

The Baltimore Immigration Summit: A Case Study of Academic-Community Collaboration

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Cite as: Clifford, E.J., Iwata, M., Lima, C.R., Banks, G.V. & Lonczak, M. (2025). The Baltimore Immigration Summit: A Case Study of Academic-Community Collaboration. *Metropolitan Universities*, 36(3), 103-123. DOI: 10.18060/28681

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Editor: Patrick M. Green, Ed.D.

Abstract

In this paper, we present a case study of the Baltimore Immigration Summit (BIS) and argue that it represents a model for how universities can engage with partners in local governments and other parts of their communities. In so doing, we offer a model that draws from but also expands on work on public sociology and anchor institutions. The BIS is a collaboration between Towson University and local government offices from Baltimore City and Baltimore County. It brings together academics, policymakers, service providers, activists, community and religious leaders, and others working with and for immigrants and refugees in the Baltimore area. In the past twenty years, we have held twelve summits, and they have grown considerably in scope, size, and reputation. Co-authors Elizabeth Clifford, Miho Iwata, Catalina Rodriguez Limon, Masuma Lonczak, and Giuliana Valencia-Banks have worked with others in the community in planning the Summit. As leaders on immigration issues in the Baltimore City and Baltimore County governments, Rodriguez Limon, Lonczak, and Valencia-Banks represent partners with Clifford and Iwata (and other committee members) from Towson University in this endeavor. In this paper, we discuss this case study, examining the origin, evolution, and growth of the BIS, and suggest that it is a model for how universities can collaborate with local governments and non-profits to bring people together for educational and networking purposes. We engage with the literature which urges academics to practice public sociology and for our universities to play

the role of “anchor institutions” (Harkavy & Hodges, 2012). We argue that the BIS model expands on the ideas of public sociology and anchor institutions. Unlike much public sociology, we do not view our role as disseminating scholarly knowledge to ‘help’ community practitioners but rather offering resources and continuance in the community as we collaborate with the state and the private sector to serve local communities (Gardinier, 2017), learning from them as well as sharing knowledge. Further, while Towson University is an anchor institution in this endeavor, we move beyond the economic impact that is often discussed in the literature, noting other ways Towson University serves as an anchor institution in this case study. We conclude by arguing that other scholars and universities can utilize the BIS as a model for effective civic engagement projects to bring people together in hopes of creating positive social change in their communities.

Introduction

In this paper, we present a case study of the Baltimore Immigration Summit (BIS) and argue that it represents a model for how universities can engage with partners in local governments and other parts of their communities. In so doing, we offer a model that draws from but also expands on work on public sociology and anchor institutions. The BIS is a collaboration among Towson University, Baltimore City, and Baltimore County in Maryland. It grew from an idea Elizabeth Clifford had to bring together academics, policymakers, service providers, activists, community and religious leaders, and others working with and for immigrants and refugees in the Baltimore area. The authors also include the co-coordinators and a planning committee member, all of whom have been involved for varying numbers of years since its first iteration in 2004. In this paper, we start out by describing our case study - setting the scene of immigration in the Baltimore area, suggesting why such a summit was necessary, giving a history of the BIS, and discussing the evolution of how it has been organized over these 21 years. Our analysis then offers our model based on the BIS and discusses how this differs from some conceptions of anchor institutions and public sociology. In our conclusion, we discuss how the model based on this case study could be adapted by other metropolitan universities and their community partners.

In particular, we argue that the format of the BIS resonates with the literature, which urges academics who practice public sociology and civic engagement and our universities to play the role of “anchor institutions” (Harkavy & Hodges, 2012). We argue that the BIS model expands on the ideas of public sociology and anchor institutions. Unlike much public sociology, we do not view our role as disseminating scholarly knowledge to ‘help’ community practitioners but rather offering resources and continuance in the community as we collaborate with the government and the private sector to serve local communities (Gardinier, 2017), learning from them as well as sharing knowledge. And while Towson University is an anchor institution in this endeavor, we move beyond the economic impact that is often discussed in the literature, noting other ways it serves this function in this case study. We argue that other scholars and universities can utilize the BIS as a model for effective civic engagement projects to bring people together in hopes of creating positive social change in their communities, with tips on how to do so. Finally, we conclude with key takeaways and a discussion of related future research and practice.

