

In the Shadow of Sparrows Point:
Racialized Labor in the White and Black Working Classes

by

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Executive Summary

Dundalk, Maryland, a historically white community, and Turner Station, an adjacent, historically black community, were home to thousands of steelworkers at the giant Bethlehem Steel Company plant at nearby Sparrows Point. After several decades of decline, the plant closed in 2012. This paper reports on an observational study of current and former residents of both neighborhoods, supplemented with Census data and interviews with community leaders, that is focused on better understanding of why so many working-class whites supported President Trump and why so few working-class African Americans did. In the 2016 election, Trump received 66 percent of the votes in Dundalk to 34 percent for Hillary Clinton. But in Turner Station, votes for Clinton outnumbered votes for Trump by 95 percent to 5 percent.

White workers at Bethlehem Steel had family incomes that were above the national average. Black workers had family incomes that were less than white steelworker families but substantially more than among African Americans nationwide. Discrimination against African Americans at the plant decreased but did not disappear after a legal consent decree in 1974.

The conventional wisdom is that working-class whites supported Trump because of the threat they felt from African Americans and immigrants. Economic factors, it is said, were secondary. But in Dundalk, the long-term decline of well-paying industrial jobs is an important part of the story. To be sure, whites in Dundalk tend to racialize their economic anxieties, but racial issues and the industrial decline are so bound together that it is virtually impossible to separate them into two independent components. The former editor of the local weekly paper, himself a blue-collar worker before becoming a journalist, said:

If you feel like you've got a place in the society around you and your own situation is not tottering on the brink, you're secure enough to open the door to other people, literally and figuratively. On the other hand, if you're fearful, desperate, alienated, you start looking for ways to be suspicious of other people.

A former steelworker said, regarding the hostility some people in the community feel towards immigrants:

When you struggle financially, you don't have that type of support system. You look for someone to blame. In our world, we're the hero. We're not going to be the bad guy, so we're going to find someone else around to blame it on. If they look like us, that's harder to accept. I think it's easy to look out and see somebody that looks different than you and think they're the problem. Then, when that's backed up by some politician with an agenda, you feel justified.

Why, then, have several national statistical studies claimed that race was more important than economics? In part because they have under-conceptualized what economics means in these communities: They have largely focused on short-term measures such as current income and employment rather than the long-term decline of the kind of labor that provided people with a sense of pride and dignity. As predictive models (i.e., who supported Trump?), the statistical studies are defensible, but as explanatory models (i.e., what underlies the support for Trump?), they are deficient. Race and economics have been intertwined in these communities for as long as the steel plant operated, and they continue to be intertwined today.

People in Dundalk may have two mindsets concerning race and immigration: An exclusionary one when their lives are not going well, and a more inclusionary one when their lives are better. In order to get them to switch from the exclusionary mindset that is dominant today to the more inclusionary mindset, one would need to provide them with work that would allow them to regain the sense of self-worth that they derived from industrial work. How to do this in an age of computerization and offshoring is the great challenge. But if this perspective is correct, it is a mistake to view urban working-class whites as permanently focused on the declining dominance of the white majority or as inexorably anxious about the scale of immigration.

The African American steelworker families in Turner Station emphasized education for their children, and most members of the children's generation have now moved to more desirable neighborhoods. To be sure, there are many low-income families in Turner Station today, but with few exceptions they are not the children and grandchildren of the steelworkers. When members of the black steelworker families were asked what they thought when they heard the Trump campaign slogan, "Make America Great Again," several responded that it wasn't that great for them in past. They viewed the campaign as seeking to re-impose the dominant position that whites once held, and they had no desire to go back to those times. A man who grew up in Turner Station said:

When he said he wants to make America great again, it was great for them during the time. But like I got friends, white friends, who like maybe a little bit older than me, say "Wasn't it great?". . . It wasn't great for me then. But they don't -- they tell me that how great it was, but the society has been separated so long that they never had any contact with blacks, so how would you know that things weren't great for us if you don't think about it.

If Trump had campaigned on industrial decline without racializing it, he might have gotten more votes from Turner Station. The Trump of 2016, however, had no chance of receiving more than a few Turner Station votes.

Mention Dundalk, Maryland, to anyone in the Baltimore area and they will envision a proud, insular, white working-class community located just east of the city line, across Bear Creek from Sparrows Point, a vast tract that was once home to one of the largest steel plants in the world. At its peak in 1957, the Bethlehem Steel Company employed 30,000 people at the Point, its smokestacks raining fine red dust on cars and homes, a small price to pay for the unionized jobs that sustained the community. Local lore has it that the Golden Gate Bridge was built with its beams. Ship plate from the Point girded countless naval vessels in World War II. Less well known is the adjacent community of Turner Station, a historically-black neighborhood of steelworker families located on a small peninsula, just across Dundalk Avenue, that juts into the Chesapeake Bay. Its story also is entwined with the rise and fall of Bethlehem Steel.

Employment at the Point dwindled over time as the movement of steel factories to other countries and the automation of steel production proceeded. By 2012, when the plant finally closed, only about 2,000 people worked there. Other large plants were gone too: In 2005 General Motors closed a nearby assembly plant that had employed about 7,000 people at its peak. In 1984, Western Electric had shuttered a factory that made wires, cords, and cables for telephone systems. Two shipyards also closed. Many smaller factories shut their doors (Nawrozki, 2005, May 13). Not surprisingly, a malaise has settled on Dundalk and Turner Station like the old red dust.

Dundalk residents are similar to the working-class voters who are perceived to have put President Donald Trump over the top in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Michigan: they hail from families that had been sustained by industrial employment and they are predominantly white. The conventional wisdom is that the turn toward Trump reflected resentment against immigrants and African Americans and anxiety about being overtaken by them. But a study I conducted of Dundalk and Turner Station showed a more complex picture; and it suggests an important role for the loss of the industrial jobs that

sustained their communities. In addition, a look at current and former residents of Turner Station shows why Trump's appeal to the industrial working class fell flat among African Americans.¹

In 1960, when employment at the Point was near its high point, Dundalk had a population of about 77,000.² Thirty-one percent of the workforce was employed in the metal industry, according to the Decennial Census, nearly all of them, presumably, at Bethlehem Steel – welders, smelters, pourers, inspectors, carpenters, cranemen, electricians, plumbers. It was a largely male labor force, although women gained a niche in the mill that made thin tin sheets. Many were of immigrant stock: Three percent of the Dundalk population had been born overseas, and another 12 percent had foreign or mixed parentage, most commonly from Poland, Italy, Germany, or Ireland. It is likely that many more had immigrant grandparents or great-grandparents. In the current furor over immigration, we tend to forget the immigrant roots of the industrial white working class.

