BRIDGES: Building Black-Brown Solidarities Across the U.S.

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Like many of our products at the USC Dornsife Equity Research Institute (formerly the USC Program for Environmental and Regional Equity (PERE) and the USC Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration(CSII)), there are a few authors listed on the cover but there are many members of our team who contributed. Our thanks to Cynthia Moreno, Gabe Watson (formerly at USC), and Edward Muña who pitched into the research effort. Dalia Lomelí Gonzalez, Lance Hilderbrand, Kim Tabari, and Rhonda Ortiz provided reviews of the report. Eunice Velarde Flores, Lauren Perez, and Jamie Flores supported the authors, particularly in making arrangements for site visits and writing retreats. Gladys Malibiran provided communications and design support. Our gratitude to each of you!

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When we first set to writing this report, in some ways, it seemed like we were living in a different world: the global COVID-19/Coronavirus pandemic had not yet hit. Now finishing this report under ongoing Stay-At-Home orders, its social and economic consequences have become clear: oppressed communities are hit the hardest, namely people of color, immigrants, disconnected seniors, unhoused youth and families, formerly incarcerated individuals, and more. As with Hurricane Katrina and other national tragedies, this crisis has once again lifted the veil on the reality of our nation.

That heightened awareness, followed quickly by the brutal murders of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd, led to a sea change of racial consciousness across our nation. Sustained and widespread Black Lives Matter protests in all 50 states lifted the language and the substance of the debate around interrupting anti-Blackness to levels unseen in this nation since the Civil Rights era. While before, some of us authors felt like we were born in the wrong era – longing to see such mobilization around Black lives at this scale – we find ourselves and this report right on time.

Indeed, while the world has changed since we started this report, the substance of our writing has not. The analysis of this report is untouched – one of the most important fights in the U.S. is against white supremacy and the systems that continue to degrade, demean, and devalue the lives of others. We still argue that the fight for liberation will be won by centering communities of color and building up our capacities to work in solidarity with each other. The need to hold systems accountable is as urgent as always, just more visible than ever.

As we write, we acknowledge our relative privileges—we have jobs, healthcare, status, and some of us are insulated from the violence endemic to this country. That is not the case for too many in this nation. And so, while this report is going out into the world in the midst of pain, loss, and anger, we hope that it contributes to ending the ongoing health and violence crises in communities of color across our nation, in or out of a pandemic, in or out of civil unrest. For that to happen, it will require that the solidarity being extended in this moment is fully embraced as just the beginning of a deeper shift in our country and the world.

Manuel, Ashley, Preston, Rachel, and Vanessa
Los Angeles, California, November 1, 2020
Introduction: American Futures

Why This Report?

The projection that the U.S. will become “majority minority” in 2045 is a headline gripping the national imagination – filling some with hope, roiling others with anxiety (Vespa, Medina, and Armstrong 2020). Many observers have noted the impact of this demographic change on the nation’s current politics, including the ways in which President Trump has stirred up his base with racist and xenophobic appeals to a past America. Tragedies like the 2019 shooting in El Paso, Texas, show how anti-immigrant rhetoric can turn into anti-Latino action. In contrast, multiracial solidarity like that seen in the aftermath of the Pulse shooting in Orlando, show the possibilities for a different future, one where people of color forge a progressive turn in America.

For that latter possibility to become a reality, both our analysis and our politics needs to go beyond the traditional white–non-white divide. Daniel Martinez Hosang and Natalia Molina lift up the importance of studying “subordinated groups” in context with each other, rather than in relationship to white groups: “By making these kinds of relational connections, scholars can...comprehend the ways power operates within a much wider framework” (2019:11). That is, understanding the dynamics of how Black and Latino communities function together in Jackson, for example, tells a great deal about the broader context and how power and white supremacy culture work to oppress communities and tries to divide them. This sort of exploration is the charge of this report.

At the Equity Research Institute (ERI) at the University of Southern California (USC), the distinct and common histories and projects of communities of color have long been part of our analytical lens, partly because of our location. We are located in a state—California—that crossed the majority-minority threshold in 1998 and a city—Los Angeles—that became majority people of color a full decade earlier. As such, we have long explored how a “new majority” can overcome its differences, find new solidarities, and work together for a more inclusive society.

This report continues that work with a focus on one part of our multiracial future: African American-Latino collaboration, or, as it is more commonly known in the field of community organizing, Black-Brown coalition building. We realize that this is just one piece of our multicultural mosaic. Equally important possibilities for future study include ties with and between indigenous communities, the complexity within the Asian American and Pacific Islander populations, and organizing between immigrants and non-immigrants, to name a few. However, for a few reasons outlined below, we confine our attention to Black and Latino communities.

First, African Americans and Latinos are the largest non-white groups in the U.S and are projected to remain so heading into 2050. Currently, African Americans and Latinos comprise 12.3 percent and 17.6 percent, of the U.S. population, respectively, and by 2050, they are expected to increase to 12.7 and 24.1 percent of the U.S. population, respectively. This means that African Americans are going from being the largest non-white group to the second largest, which could mean decreased political power. After all, Black Americans fought for their political power—so it is not easily relinquished—and forged the way for other non-white groups to have their voices heard; theirs has largely been an inclusive position on other people of color. Whether and how the emerging Latino voice expresses itself in solidarity will help determine the viability of a politics based on the common interests and values of people of color.

Another reason why the Black-Brown dynamic is central to examine has to do with residential patterns. Recent data suggest that a standard measure of segregation between Blacks and whites, the so-called dissimilarity ratio, has fallen slightly during this decade in America’s 100 largest metros. Nonetheless, most “white residents of large metropolitan areas live in neighborhoods that remain overwhelmingly white” (Frey 2018). Indeed, another measure of segregation, the so-called exposure index, indicates that the likelihood of African Americans having white neighbors has barely inched up while the likelihood of having Latino neighbors has gone up nearly 40 percent. Hence, this is an important relationship to explore for forging community-based organizations and understandings.

Further, while both groups share in the experience of brutal racism in the U.S.—and feel common pressures in the current political context—there have been efforts to pit Black communities against immigrants, many of whom are Latino. There are real concerns and tensions, particularly about job competition and elected positions, but more often, there is a potential common agenda against economic and political disenfranchisement (Pastor, De Lara, and Scoggins 2011). Across the country, we have seen evidence that political education and the long, persevering work of alliance building can result in power building and policy campaigns that benefit both Black and Latino communities. There is more to be won together than apart and both groups are fighting on shared fronts: quality education, political enfranchisement, decent and well-paying jobs, affordable housing, healthy environments, and more.

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2 Current percentages are taken from the 2017 American Community Survey from (Ruggles et al. 2017) and the 2050 projections from the National Equity Atlas with 2015 Woods and Poole Economics, Inc. projections.
Finally, working at USC and collaborating with local groups in South Los Angeles, we have had a front-row seat in seeing the shifts in local Black-Brown dynamics. Once 80 percent African American in 1970, South LA is now nearly two-thirds Latino, a phenomenon we examine in *Roots|Raíces: Latino Engagement, Place Identities, and Shared Futures in South Los Angeles* (Pastor, Hondagneu-Sotelo, et al. 2016). In that report, we examined the demographic changes, neighborhood conditions, and ways that civic organizations are (or are not) adapting to the new reality. We found a hopeful message: While the initial years of change were characterized by some well-publicized conflicts, over time, many community-based organizations played an important role in forging common ground. Black and Brown residents rallied together around notions of everyday social justice struggles that community-based organizations brought to the foreground and along the way forged intertwined civic identities specific to their home in South LA.

**The Cases and the Take-Aways**

While *Roots|Raíces* told the particular story of one mega-neighborhood, many historically Black neighborhoods across the U.S. are now home to Latinos–often immigrants. In this report, we extend the analytical frame developed in *Roots|Raíces* to understand the nature of Black-Brown organizing in other regions across the country. We specifically focus on how such cross-racial coalitions are developing in four locations: Jackson, Mississippi; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Orlando, Florida; and Oakland, California.

Why these locales? As the case studies will show, they represent the very different ways that America is transforming:

- Jackson has a very small, emerging Latino population in the midst of a largely Black-white metropolitan (metro) area, a place where the Civil Rights legacy has created a foundation for immigrant rights work.
- Milwaukee is a segregated Midwestern metro with an established (and growing) Latino community—a region where Black-Brown coalitions may be emerging.
- In Orlando, many residents come from the Caribbean, complicating notions of separate Black and Latino identities because of common Latin American roots and immigration stories.
- While Oakland’s dynamics are similar to those in Los Angeles—same state, both in major metros—there are elements unique to Oakland, such as the deep history of radical movements for justice, the pivotal role of the Black Panther Party that emerged from that context, and the role such radical movements played in the city’s social justice history.
What do we make of these four case studies and our previous learnings from South LA? While we certainly hope you make your way through the whole report—it’s worth it, we promise!—for ease, we offer three major takeaways here:

Our first big takeaway: Black-Latino organizing is not a sideshow, it is the main act for racial equity and structural transformation in the U.S. In 2045, the U.S. will be majority people of color but in many metros across the country, this is already the case. Figure 1a shows the counties that are already majority people of color (dark red); Figure 1b shows where we will be in 2050. As this and other data indicate, we are headed towards a nation where it will be important to consider racial dynamics between people of color, rather than solely between white and non-white Americans. These dynamics and their evolution over time is not just a matter of “getting along”: to the extent that Black and Brown communities can forge lasting coalitions, this becomes an anchor point for the broader movement for economic, social, and environmental justice.

**Figure 1:** Maps of Demographic Change by U.S. counties, 2010 and 2050

*a. 2010*

*b. 2050*

Source: Author analysis using Woods & Poole Economics projects data (adjusted using the 2010 census), Census TIGER/Line, NHGIS, and ESRI.
Our second key takeaway: Relationships and dynamics in Black and Brown communities are often a reflection of specific regional histories and conditions; they do not manifest out of nowhere and they are not uniform across the national landscape. In Oakland, the Black Panther Party provided a foundation for radical organizing efforts across the city. In Jackson, the historic Civil Rights Movement supports the ongoing struggle for equity but within a conservative state, coalitions are stretched thin. In Orlando, Latinos run the gamut from conservative to liberal while in Jackson newer Latino immigrants often remain in the shadows, not getting involved with politics. In Milwaukee, neighborhood segregation has been so significant that African Americans and Latinos may have had significantly fewer interactions than their counterparts in other regions complicating the future of coalition building. In our previous study on South LA, we found that residential integration has been key to forming a multiethnic place-based identity that lends itself to Black-Brown organizing.

Our third takeaway: Given the variations in contexts and histories, nuanced approaches are required to build strong bridges between Black and Brown communities. For example, since the Black-white color line is a dominant paradigm in Jackson (unlike in multiracial California) there is work to be done simply to create a context where Latinos feel safe stepping out of the shadows. In Milwaukee, connections with African Americans may be built as they move into the Latino Southside neighborhood. Oakland’s possibilities are shaped by its history of radical politics, while Orlando has complexities that arise in part from rapid growth within Latino communities—and big differences by immigration status, national origin, language, skin color, generation, class, and other factors. In short, while a common goal might be to improve relationships between African Americans and Latinos—for purposes of transformation, understanding, and power building—each place requires a different approach to get to a shared result of interethnic collaboration.

**Methods, Themes, and Caveats**

*Bridges|Puentes* jumps right into a description of the quantitative and qualitative criteria used to select the areas we visited and the stories we researched. We then go through our four main cases, offering nuances about the different histories hinted at above. We start with data on each place and then transition towards the stories and themes offered up by local stakeholders we interviewed. These case studies are relatively short and are meant to be a snapshot of dynamic places constantly shifting because of politics, economics, and demography.

We then offer five themes that might be gleaned across the sites. First, we stress the need to understand history and context. Second, we argue—partly based on these four cases but also on our study of South LA—for the need to center the struggle against anti-Blackness in political and community work. We suggest that this is important.
because, along with settler colonialism, anti-Black racism is the bedrock of the American project — it is both fundamental to and persistent in the current American experience. Grounding relationship-based alliance building in this fact is necessary to building trust with African-American communities. Third, we suggest that lifting up anti-Blackness is crucial to forming a different sort of Latino identity—one that does not rush to immigrant assimilation into the status quo. But rather, one that identifies with communities where the pathways to upward mobility, themselves, need to be altered.

A fourth key theme we highlight is the utility of a disciplined analysis of power. Power analysis illustrates the ways that outsiders can try to pit Black and Latino communities against each other in ways that obscure the need for an interconnected, broader fight against oppressive systems. A final theme we note from the cases is the ways in which tailored and intersectional approaches to multiracial power building can be helpful and why and how it is that youth are leading in that endeavor. With each of these themes, we include a handful of very practical recommendations for funders, organizers, policy advocates, and other racial equity stakeholders.