Case Description: The Baltimore Immigration Summit

Immigration in Baltimore: Setting the Scene

Baltimore played a significant role as a port of entry to many immigrants from European countries during the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries. Until the late 19th century, Baltimore’s immigrants were predominantly Germans and the Irish, followed by migrants from Eastern European countries (Ahuja). The 1924 National Origins Quota Act severely limited the flow of immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe (Ahuja), and numbers of immigrants to

Baltimore, as to the United States in general, fell for many decades. After a long period of low immigration levels, Baltimore City again became home to many immigrants as the 21st century began (City of Baltimore 2014). In 2023, Baltimore City's population was 565,239, of which 51,220, or 9%, were foreign-born (U.S. Census Bureau, <https://censusreporter.org/profiles/05000US24510-baltimore-city.md>). The largest groups of recent immigrants originate in Latin America (44.7%), Asia (24%), and Africa (19.2%). (U.S. Census Bureau, Baltimore City Profile). Baltimore County, which surrounds (but does not include) Baltimore City, had a 2023 foreign-born population of 119,056, which was 14.1% of the County's population. The top countries of origin of County immigrants were Nigeria (8.3%), India (7.9%), Philippines (5.1%), El Salvador (5%), and Pakistan (4.5%) ("New Americans..." 2023).

History of the Baltimore Immigration Summit

The idea to organize the summit originated from Towson University sociology professor Elizabeth Clifford, who had been working with a fairly new small immigration center in the city of Baltimore. After a few years, she realized that there were many other organizations in the area that were all dedicated to working with immigrants and refugees, but had little knowledge about each other, and few connections among them. Realizing this, she began to consider a way for those organizations to come together to learn about one another in order to better serve the immigrant and refugee communities. Soon she brought together a few other academics and a newly appointed city immigration resource person, and they started planning the first BIS, which took place in November of 2004. The BIS created a necessary space to bring together academics, policymakers, service providers, activists, community leaders, and others working with and for immigrants and refugees in our region.

Conferences organized by academics often involve them gathering and sharing knowledge among fellow academics. However, the BIS was conceived quite differently; it was with the assumption that those in the community had more practical knowledge than those of us in the academy, and that, as a state-supported institution, Towson University had the ability - and perhaps responsibility - to provide a venue where others could come and educate us and others (Harkavy & Hodges, 2012; Gardinier, 2017). As Michael Burawoy (2005) noted in his ASA Presidential Address in 2004, the role of public sociology is "to engage multiple publics in multiple ways" (p. 259). We argue that the BIS offers one model for such public sociology.

The first day-long BIS, held in the fall of 2004, began with a simple model, as there was no precedent. The organizing committee reached out to about a dozen local organizations that were focused on serving immigrants and refugees, and we invited them to send their representatives. Our main sessions were two large panel discussions where each organization introduced who they were and what they did, which was the main purpose for the first summit. We also had some

small break-out sessions with informal discussions (not presentations) about issues immigrants and refugees faced, such as housing, health, and education; a legislative presentation; and a panel of immigrants. It was a very simple model, but it provided an opportunity to learn and to network with one another. Those in attendance learned about the landscape of services and organizations, and attendees made connections with people, which often led to further collaborations across organizations and groups.

As the planning committee met to prepare for the first Summit, they were concerned about attracting enough participants and audiences. Clifford and the committee came up with a strategy; if they had twelve organizations presenting, and each presenter brought at least one co-worker, they would have at least 25 people. Despite these concerns, registration for the first summit filled very quickly, and surprisingly, the majority of the one hundred or so registrants were not from any of the organizations featured in the summit. We had underestimated how much interest there would be from members of the public working with immigrants, who realized that they were not well-versed on issues surrounding immigration and immigrants. Librarians, educators, health care professionals, and others shared their interests in learning to better serve this community.

Since then, we have hosted twelve Summits, and the BIS has grown in scope, connections, size, and reputation. While Clifford has been involved since the beginning, Iwata came aboard soon after her arrival at Towson in 2016. Rodriguez Limon and Lonczak both got involved as coordinators as soon as they took on their positions with the City government. Valencia-Banks had participated as a presenter and attendee while working at an area immigrant non-profit. When she was appointed to her position within the Baltimore County government, she came aboard our planning committee, and for the past few years, she served as a coordinator. This endeavor is truly a collaboration; funding, planning, and execution are accomplished by representatives of Towson University, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, area non-profits, foundations, and other interested parties.

