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University of San Francisco

**The Right to Education at the Gates of the University:
The Role of the University of San Francisco in the
Transformation of Bay Area Schools**

A Thesis Presented to
The Faculty of the School of Education
International and Multicultural Education Department

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Human Rights Education

By
Maximilian Cordeiro
October 2021

The Right to Education at the Gates of the University: The Role of the University of San Francisco in the Transformation of Bay Area Schools

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

in

HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

by

Maximilian Cordeiro
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UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Under the guidance and approval of the committee, and approval by all the members, this field project (or thesis) has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree.

Approved:

Monisha Bajaj

Instructor/Chairperson

October 31, 2021

Date

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ABSTRACT

The right to education, understood from a lens of transformational human rights, is not being fulfilled for youth of color in the Bay Area, particularly in historically Black neighborhoods like the Western Addition and Hunters Point, where high school and college graduation rates are significantly lower than for their white counterparts. The systemic barriers to educational attainment for people of color are rooted in legacy of Jim Crow-era segregationist policies, but they only exist today because they have been preserved in contemporary “race-neutral” policies and practices. This ongoing racial inequality in education has incurred a debt that educators and community activists in the Bay Area are demanding be repaid, with many utilizing the language of reparations to aim for the radical reimagining of Black education. Reparations in education has also been gathering momentum in some higher education institutions, particularly amongst the Jesuits, as they uncover legacies of complicity in the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and seek to repay their own debts.

This convergence of community activists, the Jesuit ministry, and higher education institutions engaging in calls for reparations is happening right at the gates of the University of San Francisco. Is there a role for the university to play within community efforts to fulfill the right to education for Black students in the Bay Area? How should the university evaluate its own debt to the Black community, and what would engaging in reparations mean? The university is already espousing values that appear to align with this work, but a path towards transformation and reparations would require more authentically embodying these values. If successful, a deeper engagement with actively fulfilling the right to education in San Francisco has the potential to radically transform the university and the movements arising outside its gates.

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The COVID-19 pandemic, which has infected, unemployed, and killed people of color in the United States at rates more than double their share of the population in many states, has revealed the terrifying consequences of our nation's enduring racial disparities (Rossen et al, 2021, p. 3). It may be years until we know the full extent of the harm produced by such significant amounts of preventable trauma and death, and potentially many more years before we witness any successful attempts to repair the lasting damages. What is immediately clear is that the impact of the COVID-19 crisis has been shaped by the disproportionately high rates of poverty, unemployment, homelessness, food insecurity, incarceration, and college dropout for minoritized groups that have existed since the founding of this country, and therefore any substantive recovery efforts will require a reckoning with the roots of these racial inequalities (Artiga et al, 2020). Although these disparities can be traced directly back to the legacies of enslavement and segregation in American history, they only exist today because they have been perpetuated by ostensibly race-neutral policies and systems which have reinforced de facto segregation and disenfranchisement (Alexander, M, 2020; Kohli, R. et al, 2017; Odis Johnson Jr., 2014). Indeed, even as the civil rights of historically oppressed people in the United States have become increasingly enumerated as a result of ongoing resistance movements arising from these communities, countless obstacles to the unrestricted fulfilment of those rights remain deeply ingrained in American institutions.

This remains particularly true for the right to education, which has long been understood as the ideal pathway for historically oppressed groups to overcome any racial disparities and alleviate their intergenerational poverty. While access to public and higher education has

certainly improved within the past century, the quality of this education remains deeply inequitable, and meaningful social mobility for people of color remains difficult for those who attain a degree. In truth, colleges and universities more often than not have reflected and reinforced the vast disparities between racial groups in America, and still remain inaccessible or inhospitable places for historically excluded communities (Naylor, L.A., 2015 pp. 525-528). Consequently, the fight for the empowerment of communities of color has become inextricably tied to the struggle for their representation and success in public and higher education. There has undoubtedly been a clear expansion in the population of undergraduate students of color, which has grown from 29% of the total national undergrad population in 1996, to about 45% by 2016; however, the increase in representation has yet to improve the many remaining disparities in the experiences, opportunities, and outcomes amongst this increasingly diverse student body (Espinosa et al., 2020, p. 18). Unfortunately, many institutions believe their work is done – or perhaps has gone too far – in empowering historically excluded communities.

As calls for racial justice continue to resonate from city streets up to the ivory tower, many American universities have taken this opportunity to engage as allies to these movements by embedding values of racial and social justice within their missions and curriculum. Although many institutions have aligned publicly with these values, they have struggled to reconcile with their own histories of exclusion, or furthermore, take dramatic steps to address the disparities that have resulted from their (in)actions within the communities they occupy. A deeper look into the early history of many institutions further reveal their complicity with the colonization of indigenous land, the gentrification of historically Black neighborhoods, and the ongoing displacement and oppression of poor communities throughout the country. Although many institutions, particularly in the California Bay Area, appear readily equipped to offer a social

justice curriculum that is critical of this history, these institutions continue to struggle implementing these values within their admission policy, staff/faculty hiring practices, distribution of institutional funds, or engagement with the local community. Indeed, a recent report from the University of Southern California has revealed that all California public universities included in the study “had graduation disparities between Black students and the overall population of 10 percent or higher” (Costley, 2018, para. 17). In order for the right to education for communities of color to be truly fulfilled, these institutions must align with their espoused values of racial justice and equity to provide better access and outcomes for the marginalized students within and beyond their gates.

Positionality Statement

As a white, cisgender male graduate student from the University of San Francisco (USF), I not only carry certain privileges within this work, but a racial heritage of complicity in the construction and gatekeeping of those privileges. Indeed, the very systems and institutions critiqued within this work were largely conceptualized, developed, and preserved by white male academics in America. I do not intend to draw a distinction between myself and this heritage, nor do I necessarily approach this work out of an obligation to right the wrongs of my ancestors; rather, I seek to use my positionality to support the movements for justice and social transformation currently underway within the space I reside. As a member of the residential and academic community of USF, which in turn exists within the historically Black neighborhood of Western Addition in San Francisco, I seek to better understand the complicated relationship between the university and its neighbors, and explore how to reconcile the espoused values of racial justice between the community and its neighboring institution.

This research, appropriately, is primarily focused upon understanding the current and historic role of the university in engaging with movements for educational justice and social transformation in San Francisco, and finding a path towards better aligning university policy and action with these movements. The burden of this inquiry will not be upon those whose labor has already produced the language and strategies for racial justice in San Francisco, and will instead focus upon investigating those in positions of power who are involved in the construction and application of the university's social justice mission. In further understanding my identity and positionality in this work, I engaged in critical discussions with other white people about their own positionality and role within the university's engagement with social justice.

Purpose of the Project

The disproportional impact of the deadly COVID-19 pandemic upon communities of color and the national uprising against racial injustice in the U.S. has revealed an immediate need for the transformation of systems and services to better serve the communities made vulnerable by long histories of oppression. This transformation requires institutions and those who lead them to understand their complicity in the intentional and systematic oppression of people of color, and engage in reparative efforts that center the needs of the oppressed in order to thoroughly dismantle any vestiges of structural inequality. To continue delaying or denying this process would only burden a future generation with this work, and further compound the debt owed to historically oppressed communities. Society and its constitutive elements cannot change simply by willing it to do so – this requires the deliberate action of all those who value justice and human rights to affect change within their spheres of influence. Appropriately, this project focuses particularly upon how our institutions of higher education, and those who hold positions of power within it, can support the right to education for the historically oppressed communities

they neighbor in an effort to dismantle the achievement gap experienced particularly by Black students in San Francisco.

Towards this end, this study examined the potential for the University of San Francisco to engage with the movement for racial justice in Bay Area education. As a Jesuit institution which publicly espouses values of community service and social justice, there was already a clear alignment with practices of social transformation and reparative justice; but this alignment must be continually scrutinized and improved according to evaluations of history and the current needs of its surrounding community. As a university situated within San Francisco, which has its own history of espousing an ostensible alignment with social justice and progressive liberalism, I argue in this thesis that particular attention must be paid to how the university has either perpetuated or worked against the vast racial disparities found here. Indeed, the city of San Francisco itself must be evaluated, in which the history of oppression and resistance reveals precisely the debt that has been accruing to the Black community. Furthermore, an analysis of the theories of transformational human rights and reparations revealed the ways in which the University and the city of San Francisco has engaged with them may reveal a path towards better alignment.

Significance of the Project

This research does not nearly encompass the entirety of the histories of resistance and oppression within San Francisco, nor does it claim to have the final word upon how transformational human rights and reparations can/should be articulated. It is, however, an attempt to identify the relevant contemporary movements for racial justice in education, and explore paths towards more authentic alliances between the community and powerful institutions that publicly advocate for social change. Furthermore, the ongoing COVID-19 health crisis and

the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement have brought attention to the need for targeted social change and coalition-building amongst stakeholders in vulnerable communities. Although the city of San Francisco prides itself on its progressive politics and history of community-driven activism (Shafer, 2020), its consistent ranking as the city with the highest income inequality and starkest racial disparities in education, housing, health, and employment between Black and white residents have made it clear that this latent progressivism has struggle to provide material benefits to the most vulnerable communities (Hellerstein, 2020). While it is true that there are legacies of grassroots activism in just about every neighborhood in San Francisco, these movements are defined by their resistance to local authorities and institutions which have worked hand-in-hand with the state and local government to violently suppress progress that has taken decades to achieve.

Indeed, although the struggle for racial justice in education is working to address contemporary problems, it's clear that these issues have existed for many generations. This struggle has taken the time, energy, and lives of many countless activists that have yet to see the fruits of their labor, while powerful institutions and groups within the city reap the financial and cultural benefits produced by their proximity to these resistance movements (GLIDE, 2020). While the students of many higher education institutions in San Francisco have supported this activism, the presidents, directors, supervisors, trustees, and other leaders within the systems of education have yet to substantively engage with the demands that would threaten their institution's profits or prestige (Bates & Meraji, 2019). This research, then, is significant because it seeks to challenge those very institutions to look deeper into their legacy of social justice in San Francisco, and more closely align their espoused values and practices with those that are articulated by the community around them. More specifically, this research explored paths

towards the transformation of the University of San Francisco into a more authentically community-driven institution, and provide valuable insight into the fulfilment of the right to education for historically oppressed communities within and outside the gates of the institution.

Theoretical Framework

This research utilized the human right to education as the central theoretical framework, undergirded by theories of transformational human rights and education debt. In order to build this framework, I will first explain how *transformational* human rights differs from human rights in relation to addressing historical oppression. Furthermore, this framework also depended upon the language of education *debt* to explain how this history has directly impacted the fulfilment of the right to education today.

Transformational Human Rights

Human rights, as both an idea and doctrine of international law, would not exist without first the denial of human rights. The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the most widely accepted and internationally recognized standard of rights and freedoms for human beings, emerged as a response to the horrors revealed in the Holocaust. It was unanimously adopted within the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1948, albeit with eight abstentions, and memorializes its impetus within the Preamble, stating that a “disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind” (The United Nations, 1948). This was ostensibly a watershed moment for the empowerment of historically oppressed people who have long experienced the violation of their human rights, particularly those who suffered under violent Western colonial rule. Unfortunately, this was a document primarily motivated, produced, and enforced by the overwhelming authority of those very same Western colonial powers, and therefore the

liberatory potential of the UDHR has not been shared or applied equally to all humans (Burke, 2012).