Several caveats before jumping in, most reflecting the need for clarity and precision in Black-Brown analysis and organizing. First, we are clearly not covering the universe of Black-Brown organizing; we are only looking at four places in addition to our earlier research on South LA. While we have tried to select a diverse set of places, there are surely dynamics we are missing simply because we could not go everywhere. Second, and related, we do not deeply explore the experiences and outcomes of other communities of color and indigenous nations, with the exception of including them when we discuss each region’s general demography. Oppressed groups experience their own distinct set of challenges that are interconnected with the broader movement for liberation. Still, the genesis of this project was to create a new narrative to contextualize and support Black-Latino organizing, and we hope that what we lose in breadth, we gain from maintaining this focus.

Third, both the lessons we draw and the lens we brought to the cases were deeply informed by our earlier study on South LA, a place where the demography and politics have shifted in ways that we think presage other locales in America. We do not expect readers to have already plowed through that research, so we try to explain relevant findings for comparison here. Suffice it to say that learnings from South LA—the need to grapple with feelings of Black loss in the face of centuries of asset-stripping and worries about new displacement, the importance of encouraging Latino civic engagement, and the ways in which youth engagement can help move forward new alliances—all fed into our research questions and methods when looking at the other cases.

Fourth, as mentioned earlier, we often discuss the need to confront “anti-Blackness” when trying to bring communities together. “Anti-Blackness” is the institutional, political, cultural, and economic treatment of Black people as if they were “other than human;” treating Black bodies with disregard towards their erasure and death. As a settler colonial nation built by slave labor, anti-Black racism is baked into the DNA of the U.S., with a consequent institutionalization of Black suffering. Because the devaluation of Black life is uniquely enshrined in and perpetuated by our nation’s political economy,
anti-Blackness continues to serve as a tool and driving strategy of the enduring racial contract. Challenging it is key to Black-Brown unity (Dumas 2016; Dumas and Ross 2016; Sexton 2010; Williams et al. 2019; Wynter 1979). Not only does racism and colorism in the Latino community need to be challenged but also the larger structures of white supremacy that stand in the way of communities of color coming together (e.g., HoSang and Molina 2019).

Fifth, we use the term “Black-Brown” organizing throughout this report as it is a common phrase in this sector of work. However, we acknowledge that many groups beyond Latinos may identify as “Brown” and that some Latinos may not identify as such. We are also aware of the problematic dynamics that come with conflating “Latinos” and “immigrants”—particularly the racialization of immigration and the erasure of Black immigrants. We try to be as specific as possible throughout, but there are some necessarily fuzzy edges; for example, the (non-)issue of job competition is distinctively framed as a “Black-versus-immigrant” issue and that often leads to challenges between African Americans and Latinos, regardless of nativity (Vaca 2004). We are as precise and intentional as possible with our choice of language and framing throughout the report.

Another terminological issue is our use of the word “Latino.” We are more than aware that terms like “Hispanic” and “Latino” have been, from their origins, a social construct used for political ends. We also acknowledge that others are using the term “Latinx” or “Latine” to move away from gendered binaries that are being challenged throughout our nation. These challenges have great merit and we have, in some of our reports, utilized this emerging language. That said, interviewees in this project used Latino almost exclusively and sometimes Hispanic, a more common term in some parts of our nation. Language and terminology are in constant flux across space and time—and this report reflects the period in which we conducted the research.

Indeed, that is our final caveat. While this project spanned the course of several years, all the interviews took place in 2017. As such, the interviewee affiliations are reflective of their respective roles at that time. For this publication, we updated the empirical background data and we were also able to take a bit of a longer view of each location. By using both data sources, we were better equipped to understand and contextualize recent events: Milwaukee in the midst and aftermath of the anti-union Walker administration; the way that African Americans stood up for immigrants even before the massive federal raids in the Jackson area in 2019; and the immediate and longer-lasting impacts of the Pulse shooting in Orlando on the broader social movement infrastructure. Although snapshots are informative, seeing a place through several years helps to clarify what is momentary and what is not, and we hope this adds to the utility of this report to the field.
The Cases for Collaboration

We use four distinct case studies to help tell the story of Black-Brown conflict, collaboration, and creativity in the U.S. These include Jackson, Mississippi; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Orlando, Florida; and Oakland, California. How did we choose these four places? We used a three-step, mixed-methods approach grounded in census data and qualitative local research to decide which places to select. While details are available in Appendix A: Methodology, we offer a brief overview here.

Our first step was to analyze demographic changes over the past several decades for the 100 largest metropolitan areas in the country. We looked specifically at measures of racial segregation and inter-group exposure, as well as more basic variables like the growth of Latino immigrants and changes in the Black share of the population. Based on these measures, we developed a typology:

- **“Emerging”** regions are characterized by being a historical hub of a Black community and/or having a significant Black population — usually a quarter or more of the overall population — while also gaining a small (often less than 5 percent of the total population) but rapidly growing Latino-immigrant population in the past two decades (e.g., Jackson).

- **“Advanced”** metro areas were further along in these processes than emerging regions; they tended to have a more sizeable Latino-immigrant population, while also having a significant share of native-born Latinos, and either a stable or slightly growing Black population that was usually the largest non-white group in the region (e.g., Milwaukee).

- **“Legacy”** regions have large Latino and Black populations, with the former having been largely established in prior decades but growth rates for both now slowing. In these regions, a larger share of recent population growth was driven by native-born Latinos; as a result, Latinos are approaching the status of largest racial or ethnic group in the region (e.g., Orlando and Oakland).
Using these categories, we selected eight metro areas that showed the most pronounced trends within each category (i.e., emerging, advanced, and legacy), and represented diversity in terms of U.S. Census Bureau-defined regions (i.e., the Northeast, Midwest, South, and West). We then developed regional profiles for all eight cases, integrating neighborhood research and city-level data, along with a historical timeline of the region and web-based qualitative analysis of the landscape of Black-Brown coalition building. Based on these profiles, we chose our list of four regions to visit.3

After selecting Jackson, Milwaukee, Orlando, and Oakland, we did further preliminary research in order to identify the organizations that would have the most insight about the landscape, dynamics, and state of Black-Latino organizing in each place. In the winter of 2017, three researchers on our team visited each locale for one or two days, conducting hour-long interviews (and hosting one focus group) to try to uncover the story of Black-Brown organizing. A list of interviewees is included in Appendix B: List of Interviewees. Upon returning to Los Angeles, team debriefs involved sharing stories, looking for themes, and identifying variations from the South LA experience. These case studies cannot possibly include all of the rich detail of what is happening on the ground, but we focus on the instructive themes.

Jackson, MS

Civil Rights battleground and the blue capital of a red state, Jackson, Mississippi, continues its fight for justice while inviting recently arrived Latino immigrants into the struggle—whilst holding the distinction of being the poorest state in the union.4 As a region that still operates predominantly through a biracial lens, the very small Latino community is asked to find its place within the Black-white dynamic. In the midst of this, African-American leadership has taken an early and bold stance for immigrants, grounding the work for immigrant integration within the Civil Rights tradition, and seeding a strong multiracial coalition in this very conservative state.

The racial dynamic in Jackson has been defined by a stark, binary, socially-constructed color line, one which the new Latinos presence is undermining. As seen in Figure 2, Latinos grew from 0.6 percent of the metropolitan population in 1990 to 2.2 percent in 2015. According to one interviewee, there are more Latinos—on the order of twice as many—than reported because of the way census outreach was conducted. Spatially, interviewees commented on a Latino neighborhood forming just outside the metro area, in Canton, near several poultry plants that recruit immigrants from southern Mexico, Honduras, and Guatemala.5 Further, settling in Canton puts them away from the social and political action in Jackson and can lead to isolation and vulnerability. Not surprising then, Latinos living outside of Jackson have reported harsh anti-immigrant policing practices (Eaton 2011b). Most recently, several poultry plants in Canton and its surrounding communities were the sites of the nation’s largest single-state worksite enforcement action (Denham 2019). These plants already had a history of discriminating against their Black and Latino workers.

3 We chose not to visit Charlotte, NC; Detroit, MI; Fresno, CA; and New Orleans, LA metro areas.
4 The poverty rate in Mississippi in 2011-2015 was 22.9 percent, the highest in the nation. Additionally, 36.1 percent of Black
5 Latino immigrants were targeted for recruitment, particularly after African American’s organized for union recognition, better pay, and better working conditions (Stuesse 2019).
Mississippi has the largest share of Black residents in the country. In the Jackson region, African Americans are now the plurality in the Jackson region with a population reaching 48.5 percent, as seen in Figure 2. One interviewee reported that Black residents are also undercounted by a few percentage points, due to ‘many white enumerators who were assigned to the Delta [and who] would drive into an African-American town, do a “windshield survey,” not knock on doors, and “guessimate” the population.’ Concerns about undercounting are at fever pitch: while talk of adding new citizenship and country-of-origin questions seems to have fallen to the wayside, it has likely frightened away many from participation. Moreover, the shift to digital enumeration will only reinforce the implications of the digital divide and the COVID pandemic gagged in-person outreach efforts.

In the state, there is both a legacy and a contemporary reality of deep-seated racism. One of our interviewees indicated that in the “unique state” of Mississippi there is a sort of “if you’re white you need to be with these people, but if you’re Black you have to be with these people” mentality. Because African Americans are especially marginalized, there is pressure to identify with whiteness and, indeed, we heard some Latinos wanting to associate accordingly because of their negative perceptions of Black residents; this was very much informed by the racialized character of the region and likely on top of preconceived notions brought from home countries. However, at the grassroots level in general we found expressions of solidarity similar to what Jennifer Jones found in her research on Black and Latino workers in North Carolina. She builds on the work of Dawson (1994) and others and calls this the “minority linked fate” theory or the view that in a persistently racist society, the success and treatment of one group of people of color is linked to the success of another group of color (Jones 2019).

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6 While Mississippi is 38 percent African American, Washington D.C.’s share is 45 percent—but is not a state. For more, please see National Equity Atlas, www.nationalequityatlas.org.

7 Concerns about undercounting Latino and Black populations have only increased with proposed changes to the 2020 census questions. Continued questions about citizenship and country of origin have left many fearful that even fewer Latino and Black immigrants will participate. Undercounting non-white residents has always been a reality of the census which is only exacerbated by the current anti-immigrant climate (Berry 2018; Wang 2018). Additionally, the “digital first” approach for 2020 that will rely on online submissions could further isolate communities of color, particularly those most impacted by the digital divide (Berry 2018).
Anti-Blackness is indeed especially rampant in Mississippi. In 2017, an article in the Washington Post read “Black people in a Mississippi county are ‘under a permanent state of siege,’ according to an ACLU lawsuit” (Schmidt and Hawkins 2017). The article was mainly referencing policing in a county near Jackson (that includes Canton); however, interviewees in Jackson also highlight the attacks on voter rights and participation. For example, in February 2019, it was ruled that State Senate District 22, northwest of Jackson, violated the Voting Rights Act and that the plaintiffs—three African-American men—were not given “equal opportunity to participate in processes and to elect candidates of their choice” due to extreme gerrymandering that resulted in diluted Black voting power (Gstalter 2019). Further evidence of anti-Blackness: There is a current effort in west Jackson to “demolish a whole neighborhood but leave the Confederate Park, [so as to] build a dome stadium.” Brandon King from Cooperation Jackson went on to say, ‘They are calling Jackson State an “urban university,” which is different from an Historically Black College or University. They’re trying to shift the naming to change the demographics.’

Building power can be especially challenging in the state because of the underlying culture of hierarchy and patriarchy. Jed Oppenheim, Jackson Public School District Board Member, notes these challenges:

> Linked to our deep-seated racism, we have an issue with hierarchy and patriarchy. And it's always interesting to me. There's a respectability politics; “you're much older than me, so I don't have a voice.” And that dynamic plays out all the time at all levels. There's a sense that you don't really have a voice until you're the person at the top of the pecking order. And I think that plays out in the organizing space and I think it's a problem. So at the same time that we're silencing youth, we're also saying that they're not doing anything. But they are. They're very active. I have young people who were trying to get an ordinance passed to lower the voting age in Jackson. It would change the dynamic of voice in this community. At the city level that could have a huge impact. These same young people organized to have a student representation policy in our school district to ensure their voices are a part of every decision the district makes that impacts their lives.

Due to the ongoing oppression of communities of color and the state’s history, the legacy of Civil Rights resistance lives on in Jackson. Hollis Watkins, a veteran of the movement, remains an influence in the area, consolidating lessons from prior campaigns and passing them on to younger generations—from the urgency of mobilizing the community in spite of the lack of resources, to diffusing notions of hierarchical leadership. Brandon King further reflects that, “Something the elders have taught is about pacing yourself and it's a long haul...real change takes time and that it's not something that happens overnight.” This sort of long-view, relational approach is part of the culture of organizing in a small town with deep history like Jackson.

Currently, Mayor Chokwe Antar Lumumba is Jackson’s mayor. He is a former City Councilman who was himself elected in 2013, building on the legacy of his father, Chokwe Lumumba. The elder Lumumba arrived to Jackson in 1971. He was a leader in the Republic of New Afrika (a longtime Black nationalist organization), a lawyer for
Black causes including getting the state to retry the murder of Medgar Evans. Said to have been comfortable with being called “militant,” he earned the title of “America’s Most Revolutionary Mayor” (Buchsbaum 2014). Near the end of his short term as mayor, he introduced legislation to stop the police from asking about immigration status, modeling how immigrant rights are part of the legacy of Civil Rights (Eaton 2011b).