Organization of the Summit

Partners

The BIS has received support from a variety of entities in the community. Towson University has offered its support consistently throughout the years. There are two parties whose support have been integral: the College of Liberal Arts (the Dean's Office and numerous CLA departments) and "BTU," which is an office designed to promote community collaborations. From the very beginning, Towson University has partnered with the City of Baltimore's Mayor's Office. At the time of the inception, then Mayor Martin O'Malley was encouraging immigrants to move to and settle in Baltimore City to help reverse a drastic population decline the city was facing (Morrison, 2002). As a part of that effort, he added to his staff an Immigrant Support and

Outreach Coordinator, who became one of the founding members of the BIS Organizing Committee. When giving welcoming remarks at the first Summit, Mayor O'Malley pledged the city's continuing support. Later, as a continuing effort, Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake instituted The New Americans Task Force in 2013 to retain and entice immigrants to Baltimore City (City of Baltimore 2014), resulting in the establishment of an office within City Hall to serve the immigrant community. Throughout, the City has remained a very strong partner. Further, as of the last few Summits, Baltimore County has come on board as an important partner and named Valencia-Banks as the first Immigrant Affairs Coordinator in 2021. There has also been support, in the form of organizing committee members and/or funding, from a few other area universities and non-profits (See Appendix A for a list of Organizing Committee Affiliations over the years).

Themes

Except for the first summit, the planning committee collectively came up with unique themes each year. The "theme" of the first BIS was "The BIS." As the first summit, we did not have a specific theme that year. Since then, our organizing committee has come up with unique themes for each summit reflecting on the larger social, political, and economic contexts such as changes in political leaders, which keenly affect resources allocated to support immigrant and refugee communities. We have also had some themes to uplift the community in solidarity as well as those that address pressing matters affecting them. Those themes have been integral to bring immigrant serving organizations together with a particular focus. In addition, the themes reflected the location of the event. For example, at the American Visionary Art Museum (2005), we used "Envisioning Immigrant Baltimore" as the theme. We also make an effort to have a theme that is broad enough to be inclusive but also has something to guide presenters. In addition, we also have tried to emphasize the positives of immigration in the area, without ignoring real challenges faced. After the recent re-election of President Donald Trump, the committee revised the previously decided-upon theme, concerned that "Narratives of Hope and Healing" was too optimistic; we pivoted to "Baltimore United: Solidarity and Action in Uncertain Times" to reflect the rather dire outlook for immigration under the new administration. (See Appendix B for a list of the themes).

Format

As noted on the BIS website, "The Baltimore Immigration Summit is a free one-day event that brings together academics, policymakers, service providers, activists, community and religious leaders, and others working with and for immigrants and refugees in our region. Baltimore and its surrounding suburbs represent an area with a growing and diverse immigrant population, and local governments view them as essential to the region's ongoing resurgence" (<https://www.towson.edu/cla/departments/socioanthrocrim/baltimoreimmigrationsummit/>). This

combination of attendees and presenters makes it deliberately different from typical academic and government conferences. Not only do those attending come from various backgrounds, but we also encourage panels to include representatives from more than one of these constituencies, and/or of more than one organization. For example, a panel might include an academic, the director of an organization, and clients receiving services from the organization; most of the panels and the keynote presenters include immigrants and/or refugees (See Appendix C for a sampling of panels over the years). The focus is also on specifics of immigration in our region. Initially the focus of BIS was solely on Baltimore City, however, the summit grew to include Baltimore County. As immigrants live, work, and build communities across both Baltimore City and County, it became clear that the challenges they face—like language access, legal support, and healthcare—cross jurisdictional lines, making the Summit a vital space for joint collaboration and shared solutions between City and County representatives. As immigrant communities grew and called attention to systemic barriers, the City and County recognized the need for more coordinated, inclusive support, with the Summit serving as a catalyst for dialogue and policy attention.