The supposed universality of the UDHR relied greatly upon Eurocentric conceptualizations of human rights and dignity, and therefore was, and remains, ill-equipped to support the calls for decolonization and social transformation that arose from the many Third World solidarity movements that followed its creation (Burke, 2012). Appropriately, contemporary conceptions of human rights that have arisen from the legacies of decolonial resistance movements have worked to abandon any “claim to universality,” and have focused instead upon a “pluriversal understanding” that supports local articulations of human rights (Zembylas & Keet, 2019, p. 150). This process has refocused the impetus for human rights work away from the legacy of WWII, and more towards the “trail of suffering left by the history of modern imperialism and the resistance to it” (Barreto, 2014, p. 407). Appropriately, the research within this paper is not concerned with upholding any singular definition of human rights, but instead seeks a human rights framework that centers the histories and articulations of local voices in resistance to local and global systems of oppression. Transformational Human Rights, then, presumes that “the very powers that enforce human rights are the human rights violators,” and that the only path to radically transform the lives of oppressed people requires a thorough interrogation of one’s “colonial condition as a local problem and a world problem at once” (Yang, 2015, p. 226).

This critical lens is not exclusive to oppressive states governments, but any institution or actor which is complicit in the creation and/or maintenance of oppressive power structures, especially institutions of higher education. Human Rights Educators have attempted to integrate this critique by relying heavily upon the teachings of Paulo Freire (1993) and his understanding

of the classroom space, in which student and teacher are co-constructors of knowledge in service of empowering local knowledges and culture in academia. However, many human rights educators have worked to further this understanding, like Michalinos Zembylas (2020), who believes that educators need to “create a new language of ethics—a language that moves beyond Eurocentric ethical theories and emerges from within the experience of the ‘colonial wound’” to envision new pedagogies shaped by the “dialogues amongst millions of grassroots actors and activists” (pp. 3-4). This sort of ethics takes direct aim at dismantling the neoliberal university, particularly those which falsely ally themselves with language of social justice. Zembylas (2020) further states that in order “to promote global social justice, we will also need to begin interrogating the construction of epistemic injustice in all educational contexts, theories, policies and pedagogical practices” (p. 21).

Right to Education and the Education Debt

Article 26 of the UDHR states that “everyone has the right to education,” and that it should be compulsory, free “at least in the elementary and fundamental stages,” and “directed to the full development of the human personality” (The United Nations, 1948). While this has been instrumental in providing clearer language for enumerating the rights of students, in terms of providing legal protections or guarantees for access to quality education, this document offers very little. The subsequent United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child attempts to fill in those gaps with its 28th and 29th Article, stating that signatory states must “take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates,” make educational and vocational “guidance available and accessible,” and focus the education of a child upon “development of the child's personality, talents, and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential” in order to prepare students for a “responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of

understanding, peace, [and] tolerance” (United Nations, 1989). This would be an incredible framework to uphold in the United States, but unfortunately, we remain the only country in the world that has yet to ratify this treaty through our own legislature. Indeed, the state of education in the United States stands apart from its peers in the international community, as the legacies of segregation and Jim Crow have guided our education policies to funneled many generations of low-income communities of color directly into the school to prison pipeline (Scott, 2017). Any effort to successfully fulfill the right to education for struggling communities nationwide would require the radical transformation of the current system of education, as well as an understanding of the many obstacles for communities of color.

Investigating the potential for fulfilling the right to education in the United States necessitates a clear focus on the *debt* that has accumulated within these communities, a concept best explored by Gloria Ladson-Billings in “From the Achievement Gap to the Education Debt: Understanding Achievement in U.S. Schools.” Ladson-Billings (2009) argues that “the historical, economic, sociopolitical, and moral decisions and policies that characterize our society have created an education debt” to the Black community in particular, and until directly addressed, will only serve to reinforce the disparities between Black students in underserved schools and their privileged white counterparts (p. 5). This debt has been accruing for centuries, and encompasses any policy, program, or institution which has produced racial disparities that parallel the academic achievement gap for Black youth. Furthermore, this debt is compounding, as Black people who were enslaved and subsequently excluded from receiving formal education have witnessed their unpaid labor turn into profit for other more privileged members of society who already had unfettered access to education (Ladson-Billings, 2009, p. 6).

The impacts of intergenerational poverty, segregation, and violence against the Black community has furthermore incurred a *moral* debt to the Black community, which must be repaid with meaningful social and cultural change that reckons with the lasting effects of this history. Policies which have served to gatekeep certain demographics from voting, or otherwise fulfilling their right to political representation, have effectively barred Black families from “decision-making mechanisms that should ensure that their children receive quality education” (Ladson-Billings, 2009, p. 7). Appropriately, the disparities in education are indicative of debts accumulating from circumstances outside the classroom, as the “cumulative effect of poor education, poor housing, poor healthcare, and poor government services create a bifurcated society” that will perpetuate disparities in education unless this debt is paid off, and their human rights are actively fulfilled.

Definition of Terms

This research does not presume to hold authority over these definitions, and appropriately, these terms are be defined in relation to the topic at hand. Furthermore, as this research is primarily interested in supporting the knowledges and definitions of these concepts as articulated by each community, these definitions should serve as guiding explanations that are open to variation depending upon local histories and understandings.

Neoliberalism: Although rooted in a doctrine of economic practice, it currently represents an ideology in which the primary purpose of every person, institution, or state government, is the protection and expansion of free market capitalism achieved through the privatization of property, deregulation of the free market, and the maximization of corporate profit. To be neoliberal, then, is to integrate capitalist values and practices into all social, cultural, political, and economic decisions (Harvey, 2007, pp. 22-23).

De Facto Segregation: De Facto is a Latin phrase, meaning “in fact”, and is commonly contrasted with De Jure, or “by law”. While De Jure Segregation involved explicitly excluding a racial group from access to property or resources within the text of a law, De Facto Segregation encompasses any ostensibly race-neutral law, policy, or practice which nevertheless disproportionately impacts certain racial groups or reinforces the disparities produced under de jure segregation.

Reparations: For the purposes of providing a baseline for the reader, this definition will be supplied by the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (N’Cobra, 2016), which states that “reparations is a process of repairing, healing, and restoring a people injured because of their group identity and in violation of their fundamental human rights by governments, corporations, institutions and families. Those groups that have been injured have the right to obtain from the government, corporation, institution or family responsible for the injuries that which they need to repair and heal themselves” (N’Cobra, 2016).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

We cannot begin to consider the role of higher education institutions in fulfilling the right to education, without first understanding how the obstacles to this right have been produced and reinforced. Appropriately, this Literature Review will attempt to connect the early history of racial injustice in the Bay Area to the contemporary manifestations of de facto segregation, and how this continues to produce racial disparities in educational attainment for young people of color today. Furthermore, since access to and success in higher education remains particularly difficult for communities entrenched in intergenerational poverty, the institutions themselves will be the central focus of Section Two. Uncovering the neoliberal foundations of the American university broadly will provide essential language for critiquing institutions which engage with resistance movements as both an ally and opponent; with the University of San Francisco of course serving as a case study. Given that this project is primarily concerned with the contemporary movement for racial justice and reparations in education that has arisen in the Bay Area, this Literature Review will close with an exploration of reparations in the United States broadly, and how the higher education and Jesuit communities have responded to the various calls to action in recent years.

I. Racial Justice in Bay Area Education

De Jure Segregation

The Bay Area, and the state of California largely, has maintained a reputation as a bastion of freedom, liberalism, and equality in opposition to the openly racist culture of the American

South since it was admitted as a ‘free state’ in 1850. Although slavery was explicitly outlawed in its Constitution, historians have long pointed to documented cases of slave labor, segregationist policies, and public civil discrimination as proof that California struggled to fulfill its promises to the many aspiring freed slaves who sought refuge as protected citizens within its borders. The ACLU of Northern California (2019) has brought many of these histories to light in its recent report, “Gold Chains: The Hidden History of Slavery in California”, opening with the inaugural address of 1849 by California’s first Governor, Peter Burnett, which recommended banning any further immigration of Black people into the state. Two years later, the state legislature passed the Fugitive Slave Act, which criminalized any person who provided refuge to freed slaves, and deputized white citizens who engaged in their search and capture; simultaneously, a growing number of advertisements for the sale of young slaves would appear in newspapers throughout Sacramento and San Francisco (ACLU, 2019). Unperturbed, thousands of Black people would immigrate to California in the following decades, largely from the South and the Caribbean, to settle in its expanding urban cities. Unfortunately, this growth was matched by the rise in documented cases of abuse, imprisonment, and death of Black people that grew steadily well into the 20th century (Batiste Adkins, 2018).

The early migration of Black and Asian laborers out of the American South saw many families seeking urban cities and gold mining communities in California, particularly in Bay Area, even though the improved quality of life should be attributed more to the community within burgeoning Black neighborhoods than any compassionate policies from the exclusively white ruling class. For example, an early Black trade union in Oakland, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, provided safe houses for fugitive slaves fearing prosecution by California lawmen, openly demonstrated for fair employment practices in other industries, and helped bring

Black workers into the realm of organized labor in Oakland and San Francisco (Tuttle, 2021). The first Black communities in San Francisco saw steady growth around Telegraph Hill and around the eastern waterfront, with the population rising from 425 in 1850 to 1,654 by the end of the 19th century. This population grew exponentially in the 1930s and 1940s, as many Black people throughout the state were recruited to live and work in Bay Area shipyards during WWII, particularly in Hunter's Point Naval Shipyard, and found cheap housing in the Fillmore District following the forced internment of many Japanese American residents throughout the city (Bodenheimer, 2018). The Fillmore would become a cultural hotspot for a growing Black San Franciscan population – recognized as the “Harlem of the West” for its jazz clubs and art galleries –as they were routinely denied access to other exclusively white and wealthier neighborhoods, and many of the lingering white residents in the Fillmore fled at exponential rates. By 1970, the Black population constituted 13.4% of the San Francisco, and had grown to just under 100,000 residents segregated primarily within the Fillmore and Hunters Point neighborhoods (Bodenheimer, 2018).

The subsequent processes of redevelopment and urban renewal that followed the post-war period, particularly the Western Addition A-1 Redevelopment Project, would provide the roots for the gentrification and de facto segregation of Black neighborhoods in San Francisco (Brahinsky, 2021). Hunters Point and neighboring Bayview had become the site of large temporary wartime housing complexes for shipyard workers, but while many white residents were allowed to relocate throughout the city, Black residents were explicitly restricted from owning or renting property outside of these neighborhoods. After the San Francisco Housing Authority took control of properties in Hunters Point following WWII, they instituted policies that proposed to contain ethnic groups within their prescribed housing projects, and effectively

forced Black residents to remain in under-developed houses and apartments (Brahinsky, 2021). Furthermore, the end of WWII meant the end of the boom in shipyard work, resulting in widespread unemployment and homelessness in the Black San Francisco community that went largely unaddressed by local governance. The Fillmore similarly suffered from the Housing Authority's policies of redevelopment, which focused upon constructing cross-town roadways and more exclusive housing zones, which in turn resulted in the displacement of anywhere between four and eight thousand Black residents through eviction, eminent domain, and the denial of loans. As a result, the historically Black Fillmore precipitously lost its cultural and ethnic identity as residents were pushed out to the already over-populated Hunters Point, or across the Bay Bridge into more affordable housing in Oakland, and by 1990 the Black population had dropped to 79,039. This diaspora from San Francisco continues today, with the current population having dwindled to 48,870 or 6.1% of San Francisco's population as of 2010, with roughly one-fifth still concentrated in highly segregated Black neighborhoods in which they make up at least 20% of the population (Menendian & Gambhir, 2019).