A person did not need much education to work at the Point or the other nearby factories. Seventy percent of the population of Dundalk age 25 and over in 1960 had not completed high school, and only 7 percent had attended college. That was low compared to the national figures, which show that in 1960, 56 percent of people age 25 and over had not completed high school, and 19 percent had attended college. Many young men, and a few young women, moved directly into jobs at the Point after leaving school, often following in the footsteps of fathers and grandfathers. It was nevertheless a prosperous community: The mean household income of \$6,665 exceeded the national mean for all white households, which was \$6,262.³ The wages of the unionized jobs at the Point, General Motors, and elsewhere enabled workers to buy homes (81 percent of the housing units in Dundalk were owner-occupied homes) and to live a middle-class lifestyle.

Residential segregation was severe: Dundalk was 99 percent white in 1960, whereas Turner Station, across Dundalk Avenue, was at least 91 percent black.⁴ Turner Station had a population of 5,700 in 1960. It was home to the families of black steelworkers at the Point (37 percent of Turner

Station workers were employed in the metal industry), as well as the families of service and private household workers. The steel plant itself was segregated too, with most blacks limited to the hotter, more dangerous, and lower paying jobs (Rudacille, 2010). The bathrooms were segregated; even the parking lots were segregated. In the shipyard, white workers received the better assignments according to the season of the year, according to Richard, a retired black steelworker who worked at the Point from 1968 to 1998:

Or like in the wintertime, they would take all the white employees and put them on the side where the sun is.

Interviewer: Really?

Yes. 'Cause I worked in the shipyard, so the side of the ship where the sun was on it all day is pretty warm. [They] Put the African-Americans on the cold side.

Interviewer: Really?

Absolutely. It's the same way in the summertime. Summertime, put the African-Americans up on the deck on the sun all day long. Put the white employees down in the hole where it's nice and cool, where these guys in their t-shirts.

Nevertheless, African American workers in Turner Station made more money than did the typical African American worker in the nation. In 1960, the mean income of African American households in the U.S. was about \$3,800. The mean income of African American families in the Turner Station census tract was much higher: about \$5,000.⁵ In other words, Turner Station families earned almost one-third more than did black families nationwide. African American families in Turner Station, then, had two different comparisons that they could make: Relative to their white neighbors in Dundalk, they earned less; but relative to other blacks they earned more. Both comparisons were relevant: The comparison with whites showed continuing racial discrimination, which black workers fought with increasing success over the ensuing decades. The comparison with other African Americans, on the other hand, showed that they were doing relatively well compared to blacks who were not in the steel industry. The latter comparison instilled pride in the workers, who saw themselves as having a

strong work ethic and enduring family values. Nearly all of the adult children from steelworker families that I interviewed from Turner Station grew up in two-parent families. The neighborhood had at least nine churches (Diggs, 2003). In fact, older residents tell stories of Turner Station residents patrolling the community to keep other Baltimore African Americans out.

Race

The steel plant at Sparrows Point, founded in 1887 as the Maryland Steel Company and purchased by the Bethlehem Steel Company in 1916, was unusual in its substantial share of African American workers. Managers believed that southern blacks worked well in the hot Baltimore summer, and plant representatives recruited them from Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina (Stein, 1998). By 1930, about 6,000 of the 18,000 workers at the Point were black (Reutter, 2004). Many African-American workers and their families lived at first on the streets designated for them in the segregated Sparrows Point company town, while others settled in Turner Station after its founding in 1919 (Diggs, 2003). After Bethlehem Steel closed the company town in 1972 in order to expand production, some black families moved to Turner Station.

Until the 1970s, the work rules at the plant favored white workers over black workers. Most black workers were originally hired for jobs in the less desirable units in the plant. The work rules stipulated that any worker who transferred to a different unit lost all seniority -- meaning that he or she would get the worst shifts, the most difficult and unpleasant jobs, the least desirable time off, and so forth. While black workers could theoretically transfer to better units, they would sacrifice all of the job benefits they had gained through seniority. And they would also face the hostility of white workers in their new units. Then in 1974, Bethlehem Steel and the steelworkers' union entered into an agreement with the U.S. government in an employment discrimination action brought by the Equal Employment

Opportunity Commission. The consent decree, as it was called, ended the discriminatory transfer rules and opened up new positions to black workers (Stein, 1998).

Many white workers opposed the consent decree. The old system had been in place so long that white workers thought it was the natural way for the plant to function. An environment in which whites could get positions for their sons or nephews in good units without competing against blacks was simply the way things always had been done. Whereas black workers saw the consent decree as ending discrimination, many white workers saw the new rules as discriminating against *them*. They were initially hostile to blacks who attempted to transfer. The hostility of whites in similar work settings around the country, as civil rights legislation and court decision accumulated, is among the origins of the current belief of a majority of whites that they are discriminated against (Gonyea, 2017).

During the 1980s, significant numbers of African Americans began to move into Dundalk. By the time of the 1990 Census, 6.2 percent of the population was black. In the pooled 2013-2017 American Community Surveys (ACS), conducted by the Census Bureau, 8.4 percent of Dundalk residents identified as black or African American and another 4.2 percent identified with two or more races. Moreover, the number of occupied rental units in the community doubled from 3,883 in 1960 to 7,275 in 2013-2017. Long-time residents complained about a growth in what they called “Section 8” families in rental housing. They were referring to the common name for the Housing Choice Voucher Program, which allows low-income families to choose housing units (assuming that landlords agree to accept the vouchers) and subsidizes the rent that the families pay. The number of families assisted by the program nearly doubled nationally between the early 1990s and the late 2000s (Kingsley, 2017). Section 8 may be unfamiliar to most Americans, but it is on the tips of the tongues of residents in Dundalk and Turner Station.

Indeed, its use as a label is out of proportion to its actual use as a rental subsidy. Data from the Department of Housing and Urban Development show that in 2018 just 2 percent of Dundalk residents

were receiving support from Section 8.⁶ Even among African American residents of Dundalk, only 22 percent were receiving Section 8 subsidies. Some Dundalk residents complain that their community is receiving an undue share of the Section 8 families in Baltimore County. (The County surrounds, but does not include, the City of Baltimore.) They are correct to a modest extent: Dundalk constituted 7 percent of the population of the County in the 2013-2017 period, but it was home to 10 percent of the County's occupied, Section 8-supported housing units in 2018. Yet residents are not using the term in this precise sense. Rather, as the director of a non-profit housing organization told me, "Section 8 refers to all renters, all poor people, and all people of color, in general, I would say." In conversations with me, some people spoke the term along with a knowing glance, as if to say, you know who I'm talking about.

Moreover, the common usage of "Section 8" as an umbrella term for low-income families, especially low-income African American families, has a social class dimension as well as a racial dimension. In Turner Station, some long-term residents from steelworker families lamented the recent growth of Section 8 renters in their neighborhood, most of whom, like the old-timers, are black. A resident told me that Section 8 residents have the same skin color, but:

They are so different from us . . . The people that are moving in are all about what the government can give you. They feel entitled . . . Government is keeping them from progressing.

Another older resident criticized the current management of a rental property:

They started letting people move in here, and just tear up the houses. We never rented to Section 8 per se because we knew what they did. We knew they didn't take care of stuff.