Lumumba, however, had just started moving on his agenda before his death in 2014. In 2017, city residents elected his son, Chokwe Antar Lumumba, and the community had subsequent wins to increase police transparency by releasing the names of officers involved in deadly shootings (Vicory 2019). What all this suggests is that Jackson is a blue city where its people and multiracial movements are not just contesting for local power but also state power. “The State Legislature has called a State Action against the [anti-profiling ordinance] but they haven’t been able to be successful,” says Patricia Ice of the Mississippi Immigrant Rights Alliance (MIRA). Organizations know one another, share resources, and form coalitions as a strategy to address the constant threats against unity and the divisive agenda of the state government.

The MIRA was formed in the fall of 2000 to press the state for the inclusion of immigrants. MIRA is a non-profit organization of “more than 200 paid members statewide and more than 700 affiliated members and constituent organizations” with the mission to “support immigrants in their struggles in the workplace and the greater community.”¹ While some interviewees noted the difficulty of engaging Latinos in politics, African-American leadership continues building off the strong Civil Rights culture in the region. Bill Chandler is the executive director of MIRA and an activist with roots in a multiracial neighborhood and labor organizing in Los Angeles and California. From the start, he…

…vowed never to ask white legislative allies to sponsor pro-immigrant legislation. He turned first to Representative Evans and to a former teacher and union leader, State Senator Alice Harden, to sponsor bills.

… Several local black civil rights activists sit on MIRA’s board, as do union officials. In community forums and meetings with immigrants, most of whom come with no knowledge of the bloody protests and legal struggles that dismantled segregation, Chandler and others point out that if it were not for black civil rights leaders, the immigrants’ rights movement would have no foundation. (Eaton 2011b, 2011a)

In the 2011 Mississippi legislative session, 33 anti-immigrant bills were introduced and all of them died because of coalition work spurred by MIRA (Eaton 2011b). Senate Bill 2179, which would have authorized law enforcement to ask about immigration status while enforcing other laws, was killed under the leadership of Black caucus member Edward Blackmon, Jr., Judiciary Committee Chair Willie Bailey, and other Democratic members of the House. Black caucus members used significant political capital ending these bills as well as speaking out publically to constituencies about the importance of their defeat (Eaton 2011b). The State’s Legislative Black Caucus, as well as Civil Rights organizations (including the state’s branch of the NAACP), and labor have played leading roles in fighting these bills, and continued to do so with House Bill 488 in 2012. HB 488 would have mandated immigration checks by law enforcement (Bacon 2012; Campbell

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¹ From MIRA’s mission statement available at www.yourmira.org/about/.
The Cases for Collaboration

In fighting HB 488, “Black labor mobilization was largely organized by the new pro-immigrant leadership of the state chapter of the A. Philip Randolph Institute, the AFL-CIO constituency group for black union members” (Bacon 2012). Unions UAW and UNITE HERE augmented MIRA’s resources to fight the bill—consistent with labor’s instrumental role in MIRA since the beginning (Eaton 2011b).

MIRA also worked with Black legislators to sponsor pro-immigrant bills. In 2019, State Representative Kathy Sykes introduced both HB 422 and HB 403 that would establish in-state college tuition for all Mississippi high school graduates—including undocumented students—and revise the requirements for driver’s licenses for immigrant drivers, respectively (Pittman 2019). Attesting to the power amassed by anti-immigrant proponents in the state, both bills died on their journey to becoming Mississippi state law.

MIRA set out to (and has succeeded in) building strategic relationships between Black Civil Rights, legislative, immigrant, labor organizations, and allies (Bacon 2012; Eaton 2011b)—in order to yield greater political power that would benefit everyone (Bacon 2012). Executive Director Chandler notes the importance of this kind of relationship: “This coalition would not benefit anyone if a Latino worker could not see African Americans as their allies” (Eaton 2011b). MIRA’s work has been so singular that stakeholders in Jackson noted that if MIRA did not exist, immigrant concerns would not be lifted up in coalition work. Part of this has to do with the broader state of organizing in Jackson: Organizers are stretched thin and fighting on multiple fronts against the very conservative government. Equity-oriented organizations show up for each other because their circles are small and there is consensus that they are in the same fight against oppression. In addition, history has brought organizers to conclude that unity is the way to counteract the local and state government’s targeting of workers’ rights, racial profiling, and anti-immigrant legislation.

Yet, interviewees indicated the need to deepen coalition work. “We would sit in each other’s meetings and we would sit with our own pockets of work, really wanting our voices to be heard around our issue but never figuring out how they cross each other,” noted Kim Robinson of the Children’s Defense Fund. Part of the challenge is resourcing the work of these organizations, part of it has to do with the many fronts on which organizers are fighting. One interviewee stressed the need for resources for organizing in particular: “Mobilizing is being reactionary to things that come up, but organizing is preparing and getting clarity to move forward without becoming solely reactive to everything going on.” MIRA is one example of getting ahead of the ball: “We started MIRA because we saw this Black and Brown war they [the Hoover Institute, the Pioneer Fund, and the American Family Councils] were trying to start,” said Jim Evans. The Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) has been part of creating division, to this day. As noted above, organizers got out in front of this war and started bringing together African Americans and immigrants from the start with labor as a key player.

A beautiful lady that falls in the lake, and every time you reach to grab a part of her, it would just come off...[it was said] if you just stick together you would be saved. Those were the types of stories that made the City workers of Jackson commit and they could see the benefits of them coming together.

BRENDA SCOTT, AFL-CIO

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8 Currently, applicants for a driver’s license must have a social security card.
The alliance of Civil Rights organizations and unionized labor in Jackson is seeing some victories, like the 2017 election of Mayor Lumumba with a stunning 93 percent of the vote (Nichols 2017; Rao 2017). Vowing to make Jackson “the most progressive city in the country,” Lumumba is especially strong on economic and social justice and is venturing to make Jackson a welcoming city for immigrants (Nichols 2017). Jackson is described as having been targeted by the U.S. Department of Justice when it was cracking down on sanctuary cities (Vicory 2018).

In 2018, the mayor faced down the libertarian Mississippi Justice Institute, a public policy organization, when they accused the City of destroying documentation of requests for immigration detainers from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Lumumba emphasized that police are not allowed to inquire about immigration status and thus have nothing to turn over to immigration officials (Vicory 2018). “This was a message to immigrants that they are welcome here in Jackson,” says Lumumba. “A bigger Latino population would help us politically, sure. But it is right, morally. If we’ve learned anything in Mississippi, it’s how to stand together against oppression” (Eaton 2011b).

**Milwaukee, WI**

The Milwaukee region is marked by stark residential segregation and a scarring history of deindustrialization. As with South Los Angeles, African Americans had access to the middle class as they came to the city for manufacturing jobs in the 1940’s. With the loss of manufacturing in multiple downturns since the 1980s, union jobs have been on a steady decline and the city has fallen on hard times (Levine 2016a). Simultaneously, the Latino-immigrant population has increased in the region over the past few decades, as seen in Figure 3. Yet multiethnic neighborhood coalitions are hard to come-by, partly because of the high degree of residential segregation. Nonetheless, some see the possibility for new Black-Brown organizing in connection with new residential integration and common frustration with the right-wing and union-busting politics of former Governor Scott Walker (2011-2016).

![Figure 3: Race and ethnicity by nativity: Milwaukee, WI Metro Area, 1990 and 2015](source: National Equity Atlas, nationalequityatlas.org)

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10 The city of Milwaukee’s Latino population rose from nearly 40,000 in 1990 to just over 70,000 in 2000 and up even more to about 110,000 in 2013-2017 (Levine 2016b:33, US Census Bureau/American Factfinder).
Residential segregation between Black and Latinos is the starkest among the four case studies in Milwaukee: Of the 100 metro areas with which we began, Milwaukee had the highest 2010 Black-Latino dissimilarity index, a standard measure of segregation (see Appendix A: Methodology). To the north, African Americans live in disinvested neighborhoods that were once home to a strong, middle class. “Milwaukee has suffered a 40 percent decline in manufacturing jobs since 1970s, when Schlitz, Pabst and American Motors reigned” (Rohde 2011). From 1970 to 2007, Milwaukee’s income segregation—its thinning out of the middle class—was second worst only to Philadelphia (Reardon and Bischoff 2011).

Unemployment as a result of these broader economic shifts has disproportionately impacted African Americans. As can be seen in Figure 4, the Black unemployment rate is nearly four times as high as the white unemployment rate and is more than twice as high as the Latino unemployment rate. Rather than finding themselves at work, many Black men now find themselves in prison: The state of Wisconsin has the highest incarceration rates for African Americans. Further, more than half of African American men in their thirties in Milwaukee County have been or currently are in prison (Pawasarat and Quinn 2013). The Prison Policy Initiative found that in 2010, there were nearly 10 times as many Black incarcerated people as non-Hispanic white incarcerated people in the state (2018). While Black Wisconsinites make up 6 percent of the population, they make up 38 percent of incarcerated people in the state.

"...when a community [does not] have a class of people that get up and go to work every single day. When you have high unemployment, with that we’ve seen high crime, and we’ve seen just this hopelessness."  
LEONARD THOMAS, URBAN UNDERGROUND

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**Figure 4: Unemployment rate by race/ethnicity: Milwaukee, WI Metro Area, 2017**

![Bar chart showing unemployment rates by race/ethnicity in Milwaukee, WI Metro Area, 2017](chart.png)

- **People of Color**: 8.6%
- **Mixed/Other**: 11.4%
- **Native American/Indigenous Nations**: 4.1%
- **Asian or Pacific Islander American**: 1.7%
- **Latino**: 5.3%
- **African-American or Black**: 12.5%
- **Non-Hispanic White**: 3.0%
- **All**: 4.5%

*Source: 2017 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA (Ruggles et al., 2017)*  
*Note: Universe includes the civilian population ages 25-64, no group quarters. Data reflect a 2013 through 2017 average.*
Many Black residents are in a constant job search, making it hard to focus on other pressing issues, like coalition building. Harambee, a northern and primarily Black neighborhood, is particularly pressed; one interviewee described the roots of inequitable development as structural racism and links it directly to disadvantaged Black workers. Another interviewee described how joblessness is impacting organizing; since people will thrive only if they are economically stable, advocacy has evolved to focus on these issues of employment and wages. These problems permeated through all the conversations, affecting how people relate to the City and each other.

Most Latinos live to the south – with the exception of a set of long-time Puerto Ricans along a corridor on the Northside. The Southside has historically been an immigrant neighborhood, albeit comprised of Polish immigrants until more recently (Gurda 2013). Interviewees reported that many Southside Latinos work in the retail and services industries. Unlike other metros in this study, African Americans are moving from a Black neighborhood (and to some degree from Chicago) into a Latino neighborhood—the Southside, a locale with more established organizations that is perceived as more economically vibrant and safer than the Northside. As lower-income African Americans have moved, anti-Blackness has cropped up.

So what is the state of Black-Brown organizing in the Milwaukee region?

One key contextual element has been the shifting role of unions. They are neither always nor necessarily aligned with community-based organizations or communities of color—for example, historically, Milwaukee unions excluded African Americans (Schneider 2015; Walker and Bennett 2015). Yet, in our work in Los Angeles, we have found that the more modern version of the labor movement can help build unity. When allowed to organize and bargain effectively, unions provide dollars and people power for campaigns that benefit workers, whether union or not. At their best, unions are able to lobby for projects that will create jobs—a sorely needed role in a metro with high unemployment, especially among African-Americans workers. Moreover, unions create a counterbalance to the accumulation of power by corporations and conservative, anti-union governments which in turn benefits other forms of progressive organizing.

However, in Wisconsin, according to Luz Sosa of Citizen Action Wisconsin, unions have seen their power sharply diminish. In 2011, the state legislature passed Act 10, under the leadership of Governor Scott Walker. The law placed limits on bargaining for wage increases—which can never exceed inflation; prohibited public employers from collecting dues on behalf of unions—even when workers consent; and required an annual majority vote to form (or continue) the union—no matter who shows up at that vote (Center on Wisconsin Strategy 2019). The effort to end collective bargaining rights for Wisconsin public employees used racialized language about public sector unions, making clear the common stake between labor and communities of color in fighting back (Walker and Bennett 2015).

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11 Interview with Fred Royal, NAACP, Milwaukee, WI by Rachel Rosner and Preston Mills, January 2017; see also Workneh and McLaughlin (2016).

Unfortunately, resistance was not successful. While public union membership was 46.6 percent in 2010—the year before Act 10 went into effect—it hit a low of 18.9 percent in 2017. In 2016, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel found that “Nationally, no state had lost more of its labor union identity than Wisconsin since 2011. Union members made up 14.2 percent of workers before Act 10, but just 8.3 percent in 2015. That was nearly double the drop of Alaska, the runner up” (Umhoefer 2016). And even with the defeat of Scott Walker in 2018 by Democrat Tony Evers, organized labor is not out of the woods. Walker signed lame-duck session laws in 2018 which weakened the governor’s power and Evers must contend with a Republican legislature (Szekely 2019).