We have been committed to the BIS remaining free, so that cost is not a barrier to anyone's attendance. We have been fortunate enough to garner strong financial support from our university, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, as well as some generous private organizations and funds. The budget has grown as the event has expanded from roughly 125 attendees and a budget of about \$5000 in 2004 to almost 400 registrants and about \$18,000 in 2025. Each year, most of the budget is devoted to facilities and catering costs.

For the first few years, the organizing committee (which has included representatives of Towson and other area universities, governments, and non-profits) decided on the panels as well as appropriate presenters, and we reached out to them to put the program together. As the summit grew in scope and the number of participants, we started to issue a call for presentations to be submitted for our consideration. When we first switched to calls for submissions, we occasionally had to request specific organizations to get enough panels or panelists for a full program. However, there has been an increase in submissions to present at BIS. In 2023 we received far more submissions than before - we had 50 organizations and 90 panelists who shared their work with the participants over the course of 28 panels. This trend continued into 2024 and 2025, when we had to start rejecting some strong submissions, out of space and time considerations. While the themes vary over the years, the general format of the event has remained relatively stable. Typically, the day consists of welcoming remarks from academic and political dignitaries, keynote talks/plenary panels, and breakout sessions where attendees choose from a number of panels to attend. We also include time over breakfast and lunch for informal networking. In addition, although university students have not been the focus of this event, we have involved students as volunteers and interns, and some panels have included students

focusing on issues of immigrant and refugee K-12 and university students, some of which have had students presenting.

The frequency of holding BIS has also changed over the years based on the availability of funds, the work it took, and the increasing need for such platforms due to dire political environments. Initially the Summit was held annually for the first few years. Given the cost and labor involved in putting it together, we had to switch to an every-other-year event. However, we had decided to move back to every year in 2019, as this type of event seemed more urgent than ever, and we could see the increasing demand from the participants. As both recognition of its importance and available support and funding grew, particularly from our City and County partners, we felt it both necessary and possible to move back to an annual model. Unfortunately, like nearly everything planned for after March 2020, our 2020 Summit was canceled due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and it took a few years before we were able to resume. Since then, we are back to an annual model. The need and demand for hosting this important event more frequently is reflected in the number of registrants; from about 125 the first year to about almost 400 in 2025. Further, the summit has become more well-known among service providers, activists, community leaders, and academics working in this area which also increased demand for an annual event.

Locations

We have rotated the location between Towson University, which is in Baltimore County, and various locations around Baltimore City, most recently Morgan State University. This is an important statement about whose Summit it is. If it were always at Towson University, it could be seen as Towson's event. However, by rotating between Baltimore County and Baltimore City, it represents the collaboration between the University and the two local governments we partner with.

Analysis: The BIS as a Model for Academic-Community Collaboration

The spirit of public sociology and civic engagement has deep roots in the seminal works of Marx and Engels, W.E.B. DuBois, C.W. Mills, and Jane Addams; they not only generated scholarly knowledge but also engaged with practical applications of knowledge to transpire positive social changes (Morton, et al 2012). Yet, public sociology as an established area within sociology did not emerge fully until the late 20th and early 21st century. When Clifford first began planning for an event to bring together community practitioners and organizations who serve immigrants and refugees, there was still limited literature on what public sociology looks like and what roles sociologists ought to play. In addition, she had not yet heard of the idea of anchor institutions. This humble start, however, led Clifford to truly collaborate with and listen to the community practitioners.

The BIS model extends the existing literature on public sociology and the role of universities as anchor institutions. Many aspects of what we have done starting and continuing to work on putting on the BIS provide strong support for the role we ought to be playing in collaboration with both public and private sector community practitioners: providing a platform with our institutional resources and unique ability to use our skills in organizing the event and to taking a back seat and listen to and learn from them. In other words, the BIS represents an example of a type of public sociology, and in creating and facilitating it, Towson University is playing the role of an anchor institution in the Baltimore region. We contend that this model of working with the community is impactful for any scholars who address any eminent social issues in their communities in partnership with community members.

Boyer (1996) defined civic engagement as “connecting the rich resources of the university to our most pressing social, civic, and ethical problems to our children, to our schools, to our teachers and to our cities” (p.19). As an anchor institution, we have been utilizing Towson University’s institutional resources to offer a focal point of networking for other institutions and organizations. This has allowed them to connect, raise awareness of other organizations’ programs and projects, learn from one another, and collaborate. This work has contributed to the establishment and/or added investment of the state agencies in their efforts to further support immigrant communities in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. Moreover, it also increased awareness of other organizations’ work among participants and collaboration among them.