In Turner Station, 8 percent of the population lived in Section-8-subsidized housing in 2018 – a higher percentage than in Dundalk but still not high enough to justify the broad use of the term. For many white and black residents, then, Section 8 has become a label for recent, low-income African-American residents who are perceived to come from a lower class and who are said to be less responsible and more prone to committing crime than the steelworker families were.

In another recent development, nearly 4,000 Hispanic immigrants have moved into the northwest corner of the community. Of the largely Hispanic foreign-born population in Dundalk in the 2013-2017 period, 65 percent said that they had entered the U.S. in 2000 or later. They are a diverse group with substantial representations of Mexicans, Salvadorans, Puerto Ricans, and Dominicans. Although some community leaders spoke to me about tensions between the immigrants and the non-Hispanic white residents, I heard fewer complaints about Hispanics than about low-income African Americans. Chuck, a white former steelworker who lives in the northwest corner told me that his neighborhood was becoming Hispanic. He is the son and grandson of steelworkers, and he supports his girlfriend and himself through three part-time jobs. He described how the new neighbors were buying up older, abandoned homes at auction or in cash sales and fixing them up:

The Hispanic families in my neighborhood are buying them up and coming in speaking very, very little English. These are definitely immigrants. I would say they're construction workers, things like that. My one neighbor runs a construction company; very, very nice families. In fact, they're repairing our neighborhoods right now.

Nevertheless, he continued, not everyone has welcomed them:

Some of my neighbors weren't quite as excited to see people that are different than them moving in right away. I think they weren't sure what to expect . . . So, it helped me to let them know that these are conservative family people moving in next door to you, not somebody that you think you saw on some TV special or what some politician is making up about them, you know.

Perhaps Hispanic immigration is too new and too modest in scale to have engaged the consciousness of the residents in what was, until recently, a black-and-white city. Perhaps racial and ethnic fault lines still reflect the tensions at the steel plant at a time when the community had very few immigrants. Or perhaps the absorption of an immigrant population will proceed with less conflict in the Baltimore region than elsewhere.

Economics

The area's prosperity began to ebb in the 1970s. After the Arab members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries imposed an oil embargo in 1973, the U.S. economy entered a recession. In the steel industry, foreign competitors that had built newer, more efficient plants were able to ship steel to the U.S. and sell it at prices that undercut American companies. Smaller steel companies in the U.S. established mini-mills that produced simple steel products that could be sold at lower prices (Reutter, 2004). Between 1962 and 2005, the American steel industry lost 75 percent of its workers but was still producing as much steel as in 1962 (Collard-Wexler & De Loecker, 2015). Employment at the Point followed this path. In 1985, employment dropped below 10,000; in 2002, employment was about 3,000; and in 2010, two years before the plant closed, it was 2,000 (Hopkins, 2013).

Dundalk. By the time the steel plant closed in 2012, Dundalk, was a different place. To be sure, one could still find remnants of its industrial working-class ethos. It still has Bessemer Street, named after the pioneering steelmaking process, and Youngstown Street, named after its sister steel-producing city in Ohio. Yet only 8 percent of its labor force was employed in manufacturing, according to the 2013-2017 ACS. Its population had declined to about 60,000. Some of that decline occurred because families were having fewer children than in the past, but some of it came because long-term residents moved out faster than new ones moved in. Ten percent of the housing units were vacant, compared to 3 percent in 1960. The mean family income of \$72,798, according to the 2013-2017 ACS, was well below the national mean of \$95,031. Dundalk was no longer as populous, no longer as white, no longer sustained by factory jobs, and no longer as well off as it had been in the heyday of Sparrows Point.

In addition, the residents acknowledged a drug problem. The former director of a substance abuse center for parents and children in Dundalk told me that the problems she saw were

“generational:” Troubled children whose grandparents had worked at the Point but whose parents had not. Many of the parents were substance-abusing. When asked about the source of the problem, she responded, “the closings, the jobs going away. Nothing to replace it.” It was “a proud community,” she said, but now they seem to be saying, “they took that away from us.” A clinical social worker who is assigned to two middle schools also reported that many of the troubled children she sees had parents who hadn’t worked at the Point but grandparents who had. She had examined her case base prior to our interview and had found, to her surprise, that 74 percent of the households had at least one person with a part- or full-time job:

So like how can that be? . . . It doesn’t bring stability. And that’s what’s missing: I know that my life is going to look very similar two weeks from now or two months from now or two years from now, and we’re not going to be in this chaotic crisis managements that happens.

I asked her why the jobs don’t bring stability. She replied:

I think that, I didn’t even realize it was that high until I counted it up, but they’re often at the grocery store, it’s at the part-time position at the health clinic. They are not livable jobs with livable pay. The hours are inconsistent.

Just 5 percent of the children she has seen were living with two biological parents. In fact, in Dundalk as a whole in 2010, 34 percent of all family households with children under age 18 had a female householder with no husband present – a high percentage for a predominantly white community.⁷

The liquidating company that bought the shuttered steel plant for parts and scrap metal razed the 3,100-acre site. A new firm, Tradepoint Atlantic, is attempting to revive it as a trade hub. So far, their success is mainly in generating warehouse jobs. When Dundalk residents look across Bear Creek today, they see warehouses for Amazon, Under Armour, and Federal Express where blast furnaces once stood. According to a recent estimate, about 4,000 workers, including construction workers, are employed at the Point (Maloney & Perlberg, 2019, August 15). Amazon raised the minimum wage it pays employees to \$15.00 per hour in 2018. In today’s labor market, such a wage is attractive enough that Baltimore-area residents lined up for interviews when hiring commenced. Nevertheless, the

warehouse positions are non-unionized and provide lower wages and less security than the steel plant provided. People are grateful for the efforts of Tradepoint Atlantic to attract firms to Sparrows Point, but positions such as these do not allow a worker to support a family, as did the steel jobs, and cannot bring Dundalk back to its glory days.

It may seem reasonable to look at the slide in neighborhood income in both Dundalk and Turner Station – from above the national average for whites and blacks, respectively, in 1960 to below the national average now – and to conclude that the offspring of the last generation of steelworkers are doing worse than their parents. But the story is not that simple. Many steelworker parents were able to use their high, stable wages and strong families to provide their children with more education than they had – at least some college attendance if not a college degree. It was common for their children to move out the neighborhood as they entered adulthood. Moreover, the modest, two-story row houses that characterize Dundalk – often with living space downstairs, two bedrooms upstairs, and one bathroom – have gotten old: Half were built before 1946, according to the Census Bureau. They are not attractive to college-educated young buyers. But they constitute a step up for low- and moderate-income buyers and renters. Consequently, the people who moved into Dundalk tended to be poorer than the steelworker families who moved out. The growth in rental units has also attracted lower-income tenants. The housing non-profit director said to me, “People have this misperception of blaming Section 8 for the decline of the community. But only way a poor renter could move in was if someone has moved out.”