Mapping the Education Debt

Since property taxes comprise roughly a third of the overall funding for public schools, the segregation of Black families into low-income San Francisco neighborhoods limited the amount of funding that could go towards local primary and high schools, forcing students to learn in over-populated and under-staffed schools. Unfortunately, this is as true today as it was a half century ago. In 1964, seventeen schools in the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) were more than 90% white, even though the district's overall enrollment was only 57% white, while nine schools were more than 90% Black, even as Black students comprised only 28% of the district (O'Connell, 2020). These are not disparities only recently revealed with the

benefits of hindsight, as a widely available 1968 report by the San Francisco Conference on Race, Religion, and Social Concerns titled *San Francisco, A City in Crisis*, identifies many key issues within predominantly Black schools in SFUSD, including overcrowding, struggling academic performance, inadequate funding, limited transportation, and widely unpopular integration policies which offered negligible improvements to the Black student experience (Miller, 2014, pp. 62-63).

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, San Francisco politicians and educators struggled to create a more equitable education system for students of color in the city, even as some marginal improvements were achieved. In 1969, a lawsuit brought to SFUSD by a Black father, David Johnson, sued the district for having 20 elementary schools with a Black population higher than 65% (Calefati, 2020). The resulting case led to a federal judge ordering the desegregation of SFUSD, which in turn led to a 1971 initiative to bus Black students to schools across San Francisco. Although this provided marginal progress for diversifying certain schools, bussing initiatives were largely unpopular across the racial divide, and prompted many subsequent boycotts and lawsuits from white people and even other marginalized communities. In particular, a 1994 class action lawsuit by three Chinese families with support from the NAACP, saw the removal of race as a primary consideration in assigning students to schools, and the creation of a court-mandated, race-neutral diversity index system with which to assign students to schools in San Francisco (O'Connell, 2021). Additionally, California voters would pass Proposition 13 in 1978, which sharply limited the amount of property taxes that could be used for public school funding, and put the burden on state and local governments to provide funds to struggling schools (Rancaño, 2018).

The impacts of this divestment from Black education cannot be overstated, as the convergence of rising private school attendance, increased white flight, and precipitously dropping graduation rates for Black students further cemented racial disparities in education, and led to the current resegregation of Black schools. Today, six out of the ten high schools in SFUSD have a single racial group that forms an overwhelming majority of its student population, with low-income Black students consistently receiving the least amount of spending per-pupil and the lowest chance of passing the state reading exams (Calefati, 2020). In 2017, only 35% of Black students in SFUSD had met the minimum UC/CSU course requirements to attend, compared to 68% for White students and 58% for all demographics (Bay Area Equity Atlas). These statistics have a direct correlation to the educational attainment of students of color in San Francisco, which in turn will negatively impact their financial and physical security.

The State of Higher Education for Black Californians

The cumulative education debt created by public education policies for the Black community has continued to impact the college attainment of Black students throughout California. As the state with the fifth-highest Black population in the United States, California high schools still graduate Black students at lower rates than all other racial groups, and of the students who do attend college, just about half continue to receive a degree (Campaign for College Opportunity, 2021). A recent report on the “State of Higher Education for Black Californians” offers a myriad of alarming statistics related to college access and success for Black students, making particular note that the enrollment of Black students has drastically decreased following the passing of Proposition 209 in 1997, which blocked race as a factor in admissions to public colleges (Campaign for College Opportunity, 2021). Even though the total number of college applicants in California has increased steadily each year, this has not been

matched by proportional growth in how many first-year students are accepted by these colleges, which has made attending attaining a degree an increasingly competitive process.

As harrowing as these statistics are, they do not speak to the on-campus experience for students who do successfully enroll in a California college, which have historically been inhospitable spaces for students of color. Current research indicates that Proposition 209 not only led to a sharp decrease in Black college enrollment, but also a clear trend in feelings of racial isolation amongst Black, Latinx, and Asian students who described increasingly inhospitable or openly racist sentiments amongst their white peers (Kidder, 2013). Private universities in California, like the institution central to this study, have roughly followed the same enrollment trends as their public counterparts, with a study from 2010 showing the dropout rate for Black students at private universities in California was much higher than that of the UC system, but slightly lower than the dropout rates of CSU schools (Campaign for College Opportunity, 2021). A contributing factor to these statistics is that students at private schools in California tend to experience an overall higher cost of attendance, and in turn are more likely to rely upon public and private loans to supplement their financial aid packages. For many Black students, especially those who are the first generation in their family to attend college, the extra burden of paying off several thousands of dollars in debt negates much of the potential for social and economic mobility that has become an expected result of college graduation, or otherwise creates a barrier to entry that students simply can't afford.

The recent developments in diversity initiatives on college campuses, especially those in the Bay Area, can be seen as part of an optimistic trend towards improving the quality of life for Black students on campus; however, the pursuit of numerical diversity, particularly by these historically white institutions, is rooted in the American tradition of commodifying people color

for profit. Bay Area universities have carried on this trend, and have used Black students as commodities to further not only their personal profit, but to maintain an image of allyship to further attract more social justice-oriented Black students.

II. Social Justice and the Neoliberal University

Neoliberalism and the University

Neoliberalism is at once a transparently enmeshed and deeply veiled component of American culture and society. Having evolved from a model of economic philosophy, it currently represents a more insidious doctrine which informs all decisions pertaining to social and cultural life. Central to its success is indeed its capacity to dominate thoughts and activities otherwise believed to be separate from the economy or politics. David Harvey (2007) offers a comprehensive analysis of the ‘neoliberalization’ of the world in his book *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*; stated succinctly, “it holds that the social good will be maximized by maximizing the reach and frequency of market transactions, and it seeks to bring all human action into the domain of the market” (p. 23). This phenomenon was not an unintended consequence of Western trends towards market deregulation in the 1980’s, but rather the result of decades of propaganda and cultural engineering which co-opted American values of individualism to engender a patriotic fervor for capitalist values. By coercing and manipulating belief systems through “the numerous institutions that constitute civil society—such as the universities, schools, churches, and professional associations,” the interests of the elite business class have become cemented within a more populist base of conservative America (Harvey, 2007, p. 109).

The suppression of grassroots social uprisings and the preservation of corporate interests in late-twentieth century America further set the stage for the current dominance of neoliberal ideology, as the wealthy elite class were increasingly elected to powerful offices and could

consequently control the narrative of these struggles. In Roderick Ferguson's (2017) *We Demand: The University and Student Protests*, a clear linkage is made between the demeaning of social movements and the consolidation of power amongst the business class. Ferguson (2017) argues that in "the 1960s and '70s, as we have seen, feminist, antiwar, and antiracist movements were cast as anti-intellectual and antidemocratic," (p. 71) which further enabled a growing American population to vote against their own material interests for what they perceived as morally superior cultural, national, and religious values. The apparatuses tasked with the (re)production of knowledge and culture was instrumental in this process, and Ferguson (2017) appropriately critiques those higher education institutions which increasingly turned to the suppression of free speech and political mobilization of student protests rather than challenging the status quo. Unfortunately, many university policies and programs which ostensibly seek to dismantle oppressive systems have in turn been co-opted by those very same neoliberal values, as many administrators served up "diversity initiatives as a way to promote antiracism as in line with market agendas," where "minority differences are put in the service of corporate multiculturalism and the reproduction of corporate wealth rather than the communities that produced those differences" (Ferguson, 2017, p. 74).

In order to build a more direct connection between neoliberalism and higher education, Bowles and Gintis offer an investigation into the efficacy of educational systems in addressing social inequality. They arrive to a complex conclusion, in which institutions can on one hand impart necessary "technical and social skills and appropriate motivations" to increase one's capacity to succeed in a capitalist marketplace, but on the other do "not add to or subtract from the overall degree of inequality and repressive personal development" (Bowles & Gintis, 2014, p. 11). This contradiction is inherent within American society at large, where free-market

capitalism is both savior and oppressor to the millions of working poor who seek social mobility through a system built to maximize corporate profit. When unpacked further, it's clear that the positive benefits attributed to education's capacity for boosting productivity is less in service of the students, and more for the corporate interests which innovate in tandem with educational standards to facilitate smoother integration of our youth into low-wage labor. From this perspective, our educational system should be seen less as a system which has been infected by capitalism, and more as a constitutive element of American neoliberalism which aims to increase the lower-class labor pool and hoard wealth amongst the upper-class.

Many neoliberal systems exist to monopolize power, violence, and resources within the a narrow elite class, such as the police, the stock market, or the military; however, we don't traditionally understand our educational system as complicit in this practice, since it operates as a service provided to our youth. The perceived neutrality of education is indeed critical to its function as a state apparatus, which Jacob Gross (2015) describes as a process where "in exchange for benefits, intellectuals provide tacit support for the dominant group and help legitimate its beliefs and its perspective, serving ultimately to shape 'common sense' and encourage consent" (p. 73). In response, Gross (2015) argues for a more critical pedagogy in our educational system that can serve to cultivate resistant behaviors and attitudes in our youth; however, this would not solve the central problem of how our institutions implicitly instill dominant ideology in our students through lingual, cultural, and moral codes (Gross, 2015, p. 69). Furthermore, the potential liberatory critical consciousness that this pedagogy wishes to instill in our students cannot reach its fullest potential as long as the educational system remains an exclusive space for historically marginalized and under-represented populations.

Interest Convergence and Social Justice

Nancy Leong takes this neoliberal critique and focuses particularly upon the exploitation of students of color for the profit of predominately white institutions. Leong (2013) argues that whiteness has historically served as a type of socially constructed property that can be evaluated by and converted to very tangible benefits or resources, while non-white identities have, until recently, been used to deny those same resources to non-white groups (p. 2155). As mentioned earlier, the recent trends towards diversity initiatives on college campuses can be seen as a departure from this history, since they have broadly been beneficial in providing greater access to higher education institutions for marginalized communities; however, the pursuit of numerical diversity by white institutions is rooted in the American tradition of commodifying people color for personal profit. Under closer scrutiny, we find that nonwhite identities are not valued based upon their intrinsic worth as human beings, but rather, their capacity to bring greater social and economic benefits to the institution and shield them from critiques of racism (Leong, 2013, p. 2156).

Universities that have proclaimed a superficial support for diversity and social justice initiatives while also engaging in the implicit suppression of student protests are most directly in the crosshairs of this critique. Ferguson walks through a short history of how ostensibly ‘progressive’ universities have moved from directly obstructing student movements, to welcoming and profiting off of them. University administrators, recognizing an opportunity to control the narrative of resistance, become vocal partners in student activism while simultaneously engaging in its devaluation that “often took the form of movements that presumed that the goals of radical transformation had to conform to heterosexist and patriarchal visions of the social world” (Ferguson, 2017, p. 72). By marketing themselves as an ally to radical student activists, and simultaneously complying with precisely the bare minimum

required by state and federal laws for diversity engagement, the neoliberal university is positioned perfectly to maintain its revenue-producing status quo and shield itself from calls for greater change.

Given the surge in modern resistance movements within popular discourse and social media, particularly those involving college students and their campuses, how *should* universities engage with these movements? There are several articles focusing specifically upon this question, and offer several recommendations that range from having ‘no role’, to being ‘radically-invested allies’. According to Edwin Mayorga’s article “Burn it Down,” the commensurability of American universities and the colonization of North America occludes any possibility of authentic engagement with resistance movements, particularly those that center indigeneity. Indeed, any attempts to engage in resistance work from within the university as they exist today “are specious attempts to salvage the settler project through *reconciliation*; including and thereby enclosing the colonized as subjects of the settler state” (Mayorga, 2019, pp. 94-95). Furthermore, the university as a neoliberal colonial institution cannot be salvaged, as it is far too skilled in inhibiting genuine engagement with its neoliberal critique. This leads Mayorga (2019) to conclude that new systems of education must be created, systems that “call for an education that does not produce solitary individuals within transnational society, but members of interdependent communities, conscious of their relations and capable of fulfilling the responsibilities within these relationships” (p. 96).