With the decline of organized labor in the state of Wisconsin, the burden of building power for African Americans and Latinos falls even more heavily on community organizers seeking to gain access to economic opportunities. But this can be a challenge. One interviewee stated, “With Latinos and Blacks both facing economic hardship, one might expect more organizing together, but there is not alignment even within the Latino groups.” Milwaukee organizations tend to be more neighborhood specific—partly due to residential segregation—but as the Southside further diversifies, this could be changing. In particular, Voces de la Frontera (Voces) and the NAACP have been collaborating within Southside neighborhoods in close proximity to the Northside, with the aspiration of bridging neighborhood segregation. Luz Sosa of Citizen Action of Wisconsin says:

My goal is to work with citizens, non-citizens, and the African-American community so that they can also get involved in the larger spectrum of issues with other communities to fight for immigration, mass liberation, healthcare for all, economic opportunities and many other issues affecting our communities.

Voces is a grassroots group on the Southside with roots in the immigrant rights movement that takes an intersectional approach to organizing across race and place. Working in collaboration with Black and Latino youth, the NAACP, unions (even as they have been weakened), and others, Voces has partnered to defend sanctuary-like protections at the county level. In addition, it has worked with the Community Coalition for Quality Policing “to improve police-community relations, reduce crime, and improve the lives of community members and police officers by implementing a new policing model in Milwaukee.” The We Are All Milwaukee coalition included 12

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13 While total union membership rates in Wisconsin have remained low, in 2018, the public union membership rate jumped to 24.4 percent, a 5.5 percent increase from the prior year and the first increase since 2011. “Union Membership, Coverage, Density and Employment by State, 2018,” unionstats.com.

14 Interview with George Torres, La Causa, Milwaukee, WI by Rachel Rosner and Preston Mills, January 2017.

15 For One Wisconsin’s record of Scott Walker’s ongoing effort to weaken unions, see www.onewisconinnow.org/scott-walker/labor/.

16 In 2012, Milwaukee County passed a resolution that effectively established protections for immigrants and suggests broad discretion for local law enforcement “that respects and values the community contributions of Milwaukee County’s diverse population” (Anderson 2017). For more on Community Coalition for Quality Policing, see www.cc4qp.org/.
organizations who, as a group, advocated for local identification cards—connecting the struggle for identification and voter registration among immigrants, the homeless, and the formerly incarcerated.\(^{17}\) Another organization, Citizen Action of Wisconsin, is a statewide coalition that focuses on social, economic, and environmental justice. Its newer Milwaukee chapter is framing its work around a broad set of issues affecting Black, Latino, and white communities.\(^{18}\)

Youth organizing is nascent. Home to the largest and first publicly-funded urban voucher school system, some activists argue that Milwaukee’s public school system has been effectively dismantled (Cowen et al. 2013). The system now educates a small number of voucher students in high performing schools, while the majority of students attend schools that are not reporting their results (Meyers 2017). Meanwhile, students and younger generations are asserting their rights, history, and identity by engaging in Martin Luther King, Jr. Day service events and immigrant rights events—challenging systemic injustice as the conservative state becomes more challenging to lower-income, people of color. The seeds of coalition building are being planted and—with more spaces for sharing different perspectives—stronger connections between issues, places, and people can take root and grow.

**Orlando, FL**

Multiracial organizing is rare in Orlando despite its diversity. Part of this may be due to it being a swing region in a swing state: The Orlando metro area receives infusions of funding for elections, but is left without the needed resources to do the deep work of community organizing that can lead to transformative coalition building. Such parachute funding can also detract from more pressing issues: Low-wage work is an ongoing struggle—an area of common ground—particularly since tourism giants like Walt Disney World and Universal Orlando provide inviting targets for improving workforce conditions (Caron 2018; Maxwell 2018). The sprawling nature of the region and its evolution over time pose further challenges to building a multiethnic civic identity and coalitions.

The Orlando region is home to a growing population. In our data set of 100 metro areas, Orlando is ninth in terms of population growth between 1990 and 2010, with a growth rate more than three times as high as the rate in Jackson or the Bay Area, and eight times as high as the rate in Milwaukee (see Appendix A: Methodology). This has resulted in significant shifts in demographics that can be seen between 1990 and 2015 in Figure 5 below. While there has been a sharp decline in the share of the population that is white, the Black share—both U.S.-born and immigrant—actually increased slightly. Interestingly, of our four study areas, the Orlando region is the one with the largest share of those identifying as non-Hispanic Black who are immigrants: nearly 22 percent of Black residents identify as foreign-born as of 2017. This suggests a possibility for alliances around immigration issues but it is a possibility that is not always realized.

\(^{17}\) For more, see www.thewheelerreport.com/wheeler_docs/files/0426milwaukee.pdf

\(^{18}\) For more, see www.citizenactionwi.org/aboutus
Of course the most significant demographic shift was in the Latino population. The Latino increase was primarily driven by the U.S.-born (including Puerto Ricans with a recent influx from the island post-hurricane Maria) with significant but smaller contributions from immigrants, too (Echenique and Melgar 2018; Ocasio 2019). The growing Latino population lives mostly to the east and the south of the region. According to Denise Diaz of Central Florida Jobs with Justice, “Orlando [is like] the new Miami for Puerto Ricans,” many of whom live in Kissimmee to the south. As Latino neighborhoods grow, they are bumping into predominantly Black and white neighborhoods. Overall, Orlando is marked by significant residential segregation and suburban sprawl of the sort that one might expect in a rapidly growing Florida metro.19

Figure 5: Race and ethnicity by nativity: Orlando, FL Metro Area, 1990 and 2015

Figure 6: Race/ethnicity by ancestry: Orlando, FL Metro Area, Latinos, 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POPULATION</th>
<th>SHARE OF TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caribbean (all) 305,511</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puerto Rican 231,539</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuban 35,483</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominican 36,304</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Caribbean 2,185</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central American (all) 24,282</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexican 63,304</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South American (all) 77,549</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbian 35,687</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other South American 41,862</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Latino 163,433</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total 634,079</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: nationalequityatlas.org

To see how Orlando compares empirically to the other regions in this report, see Learning from the Cases: Themes and Recommendations, number one.
Orlando’s Latino community is the most diverse of any of the regions profiled in this report. Figure 6 shows the diversity of the Latino community. According to interviewees, some Latino immigrants have been here for decades, including farmworkers coming from Mexico and Central America that settled in Apopka to the north. Puerto Ricans are the most prevalent Latino group. Their views about the island’s independence, as well as whether they grew up on the island or on the mainland causes divisions within this group. Similarly, older Cubans in the state tend to be conservative while younger Cubans in Orlando identify with more progressive politics (Navas 2018)—but as can be seen in Figure 6, Cubans comprise a relatively small share of the Latino population (6 percent) in the Orlando metro. This is unlike the Miami-Ft. Lauderdale metro where Cuban-origin individuals comprise nearly half of the Latino population. Given the generally conservative leanings of older Cubans, this can create political openings but the sheer diversity also presents a challenge. As one interviewee, Marcos Villar noted, “There does seem to be a distinction between the established politics and a new boom of diversity in politics.” Orlando’s Latino community is far from monolithic and ignoring that diversity can be dangerous when it comes to crafting a sense of a shared future.

Often funding for organizing goes to more established organizations, some white-led, that are working in communities of color. However, Latino organizing is growing through emerging grassroots efforts like Misión Boricua and Mi Familia Vota, both Latino-led. Much funding comes through civic engagement and electoral organizing. One problem with the massive funding that is infused during election cycles is that it lumps together Latinos—missing the differences between Puerto Ricans and Mexican immigrants, and totally overlooking white Brazilians who speak Portuguese and do not fit neatly within U.S. racial-ethnic paradigms. “Patient funding,” as opposed to “parachute funding,” is needed to engage the nuances of the Latino community in Orlando to build a civic identity and a multiracial voice in Orlando (e.g., Lin et al. 2019).

Another consideration with regard to Latino diversity is the way it impacts coalition building. When asked about collaboration with African-American communities, interviewees noted that it would be helpful if there was more alignment within the Latino community as a precursor to coalition building. Whether this should be a precursor or ongoing is a strategic nuance worthy of debate—in other locales, political identities are being constructed in exactly the space of Black-Brown organizing rather than apart. This was a sentiment expressed in Orlando’s organizing circles.

Of course, there is a base on which to build: Since Latinos have been in Orlando for some time, there is considerable social capital invested in these neighborhoods by communities and institutions. The labor community in Florida, a right-to-work state, is sometimes seen to be more focused on immigrant organizing. This investment contrasts with the dynamics in the Black community, where funding is perceived to

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20 Misión Boricua is a nascent, identity-based community-building organization whose leadership has shown an interest in working across communities. Mi Familia Vota focuses, logically, on electoral work.

21 Faith, service, and advocacy institutions serving and organizing the Latino community.

22 Right-to-work states are those where employees can benefit from union contracts but are neither required to pay dues nor be a member.
be scarce. For this reason, some are looking to downtown development as a possible remedy to the ongoing poverty experienced in Paramore and Pine Hill. As City Council Member Regina Hill remarked about development, “Gentrification will happen, it’s just a matter of how it will happen.” At the same time, gentrification is a looming threat to downtown communities like the historic African-American community, Parramore, where long-time residents and business owners are being displaced (Field 2017; Santich 2019).

For African Americans in Orlando, the organizing ecosystem is seen as largely underdeveloped and underfunded. Traditional Civil Rights institutions like the NAACP, the Urban League, and Black churches do mobilize get-out-the-vote activities and other traditional civic engagement and community-building activities. However, there are no substantial organizing groups nor power-building strategies that focus on long-term investment in Black leadership or communities. This is not to say that Black activism is not alive and well in Orlando. On the contrary, interviewees discussed youth activists who do not fit neatly into organizational frameworks, but who lead. Nonetheless, some do not see a concerted movement to turn this energy or their votes into long-term progressive power. Others suggest that other movements, like the labor movement, fail to prioritize Black communities. Moreover, suburban sprawl and segregation disconnects Black residents from community organizing, particularly when groups “carve up territory,” leaving Black neighborhoods to struggle without any significant resources.

Figure 7: Race/ethnicity by ancestry: Orlando, FL Metro Area, Non-Hispanic Black, 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POPULATION</th>
<th>SHARE OF TOTAL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American/Other Black</td>
<td>247,117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caribbean/West Indian (all)</td>
<td>91,339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahamian</td>
<td>2,085</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaican</td>
<td>23,830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinidadian/Tabagonian</td>
<td>4,541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haitian</td>
<td>50,164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10,719</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European (all)</td>
<td>3,270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin American (all)</td>
<td>1,799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan African (all)</td>
<td>8,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>352,275</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: nationalequityatlas.org

Black immigrants, specifically Afro-Caribbean and Afro-Latino communities, who upend American notions of race, language, and belonging, are also critical to understanding Orlando. Black immigrants composed 3.3 percent of the regional population in 2015 (as noted in Figure 5) and about 21 percent of the overall Black population.23 Figure 7 shows how Black Orlandoans identify their ancestry. Seven in ten identify as African American
but that leaves over a quarter who identify as Caribbean or West Indian. And of those, most identify as Haitian, followed by Jamaican. Without a multi-layered analysis, this distinctive feature of the immigrant experience can get lost, or worse, become a liability. As one interviewee remarks:

Groups across the state have failed Caribbean communities in their organizing. We touch them as African Americans, not as Caribbean Americans. And our approach needs to change because they are voting in directions that we assume they would be on the same trajectory as African Americans, and that is not the case. Their values are different so the messaging needs to be specific; the approach needs to be intentional. But that could be because our data collection does not segment them. Data collection list them as “Black” or they select “Other” in their voter registration or when we talk to them at the doors, as we get commitment cards. They are not identifying as African American. So to be intentional with Caribbean Americans – looking at them as their own voting bloc – is necessary.

In short, there is concern over incorrect generalizations about racial identity; for instance, identifying all Black folks as African American or all immigrants as Latino. In order for organizations to be effective at organizing, they need to see beyond these assumptions and consider other markers of racial identity, including language. Highlighting this need, Haitian Creole is the third most popular language in the Orlando MSA.24 As Jobs with Justice Executive Director, Denise Díaz mentioned, “If there’s ever any canvassing [in Holden Heights or Williamsburg] or anything there, it’s critical to know Creole and Spanish... It’s predominately more African Caribbean, Black Caribbean, and African American.” Where Blackness can build bridges, language if ignored, has the potential to undermine solidarity. While the residential segregation of African Americans from Latinos and the diversity of the immigrant community pose challenges to coalition building in Orlando, there is reason for hope.25 Zoraida Andino of Misión Boricua put it this way:

The Black community... has been here 400 years but our community has been here less than 100 years. And these are two different communities with different wants and needs, but they are all amalgamated in one point: socioeconomic status. The status of cheap labor, poverty, lack of good education, and opportunities.