Turner Station. The Turner Station community followed the same downward trajectory as did Dundalk. Its population has dropped even more sharply, from 5,700 in 1960 to 2,900 in 2013-2017. It is more diverse than in the past: 66 percent African American, 23 percent white, and 9 percent Asian (with Filipinos constituting the largest Asian group). Moreover, Turner Station is no longer a prosperous neighborhood, even by the standards of African Americans. By 2013-2017 the mean income of black

Turner Station households, \$51,170, was below the mean of \$66,132 for African Americans nationwide. Manufacturing work is nearly gone: The share of employed men whom the Census Bureau classified as production workers – essentially factory workers and craftsman – declined from 25 percent in 1960 to 4 percent in 2013-2017.⁸ Nineteen percent of the housing units were vacant in 2013-2017. Sixty-one percent of the family households with children under age 18 in 2010 had a female householder with no husband present.

The exodus of the children of the steelworker families is particularly noticeable in Turner Station. One can still find retired steelworkers and their spouses in the home-owner section of the neighborhood. But with few exceptions, their children no longer live there. I heard stories of how parents instilled the importance of education in their children, who then moved up and out. When I asked Richard, the retired shipyard worker, about his four children, he responded immediately that they all went to college. He explained:

Because I didn't want my kids to go through what I went through down at the Point, and the only way I was going see that through, they need to be educated . . . I seen it that way to make their life better. And their lives *are* better.

He added, "None of my sons ever had handcuffs on 'em," another achievement for a black parent in contemporary Baltimore.

The theme of self-betterment, of doing all you can through education and effort, can be found in the recollections of many older parents and adult children from the Turner Station community. I met with three older African American women who have lived in the neighborhood for most of their lives, and when the conversation turned to education, one of them began to recite a rhyme she was taught as a child. The other two quickly joined in, and they recited in unison:

Good, better, best.
Never let it rest.
Until your good is better,
And your better is best.⁹

Due to the segregated school systems, black teachers had difficulty obtaining positions in white schools, so the very best of them taught in black school districts such as the schools that Turner Station children went to prior to the mid-1970s.

Their children's generation took these lessons to heart, and nearly all of them, in the families I met, achieved higher levels of education than their parents. Many have college degrees or even advanced professional degrees. Others are in stable working-class occupations. And nearly all of them have moved out of Turner Station. They live in the integrated northeast section of Baltimore City, or in far-western middle-class Baltimore neighborhoods such as Gwynn Oak, or in Western suburbs such as Woodlawn or Owing Mills, or even farther out. For instance, I visited Bruce, a man in his thirties, now living in a suburb with his fiancé and their young daughter. His father, grandfather, two great-grandfathers, and many uncles and cousins had worked at the Point. He told me:

My parents pushed education. They push college on us. And my father always said that if I ever needed a job, he could get me one at the Point . . . But my mother and my father said I want you to go to school and get a degree because nobody can take that from you. Nobody can take education from you.

You could lose a job, even a secure job, but not your education. Here is an African-American family that had been steeped in steelwork for generations, and yet they did not take their jobs for granted. After Bethlehem Steel filed for bankruptcy in 2001, Bruce's father started a lawn care business on the side. "At that particular time," Bruce's father told me, "I said I'm not going to allow the steel industry to be my sole income." So although he continued to work at the Point until it closed eleven years later, he hedged his bets. And he made sure his children got educations.

The members of the Turner Station diaspora, as we may call them, fondly recall their childhood days, and they appreciate their parents' devotion to education and self-betterment. They return to Turner Station to visit parents and to attend an annual celebration and reunion. Their achievements show what happened when a generation of African Americans – their parents – were given access to decent-paying jobs that didn't require a college education. These black steelworker parents used the

income and security provided by jobs at the Point to form stable families, buy homes, and educate their children. Yet what's left now in Turner Station is a diminishing number of older homeowners and a larger, poorer, newer renter population, with whom the older generation has little contact. There are many low-income African Americans in Turner Station today, but with few exceptions, they are not the children and grandchildren of the steelworkers.

Politics

Dundalk had been trending Republican in Presidential elections. In 2004, it went for Bush over Kerry by 54 percent to 46 percent. In 2008, it went for McCain over Obama, 58 percent to 42 percent. In 2012, its voters favored Romney over Obama by 53 percent to 47 percent. Still, no Republican had been elected to a local office in memory until 2014, when Republican candidates swept to victory in all five county and state races. In 2016, Dundalk delivered its most lopsided vote: 66 percent favored Donald Trump, against 34 percent for Hillary Clinton. The Democratic party had been abandoned. But not so in Turner Station: Its voters favored Clinton over Trump by an overwhelming 95 to 5 percent.¹⁰

Nationally, the movement of white working-class voters toward Trump was a key factor in his victory in the 2016 Presidential election (Morgan & Lee, 2018). The explanation that most observers give for the working class's embrace of Trump is variously called "identity politics" or "status threat" – a fear of losing ground to blacks and Hispanics – or just plain racism and anti-immigrant fervor. Economic issues, according to this line of reasoning, had little to do with the shift. "After all," wrote Paul Krugman in the *New York Times*, "studies of the 2016 election clearly show that racial resentment, not 'economic anxiety,' was what put Trump over the top" (Krugman, 2018, Sept. 24). Also writing in the *Times*, Timothy Egan stated, "In truth, economics will probably not move Trump supporters. Their vote for him was more about status anxiety in a changing nation than about financial uncertainty" (Egan, 2018, Sept.

14). Writing in *Vox*, German Lopez concluded, “The past year of research has made it very clear: Trump won because of racial resentment” (Lopez, 2017, Dec. 15).

The evidence for these claims is based on academic studies which show that white people’s attitudes toward minority groups were a better predictor of how they voted in 2016 than were their incomes. A number of articles take the form of statistical analyses in which measures of racial attitudes, views of immigrants, or fears of displacement are pitted against measures of economic status, and the former group is found to be more strongly related to voting for Trump than is the latter. The racial measures tap attitudes such as whether respondents believe that whites are discriminated against or whether they think it should be harder for foreigners to immigrate to the U.S. (Sides, Tesler, & Vavreck, 2018). The economic measures tend to be indicators of current or recent financial status such as whether household income has changed or whether the respondent has started looking for work (Mutz, 2018b; Schaffner, MacWilliams, & Nteta, 2018), or whether the respondent reports being in poor financial shape (Cox, Lienesch, & Jones, 2017). Another frequently-cited study concludes that economic distress is not strongly related to the Trump phenomenon because, although his supporters have less education, they have relatively high incomes (Rothwell & Diego-Rosell, 2016).