III. Racial Reckoning and Reparations

Repaying the Debt of Slavery

The claim that a government must compensate a specific community for historical injuries or injustices committed by that government has been appealed to frequently throughout

history, with great variation between the intent, function, and success of each case. Indeed, there is historical precedent for the relatively successful awarding of reparations in many Western states; notable examples being the German government's provisions for the victims of the Holocaust, the Canadian government's compensation to indigenous tribes, and the United States' compensation for Japanese-Americans who were forcibly interned in WWII (Darity & Mullen, 2020, pp. 16-17). The argument that reparations are owed to the descendants of enslaved persons in the United States, however, has never materialized in a manner equivalent to either the original or cumulative damages, and continues to face great difficulty reaching a sympathetic audience within federal and state governments.

The first of many such appeals came quickly after the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863, most notably the Special Field Order No. 15 by Union General William T. Sherman, issued on January 16, 1865. This Order, which has since become mythicized as the "40 acres and a mule" proposal, allocated 400,000 acres of land to be divided amongst recently freed slaves in Charleston, South Carolina (General Sherman further offered to lend mules from the Union army to help work the land, but this was not formally documented in the text of the Order). This Order was the result of a discussion between General Sherman, Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, and 20 Black ministers from Savannah, Georgia, half of whom were recently freed slaves themselves (Gates Jr., 2013). Unfortunately, the Order was overturned by President Andrew Johnson later that same year, and the land was returned to Southern plantation owners who claimed original ownership (Gates Jr., 2013). One of the first of many subsequent attempts to reach Congress was a proposed "ex-slave pension bill" introduced by Nebraska Democrat Walter Vaughan in 1890, the failure of which seeded the roots for the National Ex-Slave Mutual Relief, Bounty, and Pension Association in 1898 (Darity & Mullen, 2020, pp. 23-24). Both were founded upon the

principle that freed slaves were owed financial compensation equivalent to the value of their indentured labor, but were ultimately denied by Congress. In the years to follow, many similar reparations proceedings brought before Congress were routinely denied, even as the myth that freed slaves received their ‘40 acres and a mule’ persisted.

There are many instances throughout the 19th and 20th century of appeals for reparations for Black Americans, and while those appeals have certainly adapted over time, the response from the American government nevertheless has remained unchanged. This is exemplified to a tragic degree with the efforts made by Congressman John Conyers Jr., who has attempted during every session of Congress since 1989 to introduce his bill H.R. 40, which called for a congressional study of slavery to offer recommendations for appropriate remedies through the Commission to Study Reparations Proposals for African Americans. Although Conyers Jr. passed away in 2019, many of his colleagues have since rallied to support the bill, which was successfully approved for the first time by a House committee in April 2021. It is currently waiting to be introduced to the House floor for review and approval (Freking, 2021)

Ta-Nehisi Coates can perhaps be attributed for reinvigorating this movement in popular discourse, with his 2014 article in the Atlantic, “The Case for Reparations”. At once a historical accounting, political manifesto, and calculated proposal, Coates offers a condemnation of systemic racism and its many constitutive elements, and builds a comprehensive case for repaying the many debts which are owed the descendants of slaves in America. This article is impactful for this study for several reasons, most particularly that Coates does not limit the potential for reparations just to financial compensation, and instead demands “more than recompense for past injustices — more than a handout, a payoff, hush money, or a reluctant bribe... but a national reckoning that would lead to spiritual renewal” (Coates, 2014, Section IX,

para. 17). Furthermore, Coates frames his case by characterizing the harms of slavery and systemic racism not just in the historic denial of rights and resources, but the active theft of labor, land, culture, and life. In this context, the case for reparations requires an understanding of not only what was taken, but what potential achievements were denied as a result of this continual theft. Coates concludes that this debt has compounded with each successive generation of Black people that experiences systemic racism, and repaying this debt will require a reckoning with every facet of governance and civil society complicit in creating and maintaining systemic racism.

Reparations and the Jesuits

Although state and federal governments have reluctantly moved towards the early stages of investigating the impacts of slavery or evaluating the potential for reparations, many religious and educational institutions have progressed through their own reconciliation and reparations processes within the past few years. In 2018, the Catholic sisters of the Religious of the Sacred Heart, after uncovering records of owning about 150 slaves in Louisiana and Missouri, created a reparations fund primarily to provide scholarships for Black students to attend their school in Louisiana. The following year, the Virginia Theological Seminary created a \$1.7 million reparations fund after discovering its own records that document a history of purchasing and selling slaves. The neighboring Princeton Theological Seminary also announced a \$27 million reparations fund around this time, after an internal report discovered that the seminary had benefited from investments in slavery-supporting Southern banks and had received donations from slave-owning donors that accounted for 15% of the seminary's revenue before the Civil War (Shanahan, 2019). These efforts represent a momentum from faith-based institutions to

engage with reparations, but particular attention will be paid to the Jesuit order of the Roman Catholic Church.

In September 2015, the President of Georgetown University, a Jesuit institution in Washington D.C., convened its Working Group on Slavery, Memory, and Reconciliation which charged its members to “provide advice and recommendations to me on how best to acknowledge and recognize Georgetown’s historical relationship with the institution of slavery” and “examine and interpret the history of certain sites on our campus” (DeGioia, 2015).

This Working Group issued its final report the following year, fulfilling its charge of providing an historical account of Georgetown’s history with the slave trade, and offered several recommendations for the President, which included renaming several buildings, offering an institutional apology, publicly memorializing this history on campus, and engaging directly with the descendants of slaves that were owned by Maryland Jesuits (University News, 2021).

Notably, this report published a document which recorded the sale of 272 men, women, and children slaves owned by Maryland Jesuits to Louisiana businessmen to work on cotton and sugar plantations. The report states that this sale was made in an attempt to salvage the university and the Jesuit ministry from crippling debt, and represented one of the largest sales of slave in the history of the state. It is important to note that Patricia Bayonne-Johnson, one of the surviving descendants of the 272 slaves sold by Maryland Jesuits, was actually the first to uncover this history and publish it on her own blog back in 2004, after consulting with a genealogist before a family reunion in Louisiana (Swarns, 2016).

In response to the details uncovered in the 2016 report, the university sponsored the creation of the Georgetown Memory Project, which has since identified more than 10,000 descendants of those enslaved by the Society of Jesus and the Catholic Church in Maryland.

Many of those descendants have subsequently formed the GU272 Descendants Association, which provided a platform for surviving descendants to collectivize and advocate for reparations efforts within the Catholic Church (Descendants Truth & Reconciliation Foundation, 2021). In April 2019, undergraduate students at Georgetown University passed a nonbinding referendum by a two-thirds majority vote to add a new \$27.20 semesterly fee for all students that would pay towards a reconciliation fund that would direct benefit GU272 descendants, including funding K-12 education, establishing college scholarships, and purchasing school supplies (Jonnalagadda, 2016). Although the University's immediate response stated that they were not obligated to enact the proposal, six months later they chose to "embrace the spirit of the student proposal" and offered to raise \$400,000 through voluntary contributions from alumni, faculty, students and outside philanthropists (Swarns, 2019). However, many Georgetown students offered a critique of this development, including Shepard Thomas, a descendant of an enslaved couple sold in 1838 and a student leader who helped organize the spring referendum, who stated that this "delegitimizes and undermines student effort and the democratic vote of the undergraduate student body" and "contains no clear criteria, accountability measures or transparency with regards to construction or implementation" (Swarns, 2019).

More recently, the GU272 partnered with the Society of Jesus to form the Descendants Truth and Reconciliation Foundation, with the Jesuits also vowing to raise \$100 million to fund this Foundation and any subsequent reparations projects, with a long-term goal of raising \$1 billion (Swarns, 2021). This development has been met with great praise from other faith-based organizations, but internally there are serious doubts about the transparency of the process and how the funds will directly impact the descendants. The details of the \$100 million plan and the Foundation was apparently discussed with Jesuits in Rome and three descendant leaders behind

closed doors, even as the announcement from those three leaders claimed that their input represented the feedback of a majority of the 5,000 identified descendants. Subsequent petitions to re-open negotiations to a larger population of descendants have since been declined by the Society of Jesus (Swarns, 2021).

Ebony and Ivy

The call to action for the Jesuit community to look critically at their complicity in the Trans-Atlantic slave trade is not isolated, and furthermore, it's not a coincidence that the focus has been upon Jesuit colleges and universities. Indeed, many of the earliest colleges and universities in the United States either depended directly upon the selling or laboring of slaves, or grew their wealth through their connections to wealthy slave-owning beneficiaries. In the book, *Ebony and Ivy*, Craig Steven Wilder (2013) argues that higher education operated as an essential "beneficiary and defender" of the slave trade, as many early graduates sought apprenticeships with slave traders and plantation owners in New England, and provided an essential "intellectual cover for the social and political subjugation of nonwhite people" through their "scientific claims of the superiority of white people" (pp. 8-9). Wilder makes a clear case that many early institutions which still operate today, like Harvard University, Trinity College, Yale University, Hartford College, and many more, would not currently exist as they do – with their million-dollar endowments, prestige, and wealthy alum base – without generating property and income from the colonization of Indigenous lands and enslavement of African people.

Wilder began his research in 2002, a time when few university historians or administrators publicly acknowledged their institutions' complicity in the development of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. Since then, however, many universities have begun their own processes of uncovering and publicizing these histories, including William and Mary, Harvard,

Emory, the University of Maryland, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, among many others. While these initiatives have unearthed a great amount of necessary historical documentation and scholarship, very few have progressed further than an academic inquiry, and neglect to offer any recommendations for addressing or repairing the harms that have been produced by these histories. In some instances, the student body of these universities have taken it upon themselves to engage in reparative measures, which is precisely what occurred at Brown University on March 19th, 2021 following the 15th Anniversary of the Brown Steering Committee on Slavery and Justice.

Reparations and the University

In 2003, Brown University's then-President Ruth Simmons appointed this Steering Committee to investigate and issue a public report on the University's historical relationship to slavery and the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, which subsequently produced the Report on Slavery and Justice in 2006 (Simmons, 2003). The Report goes to great lengths to not only document the direct financial links between early Brown University and the slave trade in Rhode Island, but to contextualize this history with critical academic perspectives on truth-telling, humanitarian law, and reparations. "Confronting Slavery's Legacy: The Reparations Question," the title of the third section of the Report, provides a historical account of the movements of abolition and reparations in Rhode Island and the United States broadly, and traces these movements right up to modern slave reparations debate at Brown University. This section offers a comprehensive analysis of the development of the call for reparations following the abolition of slavery in 1863, and how the current state of racial inequality in the United States has prompted a renewed energy for reparations that addresses systemic racism. Indeed, the Report makes it clear that this is a contemporary issue for Brown University, as it did not admit Black students before the Civil

War, and “the number of black students admitted to Brown did not increase beyond one or two a year until the 1950s” (Brown University Steering Committee on Slavery and Justice, 2013, pp. 70). In the conclusion of this section, the Report states that it intends for this exploration into the question of reparations to help “enable Americans of all persuasions to discuss such questions more openly and thoughtfully” (BUSCOSJ, 2013, pp. 79).