One of the best (and rare) examples of Black-Latino organizing comes from the Farmworkers Association of Florida in Apopka where Haitians, African Americans, and Mexican immigrants work the fields. Farmworkers have come together to promote multiracial organizing—perhaps supported by the presence of Haitians workers, who may be perceived as African American but also carry contemporary stories of migration while not identifying as Latino.

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24 Based on author tabulation of 2013-2017 American Community Survey data, 2.0 percent of people 5 years of age or older speak Haitian Creole at home in the Orlando metro, or about 47,000 people. The second most popular language spoken at home is Spanish at 22.2 percent of the population, or about 522,000 people.

25 Interestingly, the Civil Rights movement has not been a particular launching pad for immigrant rights work, as seen in places like Jackson, perhaps because Latinos have been in Florida for a long time – earlier than the Civil Rights movement.
Although low-wage work in the tourism industry—especially from large employers such as Disney—drives job growth in the area, it simultaneously suppresses wages. Incidentally, these are places where people may have increased contact across racial-ethnic lines and share common concerns; organizing for economic justice can thus have some interethnic appeal and traction. Indeed, we saw tangible results in 2018 as unions relied on a multiracial coalition to successfully campaign and pressure Walt Disney Park and Resorts to increase wages to $15 an hour by 2021 (Caron 2018; Maxwell 2018). This win will dramatically impact families of color by forcing the nation’s largest single-site employer to raise wages in a metro region. In 2015, the median hourly wage for workers of color was $15, while it was $20 for white workers—which is two dollars below the national average for each group. Moreover, it sets the stage for fights to come at other low-wage tourist attractions, including Sea World and Universal Studios (Jamieson 2017). Jared Norlund of National Council of La Raza in Orlando remarks:

Jobs will always be a high priority with the Hispanic community in Orlando because we’re in a very low-wage economy here. Most workers in our community come into the workforce through tourism-related jobs and those aren’t sustainable. Our community can’t build the wealth needed to buy a house unless its hours away from their job, which also isn’t sustainable. Everything in Central Florida is exacerbated more when you’re in a very low-wage economy where most in the community live paycheck-to-paycheck.

Campaigns against the disproportionate policing of Black and Brown people may also lead to multiracial organizing. Indeed, the June 2014 shooting of Trayvon Martin took place in Sanford, just north of Orlando—a murder that symbolizes that lack of accountability for violence against Black people and the failing of the justice system for Black communities in the U.S. An investigation by the Orlando Sentinel found that Orlando “officers used force more often than cops in several other cities with police departments, populations and minority communities of similar size” (Stutzman and Minshew 2014).

Working on the re-enfranchisement of the formerly incarcerated is also a point of common purpose. In 2018, led by the multiracial and cross-party organizing of the Florida Rights Restorations Coalition, Floridians passed Amendment 4, which eliminated an 1868 constitutional statute that created a lifetime ban on voting for people convicted of a felony. It was estimated that 1.69 million or 10 percent of Floridians were barred from voting in the 2018 election because of the ban, translating to one in five African Americans (Berman 2018). Recognizing the potential challenge to their power, in 2019, Florida Republicans undermined implementation of the law, passing a measure requiring people convicted of a felony to pay all financial criminal obligations before they are re-enfranchised. Civil Rights groups filed several lawsuits calling the new measure a “modern day poll tax” that will disproportionately impact communities of color (Lockhart 2019).

Working at the intersection of worker, voter, and immigrant rights is an emerging practice for transformative organizing. In Orlando, the response to the tragic mass shooting at Pulse nightclub—a nightclub serving the gay community—galvanized the local community and elicited deep sympathy from communities across the nation in support of the LGBTQ community. However, it also showed the fault lines between communities, particularly for Black and Brown LGBTQ people. The response included record-breaking fundraising which highlighted the lack of institutional resources available for victims and survivors—the majority of those affected whose identity were at the intersections of race/ethnicity, gender, nativity, and sexual orientation—and the cultivation of new approaches towards addressing systemic issues. It took intersectional organizing, and rooting that work in support of Black and Brown LGBTQ folks, to demand transformative change. Some organizers challenged anti-Black narratives that focused support too narrowly on Latino victims and survivors.

The intentional and intersectional work of the post-Pulse organizers brought newer organizations to support Orlando’s change. “There are some conditions to model progressive reform, it is growing rapidly here, there is an opportunity for a broad-based coalition,” remarked Curtis Hiero of Central Labor Council of the local AFL-CIO. But it will require funding to sustain the work. The Contigo Fund was founded post-tragedy to “broaden the support for a more unified movement” (Marco Quiroga, Contigo Fund), as was QLatinx to “build a strong and united community.” Younger organizers have a more intersectional perspective and approach but sometimes work in smaller “kiosko” (or kiosk) organizations that struggle to compete against older organizations (e.g., unions, Organize Now, Council of La Raza) for electoral (and other) funding.

As a fast-growing, multiracial region grappling with and working through intersectional organizing, Orlando holds great promise for the future. At the same time, it is complex terrain and will require both skillful organizing and patient investments by funders. But as a swing region in a swing state, what happens in Orlando could have tremendous impact on the state and the nation.

Oakland, CA

Oakland has long been on the cutting edge of racial justice work—from the founding of The Black Panther Party in response to police brutality to the array of Bay Area-based social movement organizations that pushed back on California’s racialized politics in the 1990s. Oakland remains a vibrant home of resistance movements. Rising housing prices and rents in the San Francisco Bay Area, a region at the forefront of demographic shifts and economic change, are fueling the displacement of lower-income residents—continuing the nation’s racist legacy of Black removal. But in Oakland, the housing crisis has revealed itself as a unifying issue across Black, Latino, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI), and Indigenous residents. This anti-displacement work is threaded together with other struggles in the city, supported by an organizing culture steeped in a sense of interconnectedness and social justice.

27 For more on QLatinx and its mission, see www.qlatinx.org/mission.

28 In the 1990s, California politics included the end of affirmative action, an attempt to strip undocumented people of all State services, and laws trying youth in adult criminal courts.
Oakland’s demographics have changed dramatically in the last several decades. As seen in Figure 8, the Black share of the city’s population has shrunk by almost 20 percentage points in the past two decades. The white share of the population has remained stable while the AAPI share has increased slightly. Meanwhile, immigrant and U.S.-born Latinos as well as mixed race Oaklanders have seen their shares rise the most dramatically. This suggests that more than in Jackson, Milwaukee, and Orlando, African Americans and Latinos are sharing spaces, creating a daily basis for both knowing each other and finding common cause.²⁹

**Figure 8: Race and ethnicity by nativity: Oakland, CA, 1990-2015**

![Race and ethnicity by nativity: Oakland, CA, 1990-2015](source)

Sobrante Park in East Oakland, for example, experienced localized demographic change and is now about half Latino (first and second generation) and half African American, according to Robert Stahl of Urban Strategies Council. In the 1950s and 1960s, Sobrante Park was a Black working-class neighborhood building its own thriving small business corridors. By the 1980s, the small suburban community began to hollow out and suffer under the traumatic combination of a crack cocaine epidemic, militarized gang violence, and oppressive policing, a trifecta of trauma similar to the experience of Black communities in South LA (Dirks 2015). Even for residents who managed to tough out those times, a wave of foreclosures during the Great Recession as well as continued disinvestment has continued to make life difficult. Latino families who made their way into this neighborhood have stepped into a community full of decades of heartbreak and pain. As a result, some understandable tensions have surfaced, driven by rapid change, including the loss of neighbors and relationships, and varying, racialized experiences. “There’s a Black-Brown divide [here]…uncertainty and risk around housing is differentially experienced and solutions are usually misaligned with what our understanding of the problem is,” said one interviewee.

²⁹ Of the regions, the Black-Latino dissimilarity index—a standard measure of segregation—is the lowest in Oakland. See the first lesson and recommendation as well as Appendix A: Methodology, below, for more. It should be noted, however, the index for Oakland is based on the city, where all other regions are based on the metro area.
Housing—and more specifically, a lack of affordability—is the single most pressing issue in Oakland. Gentrification is severe in the Bay Area where Silicon Valley wealth and employment has skewed the housing market (Treuhaft et al. 2018). “People are very concerned about how quickly and dramatically the Black population has dropped off and has been pushed out,” remarked Gloria Bruce of the East Bay Housing Organizations. In Figure 9, the two darkest purple shades indicate lower-income census tracts that are threatened by or currently experiencing displacement—according to an analysis by the Urban Displacement Project at UC Berkeley (Zuk and Chapple 2015). People of color (and Latinos especially) are either concentrating in parts of the city like the Fruitvale District or are moving further away from the city. Organizers, by necessity, are laser focused on responding to the housing crisis.

**Figure 9: Displacement in Oakland, CA**


Fortunately, organizers have a deep legacy to build on. The rise of people of color movements is partly based on the reaction to the post-war, white-led labor movement which asked for “union wages, inexpensive health care, affordable housing with low taxes, and public transportation” (Self 2003:2). African Americans, who were treated as “junior partners” of the labor movement, demanded the same rights, especially as massive suburbanization and deindustrialization ravaged Oakland (Self 2003:3). The Black Panther Party and other organizing efforts emerged in the late 1960s within a radical and progressive context more aligned with, say, Malcolm X than Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Right now, many [Latino and AAPI folks] are living in overcrowded and insufficient housing conditions.

GLORIA BRUCE, EAST BAY HOUSING ORGANIZATIONS
Nearly all our interviewees remarked on the influence that radical Bay Area movements of the 1960’s continue to have. For example, “The Black women in our organization will tell the mayor where to go and it comes from a history of resistance,” remarked Maria Poblet, of Causa Justa: Just Cause. As Saa’un Bell from Californians for Justice noted, ‘Oakland has always been a special place politically—just where folks are at in their political consciousness and analysis. … A young person hasn’t [yet] been politicized, but they still have these leanings of like “no…social justice is important to the community.” That’s how powerfully the Black Panther Party and the leaders of the 60’s and before has lingered in the community.’

Concerns about Black erasure in Oakland may be at fever pitch now but they are not new. After becoming a mecca for Black employment with the rise of wartime and post-war industry, massive deindustrialization destabilized the economic well-being of Black workers in Oakland during the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s (de Graaf, Mulroy, and Taylor 2001:358). Even before then, worries about civil unrest, à la the uprisings in the Black communities of Watts and Detroit, led Oakland leadership to engage in “urban renewal,” which often resulted in the displacement of African-American families from places like West Oakland in the 1960s and 1970s (Beveridge 2010). In the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s, a resurgence in police surveillance, random searches, and arrests of young people further pushed families away. Now displacement and rampant land speculation is again threatening the homes of low-income communities of color in Oakland.

Nonetheless, Oakland also remains the phoenix that is forever rising from its ashes: Displacement is bringing people together across racial-ethnic lines. As Ethel Long-Scott of the Women’s Economic Agenda Project (WEAP) said:

*Silicon Valley has landed on Oakland and the Bay Area and it’s a different kind of gentrification—dispossession and a new kind of poverty—resulting from labor-less production. … Both the Black and Latino communities have suffered a disproportionate blow. … The workers who are here are forced to this competition for the battle to the bottom. … We really are up against international financial forces—I mean hedge funds that buy up blocks, forget houses, blocks. … So when we talk about coalitions that are doing ‘fight back’ we’re always on the defensive—how can you not be?*

She emphasized that those dispossessed by gentrification and corporate power can and must lead the resistance.

Youth and young adults are building power in Oakland. Interviewees indicated that they hold a critique that “the power dynamic in housing and land use is an enduring tool of oppression” that directly affects their ability to build self-sustaining communities. As a result, youth are mobilizing around gentrification, job insecurity, and transportation. “There are [lots of] millennials that are not okay… [there are] millennials who are still struggling because of the economic recession and the lack of resources they have to be able to get a job and move up. … Millennials are coming together around jobs and become civically engaged—and not just through voting but actual leaders,” said Saa’un Bell of Californians for Justice. Youth organizing groups include some explicitly centered on youth like the East Oakland Youth Development Center and Californians for Justice, as well as others that prioritize educational justice.
Young people and organizers in Oakland have a strong orientation towards intersectionality and fighting anti-Blackness—perhaps unsurprising given the multicultural environment and radical Black leadership in Oakland. Youth “tend to connect better…because there is such a mix of ‘color.’ … They coalesce better and easier together than their elders,” said one interviewee. For example, in Oakland there has been a strong connection between the Black community and the AAPI community in the form of Asians for Black Lives fighting displacement and police violence. As Breeana Decker at Urban Strategies Council put it:

Moving forward [and] more than ever, things just can’t be looked at from just one lens—it’s not just a Black issue, it’s not just a Brown issue—we all inhabit this space together. … We need to have more intentional goals and strategies and that only happens when we let down our racial/gender biases. … We can tend to over-victimize ourselves without realizing that we’re all in a plight—in a struggle together. I’m looking forward to the day in which we can all fight the good fight on the same front and not have these disjointed factions ‘cause we’re not going to win.

