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Black, Brown, and Powerful: Freedom Dreams in Unequal Cities

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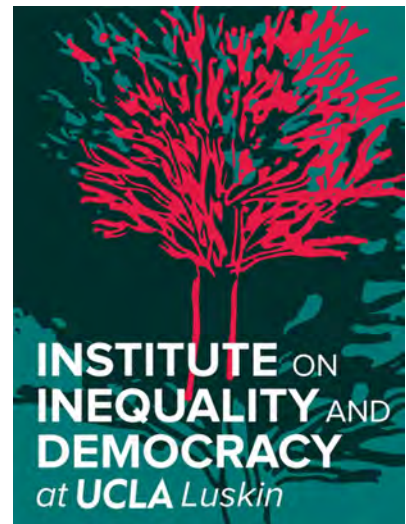
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Authors
Calderon, Caroline
Durón, Isabel
Flores, Jesus
et al.

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2018

Black,
Brown,
and Powerful:
Freedom Dreams
in Unequal Cities

*A collection of work and calls to action from the
two-day Black Brown and Powerful conference at
Los Angeles Trade-Technical College,
April 26-27, 2018*

Black, Brown, and Powerful: Freedom Dreams in Unequal Cities

In April 2018, the Institute on Inequality and Democracy at UCLA Luskin convened scholars, activists, policy advocates, community residents, and nonprofit workers to share and discuss research and action pertaining to processes of inequality in Los Angeles. We sought to shed light on the entangled structures of oppression, including urban displacement, housing precarity, racialized policing, criminal justice debt, forced labor, and the mass supervision and control of youth. Through keynote talks, group dialogue, and workshops, we analyzed how in Los Angeles, and elsewhere, black and brown communities face multiple forms of banishment and exploitation ranging from the criminalization of poverty to institutionalized theft.

The question of racial banishment is an important one for the Institute. Two years ago, our inaugural event was organized around the theme, Urban Color-Lines, and it highlighted the forms of dispossession underway in cities around the world. We gathered then at the Japanese American National Museum with social movement leaders from Los Angeles, Chicago, Rio de Janeiro and Cape Town, to remember that the forced removal of people of color is part of long histories of settler-colonialism and racial separation. We noted the urgency of our present moment, of black and brown communities being pushed out of urban cores, to peripheries and margins. We called it racial banishment.

This year though, amidst the troubled times of Trumpism, we wanted to shift our focus from banishment to freedom. In the reports that follow, you will find many examples of what Robin D.G. Kelley, a key presence at the Institute, has famously called "freedom dreams." Located in, and thinking from South Central Los Angeles, the event's participants provide insight into organizing frameworks and resistance strategies that challenge exclusion and refuse subordination. From

tenant organizing to debtors' unions, from underground scholars to educational reparations, visions of freedom abound. The Institute on Inequality and Democracy is convinced that university-based research can, and must, support such freedom dreams. As the workshop reports make evident, the frontlines of struggle generate immense homework for academia; they establish research agendas that we would be wise to take up.

Such partnership — between the public university and social justice movements — requires careful attention to the difficult task of decolonizing the university. This mandate is evident throughout this collection of reports. There is no easy alliance between academic power and banished communities; there is no obvious solidarity between urban plans and freedom dreams. This event was intended to be a step towards building such alliances, especially by reconstructing the curriculum and canon of knowledge. In his recently released song, Brackets, J. Cole raps about a curriculum that tricks us:

> *"One thing about the men that's controlling the pen*
> *That write history, they always seem to white-out their sins."*

To dream of freedom means changing who controls the pen. It means refusing to white-out the sins of obscene wealth and racist power. It means getting serious about urban histories and urban futures that center the struggles and hopes of black and brown communities.

These struggles and hopes are necessarily global, connecting South Central Los Angeles to distant geographies. At the Black, Brown, and Powerful event, we thus stood shoulder to shoulder with colleagues in Brazil, and at the request of our students, we remembered Marielle Franco, extraordinary political leader, assassinated in Rio de Janeiro earlier this year. We joined the

statement by US black feminists on the imperative for transnational solidarity in a world of rapacious global capital and interlinked state violence. We know too that the world stands in solidarity with us, against the institutionalization of white supremacy in statecraft and against the brutal exploitation of black and brown bodies in the service of racial capitalism. As one of our teachers, Pete White of the LA Community Action Network reminds us, #LetsGetFree.

Ananya Roy
Professor, Urban Planning, Social Welfare, and Geography
The Renee and Meyer Luskin Chair in Inequality and Democracy
Director, Institute on Inequality and Democracy at UCLA Luskin

Acknowledgements

Day One

From Banishment to Freedom

BLACK, BROWN, AND POWERFUL: FREEDOM DREAMS IN UNEQUAL CITIES

April 26, 2018 | LATTC, South Tent

**Gary M. Segura | Laurence B. Frank | Ananya Roy | Paul Ong
Lola Smallwood Cuevas | Tony Roshan Samara | Manuel Criollo
Jorja Leap & Kathy Wooten | Bryonn Bain & the Lyrics Crew**

In Los Angeles and elsewhere, black and brown communities face multiple forms of banishment and exploitation. At this evening of inspiring talks and performances, convened by the Institute on Inequality and Democracy at UCLA Luskin, we shine a light on organizing frameworks and resistance strategies that challenge exclusion and refuse subordination.

#ONRACE

PROGRAM

INSTITUTE ON **INEQUALITY** AND **DEMOCRACY**
at UCLA Luskin

5 - 6 p.m.

Welcome Reception & Opening Remarks
Gary M. Segura, Dean, UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs
Laurence B. Frank, President, LA Trade-Tech College

6 - 8 p.m.

From Banishment to Freedom
Ananya Roy, UCLA

South LA 50 Years after the Kerner Commission
Paul Ong, UCLA

Black Workers Rising, Los Angeles Rising
Lola Smallwood Cuevas, Los Angeles Black Worker Center

Tenant Power: Victories for Housing Justice
Tony Roshan Samara, Urban Habitat & Right to the City Alliance

Resisting Police in Schools & Organizing for Educational Reparations Now
Manuel Criollo, Activist-in-Residence at UCLA

Building Power in Watts: Community Leaders & Systems Change
Jorja Leap, Watts Leadership Institute
Kathy Wooten, Loving Hands Community Care

Special Performance: Lockdown Unplugged
Bryonn Bain & the Lyrics Crew, UCLA

MEYER AND RENEE
LUSKIN
LECTURE SERIES

Biographies are available online:
https://bit.ly/2F9ecPl

LOS ANGELES TRADE-TECH
LATTC
A Community College

South Los Angeles

SINCE
the SIXTIES

half a century of progress?

South Los Angeles

SINCE THE SIXTIES

This report examines the socioeconomic changes in South Los Angeles since the Sixties to shed light on what, if any, progress has been made toward addressing issues of access, equity, and justice. The Sixties were filled with historical accomplishments and with promises for the future. It was also a time rife with discontent at the pervasive and persistent injustice many people of color experienced. This consequential decade set into motion both progressive and reactionary movements that define reality in South Los Angeles today.

Los Angeles was a major site of protest and expressions of discontent, as evidenced by the 1965 Watts Riot and the 1968 Chicano Blowout. This publication begins with an overview of the massive societal changes in the 1960s brought on by the convergence of multiple forces. It introduces the context of South Los Angeles and evolution of inequality in the region. The next four parts examine the trajectory of South Los Angeles relative to the Los Angeles County along four dimensions over the last fifty years: employment and earnings, housing, transportation, and education.

The 1965 McCone and 1968 Kerner reports provide a backdrop against which to evaluate change. The reports were commissioned in the aftermath of the Watts Riots and the 'Long Hot Summer' that rattled the nation. Those publications capture the sense of urgency to redress centuries of racism. The reports included extensive recommendations, and we summarize the most relevant to each domain at the beginning of each section. Their recommendations highlight the priority policy concerns of the time. We use these as reference points for tracing the changes over the following fifty years.

The 1960s

The 1960s was a pivotal historical period. During this decade, our most enduring Civil Rights heroes and icons inspired generations of activism. In that era, several monumental pieces of legislation were enacted: the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965 (which ended racially biased immigration quotas), and the Fair Housing Act of 1968. At the same time, parallel movements outside of politics materialized: the Counter Culture movement beginning in 1967's Summer of Love and peaking at Woodstock in 1969, the Anti-War movement, second-wave feminism, and the Third World Strike that ushered in ethnic studies at universities nation-wide.

It was a period of growing disenchantment with justice delayed. Material and economic improvements failed to match legislative gains, falling far short of rising expectations. This disjuncture and the resulting frustration boiled over in the form of massive urban unrest. The first major riot took place where few expected, in Watts. In a 1964 report by the Urban League on the socioeconomic status of Blacks, Los Angeles was ranked as the best among sixty-eight cities. Physically, Watts, with its low housing density and opens spaces, did not share many of the stereotypical images of an inner-city ghetto. It was relatively free from oppressive Jim Crow-style laws. The McCone Commission noted "in Los Angeles […] there was a tendency to believe, and with some reason, that the problems which caused the trouble elsewhere were not acute in this community (3)". Despite Los Angeles's reputation as a "Black Mecca," Watts was plagued by problems boiling below the surface. The riot resulted in 34 deaths, over a thousand injured, 4,000 arrests, and $300 million in damage (in 2016 dollars), more than all other episodes of unrest in that year combined. Unlike the Kerner Commission, the McCone Commission recognized that many of the same issues also afflicted Latino neighborhoods.

Two summers after Watts, the nation witnessed an explosion of unrest and rioting in mostly Black neighborhoods. Forty-one large scale episodes of disorder rocked 39 cities throughout the nation, with Detroit and Newark being the sites of highest intensity.

More than a half century since the Kerner Commission, the history of South Los Angeles continues to be laden with broken promises and only modest improvements. Despite the huge efforts of residents, activists and others, the burden of under-investment and neglect continue to limit economic opportunity for too many Angelenos. This prescient report serves as an important reminder of the profound challenges that remain.