For Mutz (2018b), the basic reason for the increase in support for Trump is the “dominant group status threat” that many whites feel: The threat to their status as the dominant group has increased because they may lose their position as the majority race in the U.S. population. They also feel threatened, she maintains, by the progress of African Americans, Asians, and Hispanics. Mutz looks at changes in attitudes and in economic circumstances as determinants of change in support for Republicans among a national sample of Americans who were interviewed in 2012 and reinterviewed in 2016. One of her two main measures of status threat is a scale based on responses to questions about social dominance orientation (Ho et al., 2015), such as “An ideal society requires some groups to be on top and others to be on the bottom.” For the other measure of status threat, she uses a scale composed

of views on international trade. Opposition to international trade with nations such as China, she argues, reflects, in part, opposition to doing business with countries that are racially different. She finds that changes over time in a person's attitudes toward social dominance, as well as changes in attitudes toward international trade and China, predicted movement toward support for Republicans, whereas changes in a person's economic circumstances did not.

Morgan (2018b) reanalyzed the data used in the Mutz article and argued that the results are not strong enough to conclude that the effects of the status threat variables are more important than the effects of the economic variables. He concluded:

Material interests and her measure of status threat are sufficiently entangled among white voters, especially those in the working class, that it is impossible with her data to estimate their relative importance with any clarity (p. 12).

Mutz (2018a) responded in defense of her argument, and Morgan (2018a) responded to her response. Suffice it to say that the original article is far from a definitive test of the racial attitudes versus economic status question. Mutz's assumption that opposition to international trade represents racial status threat, and not economic anxiety, is particularly problematic. It is inconsistent with how people in Dundalk talk about the topic. For them, the issue of competition from imported steel has long been important. George, a shipyard worker who worked at the Point until it closed, told me that he had gone to Washington with other steelworkers in the early 2000s to lobby for tariffs on imported steel, but to no avail. Both Democrats and Republicans were uninterested. He took off his glasses and fought back tears as he related how great it felt, many years later, to listen to the ceremony at which Trump signed the order establishing tariffs on imported steel: "You're just like profusely thanking him for, you know, which I mean, and it just – you know, I just, I'm just crying, I'm just sobbing uncontrollably." He acknowledged that the tariffs may not be effective, or even good policy in the long run. But Trump had *done something*. Despite having worked for Democratic candidates in the past, he's ready to campaign for Trump's re-election. A former editor of the *Dundalk Eagle*, the community's weekly newspaper,

himself a blue-collar worker for 20 years before becoming a journalist, said of his community's reaction to Trump's tariffs:

It was the first time that somebody stood up for them. I'll be honest with you, I'm not sure if what the guy is doing with regard to China or with regard to GM is actually going to work, but it does on a certain level thrill me that someone is actually doing something and at least treating this like it's an issue, rather than just a thing we have to accept. There again, that's the sense I get in my community, that they're finally being paid attention to by someone.

Neither man, nor anyone else I spoke with, said anything to imply that racial anxiety lay beneath their opinions on trade.

Three political scientists have gone so far as to claim that the lesson of the 2016 election is that white America is enduring an "identity crisis" among those without college educations because of their concern that African-Americans and immigrants were undermining their position as the majority group (Sides et al., 2018). What made the election distinctive, they argued, was how much identities based on race, ethnicity, gender, and nationality mattered. These fissures became the basis for competing ideals of American identity and inclusiveness. In the most succinct statement of their thesis, they wrote:

The debate centered on whether white voters were motivated more by attitudes related to identity – race, religion, gender, and ethnicity – or by their concerns about their economic circumstances. Of these two factors, attitudes related to identity were more important. Economic concerns – such as fears of not being able to make a mortgage payment or pay a doctor's bill – were only weakly related to how people voted . . . [R]acial attitudes were the lens through which economic concerns became more politically actionable. This "racialized economics" meant that economic insecurity was connected to partisan choices when it was refracted through racial grievances (p. 156).

Here the authors make two claims: The first claim is that economic grievances were expressed by white working-class voters in racialized ways – that what we saw was "racialized economics." This claim is valid even if, as I will argue, the phrase is not quite right. The second claim, which is derived from statistical models similar to those used by Mutz (2018b), is that racial identities were more important as sources of voter choice than were people's economic circumstances; in other words, the "racialized"

part of racialized economics was more important the “economics” part. This claim, although it may be narrowly-supported by the statistical analyses, is unjustified.

Racialized Labor

The problem with trying to separate economic concerns from racially-based identity politics and to determine which is more important runs deeper than debates over statistical modeling. In the studies I have reviewed, and in much of the commentary on racially-based status threat, “economics” is under-conceptualized. Most of the measures used in the empirical analyses have centered on contemporary measures of wages, employment, macroeconomic conditions, and so forth. Without doubt, these are valuable indicators, especially if the aim of the analysis is to predict who supported Republicans or who voted for Trump. Sides et al. (2018), in proposing their “identity crisis” thesis, acknowledge and defend the limitations of their focus on the near term:

It may seem myopic to focus on short term economic trends, given the longer-term trends toward income inequality. But the impact of inequality on U.S. election outcomes has been ambiguous . . . Less ambiguous, however, is the impact of short-term economic trends, which are strongly related to presidential election outcomes and do help explain oscillating party control” (p. 16).

If the purpose of a study, in other words, is to predict how people will vote in an election, which is the outcome on which the authors are focusing, short-term measures are good predictors. Therefore, as *predictive* models, statistical analyses of this sort are defensible. As *explanatory* models, however, they are deficient. There are important long-term phenomena that can help us to understand why the election outcomes occurred. The main such a phenomenon, I would argue, is not rising inequality per se, but rather the decline of industrial labor: More specifically, it is the decline of a type of industrial labor in which people without college educations could perform physical labor under conditions in which, for a period of time in the twentieth century, they had unionized, stable positions with high

wages and good fringe benefits. This form of labor, usually but not always carried out by men, allowed them to support conventional marriages, to buy homes, and to lead relatively-privileged lives. It gave them dignity, pride, and a high sense of self-worth (Lamont, 2000). Their loss is not just the loss of a job and a good paycheck; it is a loss of a way of life grounded in productive, stable, remunerative work. To be sure, it is bound up with race. From an explanatory standpoint, given the constrained way that “economics” is used in current debates, we might more appropriately call it *racialized labor*.

Dundalk. Racialized labor at Sparrows Point did not end after the 1974 consent decree. I spoke with a retired black steelworker who had just been diagnosed with lung cancer (one of many former workers at the Point who have suffered lung ailments in their later years) and who told me how the tensions with whites in the years following the decree played out in the plant. Several years after the decree, he attempted to transfer to a job that came open in a better unit. According to the rules, he was entitled to transfer to the new position without losing his seniority. And the white workers in the new unit were supposed to train him. He explained:

It was in the books, in the consent decree, that they had to train us, but you still had the same people there, that same mentality. I'll give you an example with me. I go to this new department, I go up to the guy, "Say, man, the foreman say I'm training with you today. You know what that means?" White dude. Says "OK". So we're sitting there. . . and I get up and say, "I got this one." And he say, "No, that's all right, I got it." He went and [did the required task on an assembly line]. I said OK.

Sitting there. Next one come down. I say "I'll get it." He say, "No that's all right, I got it." He get up and he go do it.