This Committee, while initially charged with examining and reflecting upon the histories to be uncovered, ultimately chose to further provide a set of recommendations for the University to consider. These recommendations include a formal acknowledgement and memorialization of Brown’s entanglement with the slave trade, the creation of a center for continued research, new ethical standards for institutional investments and gifts, and the expansion of opportunities and resources for those disadvantaged by the legacies of slavery, especially the children of Rhode Island. Enumerated under the latter of these recommendations are several potential initiatives recommended by the Report, including: the creation of free professional development opportunities for Rhode Island public school teachers; expanded courses and scholarships offered in its Summer High School program; increased funding for Brown’s Master of Arts in Teaching Program, expanded internship and service-learning opportunities for students interested in public education; better coordination between Brown and its partner institutions in educational outreach programming in Providence public schools; a vigorous commitment to recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty and staff; and expanding the recruitment of students from Africa and the West Indies, given that these countries were “the historic points of origin and destination for most of the people carried on Rhode Island slave ships” (BUSCOSJ, 2013, pg. 85-87).

The response from the University was guided by these recommendations, as it committed to a number of academic initiatives in order to preserve and disseminate the content of the report,

as well as several community initiatives, including the creation of a \$10 million Fund for the Education of the Children of Providence (Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice, 2021). These funds would go be directly invested in the public schools of Providence, with the allocation overseen by the University with input from the Superintendent of Providence Schools. Interestingly, the official document outlining the University's response to the Report makes no mention of reparations, harkening back to the President's charge for the Committee back in 2003, which stating that the Report "would not determine whether or how Brown might pay monetary reparations," nor would she expect it to "forge a consensus on the reparations question" (BUSCOSJ, 2013, pg. 4). Indeed, students had taken note of this perceived omission, and spent several years offering space for student debate on potential referendums that would explicitly earmark funds or resources for African-American students. In April 2021, a resolution was introduced to Undergraduate Council of Students which called for the University to: identify the "descendants of slaves who built the University, descendants of slaves owned, trafficked, or sold by the Brown family, and descendants of slaves of University administrators and benefactors;" provide preferential admissions to identified descendants; allocate funds for "scholarship and monetary reparations for any descendants identified" in the University's search; and to consider "preferred admission to Native American groups indigenous to the land Brown occupies, such as the Narragansett" (Carroll, 2021, p.3). This resolution successfully passed in March of 2021, with nearly 80% of votes in favor.

Summary

This study is primarily interested in exploring the links between the contested right to education in the Bay Area, and the role of the University of San Francisco in supporting the ongoing struggle to fulfill this right. In order to fully engage with these concepts, the reader must

be informed about the history of racial oppression in the Bay Area, and how this history has impacted the right to education for communities of color into the present day. According to the research presented, it's clear that the particular histories of oppression for Black people in the Bay Area has not only produced vast disparities in their educational attainment compared to their white peers, but an incalculable debt to these communities which local governments and educational institutions have yet to fully repay.

Appropriately, the follow-up question of how to repay these communities required a better understanding of the developing movement for reparations and transformative justice in America. The literature above shows a trajectory of how the call for reparations in the United States has developed from a direct repayment of the labor provided by slaves, to a more nuanced and comprehensive framework of social transformation. This has enabled groups to seek processes of truth-telling and reparations not just from government bodies, but organizations and institutions which are only recently coming to terms with their histories. The convergence of the Jesuit and higher education movements towards reparations indicate a growing momentum for this work, but it still remains to be seen to what extent these are performative actions, rather than truly transformational.

Obstacles to the contemporary movement for reparations and racial justice in education are deeply married to the development of the university as a neoliberal institution, as it is primarily interested in preserving its prestige and wealth, and therefore has a vested interest in resisting claims for racial justice which threaten their status quo. As calls for social and racial justice rise within and beyond the gates of the university, many institutions have publicly adopted a common tactic of co-opting the language and aesthetics of these movements in an attempt to rebuke demands of comprehensive reform or transformation. In order to fully answer the

question of how the University of San Francisco may better engage with these movements and the right to education for communities of color in the Bay Area, we must then explore how the university is currently engaging with racial justice, and how it perceives its relationship to the communities it resides within.

CHAPTER III FINDINGS

Brief Description

This project investigated the potential for the University of San Francisco to engage with the contemporary movement for racial justice in education, as defined by Bay Area community activists, in dialogue with the university's own framework of social justice and transformational human rights. This was staged in two parts; first, researching news articles and public documents published within the past five years that spoke to the current movement for racial justice in Bay Area education, and second, placing this data in conversation with participants who represent leaders and educators from the University of San Francisco. Participants were chosen based upon how critical their roles are to the articulation and application of the social justice mission in the University of San Francisco, focusing upon those within community engagement and the Jesuit community, in order to explore their understanding and visions for engaging with this movement from within their roles. These conversations were then synthesized and placed in dialogue with one another in order to reveal common understandings, visions, and examples of the university engaging with a framework of transformational human rights and racial justice. The data collected from these conversations were then used to explore the potential for the university to engage with this community-driven movement, and offer recommendations for supporting this movement and/or integrating their demands into university policy and procedure.

Development

The original plan, which was crafted in early 2020, was to gather university and community members whose work contributed towards racial equity in education, and offer a space for a collaborative dialogue. Participants would be interviewed to gather their understandings and visions of racial justice in Bay Area education, and how their institutions or

organizations may further collaborate to co-construct a path towards a common goal. Given the circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, the original plan for this project had to be adjusted to accommodate the capacity of potential participants. The San Francisco Unified School District was battling two separate lawsuits at the time of writing, and many public officials within the government of San Francisco and Oakland were planning for the reopening schools and the vaccine rollout, amongst many other COVID-19 related items. The many Bay Area grassroots organizations whose writings and public statements contributed to the research conducted for this project were similarly engaged in extensive planning for mutual aid funding, mass protests, resolution drafting, and hosting public webinars. Although many members of these respective organizations and government councils were approached to contribute, it became clear that this project should not be prioritized over the necessary work underway during this pandemic. As an unfortunate compromise, this project relied upon data collected from online and textual sources that described the motivations, histories, and visions for the contemporary movement in the Bay Area.

Although this project has taken many different forms throughout the various periods of research and writing within the past year, the theoretical foundation of this work has remained fundamentally consistent. As a product of a Human Rights Education program, particular attention was paid to how transformational human rights may serve as both a pedagogical tool for investigating the many localized histories of oppression, as well as an active framework for engaging in the dismantling of the systems that perpetuate such oppression. Furthermore, regardless of the intentions of the researcher, this project was necessarily conducted from the perspective of the institution that approves and publishes it, which in turn necessitates a critical understanding of the positionality of the institution within this work. This process of reconciling

with the role of the university in dismantling systemic oppression indeed became central to the research conducted for this project, wherein participants were prompted to envision their own participation in this work. The conversations revealed a great amount about how the university has historically engaged in community-driven movements for racial justice, and how the university may or may not play a role in advocating for equality in the education of Bay Area youth. It became immediately clear upon researching the contemporary movement for racial justice in the Bay Area that community activists and educators were increasingly appealing to a common language and framework of reparations. Indeed, great attention has been paid in particular to how reparations as a framework for education reform has developed in the Bay Area, and how this framework has achieved success in recent years.

Research and Findings

Reparations in the Bay Area

The research conducted for this study has revealed only one bill from the California state legislature which speaks directly to current implications for the descendants of enslaved people; the “Slave Era Insurance Policies” bill from 2000, which requested that the California Department of Insurance make inquiries about “ill-gotten profits from slavery, which profits in part capitalized insurers whose successors remain in existence today” (California Department of Insurance, 2019). Unfortunately, this bill only allows for the disclosure of slavery era insurance claims, not any system of compensation for slaves implicated in those claims. Indeed, until the surge of mass protests following the murder of George Floyd in 2020 put renewed pressure on state and local governments to address systemic racial inequality, there were no precedents for the state of California or any of its local governments considering reparations for the Black community. Optimistically, the most recent passing of California Assembly Bill 3121 in

September 2020 offers a renewed hope for generating substantive action. This bill has created the statewide Task Force to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans, which is charged to investigate “the form of compensation that should be awarded, the instrumentalities through which it should be awarded, and who should be eligible for this compensation” (Task Force to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans, 2020). It is unclear at this stage how this will impact the many different Black communities throughout California, but the bill has already inspired others to carry this momentum into the local governments throughout the state.

Case in point, San Francisco’s own Resolution 376-20 from October 2020 has similarly called for the establishment of an African American Reparations Advisory Committee, which will subsequently “create a reparations plan that will comprehensively address the inequities that exist in the African American community” (Supporting a Reparations Plan and Advisory Committee, 2020). This resolution was first introduced in January 2020 by the Director of the Board of Supervisors in San Francisco, Shamann Walton, who worked alongside the Human Rights Commission (HRC) of San Francisco to host community input sessions in which Black San Francisco residents could contribute to a running list of Reparations Priorities, including environmental justice, wealth building, over-policing, workforce development, and education (Reparations for Black Students, 2021). These sessions also made clear that reparations should be a “conversation informed by data as well as the wishes of the community” that prioritizes a “commitment to restoration” (RFBS, 2021). The committee created by this resolution will be housed under the HRC and has allocated a specific number of seats for a diverse selection of Black San Francisco residents, including business owners, non-profit organizers, artists, high schoolers, and historians (RFBS, 2021). The resolution was passed unanimously by the San

Francisco Board of Supervisors in May 2021, and will require a first draft of their reparations plan within 18 months of its first meeting. The success of this proposal coincides with that of neighboring Alameda County, whose Board of Supervisors unanimously adopted its own resolution only a month after Supervisor Walton proposal in San Francisco, which also seeks reparations for Black residents within the county (Hegarty, 2020). Although this resolution offers no structure for engaging in reparations, and only recommends that the Board approve a subsequent resolution that outlines a plan for reparations in the future, this represents a critical first step towards direct engagement. To this end, there are several grassroots campaigns within the Bay Area currently that are engaging more directly in calls for reparations, with an explicit focus on public education.

Educational Reparations in the Bay Area

The movement for educational reparations in the Bay Area has achieved relative success recently, but its roots can be tied back to the many years of grassroots activism against policing in schools, segregation, and lack of funding for predominately Black schools. One of the earlier precedents for the movement currently underway came from the Black Organizing Project's (BOP) Bettering Our Schools System (BOSS) campaign in 2011, which spent its first several months conducting research and community strategy sessions to craft the report, *From Report Card to Criminal Record: The Impact of Policing Oakland Youth*, which in turn helped produce greater accountability measures through the Oakland Unified Complaints Policy in 2012 and prompted the Oakland School Police Department to revamp their data tracking systems (Black Organizing Project, 2019). The BOSS campaign continued to bring together broad coalitions of community allies, teachers, parents, students, and public officials to support their *People's Plan for Police-Free Schools*, which provided a detailed proposal for the divestment from the Oakland

Police Department and reinvestment of funds for “hiring additional school-based counseling/mental/behavioral health staff, special education staff and/or restorative justice staff” as well as an expansion of culturally-rooted, healing-centered “rites of passage” programs in collaboration with community partners (BOP, 2019). After many years of negotiations and concessions, the Oakland School Board voted unanimously in June 2020 to eliminate the Oakland School Police Department from their schools and implement many of the reinvestment proposals offered within the *People’s Plan*.