Gary M. Segura

Dean, UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs

1954 Brown v. Board of Education rules "separate but equal" facilities "inherently unequal"

1960 John F. Kennedy elected president

1963 **California passes Fair Housing Act** JFK assassinated in Dallas **1964** Civil Rights Act passed LBJ launches Great Society **CA voters nullify state's Fair Housing Act 1965** Malcolm X assassinated in NYC Immigration & Nationality Act passed Voting Rights Act passed **Watts Riots break out in Los Angeles Delano Grape Workers Stike begins, initiated by Filipino American-led Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee 1966 McCone Commission releases "Violence in the City" report 1967** wave of unrest across American cities during "Long Hot Summer" "Summer of Love" springs up in San Francisco **1968** Kerner Commission Report on Civil Disorders released MLK assassinated in Memphis Fair Housing Act passed Robert Kennedy assassinated in LA Third World Strikes, leading to creation of Ethnic Studies departments

1970s 1979 tensions flare in LA around desegregation busing plan; voters pass Proposition 1, prohibiting court-ordered busing

1990s 1992 Civil Unrest following acquittal of LAPD officers tried for the beating of Rodney King **1994** voters pass anti-immigrant Prop 187 **1996** passage of CA Civil Rights Initiative (Prop 209)

2000/10s 2013 Black Lives Matter movement born following fatal shootings of unarmed black men by police **2018** Trump Administration announces formal end to Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program

The committee in charge of investigating the unrest counted 83 deaths and close to 2,000 injuries in addition to tens of millions in damages (estimates vary widely). In response to what would become known as the "Long Hot Summer," the Johnson Administration assembled the Kerner Commission in July of 1967. Like the McCone Commission, it was called upon to conduct an inquiry into root causes and provide policy recommendations, only at the federal level.

The McCone and Kerner commissions exposed a society that was ignorant of the depth and extent of inequality. Johnson expressed a profound sense of disbelief, asking "How is it possible after all we've accomplished? How could it be? Has the world gone topsy-turvy?" (as quoted in Baradaran, 2017, 154).

However, this confusion betrays a detachment from the realities of many Black urban residents. "I doubt that a single Negro in Los Angeles would agree that conditions are improving", James Baldwin observed at the time, "we don't walk down the same street. [...] The real Negro leaders have been trying to speak to you for years…. You won't listen" (as quoted in Joseph, 2006, 47).

The risk of inaction is the development of an increasingly separate and deeply unequal society.

LA since the Sixties

Tragically, implementing the call for action by the McCone and Kerner commissions proved problematic. Addressing the socioeconomic crises in the inner city was not universally
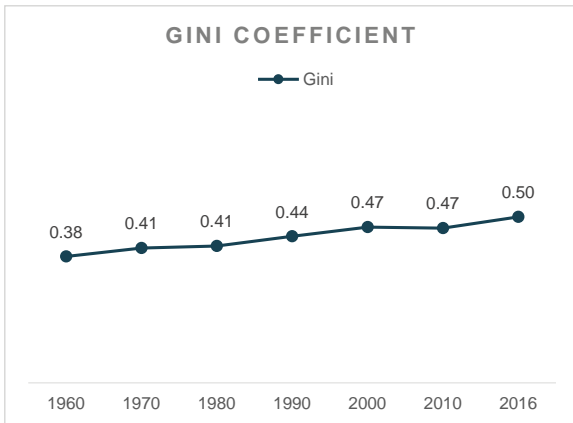
The GINI coefficient is used to measure inequality. The above is calculated using income. A measure of 0 indicates perfect equality (where all individuals make the same amount), whereas a score of 1 indicates total inequality (i.e. one person earns all incomes). The trend over the last half decade has been increasing inequality.
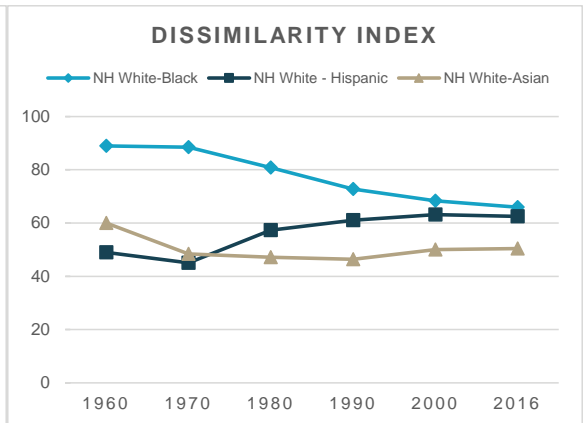
A dissimilarity index shows the degree of clustering among members of different groups. A high score indicates a high degree of segregation. Segregation between Blacks and non-Hispanic whites has decreased, however, it remains high. Segregation between non-Hispanic whites and Hispanics, however, has increased in the last decades.

Downtown
LA

South Los Angeles
Study Area

1965 Watts
Curfew Boundary
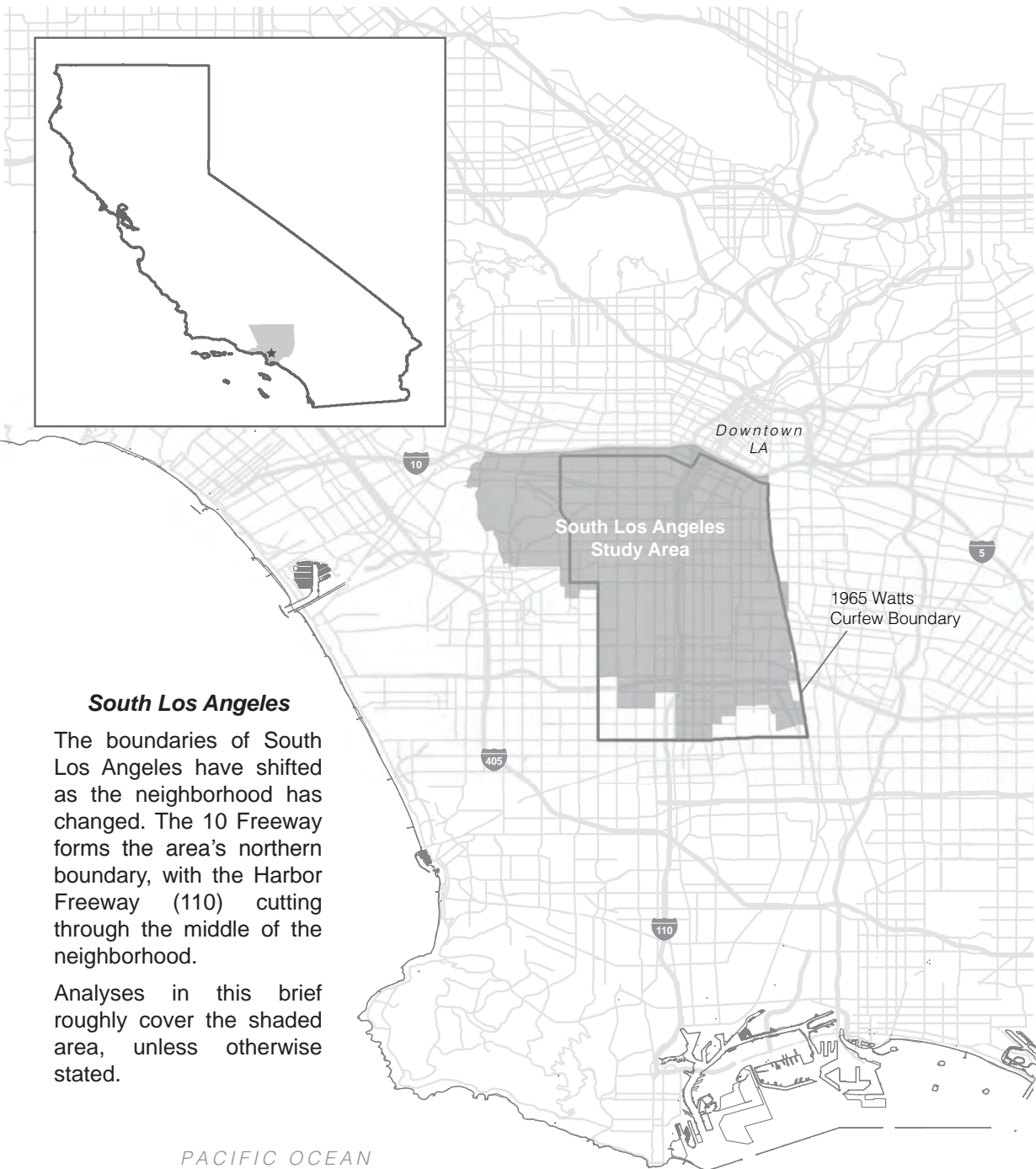
South Los Angeles

The boundaries of South Los Angeles have shifted as the neighborhood has changed. The 10 Freeway forms the area's northern boundary, with the Harbor Freeway (110) cutting through the middle of the neighborhood.

Analyses in this brief roughly cover the shaded area, unless otherwise stated.