So I'm like, "Hey man, wait a minute, this ain't working right." I say, "The foreman said I had to train with you."

[He said:] "How much time you got?" [I.e., when did you start working at Bethlehem Steel?]

I say, "I got '73 time." [I started in 1973.]

[He said:] "If I show you how to do this job, you'll end up taking *my* job." I said, "What do you mean, man?" [He said:] "Cause you got more time than me, if I train you on this job, you're going to take my job." . . . And you know that Dude wouldn't let me do nothing that day. Not a thing.

The white worker saw the new black transferee as a direct threat to his position because the black worker had more seniority at the plant. In fact, the black worker did not take his job, but the white worker was anxious and antagonistic.

Was this incident about race or economics? Clearly, it was about race, at least in part: The black worker, empowered by the legal agreement that ended discriminatory practices at the plant, attempted to train for a better job, as he was entitled to do. The white worker, coping with lost racial privilege, refused to train him. Just as clearly, however, it was about economics: The white worker was worried that he would lose his position because the new transfer had more seniority than he did. Which was more important, race or economics? There is no way to tell which was more important because they were completely enmeshed, as they had been since the start of the plant. Race and labor were so entwined that the question of which was more important not only has no definitive answer but also seems beside the point.

Race and labor are still entwined in people's accounts of Dundalk today. I spoke with William, a white man in his mid-forties who struggled with drugs as a young adult and had recently lost a cousin to an overdose death, but who has turned his life around. He talked about increased crime in the neighborhood:

Now, there's been a pervading sense of that there's more crime, there's more drugs and certainly the loss of jobs has played a big role in that. There's been a... I'm going to choose my words carefully here. . .trying to shift some of the demographics around Baltimore City and Baltimore County and at the very least there's been a perception that that has contributed to it as well . . .

There also has been a perception in Dundalk and Essex [a neighboring, largely white community] that in recent years there's been kind of a disproportionate amount of that [Section 8] happening in our areas . . . It's just what, you know, and people are getting angry, they're getting fed up with, they're getting tired of back-to-back shootings on Wise Avenue two blocks from Patapsco High School the night before school starts.

So, there has been a steady decline that's been going on and the loss of jobs is a big part of it. Now, they have finally started to redevelop some of the land . . . They moved in there a group called Tradeport Atlantic. . . Amazon has set up there, Under Armour, FedEx . . . So, there is

kind of a sense of rejuvenation that might be happening or like the chance for that to happen. So, it's a very kind of in-between time.

Is this a story of racialized identity or of economic decline? What is notable is how quickly William flipped from one to the other and back. He started out by saying that jobs are a big part of it. He then chose his words “carefully,” which was a signal that he was about to talk about race but didn’t want to sound racist: the “shift some of the demographics around” phrase refers to the idea that Baltimore City is trying to move black families from the city into the county. Then he complained about the number of families subsidized by Section 8, another code word for low-income black families. Then it’s back to the importance of the loss of jobs and the possible renewal at Sparrows Point. In his mind, the two perspectives – race and economics – were so joined together that he slipped effortlessly, perhaps without even thinking about it, between the perspectives. One cannot separate his thoughts into purely racial and purely economic components.

Granted, racial resentment played a role in the strong support for Trump in Dundalk. One woman expounded on why nearly all the members of her large extended family voted for him. Leaning into my audio recorder, she whispered, “They’re racist. They’re just bitter, they don’t like Obama. They just think, I honestly think, it’s race. I really do.” Yet as its segregated history suggests, there is nothing new about racial resentment in Dundalk. Decades of stories about tensions between white and black workers at the Point show that it has long been around. Why, then, does it seem so potent now? Why did racialized labor become more important in the 2016 election?

The former editor of the *Eagle* tried to put the current situation in context:

I do not deny that there is very real, longstanding racism in such communities. That’s not the driving force. If you want to know why communities like Dundalk voted for Trump, it’s not really bigotry in itself; it’s fear, it’s the sense of alienation, it’s the sense of desperation, it’s the sense of a lack of answers.

Racist sentiments, he argued, come to the fore when economic times are tough:

If you feel like you've got a place in the society around you and your own situation is not tottering on the brink, you're secure enough to open the door to other people, literally and figuratively. On the other hand, if you're fearful, desperate, alienated, you start looking for ways to be suspicious of other people.

The other people who you become suspicious of may include immigrants. When I asked Chuck, the white former steelworker who lives in the Hispanic part of the neighborhood, why some people harbor bad feelings toward the immigrants, his explanation echoed the editor's:

When you struggle financially, you don't have that type of support system. You look for someone to blame. In our world, we're the hero. We're not going to be the bad guy, so we're going to find someone else around to blame it on. If they look like us, that's harder to accept. I think it's easy to look out and see somebody that looks different than you and think they're the problem. Then, when that's backed up by some politician with an agenda, you feel justified.

I think that's where we have this new divide we didn't have, or maybe I didn't feel like we had ten years ago, that maybe we feel today.

When people in Dundalk are struggling economically, as Chuck says, they tend to racialize their anxieties. They talk about economic issues not in the upper-middle-class language of the unemployment rate and the gross national product, but rather in more personal, racial and ethnic terms. They retreat behind their identities and "look for someone to blame," someone who looks different from them. Racism, the editor argues, is not the driving force. Rather, it's their desperation about the loss of a way of life, the disappearance of work that gave them pride and dignity, and their sense that no one is paying attention to them. Enter Trump, the politician with an agenda. He listened to the people in places like Dundalk when no one else did. His masterstroke was to recognize the desperation of the white working class over the deteriorating industrial economy and to encourage their tendency to racialize that desperation. Neither economics nor identity politics can be said to be the more important factor. Perhaps one without the other – economics in a setting where no one racialized it, or racial prejudice at a time of economic prosperity – would not have brought about the same result. Together, they were tinder for the bonfire that resulted. And Trump was the match.

Turner Station. The African American working class has received much less attention than the white working class in the media and the academic literature recently because they did not support Donald Trump – and therefore may not be able to help us understand why Trump won. Nevertheless, their observations can be instructive as to the nature of the black rejection of Trump. I asked African Americans who were living in Turner Station, or who grew up there, what they thought when they heard Trump’s campaign slogan, “Make America Great Again.” I heard the same answer several times: It wasn’t that great for us. Richard, the shipyard worker with four college-educated children, responded:

We understand where the backlash gonna be. We know we going be the stepping stone.

Interviewer: Tell me more about that.

Okay. When I say stepping-stone, right, was when America supposed to have been at its greatest, right, we were getting used books [in segregated schools], we were getting bad jobs, we were getting bad health and everything. It wasn’t that great for us.

The son of a black professional who resided in Turner Station said:

When he said he wants to make America great again, it was great for them during the time. But like I got friends, white friends, who like maybe a little bit older than me, say “Wasn’t it great?”. . . It wasn’t great for me then. But they don’t -- they tell me that how great it was, but the society has been separated so long that they never had any contact with blacks, so how would you know that things weren’t great for us if you don’t think about it.