Discussion

Clifford and Iwata’s engagement with the community highlights the importance of academics to establish true partnership. Morton, et al. (2012) urges us that we respect and learn from community practitioners as they have keen awareness of the needs of the community they serve from their day-to-day interaction with the community. Indeed, Rev. Mac Legerton, cited by Nyden et. Al (2012) shares from his experience collaborating with sociologists that “public sociology results in an authentic relationship between community and academy partners when our grassroots communities are respected and honored and our resources and resourcefulness are recognized and engaged” (pp. 35-36). Unlike academic conferences where scholarly knowledge is disseminated, we have kept the focus of BIS to be an event of and for community practitioners who serve immigrants and refugees, many of whom are themselves immigrants and refugees, as are four of our co-authors and many of our organizing committee members. This focus has stayed with the organizing committee as well as the key organizers over the years, which has resulted in the success of the event, as we can see in growing interests and demands from the community members over the years. This process has not been without its challenges, however. We have had, and continue to have, logistical struggles. For example, figuring out how to navigate not one or two, but sometimes as many as five different bureaucracies (TU, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, the State of Maryland, and, at times, that of the other institution that is

hosting), need for greater capacity, and lack of sufficient administrative support. We work to address these together, including shifting to more community co-planning, greater institutional support, and expanding the size to accommodate increased interest.

We argue that much of public sociology involves sociologists lending their scholarly knowledge as experts, while disseminating their research to various sectors of the public, as illustrated in this figure:

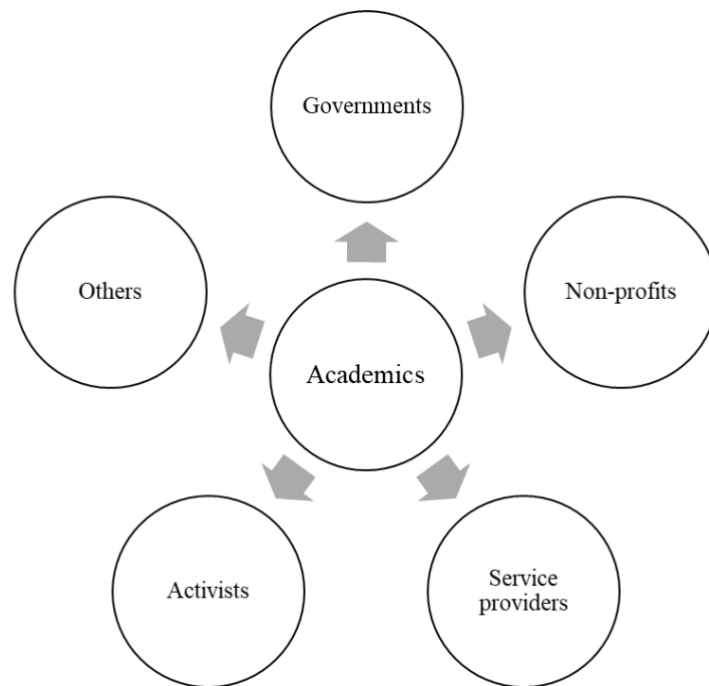


FIGURE 1. Public sociology model: Academics as experts.

Our model differs from this. Our BIS model is multi-dimensional and network oriented. In this model, rather than experts, we see academics as learners and facilitators. While the same actors and organizations in the model above are involved, we would display our model thusly:

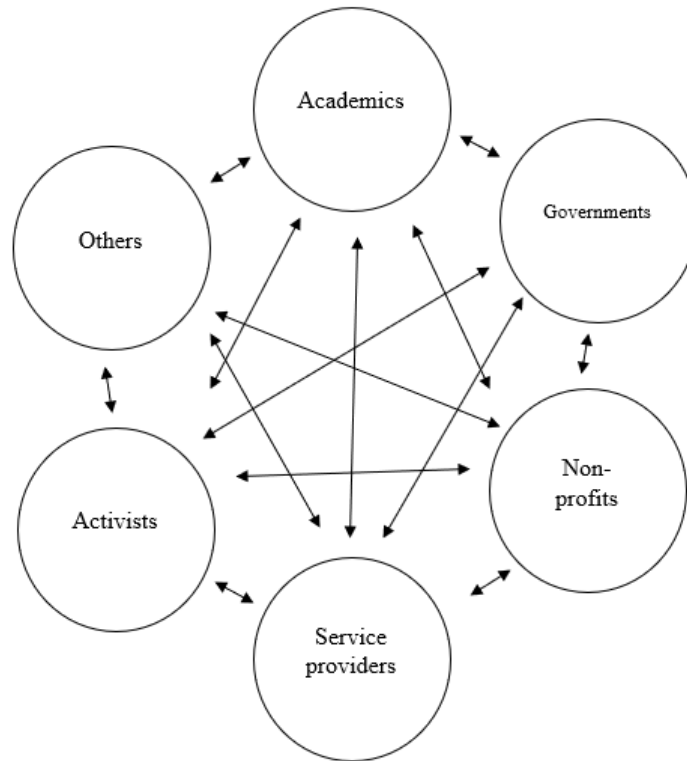


FIGURE 2. The Baltimore immigration summit model: Academics as learners and facilitators.

Here, rather than academics serving as experts dispensing information, they are learners and facilitators, sharing and receiving information from non-profits, activists, service providers, government staff, and others whose lives are dedicated to working with immigrants and refugees. This model does not assume academics have all the relevant knowledge to serve the community. Instead, it represents an acknowledgement that there are those in the community who know more than academics do. In this case, we acknowledge that people working with and for immigrants and refugees in the community have lived knowledge that those studying immigration and refugee issues academically may not. In addition, the information and connections flow among all these constituents. Academics are no longer at the center, but instead, they are just one point in this network. As a result, the BIS has helped spark cross-sector partnerships, including collaborations between government agencies and community-based organizations to expand legal aid, launch multilingual outreach, and strengthen emergency response networks for immigrants, as just a few examples.

Public sociology and civic engagement have been relatively new to scholars, and perhaps, as (public) higher education institutions, we may not feel as though we have enough resources and time to address social issues in our communities and to bring about positive social changes. However, we hope that the model and principle we have developed with BIS will help and

encourage our colleagues to start imagining the change that they want to see within their communities.

Adapting the BIS Model to Your Needs

Michael Strawser, et al. (2024) note that “many faculty members want to engage, but do not know where to begin” (p. 156). While these authors are focusing on public scholarship involving research, we acknowledge that many do not know where to begin in terms of the kind of community engagement our case study represents. The model that we developed is applicable to address pressing issues and/or needs in the surrounding community. Thus, we present several suggestions based on the experience of starting and continued work for BIS. First, identify an important topic in your local area. Second, cultivate relationships with local government(s) and non-profit organizations that have already been working on the issue. It may be that there are no public offices or points of contact designated to the specific issues you would like to address in those organizations as you begin organizing such a summit. However, starting the summit/events with existing governmental offices and non-profits may garner greater interests from public offices and other organizations that may facilitate allocating resources and personnel to address the issues. Indeed, acknowledging the important role immigrants play, Baltimore County recently appointed a personnel designated to immigrant affairs; with the increasing needs to assist and significance of the contributions immigrants make, we now have Valencia-Banks from the County who works to advocate for immigrant and refugee communities who has also been playing a crucial role as a co-coordinator for the summit. Third, start small and simple; at the inception of the summit, we were uncertain about how much it would attract the interest of those who work with and for the immigrant and refugee community. The first summit was organized to solicit interests of organizations and facilitate networking among them with several organizations known to be serving the immigrant communities. However, the summit has grown tremendously over the years. Fourth, seek institutional support. In our model, Towson University has played the role of anchor institution and facilitator, bringing in resources such as monetary contributions from many entities on campus, use of the university facility, as well as reputation as a large public institution. (Additional funds come from Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and private foundations/donors.) We are also fortunate that Towson University has an office, BTU, which encourages and supports university-community collaborations. In addition to providing financial and administrative support over the years, they also recently recognized the Summit with a partnership award, further helping us raise its profile both within and outside of the University. Clifford and Iwata also benefited over the years due to Towson University recognizing such work in its tenure and promotion considerations. Lastly, it is very important to remain humble; academics need to remember that they are not always the experts. Those who work directly with the community have deep relationships and knowledge about how to better serve them. Indeed, academics have as much (or more) to learn from policy makers, service providers, activists, community leaders, and many more.