PACIFIC OCEAN
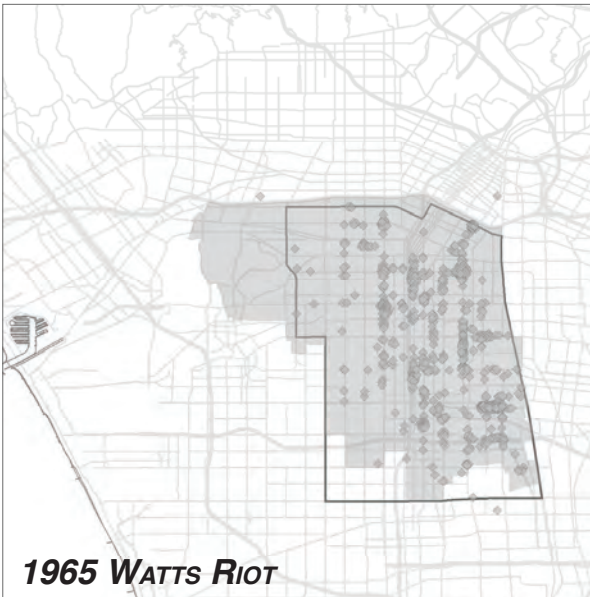
1965 Watts Riot

The above map shows instances of damage and/or violence which took place during the Watts Riots. Thirty-four lives were lost, and 977 buildings were looted, damaged, or destroyed.
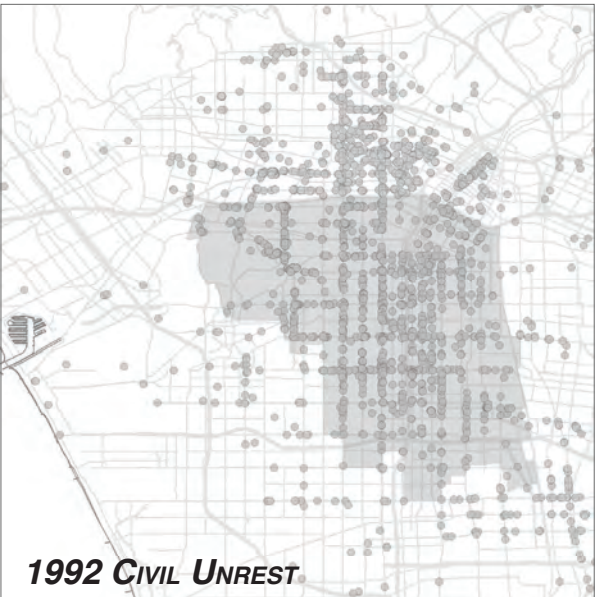
1992 Civil Unrest

Compared to the Watts Riot, recorded damages resulting from 1992's Civil Unrest were more widespread. After several days of protest, 63 people had been killed and damages totaled upwards of $1 billion.

embraced, a response rooted in a broad reactionary movement against the events and social movements of the Sixties. The subsequent decade saw the emergence of Richard Nixon's "Southern Strategy" of courting historically white Democratic voters by appealing to racial resentment among the "silent majority." Over time, this countervailing movement embraced attacks on affirmative action and race-based equity policies, both in the courts and in politics.

South Los Angeles because of its historical significance illustrates stark inequalities better than most places. The rest of the report compares the socioeconomic status of this neighborhood for three time periods: 1960,

1990, and 2016. Each corresponds to a key historical moment. The first time point, 1960, captures the rising unease with the status quo that relegated people of color to second-class citizens. It depicts the dire conditions that served as the context in which the altercation between a driver and a police officer would ignite the 1965 Watts Riots.

The second time point, 1990, is roughly the midpoint of the analysis. Equally important, it is just two years before the 1992 Uprising in South LA. The acquittal of the police officers charged in the beating of Rodney King was the catalyst for the protest. Over five days, the Los Angeles civil unrest resulted in 50 casualties and upwards of a billion dollars

in damage (UCLA Center for Neighborhood Knowledge, 2017.) The maps on the Watts Riot and the Civil Unrest show the greater geographical extent of damages and violence in 1992 compared to 1965. This growth is indicative of a mounting frustration with persistent marginalization of the community and its people.

The most recent year of this study is 2016, giving us a measure of the present. The statistics reveal a continuation of the same socioeconomic inequalities that generated many of the anxieties and frustrations that gave rise to the 1965 and 1992 uprisings. Disparities in earnings among South LA workers have persisted, driving income inequality. At the same time, homeownership, a primary vehicle for wealth accumulation, remains low. The community also has a higher concentration of low wage jobs than the County. Among other reasons, residents are, on average, less able to access higher quality jobs because of lower rates of automobile ownership. In the area of education, gaps in school performance between South LA and the most affluent neighborhoods of West LA have persisted. History taught us that continued socioeconomic marginalization and alienation were the root causes of 1965 and 1992. There has been no large-scale violence in Los Angeles over the last quarter century, but the findings should give us pause.

We look at the sum of the analyses with ambivalence. While the data paint a bleak picture, there are other areas that we do not cover which offer brighter prospects. In the aftermath of the 1992 Civil Unrest, many community members mobilized and many community organizations were born. The ability to shape a South LA that works for its residents lies in the dedication of the community and organizations on the ground. But, they, alone, cannot alter the trajectory of the area. As the Kerner Commission emphatically opened their report, an alternative path "will require a commitment to national action—compassionate, massive, and sustained, backed by the resources of the most powerful and the richest nation on this earth." It is time to renew that commitment.

Ready to Work

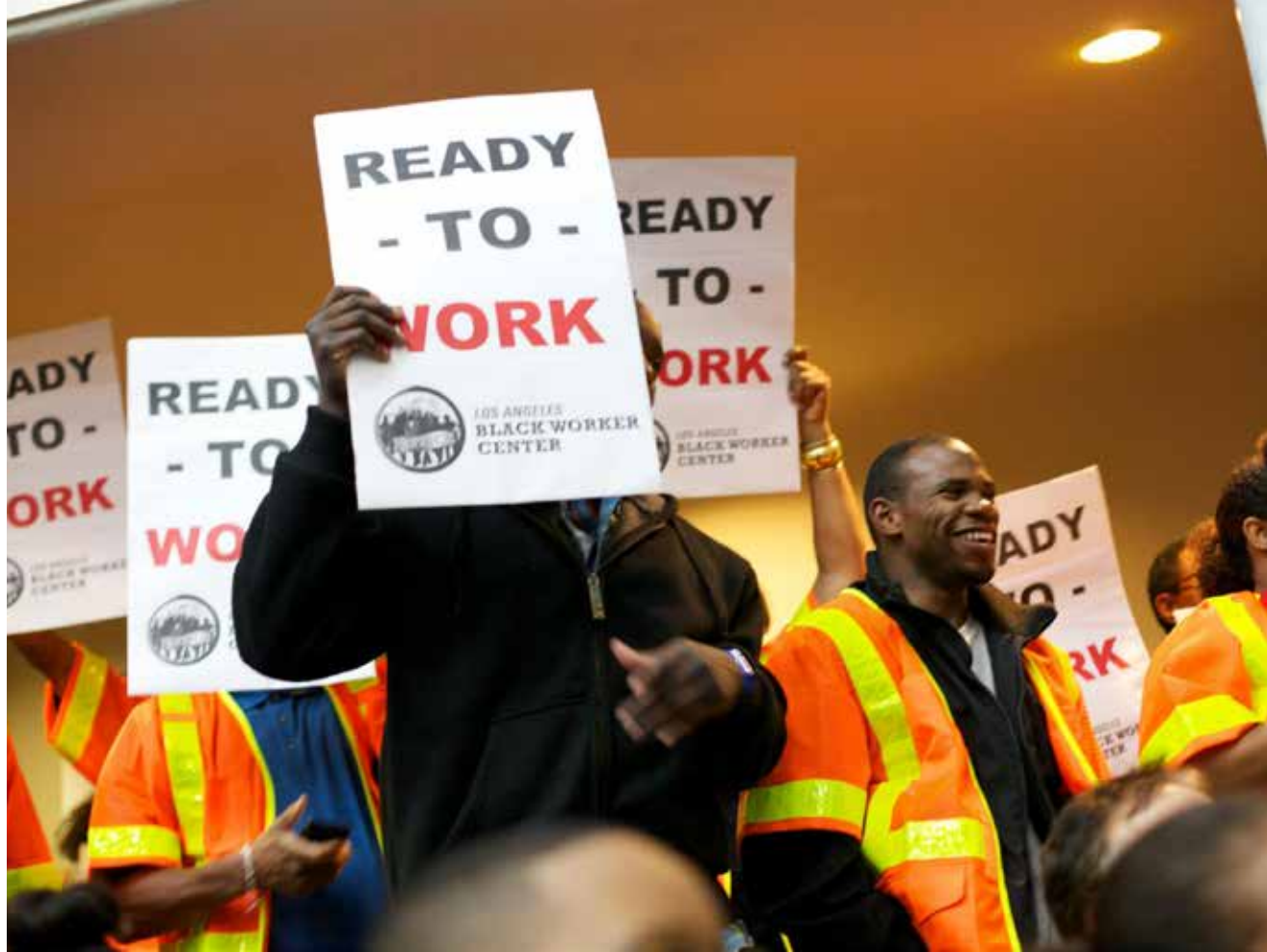## UPROOTING INEQUITY

Black Workers in Los Angeles County

March 2017

UCLA Labor Center

LOS ANGELES **BLACK WORKER CENTER**

UCLA Institute for Research on Labor and Employment

LOS ANGELES **BLACK WORKER CENTER**

Executive Summary

Los Angeles County is a vibrant and highly diverse region, comprised of people from a variety of ethnicities and backgrounds. Throughout the twentieth century, Los Angeles experienced waves of migration that significantly enlarged the region's Black community. As Black workers gradually joined the industrial workforce, they inflated union rolls and generally benefitted from the region's burgeoning economic prosperity. L.A.'s Black community, through organization and struggle, fought western variations of Jim Crow laws to win access to quality jobs, housing, and opportunities.

While the Black community was once a thriving part of L.A.'s landscape and remains integral to the county's cultural and economic life, it has long been in critical decline. Industries departed Black neighborhoods that once housed well-paying jobs. Manufacturing industries that employed a large share of Black workers moved offshore,

depleting the number of stable and available union jobs. Those that remained declined in quality, and as Black employment cratered, these communities—especially their men—were increasingly criminalized and ensnared in California's historic expansion of incarceration. Despite the enactment of anti-discrimination laws, racist hiring practices demonstrably continue to limit Black employment. As a result of widening inequality, rising housing costs, and a glaring lack of economic opportunities, Los Angeles is in the throes of a *Black jobs crisis*.

