's Public School students. In addition to these issues, the Baltimore Algebra Project is an advocate for socioeconomic and racial issues affecting young people. This organization seeks to empower youth in Baltimore City through a variety of workshops and nonviolent direct action trainings (Baltimore Algebra Project, 2015).

## SOCIAL CONTEXT

The Baltimore Algebra Project's intentional connection of race and educational inequality is supported by the data: 84% of all public school students identify as Black in a city with a 63% Black populace (Baltimore City Public Schools, 2014; United States Census Bureau, 2014). This suggests that any shortfalls of the public education system within Baltimore city have disproportionately negative effects on Black youth. This poses a variety of sociological issues for Black men and women within the city. Specifically, the shortfalls in education prevent Black youth from obtaining jobs and settling into careers. Primary schools with limited resources underprepare their students for higher education, which severely limits the career opportunities of the students and in turn creates a cycle of poverty within the communities (Putnam, 2015).

The Baltimore Algebra Project's goal is to prepare Black youth for college, and thus the emphasis on math tutoring is germane to a public school system. By one report, just over half of Baltimore City's 43 public high schools have a majority of students who tested less than proficient in Algebra (US News & World Report, 2015). In another report, Baltimore City Public Schools are among the bottom 10% of all school districts in the state of Maryland for student achievement and subject proficiency (Furtick, Snell, & Williams, 2013).

The Algebra Project often works to highlight protests such as those about the deaths of Black men and women in government custody. In April of 2015, the news of Baltimore native Freddie Gray's violent death in the custody of six police officers igniting protests through the city, resulting in an estimated \$9 billion in property damage (Almukhtar, Buchanan, Lai, Wallace, & Yourish, 2015). During these protests, this organization remained an active presence in the community, and facilitated nonviolent direct actions (T. Murphy, personal communication, August 10, 2015). These moments of stress and protest within the community have become a catalyst for public support for grassroots organizations like the Baltimore Algebra Project that work to develop the lives of Baltimore city's inhabitants. By the accounts of the organization's treasurer, Tre Murphy, the organization has gained between the months of April

and May over \$100,000 in donations from individuals sympathetic to grass roots organizations working to address the needs of the Black community (T. Murphy, personal communication, August 10, 2015).

## LOCAL CHAPTER

The mission statement of the Baltimore Algebra Project identifies several core values, including community support, leadership, youth engagement, and socioeconomic advancement (Baltimore Algebra Project, 2015). The formal values and ideals espoused in the mission statement of the organization have also been identified in the day-to-day dealings of the organization. A student of the University of Baltimore and member of the organization, Elizabeth Woodson, identified the values that she has observed within the culture of her organization: community, interpersonal obligation, and passionate dedication (E. Woodson, personal communication, August 4, 2015). The values of this organization, put into practice, have allowed individual members to develop a sincere commitment to helping the community and each other.

The organizational structure of this chapter is consistent with the core principles of the organization. The chapter is non-hierarchical in nature; every member, both high school and college-aged, has equal say in the progression and development of the organization. Woodson attested to the impact of the organization on the high school students involved, saying “We’re always gonna be (sic) at the bottom pushing [the younger students] up. It’s always gonna be (sic) them taking the lead.” (Woodson, 2015) This collective approach allows the organization to receive several levels of feedback and input, which in turn makes involvement with the community well informed, inclusive, and engaging.

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND ACTIVISM

In addition to this organization’s preset objectives, this organization has been known to be a fervent and relentless advocate for public policies affecting Baltimore City’s public school system. In one instance, representatives of the organization disrupted, and consequently delayed, the school board’s vote to close a local high school by entering the meeting room, chanting “The school board has failed us! Black Lives Matter!” (Sweeney, 2014, para. 3). This is not the first (and probably not the last) demonstration organized by the Algebra Project, which boasts of a long record of purposeful community activism (Sweeney, 2014).

Along with individual action, the Baltimore Algebra Project's relationship with Baltimore United for Change has been integral to the work of the organization. Baltimore United for Change is a coalition that unites like-minded organizations, such as Leaders of a Beautiful Struggle, a Black policy advocacy think tank, Peaceby Piece, an organization dedicated to promoting peace within the inner city, and Casa de Maryland, an immigrant advocacy group (Coalition, 2014). With the help of these organizations, the Baltimore Algebra Project has sought to build upon the progress of other grassroots organizations in their development of Baltimore City as well as obtaining much needed human and financial capital for themselves.

## ALGEBRA PROJECT NATIONWIDE

The Baltimore Algebra Project is the only chapter of the nationwide Algebra Project that is 100% autonomous of the national organization. This chapter functions almost completely independently and is sustained separate of its parent organization. Still, it is not altogether disconnected from the principles and support of the nationwide organization. While many of the goals and ideals are the same as the national organization, the independent Baltimore chapter subscribes much more to the strategy of using direct action. The national organization focuses on training teachers directly on cultural sensitivity and inclusion and on theoretical research on effective educational practices (Algebra Project, 2015). The national organization gives no money or resources to the Baltimore Algebra Project. However, this more independent structure allows much less of an opportunity for students, collegiate especially, to navigate the inner workings of the organization and place their unique talents and contributions.

## CONCLUSION

The strength of collegiate activism, or lack thereof, often lies in its ability to address the most pressing and relevant needs of its community. As such, the Baltimore Algebra Project's ability to structure to fit the specified needs of Baltimore's youth has allowed for its survival as an organization. Since many social justice issues have narrowed from broad, visible issues (such as racial segregation) to *de facto* issues of inequality (such as educational disparities), it is critical that social justice organizations make intentional efforts to research the topic that they wish to address as well as the community that the topic affects. An organization's ability to adapt to an evolving political climate is a

key factor in ensuring its longevity over a prolonged period of time. Additionally, it is important for collegiate activists to collaborate with like-minded organizations, and be mindful of the rapport maintained between the organization and the larger administrations that it seeks to work with.

In addition to maintaining adaptability, it is important that organizations such as Students for a Democratic Society develop strategic methods of advocacy. When soliciting the efforts of the general populace and/or the administration of a city or a university, it is important to understand what the target populous is most responsive to. In case of Students for a Democratic Society, the UMCP administration perceived the organization, well intentioned as they may have been, as antagonistic and hostile. By using subtler methods of communication, the chapter would be able to circumvent miscommunications with stakeholders that would otherwise be agreeable to the agenda of the organization.

Furthermore, while working to gain the support and respect of the general public, it is important for communities to exercise wisdom in its efforts of decentralization. Embracing community participation and empowerment, especially within the confines of college campuses, is a fundamental building block of social change. As seen in the cases of Students for a Democratic Society and the Baltimore Algebra Project, it is demonstrated that by encouraging local communities and giving its inhabitants the tools to increase social influence over developmental actors, we are able to create and develop tangible *de facto and de jure* local, state, and federal policy alterations from the bottom up.



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