

# Relations between Government and Citizens: Baltimore Case Study

## Interview Guide

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### **About you**

1. Could you say a bit about yourself/ your role...

### **Approach to Public Spending since 2008**

One part of our research is about the approach taken in different cities to public spending *after* the global financial crisis (in 2008).

2. What do the terms public spending cuts/ austerity / fiscal squeeze convey to you?
  - What other terms would you use?
  - What do these mean, or have these meant, for your activity/ organization?
3. What approach to public spending has been adopted by Baltimore City government?
  - Do you think this approach is reasonable?
4. Do you think the approach is ‘more of the same’ or has there been a marked change in City government’s approach since 2008?
5. In Baltimore, where do you think the effects of public spending cuts have been most and least severe?
  - At what scale? (city-wide, neighborhood level)
  - In what policy areas/ which public services?
  - Which groups (for example, the young, elderly, those on welfare) have been most affected?
  - Has this affected different neighborhoods differently?
6. Who do you think are the most important players in the City in deciding how spending cuts/ fiscal policies are made? [NB: fiscal policy is government spending and revenue (mainly taxes)]
7. Which actors would you say are most important in managing the effects of spending cuts?

### **Cooperation between City government/ agencies and others**

The second issue we are looking at is cooperation between City government/ its agencies and other actors (such as businesses; non-profit organizations, foundations, universities; community groups and social movements) in determining, managing or contesting public spending cuts/ fiscal squeeze.

8. How important is cooperation?
  - What are the main forms of cooperation in the City? (formal and informal)
  - Who are the key actors? What are they trying to accomplish? Are these forms of cooperation durable?
  - What impact do these forms of cooperation have on alleviating social problems/ making the City and its communities more resilient?
  - What impact do they have on social divisions/ conflicts?

9. From a long-term perspective (if you can), do you have a sense of whether the way City government cooperates with other actors (businesses, non-profits, community groups) has changed due to public spending cuts / fiscal policies?
  - Would you say there was continuity or change in the role of different actors – such as businesses, non-profits, unions, community groups, protest groups?
  - Overall, would you say that cooperation has become more or less important in Baltimore?
10. Does cooperation influence the way decisions are made/ implemented/ opposed?
  - Do you think that the influence of other actors on City government is growing or declining?
  - Which actors would you say are now more or less important?
11. Has cooperation made any difference (positive or negative) to the way you/ client groups/ citizens experience public spending cuts / fiscal squeeze?
12. To what extent have people, groups or organisations criticised/opposed public spending cuts in Baltimore?
  - Who are key critics of public spending cuts?
  - What are their tactics or strategies?
  - Has City government/ its agencies resisted or opposed cuts, made at City level or by other levels of government?
  - What do you think those wanting to resist or overcome cuts hope to achieve?
13. More generally, do you see any relationship between public spending cuts / fiscal squeeze and the health of democracy in Baltimore?
14. Looking forward, do you think the way public spending cuts / fiscal squeeze have been managed or governed so far is sustainable? Why (not)?
  - Is this related to what the City can do (as opposed to other levels of government)?
  - How would you describe the federal government's approach to public spending cuts/ fiscal squeeze? And the State of Maryland? How has this affected the City?
  - Are there any potential threats or stabilising factors?

### **Finally...**

15. Can you recommend any people or organisations you think should be approached to participate in the research (next phase of interviews June/ July 2016)?
16. Do you have any other comments you would like to make, or questions you'd like to ask?

### **Dissemination Workshop**

When the research is complete in mid-2017, the researcher will return to Baltimore to hold a workshop on the research findings for those interviewed and other interested parties.

- Would you be interested in attending?
- What would you like to see from the research?

### **Thank you**

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