Los Angeles is in the throes of a Black jobs crisis

This report looks at the experience of the Black community in Los Angeles through a labor and employment lens, and details how the lack of access to quality jobs is adversely impacting the community. Centered on an extensive literature review, an analysis of government data, and the collection of worker's stories and case studies, this report draws a portrait of the challenges that Black workers in Los Angeles face and this community's present employment crisis. The following are key findings.

The Black community has a long and vibrant presence in Los Angeles but economic and social hardships are pushing residents out of the area.

- The percentage of Black workers in manufacturing jobs since 1980 has shrunk 19% to 5%.

- Employer efforts to deunionize industries negatively impacted Black workers and jobs.

- Since the 1980s, the Black population in Los Angeles has declined by over 100,000 residents from 13% to 8% while the Inland Empire has gained over 250,000 Black residents.

- Nonetheless, Black Angelenos still make up over one-third of the state's Black population and are a critical part of the region.

Black people in Los Angeles are significantly more educated than previous generations, yet experience a lower labor participation rate and a significantly higher unemployment rate than white workers.

- Since 1980, the number of those with less than a high school degree has shrunk by one-third to 10% and the number of those with a bachelor's degree or higher has doubled.

- Black workers with a high school or less education experience unemployment at almost double the rate as white workers at the same education level.

- And even with a higher degree, more than 1 in 10 Black workers is unemployed.

- Black youth are almost twice as likely as white youth to be *disconnected*—neither employed nor in school.

Black workers are underrepresented in professional jobs and have lower rates in manager and supervisory positions.

- Around half of the Black workers in sectors with low union density, such as retail, janitorial, and security jobs, earn low wages.

- Black workers are underrepresented in professional jobs as well as in manufacturing, construction and food service.

- Over half of Black workers are employed in frontline, entry-level jobs such as floor positions and non-supervisory positions, and office work, administrative or clerical positions, which is a higher rate than white workers, and additionally are in senior positions at lower rates than white workers.

Many Black workers are in low-wage jobs and earn less than white workers in similar positions.

• Whether working full or part time, Black workers earn only three-quarters of what white workers earn. For Black women, the wage gap is even more severe.

• Further, as Black workers are promoted, the wage gap actually widens. Managers earned 76% of white worker wages and those in professional positions earn 78%.

• One third of Black workers earn low wages (defined as two-thirds of the median hourly wage) and at a higher rate than white workers.

• The wage gap between Black and white workers decreases, to an extent, as education levels rises. Nonetheless, almost 2 in 10 Black workers with higher degrees are still earning low wages.

• Black households have the lowest household income and build less wealth over time compared to their white counterparts.

Black workers experience a myriad of negative health outcomes due to racial discrimination in employment.

• A key social determinant of health is access to a safe and well-paying job.

• People who live in communities with high unemployment, pronounced poverty, and a generally low socioeconomic status are more likely to experience mental distress, crime, child maltreatment, childhood obesity, and higher levels of biological wear and tear from chronic stress.

The convergence of the Black jobs crisis, spiraling housing costs, state violence and mass incarceration has resulted in a perfect storm of discontent in the Black community. The response has been an unprecedented display of Black working-class activism and mobilization in Los Angeles County. As we enter the era of a new administration, however, concern for Black workers has intensified. President Trump's "business-friendly" posture, his personal history of labor and housing discrimination, and his hostile indifference to the particular vulnerabilities of Black workers means that the few remaining equal opportunity gains of the Civil Rights movement may be rolled back and compound the precarious situation Black workers already face.

This report argues for the need to stabilize Black families and communities by creating good-paying, quality jobs accessible to Black workers. The purpose of this report is to educate policy makers, union representatives, and organizations working for economic

justice about the needs of Black workers in Los Angeles. Based on our research, we make these recommendations:

1. Support worker movements that improve working conditions

a. Prioritize and implement labor organizing campaigns to raise standards in industries that employ Black workers.

b. Reject "Right to Work" laws that remove worker protections and eliminate the rights of workers to organize.

2. Create policies and programs that create access to jobs for underrepresented workers

a. Expand hiring benchmarks by establishing underrepresented population goals and amend disadvantaged worker requirements for local and targeted hiring programs to include an underrepresented worker clause with hiring benchmarks.

b. Prioritize hiring and retention programs in the public sector.

3. Empower agencies and communities to address discrimination and workplace issues

a. Amend state law to empower local governments with the authority to address issues of access and discrimination in areas where they have previously been hindered.

b. Establish a robust and seamless workplace enforcement entity charged with enforcing local wage and anti-discrimination laws.

c. Institutionalize and invest in partnerships with credible community organizations to implement targeted outreach, recruitment, and retention programs that focus on underrepresented workers.

d. Establish worksite monitoring programs to strengthen industry diversity standards by conducting regular audit studies.

4. Support and ensure high road business practices

a. Level the playing field for business by enhancing state penalty remedies that expand liability for employers who do not take steps to address employees who engage in workplace violence and intimidation.

b. Public agencies should maintain a standard of conduct in the labor market when entering into contracts.

c. Establish a citywide fair hiring recognition program.

Block by block
Feel the city rock
Tension, Release
No Justice, No Peace!

- Maya Jupiter, *Crumble*

Bryonn Bain and Maya Jupiter close out Day One with performances.

Day Two
Organizable Problems

BLACK, BROWN, AND POWERFUL: FREEDOM DREAMS IN UNEQUAL CITIES

April 27, 2018 | LATTC, South Tent and Aspen Hall

Terra Graziani, Hilary Malson, & Ananya Roy | Susan Burton & Noah Zatz | Laura Abrams, Manuel Criollo, & Matthew Mizel Funmilola Fagbamila | Pete White

This day of workshops follows Thursday evening's talks and performances, "From Banishment to Freedom." The Institute on Inequality and Democracy at UCLA Luskin now invites you to participate in a full day of dialogue and collaborative work.

PROGRAM

INSTITUTE ON **INEQUALITY** AND **DEMOCRACY**
at UCLA Luskin

8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.
LATTC, South Tent

Workshop Registration and Breakfast
Friday attendees are requested to participate for the entire day in one of the three workshops.

9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
LATTC, Aspen Hall
Workshop A. Rm 101
Workshop B. Rm 107
Workshop C. Rm 120

Workshop A.
Freedom is a Place: Land, Rent, and Housing
Moderators: *Terra Graziani*, *Hilary Malson*, and *Ananya Roy*, UCLA

Workshop B.
Pay for Freedom, Work for Free: Economic Extraction in Criminal Justice
Moderators: *Susan Burton*, A New Way of Life Re-Entry Project, and *Noah Zatz*, UCLA

Workshop C.
Disentangling the Web of the Juvenile Justice System
Moderators: *Laura Abrams*, UCLA, *Manuel Criollo*, Activist-in-Residence, UCLA, and *Matthew Mizel*, UCLA & InsideOut Writers

12:30 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.
LATTC, South Tent

Lunch

1:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.
LATTC, South Tent

Special Performance: Woke Black Folk
Funmilola Fagbamila, Black Lives Matter LA

1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
LATTC, South Tent

Freedom Dreams in Unequal Cities
Moderators: *Ananya Roy*, UCLA, and *Pete White*, LA Community Action Network
A joint convening of the three workshops to share research and analysis, frameworks and strategies for organizing, and possibilities for shared visions and proposals.

MEYER AND RENEE
LUSKIN
LECTURE SERIES

Biographies are available online:
https://bit.ly/2F9ecPl

LOS ANGELES TRADE-TECH
LATTC
A Community College

Funmilola Fagbimala performs her stage play *Woke Black Folk*

That's what it takes--
No one cast away, nobody left behind,
Not even the most problematic kind.
See, we cannot reproduce the force that tried to kill us off
'Cuz if we do, look, I'm tellin' you — we'll have to pay a real cost
Look, what I'm saying is quite simple
We cannot, throw each other away.
We are complex and conflicted, often stuck in our ways,
But regardless of all that, we're, absolutely here to stay,
So let's — teach one another, and be open to receive,
Because we really need each other —
This is a fact, guaranteed.

- Funmilola Fagbimala, *Woke Black Folk*

Workshop A

Freedom is a Place: Land, Rent, and Housing

Workshop A: Freedom is a Place: Land, Rent, and Housing

Authors: Caroline Calderon, Isabel Durón, Danny Foster, Terra Graziani, Meg Healy, Hilary Malson, and Gabriela Solis

Moderators: Terra Graziani, Hilary Malson and Ananya Roy

Strategies of Banishment and Resistance

Introduction

On April 27th, 2018, as part of The Institute on Inequality and Democracy's Black Brown and Powerful: Freedom Dreams in Unequal Cities, we convened a workshop entitled, "Housing, Land, and Rent" to have a conversation about housing's unique role in unequal cities. Ten lead participants, three moderators, and one hundred attendees shared and discussed their research and activism around housing, and with this work in mind, we collectively asked and answered the question, "How do we get free?" The following lead participants framed the conversation by sharing their inspiring work towards housing justice in the Los Angeles region and beyond.

Gilda Haas, LA Coop Lab; Kim Carter, Time for Change; Jorge Rivera, LiBRE; Elizabeth Blaney, Union de Vecinos; Luis Sarmiento, THRIVE Santa Ana; Terra Graziani, Anti-Eviction Mapping Project; Pete White, LACAN; Tony Samara, Urban Habitat and Right to the City Alliance; Rahim Kurwa, UCLA Sociology; and Michael Lens, UCLA Urban and Regional Planning.

The title of the program comes from the brilliant work of Ruth Wilson Gilmore, who writes that "abolition geography starts from the homely premise that freedom is a place" (Gilmore 2017: 227). In her critique of the carceral geographies that have shaped and continue to shape our communities, Gilmore issues an urgent call for a radical intervention in our consciousness, one that is rooted in liberation. We asked workshop attendees to reflect on the processes of enclosure and extraction through which racial capitalism operates. But, working with her vision in mind, we also invited everyone to envision spatial practices of freedom.