In 2017, BOP joined the Justice for Oakland Students (J4OS) coalition, which was a mass community effort founded by Oakland Kids First that brought together students, parents/families, teachers, allies, and other organizations like the Bay Area Parent Leadership Action Network (PLAN), Parents United for Public Schools, Teachers for Social Justice, Oakland Education Association (OEA), Californians for Justice (CFJ), Concerned Families of Oakland (Special Education), Brotherhood of Elders Network, and many others (Oakland Kids First, 2020). This J4OS coalition committed much of its first couple of years advocating for the right of Oakland youth to vote in OUSD School Board elections, which it accomplished through the successful adoption of Measure QQ in November 2020 (Oakland Kids First, 2020). As the coalition worked alongside the OEA teacher’s union to pass Measure QQ, several OEA members began to also draft a *Black Sanctuary Sunshine* proposal, which sought to increase the amount allocated from the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) budget to predominately Black schools in Oakland (Harshaw, 2020). In October 2020, J4OS officially submitted a revised version of this plan, named the *Reparations for Black Students Proposal*, to the OUSD, which was subsequently approved in March 2021.

The *Reparations for Black Students Proposal* is the result of a series of listening sessions between 2017 and 2019 amongst hundreds of Black students, parents, educators, and OUSD staff. Pecolia Manigo, the Executive Director of Bay Area PLAN, spoke to major news outlets to raise awareness about this Resolution, and stated plainly that this will work to address the many years of educational “investments that have not been made over the last several decades in Oakland” (Hassan, 2020). Central to the framework of this Resolution is the demand for OUSD to “take immediate action to stop and repair the harm to Black students and their families caused by decades of structural racism... by creating a targeted plan to monitor and invest federal, state, county and local funds for Black students and for thriving community schools in Black communities” (Reparations for Black Students, 2021).

The Resolution seeks to not only allocate millions of dollars in funds that target Black students and teachers, but to develop several district-wide policies and procedures that will repair the compounding harms that have resulted from decades of historically racist educational policies. Many of these recommendations aspire for the transformation of predominantly Black OUSD schools by designating them as “Historically Black” and restructuring them to provide greater wraparound support services for Black students and their families (Reparations for Black Students, 2021). The text of the Resolution attributes much of these demands to several existing community-devised action plans that were written by Black community organizations; particularly noting BOP’s *People’s Plan for Police-Free Schools*. The Resolution not only supported by the many organizations within the J4OS coalition, but was formally endorsed by several Oakland Councilmembers, state Assembly members, and many OUSD Board Directors (Hassan, 2020).

Although this is perhaps the clearest example of a public document which appeals to reparations for Black students, the West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD) Resolution 46-1920, which was adopted in January of 2020, set a clear precedent for education-focused legislation that aims to repair the racial disparities that resulted de facto educational segregation (In Support of the Achievement and Success of African American, 2020). Indeed, this resolution was mentioned explicitly within the preambulatory clauses of the *Reparations for Black Students Resolution*, indicating a cascading momentum for educational reparations throughout the Bay Area. This resolution, titled *In Support of the Achievement and Success of African American / Black Students In WCCUSD*, aimed to secure several million dollars of LCFE money towards targeted resources for Black students, and the creation of a District Office of African American/Black Student Achievement. This Office would be in charge of providing targeted interventions for struggling Black students with a designated specialist, mentorship opportunities through community partnerships, mental health clinicians assigned to Black families, anti-bias and diversity training for faculty and staff, new Black-centered reading material and programming, recruitment and retention programming for Black educators, summer school which prioritizes Black students, college counseling and scholarship support for Black college applicants, and access to newly gathered data that measures Black student success. Furthermore, WCCUSD intends to secure future avenues for improving Black student achievement through a “broad coalition of the school district and city leadership; including the Board of Education, the Superintendent and WCCUSD leadership, educators, 3 district employees, community-based organizations, faith-based institutions, higher education, the business community and black and minority-owned businesses, and parent and student groups” (ISOTAASOAABSITWCCUSD, 2020).

The Study

The investigative study portion of this research is focused upon evaluating the theoretical foundations of the university, with a particular focus upon areas that have been identified as critical to the articulation and application of its social justice mission. These areas include Community Engagement, Jesuit Ministry, Senior Leadership, and Social Justice programming. Four participants were ultimately selected to be included in this study that represented one or more of these areas; Karin Cotterman, Director of Engage San Francisco; Jonathan Greenberg, Director of the USF Institute for Nonviolence and Social Justice; Father Donal Godfrey, University Chaplain; and Father Paul Fitzgerald, President of University of San Francisco. An additional participant was invited in order to provide insight about the process of academic inquiry into institutional history and reparations, Chair of the Brown Steering Committee on Slavery and Justice, James Campbell. The questions directed at each participant varied slightly depending upon the area they were representing, but were otherwise consistent in an effort to connect common themes and ideas between each conversation. The first guiding question allowed each participant to elaborate on their personal understanding of human rights, social justice, and reparations. The next series of questions prompted participants to connect these personal understandings and definitions to practical applications within their roles in the university. Participants were then presented a brief overview of the research gathered from the community in order to provide an opportunity for participants to connect the current movement for racial justice and reparations in the Bay Area to their work. The final section of each interview then prompted participants to envision how the university at large can better engage with the right to education in the neighborhoods it occupies. Common themes and language were pulled from the transcripts of these conversations and placed in dialogue below.

Foundations of Social Justice Values

Participants were asked to provide their understandings of social justice, and how their theoretical foundations guide their current work. Cotterman expressed that social justice is “an opportunity to right our wrongs or take accountability for an injustice, usually a historic injustice... on a continuum with transformational justice.” As a Director within the primary community engagement center of the university, she centered her interactions within the Fillmore and Western Addition neighborhoods of San Francisco in her framework for reparations, stating that community partnerships in particular must evolve towards a process of “reckoning... because all too often it can be this feel-good volunteer experience of students within white saviorism.” This process would take “decades of work... generations of work and healing and difficult conversations and reckoning” that would address the root causes of racial oppression, rather than just its symptoms. This idea that social justice requires a process of reckoning was shared by many other participants, but Cotterman was the only member to explicitly state that their work is fundamentally concerned with bringing in the Black community in San Francisco, stating that engaging in community-driven processes for truth-telling and reparations is “at our best, what we would be.”

In a similar manner, University Chaplain Father Godfrey intentionally sought to connect his understandings with the current work underway in the university’s Jesuit Ministry, beginning first with the intersection of social justice and the catholic faith. He stated that “social justice for us as Jesuits comes from our own faith, and that’s our Catholic faith, so it comes out of our understanding of what we see as the Gospel” which in turn “goes back to the person of Jesus and how he lived his life... he had a vision of the world as it would be if God’s desires were fulfilled.” This necessarily requires a constant, potentially lifelong journey of self-examination

and an engagement with “difficult issues and taking them seriously, and allowing ourselves to be transformed.” When asked if this understanding of social justice within the Jesuit community is universal, Father Godfrey offered that it definitely should be, but that it should also “be different in each place because each place is determined by its own culture and context, so how it's going to express itself and how it's going to be seen, observed and lived will be different in each unique location.”

Although the teachings of Jesus precede the language of social justice and reparations, they nevertheless provide a model for engaging in these transformational frameworks of racial justice. As Father Godfrey explains, Jesus was essentially “a leader of a renewal movement within Judaism” which pushed the religion to new standards of inclusivity; for example, Jesus made a point of recruiting women followers and treating them “with equal respect,” which was not an acceptable practice at that time. More importantly, the teachings of Jesus and the Gospel provide a language for addressing and critiquing “sinful structures” in society, wherein one must engage in a process of self-examination to first determine their complicity in those structures, and then transform themselves to better change those sinful structures around them. Father Godfrey believes that this is especially applicable to those in positions of power, which begged the question, what is the obligation for the President of the University to address and critique the sinful structures that appear in higher education?

The conversation with Father Godfrey provided an essential foundation for the subsequent interview with Father Fitzgerald, who’s role represents the most senior leadership within both academic and religious functions of the university. In the conversation with President Father Fitzgerald, he responded to the question of the obligations for people in positions of power by saying that they must “give up some of those advantages, or make those privileges into

tools to lift other people up.” When further asked how this theological principle is applied to the functions of a university, Father Fitzgerald offered the Saint Ignatius idiom *ite, inflamate omnia*, which translates roughly to ‘go set the world on fire,’ or to provide a place for “some creative destruction and advocacy for social change.” More practically, he explained that this could be expressed via a “preferential option for those who are systemically excluded... to move towards those who are being left out or forced out, because every human person is the image and likeness of God.” He further described the Jesuit mission of the university not merely as a faith-based mission with an obligation to bring God into otherwise God-less places, but rather, a commitment “to use one’s privileges to lift other people up in solidarity, charity and generosity” because “God is already here working, through the freedom and curiosity of every human culture.” As the University President, Father Fitzgerald imagines his role in guiding this practice to be primarily focused upon “animating the conversations that take place within the university, in order for us to continue to move forward and to become more inclusive.”

Director Greenberg of the Institute for Non-Violence and Social Justice further spoke to the intersection of the Jesuit mission and community service, and connected the Institute to the deeper legacy of non-violence and interfaith activism of the Civil Rights Movement. Indeed, Greenberg gives this credit to co-founder and co-Director of the Institute, Dr. Clarence Jones, who served as Dr. King's lawyer, strategic adviser, and draft speechwriter, and has been instrumental in providing a lineage and a “bridge of dialogue for young people today” to engage in non-violent activism. This tradition and philosophy of non-violence is essential to the education students receive at the University, as the Institute itself focuses upon “analyzing the forms in which systemic violence appears in society” and educating students about “organized and mobilized non-violent strategies of resistance.”

Evaluating and discerning how each participant's own framework of human rights and social justice is utilized within their roles was central to each discussion, but Cotterman spoke most directly to a tension between the aspirations of her framework and the limitations of the university's historic model of community engagement. Indeed, while both Cotterman and Father Fitzgerald had mentioned walking through the Fillmore district and noted the devastating impact of San Francisco's redevelopment policies upon the displacement of the Black community, Cotterman spoke directly to the fact that the university was "right here, and didn't do anything." She provides a small caveat there had been a small student-led volunteer group in the 1960s that was actively supporting resistance movements in the Fillmore, but otherwise leadership within the university struggled to ask themselves, "how are we involved in examining policies and injustice and the displacement and destruction of African American communities and families and the legacy of that that lives on to this day?" Answering this question is central to the mission of Cotterman's program, Engage SF, as well as her more recent work within the Place-Based Justice Network, which is a coalition of higher education institutions that analyzes how to address historic and current systems of disenfranchisement within their local communities. Within both capacities, Cotterman focuses upon pushing the institution towards "taking responsibility for the quality of education the children are receiving in the communities that we are in."

Educational Reparations in San Francisco

Georgetown was mentioned in just about every conversation when participants were prompted to envision what reparations means for the university. It was Cotterman, however, who drew a clear distinction between the circumstances surrounding the process at that institution versus here in San Francisco. Whereas Georgetown's recently uncovered history of owning and

selling enslaved people provided a clear entry point to evaluating their complicity, the University of San Francisco does not have a comparable link to the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. Cotterman continues to explain, however, that the university's commitment to providing "place-based service" in San Francisco requires the university to think about "justice in the immediate" that connects directly to "our sphere of influence" in this community. As mentioned earlier, Cotterman draws her understanding of reparations from a framework of community engagement, but moreover, envisions a future for engagement that places the power and resources directly in the hands of community members. She points to the still in development Community Research Collective as a promising potential example of this work, which would provide a space where university faculty and local educators co-construct racial justice curriculum and qualitative assessments that would provide resources for the community to "do their own assessment and storytelling, then inform one another about what their organizations are doing or use it to inform policy." Furthermore, this would open up the door to greater potential coalition building with other Bay Area universities, to investigate and act upon the obligations produced by their "collective histories" in the Bay Area. This general framework for understanding our institutional obligations to the community was supported by other participants, as Father Godfrey concurred that "tokenism is not enough... tampering is not enough... it does need to be deeper than just the superficial change, it's a deeper kind of transformation that I think we're being invited to this moment in history."