Indeed, there is a deep and ongoing practice of solidarity in Oakland. Vanessa Moses of Causa Justa: Just Cause, an intentionally Black-Brown organization, noted the significance of this work: “We didn’t learn to hate each other through one conversation, so we’re not going to unlearn all that just because someone points out a new statistic in a meeting.” She goes on to point out that it is through relationships that people are willing to be in solidarity with each other—and actually show up for each other. In Oakland, we heard from Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice (CURYJ), Causa Justa: Just Cause, East Bay Housing Organizations (EBHO), WEAP, Californians for Justice, East Oakland Youth Development Center, and Urban Strategies Council, all of which stated that they resist focusing on single issues.

Black and Brown youth are leading that fight by blurring lines and creating connections across race to build robust, integrated campaigns that in the past would be seen as separate struggles. At Causa Justa: Just Cause, youth are calling for “Community Defense,” harking back to the language of the Black Panther Party to connect the fight against gentrification, incarceration, and deportation. Seeing these issues as a common threat to “our families and homes,” the projects being developed are designed “to complement each other and intersect the work of our members who are battling for immigrant rights, and against police harassment and racial profiling as an intergenerational and multiracial fight.”

The sharpest articulation is around the decades-long push back against the carceral state. After Proposition 21 passed in 2000, which increased the penalty for crimes committed by youth (e.g., trying them as adults), activists and organizations started organizing around the impact of gang injunctions as that predominantly impacted Black and Brown communities. George Galvis of CURYJ says:

When I shared the origin stories of CURYJ, that was very focused on Black and Brown unity too because the first defendants in the injunction in North Oakland were all African-American young men and then in Fruitvale it was 30-something Latino young men and the rest were American Indian/Native. So when we were organizing, we were family members and defendants in both injunctions...we were building that, our coalition was extremely multiracial.

This work continues to evolve and shift. Oaklanders built multiracial coalitions to address the 2011 realignment of state funding to localities for “criminal justice, mental health, and social services programs,” and to pass and implement landmark legislation to shrink the state’s carceral footprint. For instance, Proposition 47 (2014) and 57 (2016) when taken together reclassify some felonies to misdemeanors, reduce sentence length and increase access to rehabilitation, and protect youth from being tried indiscriminately as adults. These multiracial criminal justice reform movements simultaneously evolved alongside the founding of the Black Lives Matter movement, and corresponding protests in Oakland in 2014 and 2016 (Miller 2016; Parr 2014). Most recently, Oakland residents responded to conditions at U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) camps and the raids targeting undocumented community members through multiracial and multigenerational protests (Baldassari 2019). Each of these iterations of interconnected movements have intentionally weaved together the struggles facing Black and Brown families across Oakland and lifted up the need to build power in communities of color.

Oakland is simultaneously steeped in radical organizing traditions and in a housing crisis that is threatening to undermine that resilient culture. The social justice history of the Black Panther Party has carried on to form a tradition of resistance that brings together Black, immigrant, and all other oppressed people. At the same time, everyday people live in neighborhoods where tensions are rising—anti-Blackness is alive, the economic base destroyed, and where competition for housing is threatening the cohesiveness of communities. Oakland has lessons to offer the nation around the pitfalls of an economy in which increasingly skewed wealth patterns are helping to drive displacement—and around the possibilities of deep solidarity to counter transnational power grabs.

31 For more on realignment, see lao.ca.gov/reports/2011/stadm/realignment/realignment_081911.aspx.
Learning from the Cases: Themes and Recommendations

In our previous work on South LA, we found three major tenants of successful Black-Brown organizing; three themes that underpinned all the work of bringing together African Americans and Latinos to shape their neighborhoods. These have to do with the roles of time, race, and place in understanding and constructing civic identity.

With regard to time, Latinos who moved to South LA during the 1980s experienced the economic distress, rampant gang warfare, and police-driven, hyper-criminalization of the predominately Black neighborhood—so tended to shut in and shut out from their neighbors and civic life. Their children grew up in a mixed racial-ethnic environment in which their schoolmates and friends were diverse, in turn influencing their outlook on and notions of well-being (i.e., Latinos linking their well-being to that of African Americans). Time matters in honestly examining groups’ tensions, thus allowing one to understand the evolution and collaboration over time. Groups’ first interactions should not be viewed as frozen in place but more as a prism that allows one to understand shifts and adjustments with time.

Regarding race, it is important to move beyond traditional theories of ethnic succession, in which one group displaces another as they acquire voice and power. What we saw in South LA instead was a sort of ethnic sedimentation in which history is respected and groups build on and with each other’s histories. This led us to stress new civic models that support independent and interdependent Latino and Black voices, understand the importance of centering the fight against anti-Blackness, and cultivate new leaders for tomorrow.

Our third main theme was the importance of how place-based identities can coexist with, complement, or supersede race-based identities in meaningful ways. We noted that a focus on the future of South LA as a whole often compelled leaders and residents to understand that the neighborhood would only achieve success if it acted together and that paved the way for multiracial coalitions that could move progressive agendas.
While these themes guided our inquiry in this report, the case studies here also lift up their own lessons and complexities. In what follows, we offer some key lessons, often starting by comparing what we learned from our South LA examination in RootsRaíces—where we did our most detailed case study—to the case studies conducted here. We do not pretend that these are the only lessons that can be drawn, but we hope they will be useful to anyone interested in effective Black-Brown organizing in multiple metro landscapes. For each lesson, we also offer a set of brief recommendations from the field that activists, funders, and others may want to keep close.

1. Understand how history, context, and residential integration shape dynamics

Black-Brown organizing in South Los Angeles was shaped by deindustrialization, demographic change, and the 1992 civil unrest. Once supported by quality manufacturing jobs, South Los Angeles was the sort of place where working-class Black families could get close to a middle-class life. But as manufacturing left, the economic bottom fell out and the legacies of public and private disinvestment became obvious. The situation was worsened by an all-out assault on Black families—the crack cocaine epidemic of the 1980s, the militarization of gangs, and the police-driven violent repression and hyper-criminalization that followed. Meanwhile, immigrants moved into the neighborhood looking for affordable housing opportunities for their families. The back-to-back acquittals in the murder of Latasha Harlin who was killed by a Korean storeowner and the beating of Rodney King by white police officers threw tinder onto long smoldering embers exploding for the world to see. After days of unrest, organizers looked around and decided that they needed another way forward—including an explicit focus on Black-Brown organizing.

Our case studies each have unique contexts that shape Black-Brown organizing. In Jackson, a deep history of the Civil Rights movement spurred immigrant rights organizing. In Milwaukee, the region’s history as a manufacturing town makes the loss of employment and union power that much more palpable and the burden on community-based organizations that much greater. In Orlando, electoral funding is largely transactional—a quick contact for a vote—and it has skewed organizing from what it really needs to be: deeply intersectional and transformational in order to bring together the vastly varied demography. In Oakland, a long history of radical organizing, exemplified by the emergence and impact of the Black Panther Party, is foundational to the ongoing work for multiracial justice needed to match the might of ongoing state violence and the forces of displacement driven by the local tech economy and overseas investment.

Another factor at play here, is the degree of residential integration (or not). Figure 10 shows one measure of segregation: the Black-Latino dissimilarity index (for more, see the Appendix A: Methodology). Milwaukee is by far the most segregated, making very little progress over time. In contrast, in Oakland there is a higher degree of residential integration and that proximity—coupled with interdependent multiracial struggles for social justice that has retained strong Black leadership despite demographic changes—has led to a sense of shared civic identity. The Jackson metro has become noticeably more segregated and in Orlando, impressive levels of integration may be driven by the displacement of African Americans, perhaps to Latino neighborhoods. Displacement is...
Learning from the Cases: Themes and Recommendations

violent and unjust, yet activists are using gentrification to bring people together to work on a common agenda and to foster multiracial unity. In residentially segregated places, multiracial coalitions may have to start from other locales like the workplace or other points of multiracial convening (e.g., Pulse nightclub).

**Figure 10:** Segregation as measured by the Black-Latino dissimilarity index, 1980-2016, case study geographies

![Graph showing segregation data](image)

*Source: U.S. Census, 2016 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA (Ruggles et al., 2016)*

**Recommendations from the field**

Organizers and activists interviewed for this project spoke intimately about the history of their communities. In addition to being compelling stories, they were the foundation of activists’ analysis and strategies. **The work needed to build bridges must be grounded in deeply understanding the history of a place, the stories of its people, the challenges that history poses—and bringing those injustices into the light of day.** Although an examination of history may seem like the long way to do things, organizers often say, “there are no shortcuts, only detours.” Ahistorical strategies and campaigns risk alienating people before the work has begun. Cross-cultural organizing requires a great deal of trust building and stories are a necessary component to that end.

Building Black-Brown solidarities starts with sharing space. **Where African Americans, Latinos, and immigrants live blended lives, there is potential for organizing because of shared identities and histories.** For example, in Orlando’s hospitality industry, low wages and discrimination may look slightly different, but still cuts at both Black and Brown workers. **Organizations and funders need to identify and invest in these shared spaces.** This investment can deepen relationships in existing places.
as well as nurture spaces outside of the workplace, for example, in order to develop a holistic understandings of each other through narrative and peer-to-peer storytelling.

**For funders looking to invest, they must work closely with community groups—particularly those who prioritize organizing—in order to tailor investments to the nuance of a place.** There is no one size fits all strategy and in another project, we offer tools for better understanding a place (Pastor, Ito, and Wander 2016). Understanding history, culture, power dynamics, and more will increase the efficacy of investments, provide clarity on who receives what type of support, and encourage solidarity instead of conflict.

2. Recognize why centering anti-Blackness is key to multiethnic organizing

Throughout our research, leaders for multiracial coalitions consistently brought up the importance of centering anti-Blackness in building Latino civic identity. Part of this was because white supremacy targeted at African Americans was so key to crafting contemporary realities that impinge others as well. For example, when South LA became a Black space—it was once predominately white—it had an all-too-brief period of working-class glory before disinvestment and criminalization followed. South LA may be majority Latino now but structural racism and marginalization have continued to create problems and suffering for Black and Brown alike. For example, at one point, youth had to fight for the Los Angeles Unified School District Board to offer a full set of college prep courses in South LA high schools, courses that would give students a fighting chance to attend college (Rogers 2015).

Indeed, one constant among the regions we visited was the enduring legacy of anti-Black racism. In Oakland we see the ongoing efforts to erase Black communities through displacement and decades-long struggles against police brutality. In Milwaukee it is the intergenerational struggle with unemployment and mass incarceration that has led it to be called the “second worst city in America for Black Americans” based on 8 socioeconomic measures, including unemployment, incarceration rates, and mortality rates (Stebbins and Comen 2018). Despite the long legacy of Civil Right activism, Jackson is steeped in anti-Blackness and Mississippi (the Blackest state in the nation) remains the poorest state. Similarly in Orlando, Black neighborhoods are consistently the poorest and gentrification may lead to Black erasure.

Beyond analytical accuracy, centering anti-Blackness addresses the sense of loss that many African Americans feel as the demography around them changes. As we noted in our study of South LA, Latinos feel disconnected from civic life—and indeed Latinos are sharply underrepresented in political positions—but many Black residents also feel like they will soon be eclipsed by the growing Latino population. This adds to the sense of erasure from gentrification, the over-incarceration of Black men and women, and even the various attempts to use voter ID and other mechanisms to strip away the franchise. Adding to the sometimes overwhelming sense of anti-Black disconnection is a worry.

We hosted an art exhibit on the 50th anniversary of the Black Panthers and I had some of our kids talk about the 10-point plan and it’s relation to today’s circumstances. Most of them, once they studied it said, ‘oh all these same issues are our problem.’

REGINA JACKSON, EAST OAKLAND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT CENTER

For many, anti-Blackness and anti-immigrant sentiment function together in a double-bind, as for immigrants from Haiti, Ethiopia, Nigeria, and elsewhere.

FOR MORE SEE “THE STATE OF BLACK IMMIGRANTS” AT HTTP://STATEOFBLACKIMMIGRANTS.COM/.
Learning from the Cases: Themes and Recommendations

that coalitions could build power that does not lift up the specificity and devastation caused by anti-Black racism.

Incorporating work about anti-Blackness can also be important for forging a progressive and intersectional Latino identity. Susan Eaton writes about the work in Mississippi, “Several local Black civil rights activists sit on MIRA’s board, as do union officials. In community forums and meetings with immigrants, most of whom come with no knowledge of the bloody protests and legal struggles that dismantled segregation, Chandler [the executive director of MIRA] and others point out that if it were not for Black civil rights leaders, the immigrants’ rights movement would have no foundation” (2011b). While some newcomers might be wary of allying with a group that has been consistently targeted by the dominant culture, doing so is actually the way to get to the root of the problem: ongoing racism, anti-Blackness, and white supremacy in the United States.

Recommendations from the Field

Driving towards unity can lead to erasure; the term “people of color,” though useful in many ways, can mask how anti-Blackness is foundational to racism in the U.S. So, organizers are focused on how anti-Black racism contributes to the racist systems that impact neighborhoods and people, whether those people identify as Black or not. Such work is key for immigrants who may bring their own anti-Black bias—that has played out in how immigrant rights campaigns are structured. It is also key to understanding the neighborhoods in which many Latinos live and why they are disinvested.