We asked, what were the tools and tactics people have taken up that work, and what larger transformations did we want to demand? How did these strategies allow us to redefine our relationships with property? How could we learn from one another, and how could our work complement each other's to build collective power? What were the longer histories of organizing that we are currently working from, and what did it mean to build power for the future? And how could we take care of each other while organizing within and against racial capitalism?

Participants drew on their experiences as organizers, community members, and researchers to contribute their thoughts. Through participatory activities and open dialogue, we discussed the power imbalances that have been codified and reproduced through laws, markets, and complacency. We exchanged our differing strategies for pushing back against this violence that shapes our cities - by pushing for community control of land through building community land trusts, by leading fights for rent control and tenant protections, by providing supportive housing and legal services, and by building community power through research and action.

The ideas that workshop participants shared are collected here as Strategies of Banishment and Strategies of Resistance. Banishment: the tools for urban social control, through which zones of exclusion are created, enforced, and expanded (Herbert and Beckett 2010). Resistance: the tactics for pushing back and working towards an alternative future, rooted in freedom. As Gilmore writes, "by seizing the particular capacities we have… we will, because we can, change ourselves and the external world. Even under extreme constraint." (Gilmore 2017: 238). In the pages that follow, we discuss the strategies of banishment and resistance that emerged in the workshop. At the conclusion of this report, you will find advice from a few participants on how to show up and contribute to the work of liberation.

Strategies of Banishment

Speculation and Eviction

At the root of the housing crisis are the financial actors and practices that shape and maintain housing as a commodity and investment strategy. The "financialization of housing" is central to the capitalist economy where the power of the real estate industry and property owners become realized through speculation, rent increases and eviction—all of which perpetuate the reality of "displaceability" for renters and houseless individuals and households. Jorge Rivera of LiBRE (Long Beach Residents Empowered) explained that displacement can be direct or indirect. In some cases, individuals and households are given notices to vacate versus the conditions created by financialization that force people who cannot afford the rising cost of living to leave.

The financialization of housing is also evident in local government approaches to incentivizing developers and speculators to build in their cities. Michael Lens, a professor from UCLA, noted that we must work within this system of financialization in order to increase housing supplies at all income levels. On the other side, community advocates such as Pete White from LACAN (Los Angeles Community Action Network) stress that this financialization "becomes a real tactical consideration" when attempting to address why people are houseless.

Racialized Displacement

Through criminalization, racist surveillance, and long-term, systemic disinvestment, Black and Latinx people have long born the brunt of displacement in cities like Los Angeles. As Michael Lens, UCLA Professor of Urban Planning, remarked, decades of legal segregation and housing discrimination have contributed to the massive inequities in wealth that leaves contemporary communities of color in distress. In particular, the anti-blackness that has shaped U.S. housing policy historically and justifies speculation and displacement in Black neighborhoods today is why, as Malcolm Harris of Trust South L.A. notes, "we see African people dying on the streets, because that's how the system was built." Likewise, Terra Graziani shared research from the Anti-Eviction Mapping Project indicating that Black residents are overrepresented by 300% in eviction cases in San Francisco.

Workshop participants reflected on the racialized nature of displacement and discussed the targeted tools deployed by the state and private actors to destabilize Black and Brown communities. Elizabeth Blaney of Union de Vecinos referenced the intersecting struggles that Latinx immigrant residents in communities like Boyle Heights face, where some landlords are threatening tenants with calls to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to compel them to vacate the property. Collectively, the privileging of white claims to land and place in this nation (and elsewhere) justify the use of law enforcement, housing policies, and "the market," resulting in what UCLA Professor of Urban Planning Ananya Roy describes as racial banishment.

"I would like to see academics study what gentrification means to the loss of political power."

- Amee Chew

The Weaponization of Municipal Codes

Rahim Kurwa, PhD candidate in Sociology at UCLA, illustrated the ways in which municipalities leverage ordinances to systematically threaten and evict tenants of color. He detailed the lengths to which city officials - through a policing partnership between Lancaster and Palmdale, the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles, and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Office- went out of their way to evict Black Section 8 voucher recipients. Both cities also modified their respective municipal code systems to include nuisance ordinances specifically targeting these renters, effectively extending the capacity to police and harass tenants to hostile neighbors and property owners.

While the policing partnership was ultimately blocked by the U.S. Justice Department after coordinated efforts by residents, the Community Action League and lawyers from UCLA and Public Counsel, it remains unclear if it will be resurrected under the current administration.

These tools, Kurwa contends, represent efforts to re-segregate neighborhoods. While the weaponization of municipal codes and nuisance ordinances against tenants of color is better understood in the Antelope Valley, Kurwa emphasized that these tactics could be prevalent

throughout Los Angeles County. To better contend with the geography of these strategies, he called upon participants to identify other communities in which these processes may be occurring, and called for legal challenges to these municipal actions that result in the resegregation of our communities.

Low Wages and High Rents in the University

Multiple participants called attention to an often overlooked dynamic in discussions on the housing crisis: the complicit role of colleges and universities. Professors from local universities, including Los Angeles Trade Technical College and Pasadena City College, shared stories about their students living with houselessness, and discussed feeling unable to effectively advocate for their students. Similarly, students from multiple UC campuses shared their experiences with overcrowded university housing, unbearable commutes, and vehicular homelessness.

By simultaneously operating as employer and landlord, universities manufacture an environment of precarity for its students. UCLA Professor Ananya Roy discussed the unique relationship between universities and their students' housing. Elite institutions of higher education, including the University of California, rely on their students' labor to uphold their prestige: students maintain academic excellence (bolstering university rankings); they conduct research with and for the faculty; and they staff a multitude of positions throughout the university. In addition to being students' employers, universities are frequently the primary provider of the local supply for student housing. In this way, universities have a unique dual role in students' livelihoods, through dictating their wages and their rent. We find that, often, universities pay their students low wages and charge high rents for housing, making it extremely difficult for students to secure safe, stable housing for themselves.

Considering this duality, we need to re-frame the university as a perpetuator of urban inequality, and brainstorm a joint action agenda that involves holding universities accountable to their communities. In this agenda, we must recognize the university as, at times, an exploitative institution and powerful property owner, rather than a benevolent provider of resources and opportunities.

Strategies of Resistance

Counter-Narratives of the Housing Crisis

Resistance to the enclosure and extraction of community resources such as housing, and working against the continued exclusion and banishment of marginalized communities themselves, necessarily embraces a diverse range of tactics. The first of these, according to many workshop participants, must be adopting an expansive, critical perspective on the housing issue itself.

One way to critically expand our conception of housing is by thinking about the ways in which housing impacts many spheres of our lives. For instance, numerous speakers, including Jorge Rivera of LIBRE, pointed to the challenges that the housing crisis can pose for the health of people experiencing displacement and dispossession, and called for recognition of the housing crisis as, simultaneously, a public health crisis. Similarly, Urban Habitat's Tony Roshan Samara noted that the uneven production of good housing and the power-laden distribution of access to it collectively contributes to climate injustice.

Another approach to rethinking-as-resistance is to challenge the narrow terms in which the housing problem is typically posed; doing so opens up a limitless realm of solutions. As one example, Gilda Haas of the L.A. Co-op Lab encouraged workshop participants to interrogate assumptions about definitions of "affordability" in affordable housing, and to contest common housing production narratives like the "myth of scarcity." Similarly, the Anti-Eviction Mapping Project's Terra Graziani advocated for a more critical and creative approach to empirical observations of the housing crisis; for example, layering court data with oral histories of those who have been displaced to fill the holes that empirical data can't express. More broadly, many workshop participants urged us to recognize that the truest claim to expertise about the housing crisis rests with those most affected by it, whose experiences and demands should be at the center of every movement to resist banishment and to rebuild enclosed communities.

Autonomous Action from the Ground Up

If resistance begins by critically reframing the housing crisis, then the following question arises: what are the courses of action that emerge in the expanded field of struggle? Our discussions unearthed at least two distinct and complementary paths to pursue: remaining in and reclaiming contested communities, and building new, more just organizations and institutions.

Several participants suggested that resistance to displacement naturally begins with the defense of the home itself. Yet precisely because banishment works by isolating individuals from their communities of support, the defense of housing requires cultivating collective power among those struggling against dispossession. From the Bay Area down to Santa Ana, tenant associations are proliferating and challenging the precarity of their housing tenure. As Elizabeth Blaney of Union de Vecinos argued, in places like Boyle Heights where such associations are already well-developed and winning concessions from landlords, direct actions such as rent strikes can be scaled up to become neighborhood-wide efforts.

"Are we really supposed to limit our tactics to protest and dialogue? We don't think so. So why are we negotiating our exit?"

-Elizabeth Blaney, Union de Vecinos

While one course of action confronts the existing apparatus of development through displacement, another course undertakes experiments in community building absent enclosure and in development without displacement. As Kim Carter powerfully asserted while sharing her success of creating affordable housing for formerly incarcerated women, "we can build for ourselves." For other groups, like T.R.U.S.T. South L.A., development without displacement means trying out new ways of generating secure, affordable, democratically controlled housing by forming community land trusts. Luis Sarmiento described similar efforts by THRIVE Santa Ana to reclaim community control in commercial spaces as well, by building a market to connect local artisans and micro-vendors with supporters in their communities and around the city. Still others have worked to reclaim and enliven public space by painting murals to memorialize past and present struggles. In all these and other cases, participants pointed to the power of autonomous action, defensive as well as generative, in resisting banishment and rebuilding communities.

Translocal Coalition Building

The knowledge and expertise throughout the workshop was palpable and the flow of ideas was inspiring. The workshop helped create a space for ideas and strategies to be discussed freely in an attempt to foster connections and alliances between different organizations. As participants shared their different circumstances and visions, they discussed their previous experiences with coalition building and articulated a need for extended, translocal, and cross-sector collaboration.