A Turner Station man whose father was a truck driver and whose mother worked in an electronics factory, and who became a college professor, said, “It wouldn’t be great, it would be going back to Jim Crow.” He offered these thoughts about the black working class in the past:

So, alright, so, marginality is something that came to mind when I was thinking about meeting with you and I looked over the things. These folks came out of that, you know, that migration and there were marginal opportunities on the edge of economies . . . So, they were marginal to the workforce. My father in the trucking, they didn’t want him to – he got a union badge, the teamster’s badge, but when he lined up to go get for the work, he was seen as black . . . And, so, you’re there but you’re not there. You’re there but you’re there on forbearance of people who got the power.

Was there racialized labor in Turner Station when the Point was at its peak? Yes, but of a different kind from the whites in Dundalk. It comprised a relationship to the labor market in which blacks could be

hired for industrial work and, compared to other blacks, make a good living. They did so, nevertheless, as marginal citizens: The unions resisted them for decades. They were shunted to the least desirable jobs. They made less money than comparable whites. Their children went to segregated schools. They and their adult children have no desire to make America great like that again.

Is there racialized labor in Turner Station today? Yes, but of yet another kind: The industrial jobs are gone, and the neighborhood is dominated by low-income renters, many of whom have a tenuous relationship to the labor market. I have already noted the high housing vacancy rate and high percentage of female householders. The children of the industrial workers have moved on. The college professor said of the generation that left:

We cherish what it was, but we're not stupid. We understand that it wasn't the best thing, it was somebody's seconds. That it was – that we had to leave in order to get – some of us had to leave in order to get something better.

The older people still in the neighborhood bemoan the loss of community, but they understand why many of their children have moved to better neighborhoods and better careers – the kinds of neighborhoods and careers that were not available to them when they were young adults in segregated Baltimore.

One also gets the sense, however, that had Trump not run on themes that many blacks see as an effort to restore white supremacy, he could have gotten some support from the current and former residents of Turner Station. Richard complained about the demise of Sparrows Point in terms not much different from the white retired workers. He talked about the tough situation that the closing of the plant left his friends and him in:

You know, you taking guys that were making way above their pay grade educational wise, right? Because they should have been making minimum wage, right, but they weren't making minimum wage. And they were sending their kids to college for the first time. It was some guys were buying farms down south, buying homes, and then, bam, the bottom falls out of this thing. Okay. . .

So then I looked at it like, okay, how do you start over? There is no starting over. You dead in the water. Because most of the guys were in their late 50s, early 60s, who's gonna hire them? . .

Because once I retired, I had my life insurance, I had my benefits, I had my pension. Well when Bethlehem cut all that, right, they cut all that. My benefits left, my life insurance left.

Richard is referring to the Bethlehem Steel bankruptcy filing, which allowed the company to end medical and life insurance coverage for retired workers, despite a union contract in which the company had agreed to provide these benefits to retirees. Those who were too young to qualify for Medicare were left with expensive health care options; some went without coverage. The unanticipated end to retirement benefits was felt by black and white workers alike.

Bruce's father said of that period:

Everything started diminishing, little by little. And one of our main adversaries was foreign steel. Foreign steel. That was just cutting us out of, cutting us. And the bad part about it was the government, they were in cahoots with foreign steel, it was cheaper, they were getting it cheaper, but it was taking jobs out of our backyard. No question about it. We had rallies, "Stand up for steel," we was over Washington, we was out Annapolis, we was anywhere possible we could go rally, stand up, try to fight for our jobs.

But no one in the federal or state government was willing to do anything.

A deeply-religious long-time Turner Station resident reacted with indignation when I had the temerity to ask why more black steelworkers don't support Trump. ("My God, do I have to answer that? Look what comes out of his mouth!") Still, he said, there was one issue on which he agreed with Trump: "I don't like this abortion, getting rid of babies, I don't like that. I never did like it." Surveys show that African Americans are less supportive of abortion rights than are whites.¹¹ A non-racist Trump could have won more votes from the black working class, who are concerned about industrial decline and are more socially-conservative in some respects than whites. The Trump of 2016, however, had no chance to win the votes of the African Americans in Turner Station.

Cultural Mindsets

Listening to Dundalk residents, one gets the sense that their stance regarding African Americans and Hispanics depends on how their lives are going. Currently, their lives are not going as well as their parents' lives did. Relative to the expectations they had while growing up in stable, prosperous steelworker families, their adulthood is often disappointing. And as Chuck said, "When you struggle financially . . . You look for someone to blame." In contrast, when things are going well, they may not see themselves as threatened by other groups. "It's a matter of circumstance, absolutely," the former editor told me. "Under favorable circumstances, the better angels of their nature come forth." He added:

Well, you've got generation after generations of prosperity and social stability and happiness in a community like Dundalk; that rug is pulled out and you've got a level of expectation that's been set fairly high and all of a sudden, the target of reality has been set awfully low. That's where the anger comes in. It's going to drive some sort of action. In this case, it's driven this bizarre social revolt.

In other words, Dundalk residents may have both a more inclusionary way of responding to the diversity around them when their lives are going well (e.g., the Hispanic immigrants are "very, very nice families") and a more exclusionary way when their lives are not going well ("There's been kind of a disproportionate amount of that [Section 8] happening in our areas"). Psychologists and sociologists call modes of thinking such as these "mindsets" or "cognitive schemas," by which they mean predispositions to understand the world in particular ways. These mental maps of how the world works help us deal with the complexity of everyday life by providing rules for how to behave. An older view in social science was that these mindsets are formed through socialization and are largely fixed throughout life, which would imply that individuals in Dundalk rarely change their beliefs. A newer view is that people have more than one mindset that they can choose from in their heads and that they may switch mindsets based on the situation. In the classic view of Swidler (1986), culture is a toolkit from which a

person can select the appropriate tool – the appropriate mindset -- for understanding a situation.

When the situation changes, so can the choice of tool – which mindset – to use.

It's unlikely, then, that we could sort the people of Dundalk into two fixed groups, the forever racially-intolerant and the always open-minded. They are often the same people: Individuals may shift over time from one mindset to the other. "It's a matter of circumstances, absolutely," the editor said. At the moment, given the recency of the closing of the steel plant, the exclusionary mindset is foremost in the minds of many residents. "When you struggle financially, you don't have that type of support system. You look for someone to blame," Chuck said. While this mindset may have led to the rise of racial resentment and anti-immigrant feeling in 2016, the inclusionary mindset, if conditions change, could allow more open feelings to rise in the future. If this perspective is correct, it is a mistake to view urban working-class whites as permanently focused on the declining dominance of the white majority or as inexorably anxious about the scale of immigration.