Black and Brown organizing and coalition building requires Black leadership and investments in African-American institutions. While this may seem obvious, the nuance here is that in those places where the Black share of the population is decreasing or being eclipsed by Latinos, coalition-minded Black leaders are especially important. Dushaw Hockett and others have emphasized the importance of “Black space” within multiracial organizing as a means to gather, heal, and consolidate Black wisdom. Institutionally, investment must include Civil Rights, faith-based, power-building, cultural, and radical spaces; Black institutions are as diverse as Black communities.

The development of ally-driven, anti-racist work is also key. Supporting non-Black leaders to actively combat anti-Blackness in their everyday work will build a stronger movement for liberation. Relying on Black leaders and people to do the heavy lifting against anti-Blackness only reifies Black identity at the bottom of the racist hierarchy and the asymmetry of the Black experience in Black-Brown coalitions. Non-Black leaders, particularly those who have benefitted from the political education of their Black colleagues, should take up the mantle of responsibility. In Black-Brown spaces, this means being a Latino leader who lifts up Black and Latino residents and works to build empathy and solidarity.

3. Understand Latino identity formation and create avenues for civic engagement

The endurance of anti-Blackness in the U.S. contrasts with how Latino civic identity...
Learning from the Cases: Themes and Recommendations

Learning from the Cases: Themes and Recommendations has shifted over time and place. Take South LA: The first generation of Latinos to arrive there often came with attitudes that included negative attitudes based on skin color—and these were reinforced by America’s own color line. Immigrants arrived in the midst of a crack cocaine epidemic, the hollowing out of the economy, and the hyper-criminalization of Black adults and youth. As a result, they often sought to keep at bay an outside (and often Black-dominated) world from their young families. But those families grew and the second generation of Latinos in South LA went to schools, played on sports teams, formed friendships, and fell in love with African Americans and, so, formed a place-based identity that was much more connected to their Black neighbors.

Among the case studies, Latino political identity varied significantly. In Orlando, for example, older Cubans tend to be conservative while younger Cubans are more progressive; Puerto Ricans from the island have differing views on the fate of their home compared to those coming from New York City; and this is not even beginning to account for differences among Mexicans, Central Americans, and South Americans. Figure 11 shows the diversity of ancestries and countries of origin that Latinos identify with in each case study geography.

**Figure 11:** Top 10 detailed origin/ancestry, Latinos, 2013-2017, case study geographies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JACKSON</th>
<th>MILWAUKEE</th>
<th>ORLANDO</th>
<th>OAKLAND</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mexican</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>Mexican</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puerto Rican</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>Puerto Rican</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honduran</td>
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<td>Honduran</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<td>Guatemalan</td>
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<td>Guatemalan</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuban</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>Cuban</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spaniard</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>Spaniard</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominican</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>Dominican</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South American</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>South American</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peruvian</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>Peruvian</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentinean</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>Argentinean</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other Latino</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>All Other Latino</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Latinos participate and collaborate unevenly with African Americans on civic matters. In Jackson, our respondents report that Latinos are generally less engaged in civic matters and therefore are not allying with African Americans. In Milwaukee, African Americans are beginning to move into Latino neighborhoods which may enable collaboration.

In contrast, in Oakland and South LA, it is Latinos who have moved into Black neighborhoods, although sometimes generations ago. Contributors to these differing levels of civic engagement may include legal status, interaction with the carceral state, bias, segregation, and more.

The key point is that identity is in formation, not fixed. Indeed, the terms “Hispanic” and “Latino” have only several decades of popular use and are constantly being shaped and re-shaped by commercial and political forces. Nurtured on college campuses,
“Latinx” is now increasingly common in some areas, arising partly from a concern for gender equity. But consider the way that certain moments, such as the current rise in anti-immigrant sentiment, can bring together Latino sub-groups that differ by national origin, nativity, or other characteristics, and make them feel as a single community.

Identity building opens up real possibilities for working at the intersections. For example, the Pulse tragedy in Orlando allows many to see connections across multiple identities as most of those killed were younger, LGBTQ, Latino, Black, and Afro-Latino. Bridge building with African Americans can help to shape Latino identity in a way that is even more cognizant of the racial dynamics in the U.S. (as seems to be the case with second generation activists in South LA and Oakland) and result in stronger alliances over time. But this requires creating the space and support for new forms of civic engagement.

**Recommendations from the field:**

Much as there is a need for “Black space,” there is a need for the formation of an independent Latino civic identity. While many Latino immigrants have become involved in defending immigrant rights or furthering unionization, civic engagement among other Latinos may be a new because of a religious tradition or because involvement in politics in a sending country was dangerous. To steer clear of a nationalist strand of Latinidad, however, means developing a civic identity that is constantly aligned with multiracial coalition building. The political history of the term “Latino” demonstrates its social construction and, thus, its malleability. Therefore, Latino communities have a stake in claiming that that identity is in alignment with progressive values and civic power.

A singular, shared Latino identity is useful up to a point. In places like South LA, there are pockets of Central American Latinos whose engagement may look quite different from Latinos with Mexican origin. And as we have already pointed out, the diversity of Latinos in Orlando makes organizing particularly challenging. Some organizers are creating on-ramps to Latino civic engagement that consider varying legal status, time in country, and other priorities. These on-ramps are often highly relational forms of organizing including staffing up promotoras or deep canvassing that may take the form of integrated voter engagement (see the next recommendation for more).

**African American support for civic paths is particularly important to Latinos, including naturalization, immigrant rights work, and building out powerful political alliances. As seen in places like Jackson, this work of solidarity building leaves little room for outsiders to insert a wedge in Black-Brown coalitions.**

Solidarity building has included common efforts around voter registration and electoral mobilization. And still, because of lack of documentation and former imprisonment, civic life must and should be more expansive and include participation in schools, unions, community-based organizations, get-out-the-vote efforts, and more. Black and Brown leaders should be in the business of expanding collective civic identity.

**THE IMPORTANCE OF POWER**

We have to put our power together to defeat these giants and elect people who are really empathetic to our needs.

BRENDA SCOTT, MISSISSIPPI ALLIANCE OF STATE EMPLOYEES/LOCAL 3570

We must get to those things that are going to address and potentially flip the paradigm and the power dynamic so that we’re not just chasing issues.

ROBERT STAHL, URBAN STRATEGIES COUNCIL

Even if we provided legal representation for everyone who has been promised they will be in deportation proceedings ... it’s woefully inadequate to address the imbalance of power for how we got here in the first place.

MARIA POBLET, CAUSA JUSTA
4. Be clear about how power imbalances drive shared inequities

When some observers talk about power imbalance in the Black-Latino context, it is often taken as a signal that the real power shift has to occur between these two groups. There is, of course, a sometimes popular narrative about immigrants replacing African Americans in the workforce and Black leaders boxing out Latinos from civic power (Vaca 2004). This lays the ground for arguing that there is a power struggle between Blacks and Latinos, especially their roles in the economy and politics, and that this should therefore be the main focus of research and even some organizing.

We do not deny that there are tensions, but we would suggest that focus on that old narrative obscures the way in which white supremacy creates conditions of scarcity for all communities of color. Such a perspective also misses complementary effects in the labor market, daily collaboration in neighborhoods and business, and leadership for multiracial coalitions (Pastor, Hondagneu-Sotelo, et al. 2016; Pastor, De Lara, et al. 2011). Building shared civic power is key to improving a range of issues, such as underperforming schools, unequal workforce outcomes, and environmental degradation that impacts all residents. In short, rather than figuring out where the wedges may be between African Americans and Latinos, we find organizers lifting up an entirely different story.

In this alternative narrative, the inequities experienced by Black and Brown communities are the result of entrenched white supremacy that has produced a historical imbalance of power—present from the founding of this nation and institutionalized over generations. Jackson is front and center in this respect. “There’s a strong sense of having things taken away from you. … It’s the people that have more now, who are descendants of plantation owners…those are the people still benefitting from our labor,” said Brandon King of Cooperation Jackson. As a result, African Americans are standing up in solidarity for immigrants even before immigrants are fully in the fight. In Oakland, Black and Brown communities show up to fight against concentrations of economic power that are threatening to further displace communities through gentrification. The only way to match oppositional power is to organize together across racial and ethnic lines. Nothing promotes transformative relationships like standing with each other against injustice.

So, what is needed for transformative work? Building deeper coalitions is a key step. In Los Angeles and Oakland, coalitions mean deep transformational relationships while in places like Jackson, coalitions were described as more transactional.33 This was partly because of tighter operating budgets, a smaller ecosystem of social justice organizations, and a tougher fight on multiple fronts. At the same time, it is important to recognize that some of the most radical acts of solidarity, particularly with regard to African American support for immigrants, came from an under-resourced Jackson. In the struggle for social and racial justice, they are not waiting for full funding and are instead punching well above their weight.

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33 For an framework of coalition, see “Transactions - Transformations - Translations: Metrics That Matter for Building, Scaling, and Funding Social Movements” (Pastor, Ito, and Rosner 2011).
While we celebrate the ability to make much of little, in nearly all of our interviews, organizers mentioned the lack of resources to even sustain (let alone grow) their work. Sustained organizing is needed to engage the complexities of race, ethnicity, and migration. Transformational relationships are often not attended to within electoral organizing (e.g., Orlando) and can slip to the background when fighting on all fronts (e.g., Jackson). Organizers do the work of bringing people together face-to-face, race-to-race, and place-to-place. The more multiracial our nation becomes, the more pressing the need to work through prejudice, assumptions, and misunderstanding. Organizing finds the way forward through working together in multiracial America—and it needs to build resources in a way that reflects its centrality to the American future.

**Recommendations from the field:**

*Foundations must fund multiracial, power-building ecosystems that focus on issues that impact African Americans, Latinos, Asian American and Pacific Islanders, immigrants, and other oppressed communities* (USC PERE 2018). The work in Jackson proves that people of color are going to do the work of addressing unequal power relationships regardless of the support from formal institutions—and they are going to do it well. Jackson also demonstrates a major opportunity to get a “big bang for a little buck,” by funding the kind of relationship driven activism that can mean big changes for communities. But our emphasis here is on ecosystems for change. This means prioritizing organizing work while also considering how legal, policy, research, etc. capacities are needed to support the work of power building.

Another way to think about relationship-driven activism is to work towards **transformational, rather than transactional coalitions**. Much of the onus of getting to transformational work lies on funders who may overlook and underfund the type of trust-building work required to build power and fight overt and subtle acts of white supremacy. An initial step in this direction may be co-creating metrics for power building that value, for example, both how many people show up at a meeting as well as the increased confidence of membership to speak with authority to their elected official (Pastor, Ito, and Rosner 2011).

Another emerging practice that may help is to **support integrated voter engagement that takes the momentum of electoral organizing and sustains it year round** (Lin et al. 2019; Pastor, Perera, and Wander 2013). Over the course of the past three decades, California has had a major turnaround—from passing policies that oppress people of color (like our Three Strikes law or the end of affirmative action) to being on the road towards a much more liberatory policy framework. Part of the state’s success has been the ability of community organizers to go from “opposition to proposition.” That is, from being on the defensive and having to build power from nearly scratch to having a sophisticated organizing strategy that brings the power of everyday people to bear on the voting booth and beyond.
5. Employ diverse approaches to multiracial coalition building, with a special focus on youth

Social justice organizing matters in South LA because it brings together a multiracial set of residents around common neighborhood concerns. Not only does community organizing tangibly improve inequities (e.g., improvements to local parks, access to college prep courses for all students, etc.), but it uses the process of getting to those wins to bring residents face-to-face and transform relationships between African Americans and Latinos, working through tensions towards collaboration. That process requires operating at the intersections: acknowledging the diverse identities in the room (e.g., Guatemalan, Black immigrant, unemployed, working poor, formerly incarcerated, undocumented, etc.), engaging with unique and common struggles that come from those identities, and working together for equity for all.

The multi-issue organizing happening in the case study areas needs to be nurtured. Interviewees expressed that they intentionally avoid working on single issues. In Milwaukee, where segregation has separated Black and Latino residents, organizations are trying to get to diversity, while organizers like Urban Underground are already there, using creative strategies to bring together Black and Brown youth. In Orlando, following the Pulse nightclub shooting, communities came together across race, sexuality, generation, and institution (including funders, queer people of color, and faith-based groups) and there is a continued interest in organizing more widely to counter attacks on all groups. In Jackson, interviewees reflect that the depth of racism and inequality require long-term relationship building that transcends issues and generations.