Tony Roshan Samara of the Urban Habitat & Right to the City Alliance, discussed the coalition's vision of creating a movement that was purposefully grounded in community organizing with a focus on translocal collaboration in order to amplify the message and build out the work. Tony also indicated the opportunity in linking other social justice movements to the housing justice fight, a strategy that THRIVE Santa Ana has utilized effectively. Luis Sarmiento of THRIVE Santa Ana shared how they linked their resistance strategies to other important social justice fights for the Santa Ana community. For example, in their creation of micro-granja THRIVE Santa Ana has linked their housing advocacy work to food justice issues and ensuring the self-sustainability of their low income residents. Yet coalition building is not without its challenges. As some participants noted, anti-blackness and Black-Brown communities tensions pervade all sectors of society, including organizing. One question that came to the fore was, how do people navigate and transform those dynamics in the fights for housing justice?

The volume of participants in the workshop reminds us of the innumerable opportunities that exist to learn and collaborate with allies throughout Greater Los Angeles. By recognizing the extended geographies of the housing crisis, houselessness, and resegregation, we can build up the collective power of grassroots organizing. As communities facing banishment are burdened by multi-dimensional forms of oppression, it is vital to strategically organize parallel to other social justice fights in order to build community power.

Moving Forward: How You Can Show Up

These are problems that require movement building. Lead workshop participants recommended the following as just a few of the ways you can show up and contribute to the housing justice movement in Los Angeles.

- Get involved with organizations working on the ground. Contact organizations directly to receive updates and learn about opportunities to support their work.
    - Long Beach Residents Empowered (LiBRE): www.wearelbre.org, 562-444-5147
    - Santa Ana Building Healthy Communities : http://www.sa-bhc.org/
    - Union de Vecinos : http://www.uniondevecinos.org/
    - TRUST South LA: https://trustsouthla.org/
    - Urban Habitat: http://urbanhabitat.org/
    - Los Angeles Community Action Network (LACAN): http://cangress.org/
    - Time for Change Foundation: http://www.timeforchangefoundation.org/
    - Los Angeles Center for Community Law and Action (LACCLA): http://www.laccla.org/
    - LA Coop Lab: https://lacooplab.com/
    - The Anti-Eviction Mapping Project: https://www.antievictionmap.com/
    - Right to the City Alliance: https://righttothecity.org/
    - The Community Action League: www.tcal.info

- Support Proposition 10, the repeal of California's Costa Hawkins Rental Housing Act, which will be on the ballot in Fall of 2018. Visit the campaign website to get involved. http://www.affordablehousingact.org/

- Join the coalition to bring rent control and just cause to unincorporated Los Angeles County by coming to a Saturday meeting. LACCLA has community meetings and legal clinics every Saturday at 5:15pm in Boyle Heights, at 407 S. Chicago St., Los Angeles, CA 90033. You'll have the chance to participate in direct action, strategize about law-and-organizing solutions to mass displacement, and plug into groups throughout LA County pushing for an expansion of tenant, and human, rights. You can also support the

expansion of rent control and just cause eviction protections to unincorporated Los Angeles County by giving public comment at Board of Supervisor meetings when the issue is on the agenda in Fall of 2018.

- Support strengthening our social safety nets, affordable childcare, and economic security for women. Time for Change Foundation understands that in order to advance economic security for women transitioning from incarceration, domestic violence and/or homelessness, it is imperative that housing and access to housing lead that effort. Additionally, because family reunification is dependent upon women accessing safe and decent housing, support public policy agendas that address affordable housing, improve access to living wage jobs, and close the women's wealth gap.

- Incorporate overturning discriminatory housing laws into existing movement goals. One local example is the gap on housing vouchers: California fair housing laws that ban income-based discrimination do not interpret that vouchers are covered by that regulation. Learn more about this exception at http://www.prrac.org/pdf/AppendixB.pdf.

Workshop B

Pay for Freedom, Work for Free: Economic Extraction in Criminal Justice

Workshop B: Pay for Freedom, Work for Free: Economic Extraction in Criminal Justice

Moderators: Susan Burton, A New Way of Life Re-Entry Project, and Noah Zatz, UCLA

Lead Participants: CT Turney-Lewis, A New Way of Life Re-Entry Project; Hanna Laura, Debt Collective; Alvin Teng, Million Dollar Hoods; Theresa Zhen, Back on the Road Coaltion, East Bay Community Law Center; Tia Koonse and Jeylee Quiroz, UCLA Labor Center

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Workshop B was set up as a gallery walk with three stations, each dealing with the expropriation of wealth from working communities. Station one dealt with court-ordered community service and labor, station two with debt and court-ordered bonds, and the final station dealt with racial disparity in law enforcement activity.

Station 1 : Community Service

Presenters at the first station spoke about the scope of community service, which can be characterized as court-ordered unpaid labor performed at a government or non-profit entity. The first station brought awareness to the economic extraction of labor through court-ordered community service and how it produces value. The UCLA Labor Center has collected court files of court-ordered community service participants from Downey, La Mirada, and Whittier courthouses. Their research findings are not available for distribution at the moment, but particular themes of discussion among the participants are described below.

Courts may order a defendant to perform community service 1) as a direct sentence, 2) in lieu of fees and fines, or 3) in lieu of a jail time. Community service eligibility, hours, and its relationship to a citation amount is up to the discretion of the judge. Community service is often used as an "alternative sanction" for individuals who cannot afford to pay their citation. In many cases the traffic fines and fees are very high, especially for those who are unemployed. There is no available data or specification about how community service hours are calculated in relation to fees and fines owed. Community service is not a rehabilitation program, nor the type of program for participants to learn a trade; it is uniquely created to extract free labor.

When a court issues an order for someone to perform community service, they are often transferred to a third-party agency that will find them a placement and ensure that they complete their hours. Individuals completing community service are primarily placed in government agencies such as parks departments, or non-profits that encompass an array of organizations

such as hospitals, nursing homes, the Salvation Army, US National Guard, churches, and others. Individuals are also placed at CalTrans to perform "community labor," a special form of community service where work is more arduous. No data is available that describes the type of work or roles that participants receive in these agencies.

Common questions and concerns that the workshop participants shared about the data findings include:

- Gender differences in placement
- Accommodation for pregnant women or people with disabilities
- The displacement of unionized workers for free community service labor; in particular Caltrans
- Working conditions of participants, are there any workplace protections?

Upon completion of data, UCLA Labor Center hopes to disseminate:

- Data on patterns of racialized community service orders
- Gender breakdown of data
- Working conditions
- Awareness of lack of data/transparency in our court system
- Qualitative data on the community service experience and their job duties to fulfill their hours
- Data on displacement of paid labor

Station 2 : Debt Peonage

Station two dealt with two key types of debt peonage suffered by communities of color. CT Turney-Lewis and Manuel Galindo from A New Way of Life Re-Entry Project discussed how court-imposed bail systems and fees from the Los Angeles County Probation Department landed on people who ended up in the criminal justice system. Several participants were shocked to learn the details of this form of debt peonage, and the lengths to which the County in particular was willing to go to force people to cover the costs of their own persecution in the courts and the long arm of state overwatch after their trial. Cash bails are now illegal in most countries, and are generally viewed as a form of criminal witness tampering. But the practice remains very

commonplace in the United States and falls on those least likely to be able to pay. Families often have to take out bonds to cover bail at exploitative interest rates, and using whatever meager wealth they have as collateral. Even if the person is totally acquitted, they will lose a significant percentage of the money they put up as collateral. As if by design, the bond system charges those least able to pay the most for the service, since they are viewed as the riskiest borrowers. When the wealthy are accused of crimes, they generally do not have to resort to bonds to cover their bail, and don't lose a dime. After exiting from the criminal justice system, people continue to pay significant fees to the County to pay for their own supervision, even if that supervision consists of just checking into a kiosk. The County encourages people not to contest this charge through a waiver presented as mandatory. Participants discussed a program in New Jersey which significantly curtailed the use of cash bail. However, this system seems far off in California; counties and courts rely on these fees to continue operation. In fact, the trend is that these fees increase in size every year to subsidize a bloated criminal justice system and its continued persecution of people of color.

Laura Hanna from the Debt Collective outlined that organization's efforts to organize debtors against exploitative lenders. The Debt Collective believes that all debt incurred in low-income communities, and especially by people of color, is immoral and invalid, and seeks to help people dismantle these systems at all places and times. Specifically, the organization has raised funds to perform mass debt buy-backs and amnesties, and organized for-profit college students to refuse to pay exploitative student loans. The Debt Collective is currently maintaining a website and will assist anyone who owes money, anywhere, in contesting that debt -- a somewhat technical process which most people don't even realize is an option but which falls short of the disruptions of bankruptcy. Participants came away commenting that debt is literally unavoidable for low-income people. Whether one works hard to stay in school and takes out loans to buy a car or pay tuition, or runs afoul of the criminal justice system which is constantly arresting and charging people for little to no reason, one will end up with massive amounts of debt to contend with.

Station 3 : Racial Disparities in Law Enforcement

Station three concerned issues of racial disparity in law enforcement activity. Theresa Zhen from the East Bay Community Law Center presented on license suspensions in the Bay Area. By mapping the number of suspensions by communities of color, Zhen was able to demonstrate that the costs associated with license suspensions (inability to get to jobs, court fees, and increased difficulty in getting around town) fall excessively on the communities least able to support them -- black and brown low-income communities. Zhen also demonstrated a similar dynamic by mapping

Alameda County parolees by race, showing huge proportional differences in the parole rate between communities, again falling exclusively on black and brown neighborhoods. Alvin Teng from the Million Dollar Hoods project showed how neighborhood disparities in incarceration rates have landed the most heavily on many of the same communities. Literally tens of millions of dollars are spent every year to jail residents of some of Los Angeles' poorest communities. This money, instead of being invested in the community, is being used to lock up human beings behind bars. This perverse 'investment' in human bondage has created a paradox of intense resource use directed to suppress people of color from several Los Angeles neighborhoods -- our Million Dollar Hoods.