Despite the success of BIS over the years, there have been challenges that we had to surmount. For example, we have faced challenges in garnering enough funding, finding the locations that would accommodate our specific plans, and as mundane as lunch catering style that took a very long time for attendees to settle down in time for the speaker. Recognizing how much time it takes to work on all the aspects of the summit, we have increased the frequency of committee meetings (at least one per month) as well as starting the planning meetings at the beginning of the fall, months before the spring Summit. This has helped to ensure that we had enough time to work out different issues we face as we plan for the event. This has helped to ensure that we had enough time to work out different issues we face as we plan for the event. Depending on the particularity of the project, such as the amount of resources, who are represented in the planning committee, and even the political climate, the challenges to be overcome may vary; however, it is our belief that it is very important to overestimate the time and effort it takes to start and continue to improve the public sociology praxis. It is our hope that you can adopt and apply our BIS model in your community to address important issues in your area.

Conclusion

Public sociology as an area of inquiry was formally instituted in 2004. The term "public sociology" was prominently popularized by Michael Burawoy, then president of the American Sociological Association (ASA), during his ASA presidential address. This is considered the official moment when public sociology was formally established as a movement within the discipline. Much of literature on public sociology has documented the works of scholars who engage and work with the community, particularly in the issue areas related to economic development and its impacts. Further, in many cases, the work of scholars as experts is often highlighted as they bring in their knowledge to address eminent social issues in the communities. The case of BIS as a practice of public sociology extends the existing knowledge by shedding a light on the importance of building true partnership with the community, for sociologists to play the role of facilitators, and utilize the university as an anchor institution with available resources.

With the case and model of BIS, we encourage others to share their case studies for us to engage in dialogues and to broaden the scope and models of public sociology praxis. As a relatively new area within sociology, there is a need to add more literature highlighting diverse models and praxis away from the mainstream model. Further, although many academics have been engaged in public sociology practice, they may not have conceived it as public sociology due to their practice not aligning well to the mainstream literature. Thus, our case study of BIS offers a new insight into what public sociology can look like, having the potential to enrich the literature.

Over the years, our practice in planning and executing BIS has evolved organically, learning from past events and from the feedback we received from the participants. Initially, Clifford did not conceive BIS as public sociology practice; it was a way to engage with and work with the community. Thus, we encourage sociologists to consider their public engagement work more broadly and to treat it as an area of inquiry. In this case, Clifford and Iwata began to conceptualize their engagement with BIS as a form of public sociology just recently, which resulted in lack of formal data collection. Each time we hold the BIS, we take into consideration the feedback from the previous Summit and try to continually improve. As an example, many respondents felt that at the 2024 BIS, there were not enough opportunities for networking. In planning the 2025 BIS, we created a poster session, during which attendees circulated around a large space with fifteen posters displayed, and were able to interact with each other and learn more personally about a number of programs. Networking occurred between poster presenters and other attendees, as well as among attendees themselves. Moving forward, we plan to address that lacuna, so that we can include data from those who attend the Summit year after year. Further, we plan to do in-depth interviews with a sample of attendees and presenters to get a more in-depth understanding of how the BIS impacts the community. We argue this could give us a richer understanding of how anchor institutions such as Towson University can draw on public scholarship/sociology to effectively enrich their communities, while also benefiting from the resources and expertise in their surrounding communities.

Over the course of planning and carrying out the 2025 BIS, we were reminded how tenuous the relationship among the university, city, and county is, and how there is not a formal relationship/agreement about who is responsible for which aspects of the Summit. Moving forward, we are engaging in discussions about this and figuring out if there is a way we can maintain a balance between solidifying those relationships, while also keeping flexibility. In conclusion, the BIS has become a space where partnerships are formed, existing relationships deepen year after year, and where immigrant leadership is not only welcomed but increasingly centered in shaping the conversations.