Reconciling the complicated legacy of institutions which have long existed in proximity to historically-oppressed communities has become a critical conversation within the larger Jesuit community. Father Godfrey spoke directly to a growing engagement with reparations and truth-telling in regional American Jesuit circles following the Descendants Truth and Reconciliation

Foundation, which recently pledged \$100 million in reparations to the descendants of slaves owned by the Jesuit priests of Georgetown University in the 19th century. Father Godfrey praised this process and how it had utilized a deep dialogue with members of the community that took years to process, and further stated that “it has to go on, it's not the beginning, because the conversation did begin before this, but it's a turning point in some ways... a catalyst for a shift in consciousness.” Indeed, this development in reparations from Jesuits in Georgetown has prompted the Jesuit West province, which represents the network of Jesuit communities within California and Oregon, to form a Diversity Committee that would be in charge of “facilitating and encouraging this conversation amongst individual communities and also in the wider Province.” Father Godfrey is anticipating a greater role for the University Ministry at the University of San Francisco, and the broader university community, in the discernment process for a similar reparations and truth-telling initiative within this Province.

When pushed to engage directly with this framework of reparations, Father Fitzgerald offered some examples of current work underway in the university related to scholarships, hiring Black faculty members, and creating targeted programming for Black students, and further stated that the university must “continue to diversify our board of trustees, our senior leadership, our owners, our deans.” This is consistent with his own framework for the purpose of a university in the Bay Area, as Father Fitzgerald states that “the best way we can participate in the healing of social wounds is by our faculty conducting research and acting as public intellectuals, to push out these extraordinary ideas about social justice and the real ways for people to achieve it.” He further elaborated upon the many collaborative projects underway between the university and other faith-based primary educational institutions in San Francisco and Oakland, which are providing pathways and pipelines for low-income Black students to eventually attend the

university, including the Cristo Rey Academy. Once presented with the research and data collected from the Bay Area reparations movement, Father Fitzgerald was asked if he could see the university engaging directly with a process of truth-telling and transformational reparations, to which he responded favorably, stating “Yeah, absolutely. We're always looking to do better.”

Truth-Telling and Reparations Within the University

There are an increasing number of universities engaging in serious academic inquiry into their own history of racial justice, as well as the implications of that history upon contemporary policy and practices, and many can be traced back to the model provided by the Brown University Steering Committee on Slavery and Justice from 2006. James Campbell, who served as committee Chair, explains that the committee and its subsequent report were shaped by Brown’s then President Ruth Simmons, who charged the committee in a 2003 letter to thoroughly examine the university’s relationship to the slave trade, and provide historical context to the debate surrounding reparations (Simmons, 2003). Campbell and a team of Brown faculty and students, as well as community educators and researchers from Rhode Island, spent the next three years researching and publicly presenting the data collected from their inquiry. It was important to Campbell that this work would represent more than just a simple historical accounting for the early history of Brown University, as it was an opportunity to explore the broader context of “gross violation of human rights globally, and the variety of modalities that emerged for societies to come to terms with these patterns.” Providing a thorough accounting for this institutional history was crucial to the Committee’s role in the advancement of racial justice, as he states that:

Many of our wealthiest, most elite universities - like Brown, Harvard, or the University of Pennsylvania - because of when and how they were founded, now find themselves in the middle of communities of color that often are ravaged by poverty. So, one of the

things that this inquiry should contribute to is how to rethink those relationships, and see what institutions were capable of doing.

Central to shaping the scope of this inquiry was the idea that Brown, as an institution of higher education, is primarily responsible for generating and disseminating new knowledge; and even as other institutions engage in their own processes of historical review that tended towards transformational activism, Campbell and his team maintained expectations that were “emphatically academic, because part of what we were trying to do was model rigorous academic research on a difficult question” that was “not in an adversarial position with the university, but in keeping with its finest values.” This is not to say that the Committee sought to avoid controversy, but rather to provide a model that “could become an inspiration and provocation to other universities, and Brown ilk all over the country.” Retaining academic rigor was also a response to the greater contexts surrounding debates on reparations and racial justice in the early 2000s, as Campbell states that these questions about “legacies of racial injustice, and what responsibilities may befall us in the present in light of this history, has been reduced to an extremely unproductive vitriolic argument about who is supposed to write a check to whom.”

Although the initial letter from President Simmons made no mention of charging the committee with offering explicit recommendations for how Brown should engage with reparations, Campbell felt that it would have been disingenuous to assume a neutral stance on how the university should engage in reparations, given the incredible efforts made by the Committee and the community to account for the university’s role in the slave trade. It was then especially important to Campbell and the rest of the Committee to push the university to “take responsibility in the present” for what it “now understands of the past,” and offer a litany of recommendations for Brown leadership. Drafting these recommendations, which are listed in some detail in Chapter 2 of this paper, provided the Committee an opportunity to not only

explore forms of redress for the communities that represent the descendants of Rhode Island slaves, but “an opportunity for us to alter the matrix of political possibility and to move forward.” Tying back to the role of the university, Campbell also stressed the need to continue this inquiry and research, stating that “one of the most meaningful things a university could do was create a center for the study of slavery and justice, which would be dedicated to producing knowledge about slavery and other forms of gross human injustice to deter such activities from happening again.”

This year marks the fifteenth anniversary since the publishing of the Report, as well as the year that undergraduates at Brown voted in support of a Reparations proposal that directly cites the findings from the 2006 Report in its pre-ambulatory clauses. The proposal calls for a search for the descendants of slaves that built the University, or were otherwise trafficked by the Brown family and faculty, and further calls upon the University to provide preferential admissions and newly allocated funds to identified descendants (Carroll, 2021). When asked to give thoughts about this development, Campbell offered cautious support, stating that this is a great “leap from the process at Georgetown” but recognizes that this proposal represents a departure from the recommendations offered in the 2006 Report. The kind of reparative justice that is focused upon financial compensation for direct descendants can be an opportunity for institutions to simply “pay damages and relinquish any further claims”, and Campbell hopes to see further expansions of “broad political coalitions” that “transcend the goals of race.” Campbell offers support for more bold measures for reparations and social change that look outside the gates of the university that would create a “pipeline of students from historically disadvantaged communities” to the university.

Discussion

The research question for this project asks, “how can the university be better engaged with the right to education and movements for racial justice in education in the Bay Area”, and appropriately, this required a better understanding of how the university currently engages with the community around it. The insight provided by Cotterman was particularly helpful here, as one of the senior members of the university’s Leo T. McCarthy Center for Public Service and the Common Good, she provided critical language, analysis, and visions for USF’s community engagement. Notably, she was frank in her critique of USF’s history of inaction during periods of rapid gentrification and divestment that helped produce such entrenched disparities in educational outcomes for Black youth in the Fillmore and Western Addition. This critical look at the institution’s history has in part guided the ‘place-based’ nature of community engagement at USF, but Cotterman is hopeful that the latest initiatives within her organization will be the first of many necessary steps in bringing resources and autonomy back into the hands of Black community members.

This prevailing opinion that the university should be engaging more thoroughly with its own mission, and furthermore, that the university is obligated to improve the educational attainment of students in the neighborhoods around it, was shared amongst all participants. When the latest calls for educational reparations from organizers in San Francisco and the East Bay were brought into the conversation, all participants expressed an interest in supporting those movements, and agreed that the university could play a role in the supporting their advocacy. However, in terms of what precisely this would mean for the university, and to what extent policies and practices at USF could embody the values being expressed by the community, there

was a diversity of opinion. It was clear that all participants believed the university was already engaging in practices and programming that supported college attainment for Black youth in the Bay Area, but there was a hesitancy for some to connect USF to the legacy of gentrification and oppression in the neighborhoods it occupies, or further, that this history of (in)action would obligate further transformative action.

In terms of providing guidance on a process of internal critique on institutional legacies, the conversation with Campbell from the Brown Steering Committee on Slavery and Justice provided further insight into how an academic institution may use its resources to engage specifically with the question of reparations, and where gaps in the process still lie. Campbell spoke of how the Committee utilized a framework of academic inquiry that was purposefully narrow in scope, so that they would be able to answer a very select number of questions and thoroughly explore their implications for the university. This was done intentionally so that the culminating Report would start a necessary conversation rather than dominate it, and furthermore, the Committee envisioned that other institutions could be enticed to take up their own processes within their own communities.

Indeed, it appears as though even the President of USF is open to more directly engaging in community-driven and informed processes of reparations in San Francisco, but these conversations were notably short on providing finer details, or indicating when the inciting moment would arise. The successes of the OUSD and WCC reparations plans has shown that these movements don't necessarily even need the support of higher education institutions, but when the theoretical frameworks and missions of the university all point towards actively pursuing justice according to the needs of the community, it is clear that we are missing an opportunity for transforming our relationship to the community. Of course, this then begs several

questions; who would guide this work, how would the university change, what is the end goal, and what does this mean for higher education more broadly? Bringing together a historical analysis of racial justice in San Francisco, the current state of education for historically marginalized groups, and the visions of USF as a more thoroughly committed community partner, is essential to begin answering these questions.

CHAPTER IV CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This project sought to better understand the historical and social impetus for the current movement for racial justice in Bay Area education, as well as the role that higher education institutions, particularly USF, can play in supporting the movement. Within the human rights curriculum and social justice branding of the university, which has partly informed the theoretical foundations of this project, the understanding of the right to education has shifted from the limited framework provided by the UDHR, to one that centers transforming systems of oppression and repaying the educational debt owed to historically oppressed communities. On the surface, this understanding aligns itself well with the current movement for reparations for Black students in Bay Area public schools, which has taken a critical look to the ways in which funds, resources, and freedoms have been divested from these schools in order to build a strategic advocacy plan for transforming those schools. Given these ostensibly converging frameworks of educational justice, can USF also align its practices and policies with the plans provided by community activists? How can we begin to discern our engagement with reparations? The narratives expounded in the literature review, paired with the feedback provided by the participants of the study, have assisted in evaluating these research questions and have aided in producing the following conclusions.

Conclusions

Fulfilling the Right to Education Requires Transformation and Reparations

The right to education is not only an essential human right, but a necessary prerequisite for the transformation of broader systems of racial inequality in America. Within San Francisco and the Bay Area, disparities in educational attainment and success mirror those found in other indicators for quality of life, including employment, income, and health. Furthermore, the recent

resegregation of public schools, paired with the ongoing disproportionately deadly COVID-19 pandemic, has proven that piecemeal progress and reforms have not met the needs of the community, and has further entrenched many various harmful outcomes for the dwindling Black population in San Francisco. Although there have been some proposed solutions within the past few decades that have provided marginal improvements to Black educational outcomes in the Bay Area, the conditions for lasting success and the repayment of decades of educational debt have not yet been met. Indeed, the path forward requires transforming the current system of education according to the demands and needs of the community, and dismantling the lingering impacts of segregation and divestment in Black education.

The contemporary movement for racial justice in Bay Area education, which centers the radical reimagining of Black-serving public schools, is not an isolated movement, but rather has been built of a coalition of stakeholders that advocate for the transformation of education aligned by a common vision of greater systemic change. As mentioned earlier, the Reparations Resolution in OUSD was greatly informed by the prior initiatives of its constituent organizers, like the BOP, who successfully advocated for the removal of police from public schools as a component of its greater movement towards abolition in Oakland. This is directly aligned with our current understanding of the right to education, which necessitates a critical look at the broader social phenomena which inform educational policy and culture in order to dismantle the many intersecting constitutive elements of racial oppression.