Participants from station three viewed both of these dynamics as indicative of an overall suppression of wealth in black and brown communities by the State. These projects captured, through data and mapping, the lived experiences of millions of people who have complained about excessive state oppression for decades to a largely silent audience. Participants believed that white people are reluctant to believe stories about racial disparities in law enforcement, and the effects on communities of those disparities over time, because they simply don't experience anything like it. The dynamic creates a self-perpetuating myth about the lack of wealth in low-income communities of color which constantly are losing wealth due to state violence, oppression, and incarceration, and who see little public investment besides the money spent to lock up their sons in prison -- a tragically huge sum.

The workshop reconvened as a whole and made the following recommendations as next steps:

Organizing

- Create a forum for on-going checking-in and strategizing about resources and campaigns -- and opportunities for solidarity.
- Invite members of organizational bases into these spaces.
- Teach financial and debt literacy using organizing and popular education methodologies.
- Explore prison co-operative models as potentials to avoid coerced labor from criminal justice litigants.
- Include direct action components in every campaign around any of these issues, every time and everywhere.
- Tie data to street-level and high-level tactical decisions, not vice versa.

- Learn from the Black Lives Matter movement's model of shared platform for unity of messaging and communications, and for mass action.

Research

- Find a single platform or space to share diverse research going on around questions of mass debt and mass incarceration.
- Learn more about the New Jersey reforms to the cash bail system and see how much money could be saved in Los Angeles from a similar system.
- Learn more about what jobs are displaced by forced community service and labor.
- Uncover what mechanisms organizations use to certify themselves as placements for those ordered to community service by courts.
- Survey all incarcerated laborers.
- Perform a full audit of criminal justice system costs.
- Ensure all research is tied into a base-driven organizing movement.

Policy

- Pursue policies which would make community service and community labor programs more transparent.
- Pursue policies to eliminate cash bail systems.

Legal

- File a lawsuit around court fee assessment informed by similar initiatives.
- Pursue community service as a violation of the 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution.

Workshop C

Disentangling the Web of the Juvenile Justice System

Workshop C: Disentangling the Web of the Juvenile Justice System

Moderators: Laura Abrams, UCLA; Manuel Criollo, Activist-in-Residence UCLA; Matthew Mizel, UCLA & InsideOut Writers

Lead Participants: Jesse Aguiar, Journey House; Carlos Arceo, Public Allies, CDTech; Yahniie Bridges, Social Justice Advocate; Kesi Bem Foster, Urban Youth Collaborative; Michael Mendoza, #cut50; Javier Rodriguez, Underground Scholars Initiative, UCLA; Jasmine Williams, Black Organizing Project; Jimmy Wu, InsideOut Writers

Author: Victoria Lewis

Workshop Overview

The juvenile justice system in the United States disproportionately pulls youth of color into its oppressive web. Youth of color are pushed out of systems of education and social welfare, and into systems of surveillance and violence in the forms of community policing, incarceration, and probation. This workshop explored the lie of juvenile "justice," deconstructed the many institutions complicit in the incarceration of youth, and sought to dream collectively about what a restorative juvenile justice system could look like and outline what this transformation will require.

Methodology

This workshop used a collaborative methodology that emphasized group activities in order to collectively educate, share knowledge, center lived experiences, and seek solutions that will elevate the lives of youth of color. The session consisted of large and small group activities in which advocates and participants worked together to map the extensive reach of the juvenile justice system, create plans for change, and dream of freedom and community control of power and institutions.

Opening Activity

Matthew Mizel, UCLA & InsideOut Writers, asks participants:

What words come to mind when you hear **juvenile justice**?

Injustice—Misnomer—Trauma—Schools—Money—Prisons
Foster Care—Abuse—Control—Social Control—Violence
Race—Colonialism—Conform/Conformity—Punitive
Neglect—Work Camps—Criminalization—Recidivism
Poverty—Unhealthy
Institutional Dysfunction—Degrading

Workshop participants then selected one of the words and together used their bodies to form a human sculpture that represents what the word means--

- In the discussion *trauma* and *institutional dysfunction* were recurring themes

Social Control

Violence

Neglect

Trauma

Workshop Objectives

Manuel Criollo, Activist-in-Residence at the Institute on Inequality and Democracy at UCLA Luskin provided an overview of the workshop objectives which included:

- Making connections among "interlocking, intersectional, and interdimensional" systems that keep youth of color incarcerated or trapped in structures of surveillance, supervision, and punishment
- Mapping the ways that the tentacles of the system function with a particular focus on child welfare systems, schools, policing, and incarceration
- Creating collaborative solutions based on personal experiences and activism in affected communities

World Café

Laura Abrams, Social Welfare Department Chair and Professor at UCLA Luskin introduced the World Café activity in which workshop participants divided into four large groups that each focused on one aspect of the juvenile justice web. Within each group were experienced facilitators, individuals who have been system involved, and participants who work with system involved youth. Participants rotated among the stations with the goal of deepening the discussion and building on ideas during each round.

Child Welfare System

Led by Yahniie Bridges, Social Justice Advocate & Jesse Aguiar, Journey House

Many youth enter the system by being taken away from their families
Youth who have experienced trauma, abuse, and neglect face over surveillance by social workers and the child welfare system
Our child welfare systems are feeding into the juvenile justice system

Schools, School Policing & the School-to-Prison Pipeline

Led by Jasmine Williams, Black Organizing Project & Kesi Bem Foster, Urban Youth Collaborative

Schools that should be a place of learning, safety, and liberation have instead been a place of punishment and criminalization for youth of color
The presence of police in schools funnels youth of color into the system and leaves them vulnerable to violence

Policing & Surveillance in the Community

Led by Carlos Arceo, Public Allies & Michael Mendoza, #cut50
Youth of color face persistent and pervasive surveillance by the police
Mass incarceration and the over policing of communities of color

Probation, Detention & Incarceration

Led by Javier Rodriguez, Underground Scholars Initiative, UCLA & Jimmy Wu, InsideOut Writers
Youth are kept in captivity and under surveillance
Even after release, youth may remain in the system's web through probation

Main Findings

Group 1: Child Welfare System
Guiding Questions:
1. What community-based programs can help break the cycle of the foster care to prison pipeline?
2. How do we strengthen families and communities to care for children in need?
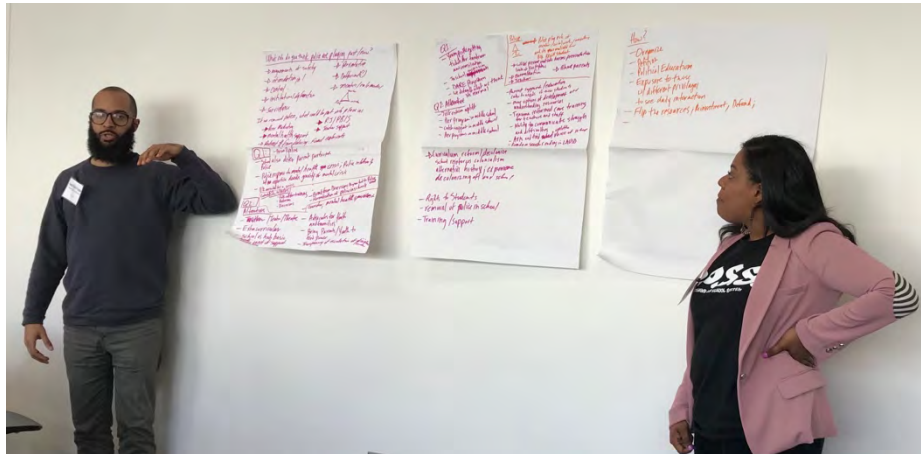
Discussion Summary:

- We must focus on keeping kids out of the system in general
    - Children are being unjustly extracted from their homes
    - We should question and challenge the evaluation metrics that DCFS and social workers use to determine a child's risk and ultimately make decisions about removal
    - There is a need for best practices that address racial bias in these systems
    - Do social workers come into a home with pre-conceived notions and ideas of what a healthy home should look like? For example, if there is a mattress in the living room or if multiple people live in a house, is this really a problem? Is that a risk that should constitute removing a child from the home?
- Accountability with regards to false reporting
    - We know that there may be false reports made against families out of spite and we have to be able to hold these people accountable
    - Families who have been falsely reported develop a track record and paper trail that they don't have the opportunity to challenge
- Critical points of intervention
    - When social workers are creating family reports there should be an opportunity for the family to view, add to, and appeal the report before it becomes an official court record
    - It is essential to institute cultural competency within DCFS
- When do foster youth go into the juvenile justice system?
    - Law enforcement may be called to group homes for simple behavioral complaints
- An opportunity for change: Running an "educating the court room campaign"
    - Educate judges about how their decisions are impacting communities of color

Group 2: Schools, School Policing & the School-to-Prison Pipeline

Guiding Questions:

1. What do you believe the role of law enforcement has been in schools?
2. How would the paradigm of justice shift if we removed law enforcement and the criminal justice system from the public education system?
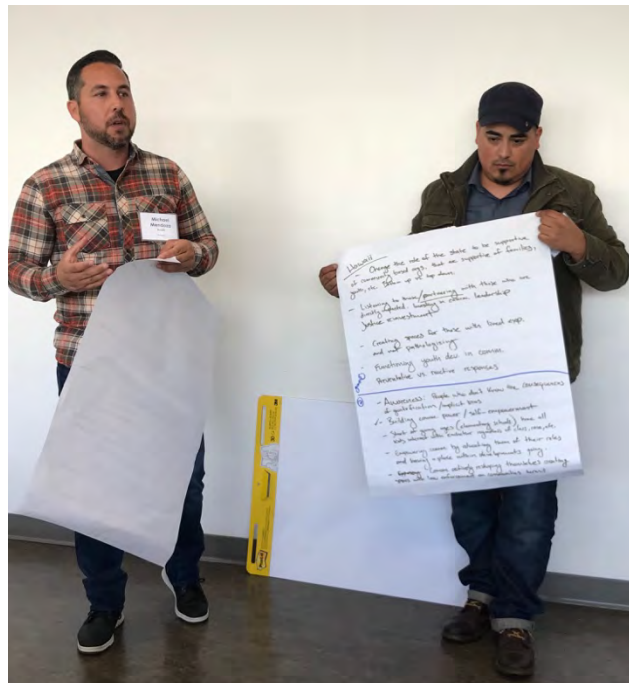