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Appendix A

Organizing Committee Affiliations

Educational Institutions

Towson University (2004, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2019, 2023, 2024, 2025)
University of Maryland School of Social Work (2005)
West Virginia University (2005, 2006)
Johns Hopkins University (2005, 2006, 2008, 2010)
UMBC (2008, 2024)
Morgan State University (2025)

Government

Baltimore City Mayor's Office/Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MIMA) (2004, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2019, 2023, 2024, 2025)
Baltimore County (2023, 2024, 2025)

Non-profits

Global Women of Baltimore (2004, 2005, 2006)
Hispanic Apostolate/Immigration Legal Services (2005, 2006, 2008)
East Harbor CDC (2006)
Baltimore Jewish Council (2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2019)
Jewish Museum of Maryland (2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2019, 2023)
Crossroads Youth Opportunity Center (2008)
Casa de Maryland (2012, 2014, 2016, 2019)
Archdiocesan Immigration Coalition (2012, 2014)
New American Leadership Institute (2019)
Baltimore Development Corporation (2019)
Immigration Outreach Service Center (2019, 2023)
Baltimore Immigration Museum (2019)
International Rescue Center (2019)
Esperanza Center (2019, 2024, 2025)
Komite Aite (2024, 2025)
American Bar Assoc. Commission on Immigration (2024, 2025)
Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area (2024, 2025)

Other

PNC Bank (2008, 2012)

Appendix B

Themes

- 2005 Envisioning Immigrant Baltimore
- 2006 Building Bridges
- 2008 ReGenerations
- 2010 ReFraming the Issues
- 2012 Investing in the Dream, Building Our Future
- 2014 Living, Working, Growing Together
- 2016 Stand Up, Be Heard, Get Involved
- 2019 Restoring Hope Through Solidarity
- 2023 Working Towards Equity
- 2024 Empowered Immigrant Communities: Engaging, Sharing, and Growing Together
- 2025 Baltimore United: Solidarity and Action in Uncertain Times

Appendix C

Sample of BIS Panels

2004 Immigration in Baltimore: What's Happening?

Panelists from Baltimore Immigration Project, Immigration Outreach Service Center, Episcopal Refugee Immigrant Alliance, World Relief, Casa de Maryland, Greater Homewood Community Corporation, and American Friends Service Committee

2005 The Role of Faith Leadership in Immigrant Communities

Panelists from The Synagogue Center, Muslim Community Cultural Center, and Maryland Province Jesuits

2006 Creative Alliance: Connecting Cultures through the Arts

Panelists from Creative Alliance, Divino Salvador, American Visionary Art Museum, and Southeast Youth Academy

2008 Community and Individual Supports for Chinese and Korean Immigrant Families

Panelists from UMBC), Korean Society of Maryland, Lin Tang Northeast Chinese Assn, and Howard County Library System

2010 Entre Dos Tierras: Engagement and Participation of Women on Immigration Issues

Panelists from: University of MD School of Social Work, Gandhi Brigade, Casa de Maryland, and Linkages to Learning

2012 Soccer without Borders: Investing in the Dream through the World's Most Popular Sport

Panelists from Maryland Office for Refugees and Asylees, Soccer Without Borders Towson University Men's Soccer, Digital Harbor High School, and Urban Information Associates, Inc.

2014 Meeting the Critical Needs of Unaccompanied Central American Minors in Baltimore

Panelists from International Rescue Committee, Bethany Christian Services of Maryland, Bayview Care-A-Van, and Esperanza Center of Catholic Charities of Baltimore

2016 Promoting Safety, Wellbeing, Reconciliation, and Inclusion

Panelists from Unidos y Seguros of Johns Hopkins Hospital, The Family Tree, Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center, East Baltimore Medical Center

2019 Census 2000: Why it Matters Here in Baltimore

Panelists from U.S. Census Bureau and Casa de Maryland

2023 The Baltimore New American Access Coalition: Strides Towards Equitable Access to Public Benefits

Panelists from Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MIMA), Southeast CDC, Casa de Maryland Esperanza Center

**2024 The Journey to Belonging: Baltimore County's Immigrant and Integration
Welcome Plan**

Panelists from Office of the Baltimore County Executive, Towson University, Baltimore County Health Department, and T. Rowe Price

2025 Beyond Detention: Expanding Access to Justice for Immigrants in Baltimore

Panelists from Amica Center, Casa de Maryland, Tahirh Justice Center, and Asylee Women Enterprise