More to the point, this research has shown that not only is education one of many critical entry points for greater systemic change, but one of the *most essential* sites for transformation and reparations in the Bay Area. When the Jesuit church looked to expand its integration into San Francisco society, its first initiative was to build a school; when the Black Panther Party

sought to establish a safe, autonomous Black community in Oakland, one of its most successful and long-lasting programs were its community schools; and now, public school districts and higher education institutions are increasingly becoming sites for growing abolition and reparations movements. To caveat that final statement, the burden has almost entirely fallen upon the student body to be the primary force behind these movements, and those that have been successful have worked alongside community members, rather than in isolation. It remains to be seen the place for university administration, faculty, and leadership in supporting these movements.

The University Has a Duty to Fulfill the Right to Education in San Francisco

The University of San Francisco, as a Jesuit, place-based, social justice institution of higher education, has a duty to support the fulfillment of the right to education for the historically marginalized communities it exists within. This conclusion is supported by two distinct evaluations; USF has and is currently profiting off of its proximity to the culture of resistance by Black activists and educators in San Francisco which should be paid back, and the currently espoused values of the institution supports a more deeply engaged relationship with the contemporary movements for educational justice in the Bay Area.

USF's marketing as a social justice institution is almost always paired with its presence in San Francisco, signaling an alignment with the city's culture of activism and resistance. This institutional identity, which greatly informs the policy and practice of the university, publicly positions the university as an ally to resistance movements in the city. Several participants in the study noted some examples of USF students supporting public protest campaigns and community organizing in the city, but it was unclear if university leadership has ever engaged in any meaningful way to directly support these movements. The motto, "change the world from here,"

further invites students to join in this legacy of activism and change, and encourages those who seek this work to attend the university.

Building off of the neoliberal critique provided in the Literature Review, it's clear that the university has a vested interest in preserving its connection to this culture of activism and resistance, which is necessarily dependent upon the existence of resistance movements in San Francisco. Furthermore, the influx of young college students seeking this experience directly contributes to the ongoing crisis of displacement and gentrification which are the targets of many resistance movements, particularly in the historically Black Western Addition which USF neighbors. This process of contributing to the very problems that the university is ostensibly training students to target serves as a positive feedback loop, which effectively secures the university's ability to profit off this reputation, while avoiding and larger culpability. In order to more authentically engage as an ally, the university must rethink and rework the current relationship between the struggles of the community and the vast financial and cultural resources it hoards behind its gates. The beginning of this reshaping of the relationship can already be seen in some of the work done with community engagement in recent years, as discussed with Cotterman, but it is clear that there's still much work to be done in terms of who controls the power and resources.

The espoused values of social justice, human rights, and Jesuit tradition have been thoroughly explored in this study, and it's clear that a more authentic embodiment of these values requires a deeper institutional investment in racial justice in Bay Area education. The development of our theoretical foundations concerning community outreach towards *place-based justice* in particular places the onus upon the institution to look critically at our positioning within the land we reside. Although we may not necessarily have the same connection to the

Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade that has prompted other higher education institutions to begin this evaluation process, it should not be taken for granted that this institution would not exist without our engagement in the theft of indigenous land, and the establishment of Jesuit missions which reinforced the early colonial state (Hartman, 1974; Lee et al, 2020; Miller, 2013). Uncovering the history of our engagement with these processes would be a project within itself, and would be a notable academic inquiry, but should be guided by the input and needs of indigenous advocacy groups that exist today.

Furthermore, the first step the university must take when engaging with the right to education in San Francisco is to understand how the community is articulating its struggles and needs, and to reconcile that understanding with the university's own capacity and values. Community activists in San Francisco and across the Bay Area have made it clear in their advocacy that funds and resources have been strategically divested from Black communities for decades, accumulating a debt that has manifested in intergenerational poverty and extreme racial disparities in educational attainment. This aligns well with the university's espoused values of transformational human rights, which calls for a process of justice and reparations to repay this debt and restructure how funds and resources will continue to be invested in the future.

Furthermore, it's clear that the framework for reparations proposed by Bay Area educators utilizes a framework for transformational justice that seeks more than just acquiring more funds, but developing curriculum, policy, and retention programming that specifically targets a set of thriving indicators for Black students and teachers. This is a comprehensive transformational plan that other educational institutions, like USF, should take into consideration. The university should not look towards this work as a way of the wiping clean its ties to gentrification and displacement, but rather to envision a transformation from within that

would make its academic and Jesuit community prepared and capable of supporting the struggle against systems of racial injustice in Bay Area education. As an educational institution which seeks to better the world from its seat in San Francisco, it must first begin by providing a model for the world of how an institution can truly serve the communities it resides within.

Recommendations

The conclusions above paint a critical yet decontextualized understanding of how the university may move towards engaging with racial justice in education, and ultimately, reparations. In an effort to make these conclusions more concrete and actionable, the following recommendations are provided. To be clear, the onus of change and transformation recommended by this research falls exclusively upon those in positions of power, or those who guide the culture programming, curriculum, and policy of the University of San Francisco.

Identify Needs of the Community

The conclusions of this paper posit that the university should engage with the moments arising from the community, however, it is important that this work is not only guided by the needs and desires expressed explicitly by community members, but requested. It may be the case that there is no space in the movement for racial justice in the Bay Area for the university to have a positive or constructively role, or at the very least, not in a manner that would involve collaborating with educators and activists. In this case, the university should instead begin an internal process of evaluating its capacity for authentic community engagement, and seek a process of truth-telling and honest dialogue between the institution and its current community partners.

Determining the needs of the community first necessitates understanding what communities are being sought. This research has spent a particularly amount of time and focus

on the Black community in San Francisco (and to a certain extent the diasporic Black community throughout the Bay Area) because of our physical proximity to the historically Black Western Addition as a place-based university, however, this is not intended to limit the scope of transformation and reparations to just how we may benefit one community. Indeed, the conclusions and recommendations provided here are the product of a particular political movement and history for Black education in the Bay Area, which would mean that they cannot presume to fulfill the right to education for all people. Even more to the point, the Black community is not a monolith in terms of its needs and how it seeks change, so the university needs to identify the particular needs of those who it is best positioned to impact, which would be the schools, organizations, and educators at the gates of the institution.

This process should involve a coalition of university and community members engaging in critical, public dialogue about the legacy of de facto segregation and its impacts upon Black education, as well as providing a space for citizens to make public comments towards recommendations and truth telling. If possible, this coalition should include high ranking members of USF's leadership, faculty, ministry, and staff members who have agreed to implement subsequent recommendations into policy and practice. The materials produced by this coalition, including public statements, should be folded published and made required reading for current students. This publication should also be provided to relevant groups, like the Human Rights Commission and the upcoming African American Reparations Advisory Committee in San Francisco, if they were not already part of this process already.

Who is USF, and How Can They Support

The preceding recommendation is greatly informed by the academic inquiry that had been conducted at Brown University towards its own history and potential for reparations;

however, to be clear, we should not follow that model precisely, but rather, first understand our own purpose and capacities. The Chair of the Brown Steering Committee was explicit in noting that the purview of their work was based upon a common understanding that Brown is an institution focused on critical academic inquiry, and as such, their process remained narrowly focused on this inquiry. Moving from inquiry to action is a process in itself, and necessitates an understanding of the relevant stakeholders and obstacles. At Brown, for example, the student body took it upon themselves to generate a formal reparations initiative for Black students, even if that was not directly reflected in the recommendations provided by the Committee.

At USF, we are not only an academic institution, but a collection of activist-minded students, scholars, and educators, which should guide our approach to this work. The research within this study has made it clear that this culture and practice of activism is most authentically represented by the students themselves, in which case, they should be central to conducting and evaluating this process from the outset. Not just current students, however, but the students here in San Francisco who have experienced obstacles to their right to education directly. A collaborative effort between current college students and those in public school is necessary to bridge the gaps between the communities, but this collaboration must be made with the intention of supporting students who come from the community, so we must compensate them for their work. If we are unable to have a relationship with students from the community that doesn't reinforce white saviorism or the school to prison pipeline, then we must re-evaluate what the purpose of our community engagement programming is, and potentially who runs it (particularly if they are not from San Francisco).

Put The Money Where Your Mouth Is

If the prior recommendations are followed, then the potential for USF to engage in both internal transformation and more authentic engagement with resistance movements may be achieved. But what does this really mean, and what could this future look like? For starters, it requires better utilizing our financial and academic resources for the benefit of the Black community around us, and to rethink how we generate these resources from the community. A simple but difficult entry point would be to reserve a certain percentage of the student body for student who attend public schools in San Francisco, and to provide them free tuition. In order to support the college attainment for those students, we must also reinvest funds into those public schools via academic support programs, teacher training, and donations of books and other materials. In terms of college success, the model of a Black Thriving Index provided by the Reparations for Black Students Resolution offers great recommendations for similar work at USF, which would involve recruiting and retaining Black mental health practitioners, faculty and staff, implementing family engagement programming, greater support for Black organizations on campus, and an expanded Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Office with a staff that would monitor the implementation of these recommendations.

Although funding these initiatives is extremely important, it is just as important that resources and programming are not hoarded by the university, but rather generated and owned by the community as well. It is clear that there are already many educators and organizations that are doing critical work to improve the state of Black education in San Francisco, and we should seek to support and bolster this work as a priority over creating new university-branded programming. This work should not seek to take “high-achieving” students from the community and keep them within the university, but rather to support their efforts within their neighborhoods to radically improve the conditions of their schools and educational opportunities.

This doesn't just apply to students, but also to teachers, who could benefit from training and curriculum development opportunities within their own schools. This in turn would require bolstering the internal support for our faculty, particularly those from San Francisco, who may be doing additional unpaid labor to provide quality programming for the greater community in San Francisco. Aside from funding, supporting the coalition-building amongst otherwise disconnected university staff and faculty would greatly support this work, and ensure that the articulations of our social justice mission is thoroughly and consistently engaged in by all parties.

Discussion

The vision of collective engagement amongst community organizations and academic institutions towards radically fulfilling the right to education and transforming systems of education is one that compelled this research from start to finish. Appropriately, the preceding conclusions and recommendations are an attempt at balancing critical imagination and grounded action, which if followed, could also apply to other institutions seeking this work. The true endpoint for this research, and to an extent the theoretical foundations of the right to education, is the elimination of systemic inequality on a broad scale, particularly as it relates to our youth. In order to achieve this vision, this research sought not to vilify higher education, but to seek those components which must be preserved and shared equitably, especially to those who live at its gates. The participants within the study are representatives of so many disparate communities within USF, and even still were able to share common visions and ideas for future engagement with institutional transformation because that is precisely what this university engenders.

Although there are some points in this research that may depict a tone of disdain towards the university, much of the inspiration for this writing came from experiencing the abundance of critical care and community-building that members of the university have provided. This is only

unfortunate precisely because this is such an exclusive experience, and the obstacles, although deeply entrenched, are almost entirely socially constructed. Working collaboratively within and outside the institution is the only way to authentically reimagine how those obstacles may be dismantled, and this research is aware of how narrow its recommendations are towards this end. The potential for this project and its recommendations to provide little in the way of meaningful change or transformation if enacted is still high, however, commitment to a longer process is a very necessary first step towards other visions that may provide better chances of success. What's immediately important is ensuring that the university is exercising its best efforts to engage in the espoused values and principles its currently profiting off of; and if this evaluation is found to be wanting, *ite, inflammate omnia*.

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