Discussion Summary:

- We must dismantle the pipeline and the webs
    - Police have no role in school and we need to get them out
    - As long as police remain in schools there will always be a pipeline
    - We cannot disentangle a web that involves black and brown youth if police are involved
    - We need a movement about removing police and the criminal legal system from public education systems
- Criminalization does not start and stop in schools
    - This also occurs with transit police, community police, and housing police
    - Black and brown youth are policed at every level of existence
    - There has been a criminalization of normal youth behavior in schools
    - We must uplift the trauma involved with histories of police brutality in black and brown communities
    - Youth behavior is often a manifestation of their trauma
- What would alternative systems look like?
    - Parents in the community need to be empowered
    - We should think about empowerment as community control and real self-determined community control over institutions
    - Creating spaces for youth and communities to be advocates for their social and mental health needs

- It is easier to blame the community, parents, and youth rather than changing the institution
- The school must be accountable for its curriculum, teaching, and treatment of youth of color

- Looking at budget investments
  - Do the budgets align with the city's claimed goals?
  - If a district claims to emphasize restorative justice but the budget shows a disproportionate amount of funding being allocated to police, this is one way to hold systems accountable

- We must be careful about reforms and tweaks that we suggest
  - We must ensure that we are not pouring resources into training police to be more friendly
  - Our reforms must not further perpetuate a system of social control and trauma

Group 3: Policing & Surveillance in the Community

Guiding Questions:

1. Who are the contributors to the criminalization of youth of color in our neighborhoods and communities? How does this happen?

2. What are community-centered responses to these issues?

Discussion Summary:

- We must think about the framing of violence and who is labeled as violent
    - Over diagnosing of youth of color with conduct disorders
    - Focus on making youth of color obedient
- We must challenge the mental models of those in power and in positions of political leadership because their implicit biases can demonize youth of color
- Law enforcement are becoming main point of contact of communities of color with the state
    - The presence of law enforcement is replacing other supportive services
- There is a preoccupation with protecting property over people
    - Gentrification and the role of new residents criminalizing historical residents must be highlighted
- We must have an intersectional approach but also realize that youth of color are marginalized within the margins
    - Push out of LGBTQIA youth and youth with disabilities
- We must reimagine our notion of policing and safety
    - Agreement that safety does not come from policing
    - Law enforcement is being used as the catch all for any issue in communities
    - We must imagine alternatives to policing
- Gang injunctions change the behaviors of youth and impact how they build community
    - There is a focus on gangs rather than the basic needs of communities of color that are not being met
- The overarching theme is that "we need to call it what it is and it is white supremacy"
- We must change the role of the state to be more supportive of our youth and communities
    - Change the system to be healing and restorative, bottom up rather than top down control of power, and collaborative with communities
    - Listen and partner with those directly impacted
    - Give youth of color a platform to discuss their experiences and solutions
    - Let communities decide how their relationship with law enforcement should look

Group 4: Probation, Detention & Incarceration

Guiding Questions:

1. Will the new diversion plan end the cycle of youth incarceration in LA? At what point is arrest/probation necessary for youth without contributing to mass supervision?

2. How can you directly support the programs that organizations and agencies are offering for incarcerated youth and assist with reducing recidivism after they're released?

Discussion Summary:

- The group began with the facilitators sharing personal experiences with law enforcement and the juvenile justice system
- LA County is pursuing the expansion of their diversion program
  - Avoiding the arrest of youth of color
  - Law enforcement officials are currently working with probation, mental health, and community-based service providers to think about how we can intervene to avoid arrest, detention, and incarceration
- What should a diversion program look like?
  - There are concerns over who will have discretion. Will diversion be up to officer discretion, and if so, there is a concern for racial bias and the perpetuation of criminalization in this program
  - The program seeks to target low level offenders when targeting high level offenders could help to shift the paradigm of criminalization of youth
- How successful will diversion be?
  - There needs to be enough money invested into this program in order to make it effective
  - There is concern about providing the needed family support to parents. We know that a lot of dysfunction can take place in the home and therefore we must be able to offer assistance to parents and families

- o Service providers should support a youth's successful return to the home and to the community
- o Successful diversion requires work around racial bias
- We must continue to think about what we are able to do on the reentry side of the system to avoid recidivism and ensure public safety
- Getting involved in these conversations and issues is critical
  - o Ask questions and do your research
  - o Promote awareness in your communities, volunteer with an organization, and attend public meetings with the Board of Supervisors or with probation officers

Final Thoughts

Once youth are in the system it is extremely challenging to get out of its web.

These systems work together to keep youth of color involved in the juvenile justice system.

A Call to Action

We must shift resources from law enforcement to families and communities.

We must change the role of the state to be healing, collaborative, and responsive/accountable to the needs of communities of color.

We must dismantle systems of white supremacy in all of our institutions if we are committed to making a difference in the lives of youth of color.

We must support local community leaders and organizations working on juvenile justice reform for youth of color, and keep our local institutions accountable to these efforts.

Closing Session: Freedom Dreams in Unequal Cities

Authors: Jesus Flores, Christian Mendez, Marlene Salazar, and Rachel Wells

After a thought-provoking performance by Funmilola Fagbamila, conference attendees reconvened to share lessons learned from the workshops. Led by Ananya Roy, representatives from each group were invited to the front stage to reflect on key takeaways.

From the Criminal Justice workshop, Tia Koonse from the UCLA Labor Center recalled three interactive activities that allowed participants to understand the gravity of mass incarceration and bail costs. Rather than being overwhelmed by the crisis, Koonse emphasized that these are "organizable problems." In order to get there, she noted that progressive groups must learn strategies, such as jail strikes, and maintain close contact with one another.

Jorge Rivera from Long Beach Residents Empowered shared that the housing workshop brought together a diverse array of folks in an engaging conversation on a deeply complex topic. He reiterated the inherently racist manifestations present in the housing market and was motivated by the number of students challenging professors in their classrooms. He believes that community-owned land like community-land trusts are an important strategy moving forward in the tenants' rights movement. Silvia Hernandez from LA-CAN also chimed in, saying her key takeaway from the workshop is the energy and action-oriented knowledge she felt in the room.

For the workshop on the juvenile justice system, Laura Abrams and Matthew Mizel (UCLA Social Welfare) provided a brief overview the session. The workshop was divided into three sections under the topics of different populations people served. This allowed participants to disentangle over-policing and reimagine what real juvenile justice looks like. The main findings they drew out of the conversations were the disproportionate impacts of the juvenile justice's "interlocking systems" on youth of color. They also pointed to the issue of surveillance as a new concept for what public safety may mean in the future. Overall, Laura and Matthew pointed to the general theme of extraction. Rather than investing in families, law enforcement continues to see increases in resources. "Dismantling white supremacy is key," Laura added.

Closing Remarks and Call to Action by Pete White

After the workshop recaps, Pete White (from Los Angeles Community Action Network) facilitated a conversation among attendees. Pete White's remarks helped to make connections between movements and provide a larger context before asking people to end the day with commitments to action. He started by referring to the theme of Freedom Dreams, and quoted Frederick Douglas

with "It wasn't until I prayed with my feet did freedom come." He commented that he previously had not heard as much conversation about the role of policing within housing justice discussions and the connections between gentrification and policing compared to today. He referred to their earlier organizing campaign to strengthen preservation of residential hotels, a crucial affordable housing option in downtown. Two days after they won the residential hotel battle and were able to preserve this key housing option, they heard the announcement about the Safer Cities Initiative for policing within Skid Row. Right after a key victory, they were faced with new opposition. With 27,000 arrests in Skid Row, including one person who had been arrested over 130 times, policing through the Safer Cities Initiative has significantly affected the Skid Row community. Referring to discussions earlier that day, he talked about how housing justice organizers have now started to identify the role of policing in plantation capitalism.

As he reflected on a history of organizing, he highlighted the role of Black Lives Matter in bringing attention to problems of carceral system. As organizers move forward, we should acknowledge that we are drawing from their work. He used the example of bail reform. While bail reform started with good conversations, without people who are impacted as part of the conversation, the conversation could become problematic. He also stressed the need to talk about jail expansion when talking about bail reform and how we are seeing an overall expansion of the role of criminalization.

After presenting this context and analysis, he asked for commitments. Instead of simply providing comments, he asked people about their intention to move forward from the conference and what they are willing to do. For comments, he urged people to use I statements and say what we are willing to commit to either as ourselves or as an institutions. He referred an earlier discussion by Ananya Roy about decolonizing the university. He said that if you are ready to do this, we are ready to support it. As we make commitments, how do we fight together?

Ananya ended the day by urging academics to look at what our tools are used for. She referred to the writings of Clyde Woods who asked if the tools of academia are only used for autopsy or can they be used for something else. As we look at the idea of freedom dreams, there are certain ways of organizing and each has their flaws. Through this work, we can combine history and hope.

Student Authors:

Caroline Calderon, Urban and Regional Planning
Isabel Durón, Chicana/o Studies
Jesus Flores, Urban and Regional Planning
Danny Foster, Geography
Terra Graziani, Urban and Regional Planning
Meg Healy, Urban and Regional Planning
Victoria Lewis, Public Policy, Social Welfare, Medicine
Hilary Malson, Urban Planning
Justin McBride, Urban and Regional Planning
Christian Mendez, Urban and Regional Planning
Lorraine Perales, Public Policy and Social Welfare
Ramandeep Sangha, Public Policy
Gabriela Solis, Public Policy and Social Welfare
Marlene Salazar, Urban and Regional Planning
Rachel Wells, Social Welfare

Editor:

Terra Graziani