Nevertheless, people tend to stick with the mindset that they are currently using because it takes mental energy to switch to a different one. Changing people's ways of thinking can be a slow, difficult process. What would it take to get some of the Trump supporters in Dundalk to switch to a more inclusionary mindset? Offering them a way to regain the pride and dignity they derived from blue-collar work would have the best chance. Dundalk residents may yearn for the old days of secure, high-paying industrial jobs, but they increasingly know in their heads that the kinds of jobs that their families relied on for generations are gone. They realize that their children face an insecure economic future. How to restore dignity in this age of computerization and outsourcing is, of course, the great challenge. It would require more than warehouse jobs, as welcome as those may be and more than just "economics," if that just means wages and work – any work. It would also require rebuilding a pathway to self-worth. In the twentieth century, it was possible to attain self-worth through industrial labor. If that is no longer possible, then we may need to expand the definition of meaningful labor to include

activities such as caring for family members, the need for which is expanding in our rapidly aging society, or volunteer work, or contributing to the arts or culture (Beck, 2000; Lamont, 2019; Standing, 2011).

Such an expansion may seem farfetched, but that simply illustrates the magnitude of the task.

The Turner Station steelworker families were not included as equals at the plant until the 1970s, and even after that, some racial tension persisted. Nevertheless, they had access to good industrial jobs that did not require an advanced education. “All around us,” Bruce’s father said, “was blue-collar jobs. You had Western Electric. You had General Motors. You had Bethlehem Steel.” In raising their children, they emphasized education and upward mobility. Today those children are scattered across Baltimore City and its suburbs. Older parents and adult children talk nostalgically about the Turner Station of the past. But they also remember the racial discrimination at the plant and the segregation of housing and education that accompanied it. They interpreted the slogans of the Trump campaign as signaling a desire to go back to the days when whites were dominant and blacks were discriminated against. They do not want to go back to those days. They almost unanimously voted against Trump.

Meanwhile, the housing void in Turner Station caused by their departures has been filled with low-income renters who have moved in from Baltimore City and from other parts of Baltimore County. One might naively think that the low-income families in Turner Station today are the descendants of the steelworker families; but they are not. Rather, they are a generation of African Americans who reached adulthood too late to take advantage of the opportunities for blue-collar jobs that the steelworker families had. All of the firms that Bruce’s father listed have closed. Blue-collar Baltimore is in steep decline. The brief window of upward mobility for working-class African Americans through industrial employment is now closed.

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Notes

¹I first consulted with knowledgeable sources such as faculty members at the local colleges and authors of histories of Sparrows Point, Dundalk, and Turner Station. I used these contacts to find individuals from steelworker families with a connection to Dundalk or Turner Station – many who still lived in these communities and others who grew up there and have moved out. I sometimes met separately with members of two generations in the same family. I also interviewed community leaders and social workers. In all, I conducted 35 interviews. I also attended events and lectures at which former steelworkers and their families gathered. In addition, I analyzed U.S. Bureau of the Census data from the Decennial Censuses of 1960 through 2010 and the pooled 2013- 2017 sample collected by the Bureau’s American Community Survey and did archival work at the Dundalk Historical Society. I would like to particularly thank Bill Barry, retired Director of Labor Studies at the Community College of Baltimore County, and the Board of the Henrietta Lacks Legacy Group, including Servant Courtney Speed and Professor Adele Newson-Horst of Morgan State University. I have changed the names of the persons I have quoted, and I have altered some of the details of their lives, in order to protect their privacy.

² All statistics about Dundalk and Turner Station, unless otherwise noted, are from the public use files of the Decennial Censuses or the pooled 2013-2017 American Community Survey. Because Dundalk is an unincorporated place, its boundaries are not legally fixed. Most of the census tracts that correspond to what people think of as Dundalk are in Baltimore County, which is shaped like a doughnut that encloses, but excludes, the doughnut hole of the city of Baltimore. Yet an edge of what local residents consider to be Dundalk extends across the county/city boundary into Baltimore itself. There is little agreement about the boundaries of this edge, so I have not added in the population of nearby Baltimore City tracts. I am also excluding from my definition of Dundalk the population in the census tract that most closely maps onto the historically black neighborhood of Turner Station, which abuts Dundalk. I consider Turner Station to be a separate community, which is consistent with local definitions.

³ These are my calculations from census data that show the number of people in various income categories. There is certainly some error in these calculations, but the clear finding is that despite their lower levels of education, the average Dundalk household had as much as, or more income than, the average white household nationally.

⁴ Ninety-one percent is probably an underestimate of the percentage of Turner Station residents who were African American. The figure comes from Census Bureau information on 1960 census tract 1200-67-10 in Baltimore County, which encompasses not only what locals would consider as historic Turner Station but also a smaller area to the west of Broening Highway known officially as Carnegie Plat, but often referred to by residents as “White Turners,” as well as the south-of-Dundalk-Avenue portion of the almost-all-white Watersedge neighborhood. From 1970 onward, the relevant census tract is 4213 in Baltimore County. All statistics on Turner Station, unless explicitly stated otherwise, are based on the population in census tract 1200-67-10 in 1960 and census tract 4213 from 1970 to the present.

⁵ These 1960 figures are the mean income of black families in the census tract that encompassed Turner Station, 1200-67-10, and the mean income of black families nationwide. Both figures are from the 1960 Decennial Census.

⁶ Section 8 data for 2018 were obtained from the U.S. Housing and Urban Development website, “Assisted Housing: National and Local,” accessed on September 24, 2019 from <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/assthsg.html>.

⁷ From the 2010 decennial census. For the nation as a whole, the figure for white families is 26 percent.

⁸ For 1960, this comparison uses the category “operatives and kindred workers” for employed males in the civilian labor force, subtracting out bus drivers, truck drivers, and taxi drivers (collectively 3 percent of all employment), who were measured separately in 2013-2017. For 2013-2017, it uses the category of “production occupations” for employed males in the civilian labor force. The 1960 figures refer to census tract 1200-67-10; for the 2013-2017 data files, the corresponding census tract is 4213.

⁹ The saying is attributed to St. Jerome.

¹⁰ These figures come from the election results reported by Baltimore County for District 12, with the precinct at Fleming Center (Turner Station) consider separately.

For 2016, see

<http://resources.baltimorecountymd.gov/Documents/Elections/2016/2016generalbyprecinctofficial.pdf>

For 2012, see

<http://resources.baltimorecountymd.gov/Documents/Elections/2012/precinctdetail130515Flat.pdf> .

For 2008, see

<http://resources.baltimorecountymd.gov/Documents/Elections/08genresults/precinctresultsfinal021009.pdf>

For 2004, see

<http://resources.baltimorecountymd.gov/Documents/Elections/04generalofficialresults.pdf>

I have excluded the small number of votes for third-party candidates. The 2014 local election results are taken from the community’s weekly newspaper, the *Dundalk Eagle*.

¹¹ For instance, in the 2018 General Social Survey, 45 percent of whites, but only 41 percent of blacks, thought that a married woman should be able to obtain an abortion if she is pregnant and doesn’t want any more children. (Author’s calculations.)