Facing a more diverse future, bridge building comes more naturally to young people. In South LA, younger Latinos—those born and raised in South LA—saw their future connected to the welfare of Black folks; they were different from their cousins and friends who grew up in Latino enclaves who sometimes had a more anti-Black point of view. With up-close experience—of the sort that organizing together provides—this younger generation of Latinos see the racism and neglect directed at South LA, and its relationship to anti-Blackness. As a result, they have intersecting concerns and empathies with African Americans, albeit though different racial-ethnic experiences.34

Across geographies, the possibilities of youth organizing infused our conversations—from working to increase their power at the school board to participating in immigrant-centered labor struggles. On a more personal level, young people help shape their parent’s consciousness. Despite all this, some elders do not see their work and, so, youth struggle to break into movement-building work, particularly in Jackson and Orlando. This is especially important to overcome because youth have a natural pull towards difference, instead of away from it—as noted by multiple interviewees. It is part of our younger generation’s experience and culture. And perhaps that is why they also do not “sell out” as easily, as one interviewee said, and may keep organizations true to their mission. Youth organizers are key to our multiracial future.

34 Much of the South LA experience is influenced by residential integration, which varies in our case studies. Future research could explore the extent to which residential integration matters for cultivating an intersectional worldview and how gentrification and displacement threatens to undo that progress.
Recommendations from the field:

Solidarity is necessary for our shared future in which no one group holds the numeric majority. Solidarity is practical, it builds trust, but it is more deeply a worldview issue: Do we believe that we need each other to the extent that we will give our time, resources, and energy for one another? One very practical step in this direction is finding common, intersecting issues of concern (e.g., criminalization, education, and voting) and building from there. The goal—over time and through repeated interactions—is to build communities of solidarity that can stand with each other across a spectrum of issues.

For America’s next generation, the future is now. Supporting them will help move the needle on our nation’s demographic and economic changes even as it helps youth realize their own chance to have healthy, productive lives. And investing in their leadership will shore up their resilience, help them develop their potential, and feed into the popular movements that will hold existing systems and older leaders accountable (Pastor et al. 2010). Therefore, fund youth organizing within institutions and emerging organizations, and leadership development among unaffiliated youth who may not see themselves in the current landscape.

Today’s youth are linked together through multiple categories of identities—racial, cultural, political, sexual, spiritual, socioeconomic, etc. Their experiences make them ideal to lead across multiple, diverse communities and to see each group’s struggle as part of the larger agenda for social equity. The challenge may come in connecting with an older generation and making organizational transitions. As such, it will be important to bridge generational divides to encourage younger leaders to build more broadly on their inclination to infuse organizations with an intersectional lens.
Conclusion: Soul, Systems, and Solidarity

Mississippi presents a most interesting example for the country. Not only does Mississippi have the highest share of Black residents, of all states, but it is the Southern state where African American leadership has stood firm in the defense of immigrant rights. One easy interpretation could be transactional: Black political figures recognize that if their numbers could be combined with a growing Latino vote and progressive whites, the state could shift dramatically. And while we do not doubt that that might be part of the story, it is also the case that something much deeper is going on.

Simply put, many African Americans in Mississippi have a deep experience of oppression and have been able to translate this experience into solidarity for immigrant rights. And what have actions to support immigrants done for racial justice? One worker, Isela Gonzalez whose children’s father had just been deported recalls attending a pro-immigrant march, “I became happy [because] I saw that we are not alone. There are people with us.” Gonzalez joined “a lot of Mexicans and Guatemalans and white people” that day, adding, “I saw many more black people who seemed like important people, the bosses, that day” (Eaton 2011b). How much more might Gonzalez be willing to stand-up against anti-Blackness because her sense of a broader movement for justice?

Soul work, driven by deep values, holds the promise of a new sort of racial healing—one that is not just about patching up old wounds but instead working together to change the system that produce the hurt in the first place. Soul work, in short, must be deeply connected to systems work. Given the historic cleavages in America, the discussion of racial healing and transformation is often taken to center on connecting white communities and leaders with those of color. But the new American context calls for de-centering whiteness and organizing that works through tensions and builds alliances between communities of color. This is absolutely crucial to challenging the broader forces producing inequality in America.
Soul and systems work will only be effective if we learn to practice new forms of deep solidarity. One aspect of this is the relationship between African American and Latino communities. Our previous work on this topic, *Roots|Raíces*, led us to realize that while the common media portrayal is of a “new majority” fraying apart, the reality is more complex. Early accounts stressed tensions and rivalries. However, even against the backdrop of conditions that are often challenging, African American and Latino residents found their way to new coalitions on shared issues. The tales of resilience and transformation—the way in which we, ourselves, came away with great hope in the future of urban America—made us wonder whether we were looking at a “one-off,” an experience entirely unique to Los Angeles.

We were not. Our case studies on Jackson, Milwaukee, Oakland, and Orlando reveal the possibilities and challenges for future organizing. There are real tensions in working towards multiracial coalitions: tensions informed by real histories of struggle and strife, exacerbated by economic stress and structural racism; and challenged by power imbalances that sometimes impede the achievement of a common agenda. But there are also emerging models for Black-Brown organizing that hold promise for doing soul and systems work to create a stronger, more resilient American future.
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Appendix A: Methodology

_Bridges | Puente_ is grounded in bridging the qualitative data gathered from interviews at each of the site visits with quantitative demographic analysis to both determine which metropolitan regions to examine and contextualize the changes occurring in said regions. The quantitative data presented in this report are generally calculated by the Equity Research Institute (ERI) and are based on two main sources. The first was a pooled sample of the American Community Survey (ACS) microdata from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Sample (Ruggles et al. 2015). The second was the U.S. decadal census for 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2010. In the actual work, we did not generally utilize the 1980 data since the intermingling of African-American and Latino populations, while not entirely new, does seem to have picked up in more metro areas post-1990.

As this report’s development spans many years, we use several batches of the pooled ACS. The methodology used to select the case studies—detailed below—relies on the earliest sample, 2011-2015 ACS data. We also lean on data with the same vintage from the National Equity Atlas—of which we are a creator, along with PolicyLink. Where possible, we have updated to 2013-2017. As a result, throughout the report we have been careful to indicate which sample of the ACS we are using.

As the report outlines, with the U.S. continuing to experience a demographic shift to becoming majority people of color, the place-based racial dynamics between people of color—outlined in our _Roots|Raices_ report—are becoming more commonplace across different urban areas throughout the country. However, these dynamics are not playing out in a singular way, nor are the demographic shifts happening at an equal pace or to the same degree across regions. In order to identify which metropolitan areas to study more in-depth, we embarked on a three-step process.

First, we examined the 100 largest metropolitan areas in the country, as defined by their Core-Based Statistical Area (CBSA), across a variety of summary measures that captured Black and Latino immigrant population changes. While our original analysis included dozens of additional variables, when looking at all regions, we focused on indicators that are standard to measure both proximity and residential segregation by race: the Dissimilarity Index and the Exposure Index. The Dissimilarity Index captures what percent of a given demographic group would need to move across a given metropolitan area to be evenly represented in all its neighborhoods (often defined by census tracts). Such a measure can be constructed for two specific groups (usually for Blacks and whites) and it can tell you whether communities are more or less likely to be spread into each other’s areas. The Exposure Index accounts for the likelihood of two groups, say African Americans and Latinos, encountering each other in a given area (in our case, a metropolitan region or city).

Along with these two indices, we also looked at population changes and growth rates
for Latinos and Blacks; Latinos were broken out by nativity to parse out how and where immigration was a driver of overall population growth (or in some case, mitigated population decline). Below is the list of primary variables we analyzed:

- Black Share of Total Population Growth from 1990 to 2010
- Latino Immigrant Population Growth from 1990 to 2010
- Exposure Index for Blacks to Latinos in 1990 and 2010
- Exposure Index for Latinos to Blacks in 1990 and 2010
- Black-Latino Dissimilarity Index in 1990 and 2010
- Black Share of Total Population in 2010
- Non-Immigrant Latino Share of Total Population in 2010
- Total Latino Immigrant Population in 2010

From here, we charted the data for all 100 metropolitan regions and defined three broad categories for classifying a given region: emerging, advanced, and legacy. As noted in the text, emerging regions are characterized by often having a significant Black population—usually a quarter or more of the overall population—and/or being historical hubs for Black communities. Meanwhile, they are also gaining a small (often less than five percent of the total population) but rapidly growing influx of Latino immigrants, in the past two decades. Advanced metro areas tend to have a more sizeable Latino immigrant population, while also having a significant share of native-born Latinos, and either a stable or slightly growing Black population, one that is usually the largest non-white group in the region. Finally, legacy regions had large Latino and Black populations, with the former having been largely established in prior decades and growth rates for both slowing down. Oftentimes, legacy metro areas have a large share of their recent population growth driven by native-born Latinos. In turn, Latinos are becoming the largest racial or ethnic group in the region.

Based on this classification, we identified 15 metropolitan areas that fit within each of the categories and exhibited unique characteristics within broader trends. To ensure geographic diversity, we also grouped all metropolitan areas by geographic region as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau (i.e., Northeast, Midwest, South, West)—doing so made certain trends apparent. For example, nearly all emerging regions we identified were in the South. From there, we narrowed down our list to eight final metros to examine in depth.

The final step was to create regional profiles for these final regions. At this stage we integrated qualitative data into the analysis and drilled down to the city level, conducting a historical review of the region and researching specific communities or areas where interracial demographic trends had taken place. Concurrently, we charted racial composition over time by nativity; population growth rates for all racial and ethnic groups; and demographic projections for both the metropolitan area and the primary city within each area. In addition, we looked at racial dot density maps to visualize the geographic segregation of a given region.
This mixed-methods approach at the final stage allowed us to make final determinations on the three sites to visit, choosing one emerging, advanced, and legacy site. Each site was also located in a different census region. Our final determination took into account the degree of change that had occurred in the past decade and the current population levels for Blacks and Latinos, including immigration rates for the latter. We also looked at the degree of stability of the Black population in each region, (e.g. the degree to which it was shrinking or growing, especially compared to overall population change) and the composition of Latinos by age and national origin. Finally, because Roots|Raíces showed that citywide changes play out in different ways at the granular level, we made our choices by looking at the sub-regional changes and dynamics identified at the neighborhood level for each region.
Appendix B: List of Interviewees

Titles and affiliations reflect positions at the time of the interview.
* Indicates review of the region’s case study.

**Jackson**
- Bill Chandler (Phone)—Executive Director of Mississippi Immigrants Rights Alliance (MIRA)*
- Brenda Scott—President of Mississippi Alliance of State Employees (Local 3570)—Communications Workers of America (MASE-CWA)
- Jim Evans—former State Representative and AFL-CIO organizer
- Brandon King—Community Organizer for Cooperation Jackson
- Hollis Watkins—President of Southern ECHO
- Jed Oppenheim—former Board Member of Jackson Public School District
- Karla Velez—Vice President for Mississippi Hispanic Association
- Jimena Velasquez—Project Assistant Director for Mississippi Hispanic Association
- Kim Robinson—Program Associate for Mississippi Hispanic Association
- Patricia Ice—Legal Director for Mississippi Immigrants Rights Alliance (MIRA)
- Amelia McGowan—Program Director for Migrant Support Center Catholic Charities

**Milwaukee**
- J. Allen Stokes (Phone)—Former President of Harambee Great Neighborhood Initiative
- Rick Banks—Coordinator of Harambee Great Neighborhood Initiative
- Fred Royal—President of NAACP Milwaukee
- Chris Grandt—Director of Neighborhood Development for Riverworks Development Corporation
- Mariana Rodriguez—Program Manager for United Migrant Opportunity Services (UMOS) Latina Resource Center
- George Torres—President/CEO of La Causa
- Luz Sosa—Latino Outreach Organizer for Citizen Action of Wisconsin*
- Christine Neumann-Ortiz—Executive Director for Voces De La Frontera
- Thomas Leonard—Program Coordinator for Urban Underground
- Sharlen Moore—Executive Director of Urban Underground
Appendix B: List of Interviewees

Oakland

• Kimberly King (Phone)—Professor at Laney College
• Regina Jackson—President and CEO of East Oakland Youth Development Center (EOYDC)
• Saa’un Bell—Statewide Communications Director for Californians for Justice
• Maria Poblet—Founding Executive Director of Causa Justa: Just Cause
• Vanessa Moses—Co-Director of Causa Justa: Just Cause
• George Galvis—Executive Director of Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice (CURYJ)
• Gloria Bruce—Executive Director of East Bay Housing Organizations (EBHO)
• David Harris—Chief Executive Officer of Urban Strategies Council
• Ethel Long-Scott—Executive Director of Women’s Economic Agenda Project
• Robert Stahl—Associate Director of Urban Strategies Council*
• Breeanna Decker—Program Associate of the Opportunity Youth Initiative of Urban Strategies Council

Orlando

• Marco Vilar (Phone)—CEO of Vilar Strategy Group LLC
• Jasmine Burney—Civic Engagement Coordinator for Faith in Florida
• Denise Diaz—Director of Central Florida Jobs with Justice*
• Marco Quiroga—Program Director of Contigo Fund
• Jared Norlund—Senior Strategist of National Council of La Raza in Orlando
• Zoraida Ríos Andino—President of Misión Boricua
• Emily Bonilla—District 5 Commissioner, Board of County Commissioners, Orange County
• Nancy Rosado—Co-Founder of Somos Orlando
• Curtis Hierro—Organizing Director of Central Florida American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO)