

Literature Review of Black/Brown Unity and Coalition Building



Introduction

This literature review is a living document which highlights and document the work of organizations, individuals and communities that are working on building Black and Brown power through unity and common struggle. The goal is to offer people research materials that can be used to further the building of Black/Brown power within their own community or organization. Both communities face injustices that are intertwined with one another; such as poverty, police brutality, education reform/school to prison pipeline, immigration, unemployment and much more. This literature review focuses on the many different ways that black and brown unity has been successful. From time to time, this Literture review will be update.

By Ramon Ramirez, 2019-2020 Taconic Fellow, Community Change, Washington DC, with the assistance of Diana Santiago, a graduate student of Oregon State University.

Literature Review

1. Out of the Muck - [Out of the Muck Grant Trailer - YouTube](#)

Apopka, Florida. 2013. Story of Black and Brown farmworkers being poisoned by Pesticides from Lake Apopka in Florida. Farmworkers fighting back through the Farmworker Association of Florida, a multi racial organization of Blacks, Latino and Haitian farmworkers.

2. [“Solidarity: Brief Accounts of Black and Latino Unity from the Late 1800’s to the Present”](#) **By Carlos Martinez. Latino Rebels. December 26, 2014.**

This article narrates how there has been unity among the black and brown community since the late 1800’s beginning with Arturo Alfonso Schomburg, an Afro-Latino who is known as a founder of the African American/African studies, to the present day with communities coming together to fight against police brutality through solidarity. Carlos Martinez uses examples from the 50’s and 60’s when Martin Luther King supported Cesar Chavez during the civil rights era and then goes on to talk about how that was successful for both groups. Martinez then continues to talk about how artists such as Ice Cube have also used his platform to influence the Latino community and how he wants there to be unity as well. Martinez finishes by saying that the black and brown communities are strongest when they stand in solidarity with one another.

3. [“Black/Brown Unity coalition”](#) **Farm Labor Organizing Committee. North Carolina.**

This page focuses on how the black and brown communities have created a coalition to work together to fight their injustices. Their preamble, written by Baldemar Velasquez, states that they will not fight separately, but will work together to identify and strategies common issues and will work collectively to find solutions. The mission of this coalition is to empower the black and brown communities and work together in community organizing and services, education and advocacy. There are three initial projects that they want to be focusing on; implementing a code of conduct with the local police department, lighting up darkened neighborhoods and to develop a formal leadership structure. This is all done to successfully address barriers to social mobility among the black and brown community.

4.

<https://www.intergroupresources.com/rc/Alvarado%20and%20Jaret%202009.pdf>

By Joel Alvarado and Charles Jaret. Georgia State University, Atlanta. 2009.

The increasing presence of Latinos living in the Southeast is one of the most obvious demographic changes occurring in this region. Much of this population increase consists of people moving in from other regions of the U.S., Mexico, or other parts of Latin America.

5. This has produced a novel situation in many communities in the region – African Americans and Latinos encountering each other in work settings, schools, neighborhoods, and other places. While some interactions have gone smoothly, many have been fraught with misunderstanding, competition, suspicion, hostility, and conflict. Many leaders from both communities have suggested much is to be gained by collaborating to solve mutual problems.

6.

<https://s3.amazonaws.com/oxfam-us/www/static/oa3/files/building-common-ground-en.PDF>

2008 Oxfam America, Boston, Mass. “Building Common Ground”

Building Common Ground examines the relationship between the African-American and Latinos and the tensions that arose when they were forced to compete for the same resources in a post-Katrina New Orleans.

7. https://books.google.com/books?id=CzarnBhJiZUC&pg=PA158&lpg=PA158&dq=Black/Brown+unity+and+coalition+work&source=bl&ots=E9rQssvj35&sig=ACfU3U3pMWIGMAXo1VhmcvJTcCq897omfQ&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjI0oHEXlflAhWJrFkKKhV_fBCs4ChDoATAEegQICRAB#v=onepage&q=Black%2FBrown%20unity%20and%20coalition%20work&f=false

By Laura Pulido, Univeristy of California Press. Los Angeles, California.

2006. This book is a historical review of the exeriences of African American, Latinos and Asian organizations in left politics in Los Angeles and California from 1960's to 1980's.

8. [“Black and Brown Unity: a powerful force”](#) **By Teresa Gutierrez. Workers World. July 26, 2016.**

In this article by Workers World, Teresa Gutierrez highlights some of the work that the brown and black community have already done together in the past. She speaks about how during the civil rights movement in the 1960's, the brown community recognized how important the black liberation movement

was and stood in solidarity with their community. To end the article, Gutierrez states that there is no stronger force than the black and brown people coming together and standing in solidarity with each others struggles.

9.

<https://www.essence.com/news/politics/sanctuary-cities-black-families-immigrants/>

By Janae Bonsu. March 10, 2017. Black People Need Sanctuary Cities, Too.

Whether it's stop-and-fisk or no-knock immigration raids, both undocumented immigrants and U.S. born black people have a vested stake in redefining what sanctuary really means.

10.

<https://leftroots.net/organizing-transformation-best-practices-in-the-transformative-organizing-model/>

Left Roots by Steve Willams. New York. May 2015

The article looks at what is transformational organizing in the context what our the best practices of organizing model. Examines organizing model of Causa Justa, Vermont Worker Center, Power U for social change and National Peoples Action.

11. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1536504216648149>

By Hana Brown and Jennifer A. Jones. June 2016. "Immigrant Rights are Civil Rights". The article examines Black and Brown coalition activism in Mississippi and throughout the south and how it is changing the heart and minds.

12.

<https://www.burnsinstitute.org/blog/new-report-from-the-bi-a-brief-history-of-the-youth-of-color-in-the-justice-system/>
[September 23, 2015](#) by [Angel Jackson](#)

By Angel Jackson, Burns Institute, Oakland, California. September 23, 2015. Brief History of the Youth of Color in the Justice System. **Today, more than 2 million people are incarcerated and more than 7 million are on probation, parole, or other supervision in the United States.** Similarly, we have nearly 1 million young people involved in the youth justice system. The overwhelming majority in both

systems are people of color. The national reaction to these numbers covers a wide range of commentary, scholarship, and punditry.

13.

<http://2j61yv256vxd12hdls206jrv.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/PFP-FNL2-web.pdf>

By Community Coalitions, Los Angeles, California. An in-depth document outlining the political platform, work and mission of Community Coalition, an organization based in South Los Angeles. The organization was formed by Karen Bass, currently a member of the U.S. Congress.

14.

<https://www.aaihs.org/how-african-american-activists-are-influencing-latinos/>

San Francisco. June 2017.

The article describes how Black activists are influencing Latinx leaders in a number of issues including police brutality and police accountability in the San Francisco bay area in California.

15.

<https://communitychange.org/thelatest/representing-the-future-is-now-as-seen-through-our-black-and-brown-youth/>

By Community Change. Wash DC . 2016.

Two videos that illustrate the need for youth of color to build leadership and capacity and that their voices must be heard.

16. <https://utpress.utexas.edu/books/marbla>

By John D. Marquez, January 2014.

A study of the new coalitions between African Americans and Latinx communities that are emerging throughout the Gulf South, where previously divided ethnicities are forging an unprecedented challenge to white hegemony.

17. <http://blackworkersforjustice.com/category/blackbrown-unity/>

Black Workers for Justice, Rocky Mt, North Carolina. 2019.

The article covers the march for justice “and still we rise” in Greenville, North Carolina.

18. <https://www.kcur.org/post/forming-black-brown-coalition#stream/0>
Kansas City, MO. 2006. African American and Latinos are the two largest minority groups in the United States. But recently, the percentage of Latinos nationwide has grown to 14 %, surpassing the 12% of African Americans. In the Kansas City metro area, African Americans still are double the number of Latinos, that's 13% compared to 6.5%. Many African Americans and Latinos have common civil rights interests; but cultural, political and historical differences can lead to tension and misunderstandings. A few local leaders believed that it was critical to begin to build bridges of understanding between these groups.

19. ["Black, Latinos gather for sixth annual unity cookout"](#) **Madison.com, published August 24th, 2014.**

This video illustrates celebration within a community that wants to work on unifying both Black and Brown people. The event is called "Black & Latino Unity Picnic" and it includes food, music and unity. It is hosted in Penn Park, also known as the heart of the community in the Southside of Madison. Clarissa Pearson, event organizer, mentions how there is still a lot of work that needs to be done in order to unite. Jazmin Garcia, member of "El Comite Del Festival de Mexico" joins Pearson in this fun family event because it's a good environment and they can talk about how to work together to improve both of their communities in a safe environment.

20. <https://www.peoplesworld.org/article/racism-and-unity/>

Peoples World, New York. 2005

The Article describes how the right wing uses racism to divide the working class. The need for building unity among black, brown and white working class folks

21.

www.handsupunited.org/blog/2015/1/18/ferguson-movement-aims-for-black-and-brown-unity.

St Louis Missouri. Published in 2015. The Ferguson movement review stories for building Black and Brown unity from the stories of individuals in the fight for social justice.

22. ["67 Sueños: Black and Brown Unity Mural"](#) **American Friends Service Committee. By 67 Suenos and the Allen Temple Baptist Church**

In this short clip, a mural was built by the black and brown community in East Oakland, California. Both the 67 Sueños Youth and the Allen Temple Baptist Church joined in 2014, to unveil what is called the “Black and Brown Unity Mural.” The community, alongside artist Francisco Sanchez, worked on the Black and Brown Unity Mural project to bring together the African-American and Latinx communities. The project was meant to highlight the intersectional struggles, dreams and aspirations that both communities face through art. The project gave the community a space to join voices in creating a mural that represents their unity. There was a lot of storytelling throughout the process. Anyone from the community was encouraged to help, creating a sense of unity. This mural brought both of the communities together, and taught them how working towards a common goal together can make a difference.

23. [“Summary of Beloved Community Center’s Black/Brown work for Equality”](#) by the Beloved Community Center. February 25, 2012.

In this video, the Beloved Community Center shows illustrates how they community center serves to create a space in which the african-american community and the Latino community can come together and have an honest dialogue about discriminatory federal policies that influence both communities and how they can work together to confront the forces that are trying to tear both communities apart. The video also depicts how the Beloved Community Center has also worked with the Farm Labor Organization Committee and Oxfam in order to shine light to the human rights abuses in the fields of North Carolina. The Reverend Johnson working closely with the community center mentioned that there is nothing more powerful than connecting on a physical level and seeing things first hand. Therefore, listening to both communities can create black and brown unity.

24. [“The Village Black Brown Unity”](#) by Fox 11 News Los Angeles.

In this short news clip, we see how a group called The Village Nation, created by three teachers who seek to raise test cores and pride among the black and brown students, create unity using an old african-american proverb stating that it takes a village to raise a child. Founder Luck Blucher stated that his mission was always to reach the black and brown communities because understanding each others cultures can go a long way. In this clip, a Latino guest speaker goes to a local Los Angeles high school and talks to the students about how they should unite as one instead of falling under the typical stereotype. Their purpose in this event is to bridge both communities

together through the sense of belonging. The end goal is to create something positive through open dialogue.

25. [“Black and Latino Coalition Project”](#) **By Arizona PBS and Horizonte. March 23, 2012.**

In this video conducted by Horizonte, we see a conversation of how a documentary done by the Black and Latino Coalition Project has started a dialogue about the black and brown unity. This conversation is facilitated by Jose Cardenas and questions both Tia Oso, a leader in the Black Alliance for Just Immigrant, and Dr. Matthew Whitaker about the difference that their hoping to make with their documentary that illustrates the life of Latinos and African Americans. The documentary dealt with the various struggles that the black and brown community need to overcome in order to become a stronger force together. Both speakers said that the black and brown community need to unite and become allies instead of fighting against each other when the real fight is against racism, systematic oppression-- all of which are shared struggles within both communities. Therefore, they want to help unify the black and brown communities through film.

26.

<https://www.hispanicizewire.com/building-blacklatino-coalition-racial-economic-justice-statement-rev-jesse-l-jackson-sr/>

By Rev. Jesse Jackson, Rainbow Coalition. Chicago, Ill. April, 2017

Article written by the Rev Jesse Jackson on building the Black/Brown coalition on racial justice and economic justice

27. [“PNN TV:Black and Brown Unity Oakland - People Power - Development Without Displacement”](#) **by Poor Magazine/Prensa Pobre. March 17, 2015**

This event is in honor of the black and brown community that unites in Oakland, California. Sagnicthe Salazar, an organizer of this event says they also want to put emphasis on the RTF project, which is essentially a transit project to create a trolley system that will divide and gentrify the community. They want to not only celebrate and rejoice as a community but they also want to educate and mobilize both latino and the african american community on the different forms of violence that gentrification and police brutality has on their community and the U.S. Throughout this event, they walk and do traditional dance all leading to the “black party” which will host all the families that attend. They want to make sure that this information is

accessible to everyone. Raquel Manzo, another organizer, says she wants to put a stop to police brutality nationally, and that in this event they are uniting to prove that they are powerful together.

28. <http://www.blackbrownunity.org>

Los Angeles, California. 2018. Articles by Professor Ron Wilkins from Calif State University at Dominguez Hills.

Unity of Thought, Leads to Unity of Action. "Black and Brown Unity Through the Lens of the Mexican Independence Struggle".

29.

https://dornsifecms.usc.edu/assets/sites/242/docs/colorofchange_fullreport_web.pdf

By Manuel Pastor, Rhonda Ortiz, Jennifer Ito, Veronica Terriquez, Vanessa Cater, Jennifer Tran and Teresa Cheng. University of Southern California.

November 2010. This 115 page document examines that has the USA becomes a people of color majority by 2042. Youth of color become the minority majority by 2023. What are the major challenges facing youth of color in the time of change.

30. ["Nearly 20 Years After L.A.'s Rebellion, Black and Brown Artists Show Love"](#)

Jamilah King. Colorlines. May 2, 2011.

In an article by Colorlines, writer Jamilah King shares a video by music artist Arturo Quiros, who sings about the importance of speaking out about police brutality and standing together (black and brown communities) to fight these injustices. This video comes out nearly 20 years after the Los Angeles uprising, and really emphasizes resistance. This video is a demonstration of black and brown unity through art.

31. ["New Book Breaks Down the History of African American and Latinx People Joining Forces to Fight Racism"](#) by **Catherine Lizette Gonzales.**

Colorlines. February 2, 2018.

In this article, Catherine Gonzales promotes author Paul Ortiz's new book, *An African American and Latinx History of the United States*. In her article, she states that the book challenges the various narratives that have been surrounding both the black and brown community within U.S. history. She provides examples of how the black and brown community united and fought for self-determination, such as in the underground railroad to Mexico,

Cuban solidarity in the late 1800's, Act of Chapultepec in light of the civil rights movement and the rainbow coalitions in the late 1960s and 1980s.

32. [“FFF Harlem Outreach Video”](#)

By **Families for Freedom. September 25, 2019**

In this quick video, a black man talks in the African Plaza in Harlem, speaking on everyone knowing their rights on deportation. He is talking about the exploitation that undocumented folks are going through and how they should fight and how other people should step up and speak up for those who are undocumented. This is an example of the brown and black community uniting to fight for problems that affect all of them. They are also providing flyers for the community to pick up and become more educated on the subject.

33. [“Blacks & Latinos Collaborate For Civil Rights, Economic Justice”](#)

By **NCBCP Headlines**

In this quick summary of black and brown collaborations, there are references to the various times that African Americans and Latinos have had to work together and created new political unions. The president and CEO of the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation in D.C., Melanie Campbell, states that her union actively works alongside black and brown ventures in both local and state level. She states that the fight that both black and brown people are fighting is the same fight and that they should continue to unite and become a strong force to be reckoned with. She states how one crucial change that the brown and black community made together was during the 2010 census when there was an Afro-Latino Forum in New York with encouraged people to participate in the census.

34. [“Hispancis, African-Americans come together to fight racism”](#) by **Heidi Schlumpf. The Independent News Source. September 8, 2017.**

This article demonstrates how two separate Catholics have joined forces to stand up to racism, anti-immigration sentiment and incarceration. One of the groups was the Black Catholic Theological Symposium and the other one was the Academy of Catholic Hispanic Theologians in the United States. They decided that although black and brown communities are sometimes pitted against each other, they can become a stronger force together and sharing their voices together is stronger than doing it separately. The organizers hope that more people can begin working together because once we begin to share our stories and listen and support one another, we can begin to

dismantle all of the oppression occurring with the black and brown communities.

35. [“African-Americans and Latinos Unite to Repeal Alabama’s Anti-Immigrant Law”](#)

by Ingrid Chapman, Alia Trindle. Causa Justa.

This article focuses on how the African-American community united and supported the Latino immigrant community trying to repeal the HB56 law which would essentially be an anti-immigration law that would allow mistreatment of the undocumented community. The African-American community was in solidarity with the community and attended immigration workshops, learning more about how they can be an ally to the undocumented community in case there was a situation where they had to help. In return, the Latino immigrant community went to the MLK Day Parade and also planned to march in the annual Bridge-Crossing Jubilee March. The African-American and Latino community forged together to create a strong and powerful group to fight injustices.

36. [“African Americans and Latinos Unite in Alabama to Fight for Immigrant Rights”](#) **by Refugio Mata. Huffpost. December 6, 2017.**

In a Huffpost by Refugio Mata, Mata describes how activist Linda Dent and thousands of other activists from across the nation joined forces to march through 53 miles of rolling hills from Selma to the state capital in Montgomery, Alabama to fight against the HB56 law that has anti-immigrant sentiment. Dent stated that all people should be treated equally, regardless of immigration status. Among those marching were African and Latino families who united to fight the injustices by the government. Dent said this march reminded her of the civil rights movement when the black community was also fighting for equal rights. Dent stated that it is important to stand up against these laws such as HB56 which racial profiled Latinos and that African Americans should stand in solidarity. Mata ended the article emphasizing how important it is to unite as black and brown communities in order to stand up for what’s right.

37. [“Frisco 5 Hunger Strikers to SFPD: ‘Stop executing our people’”](#) **by Dave Welsh. BayView. May 3, 2016.**

In this article that came out in 2016, Dave Welsh recounts how 5 San Francisco residents go on a hunger strike after the murders of Black and

Brown people. The five strikers are black and brown people; Edwin Lindo, Cristina Gutierrez, Ilyich Sato, Ike Pinkston and Selassie Blackwell. In this attempt to get the Police Chief Gre Suhr fired or to resign, they say that they are being aided by the Black and Brown Social Club, which strives to create unity among the black and brown communities. Through their hunger strike, they caused a lot of attention, yet it was mostly all supportive, with people stopping by to support or encourage them during their strike. Many state how this has started a conversation among all different kinds of communities, how the killings of black and brown people isn't okay.

40. ["Black/Brown Unity Coalition Head to Site of Woolworth Sit-ins and to Tobacco Fields"](#) **Farm Labor Organizing Committee. 2018.**

In September of 2018, Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) president, Baldemar Velasquez stated that the Black and Brown unity coalition would go to Greensboro, Woolworth in order to experience what the African-Americans had to fight against in the 1960's. He took them to the sit-ins location that African Americans fought to get lunch counters and was a pivotal moment in the civil rights movement to provide a living history experience. He then took the group to the tobacco fields so that the African Americans could see how the current farm Latino workers are facing unfair treatment. This is done to create a dialogue between the black and brown community in order to create more unity through shared struggles.

41. ["Building Unity Between Black and Brown Communities"](#) **by DC Jobs with Justice. March 24, 2009.**

In March of 2009, the DC Jobs with Justice program began working on a project that would help build unity among the black and brown communities. Throughout this day, families, workers, organizers and tenants would all gather to learn more about racism, immigration and class in the DC. This all day event called "Facing What Divides Us: building unity between the Blackk and Brown communities" sought to create an open dialogue about coming together, expressing thoughts and feelings, and to analyze all the various factors that both communities face. The project is hoping to use this time to build a stronger tie between the black and brown community.

42. ["Black and Latino Youth Demand Police Reform"](#) **The Real News Network. January 9, 2016.**

The two organizations came together in 2016 in front of Baltimore Hall, the CASA de Maryland and the Youth Freedom School, to protest and demand police reform.

A volunteer from Freedom School, Jeremy Collins, stated that they went in with some demands; first firing the police who kill innocent people, police must have badges, and to stop gag orders. Both black and brown people came out in solidarity. Misael Garcia stated that the only way to get things done is to do it together. Garcia is an organizer for CASA de Maryland. Garcia believes that working together will help make a change. Protesting students want to get justice, safety and jobs- everyone wants the same rights. White supremacy is prominent everywhere and by having the kids come proves that they won't allow this in the future. Black and latinos recognize that they have concerns in common and that they are stronger when they work in unity. Rev. Heber Brown III is hopeful that this will get other people to speak up and recognize that the black and brown community must join forces and unite to fight the injustices.

43. ["South Los Angeles Latinos and Blacks Find Unity in Worship"](#) **By Teresa Watanabe. Los Angeles Times. May 1, 2010.**

Two Los Angeles churches, West Angeles Church of God in Christ and Iglesias de Restauracion, joined together in 2010 to break bread for the first time ever. Both churches worshiped together in an effort to overcome the differences among the black and brown community. A reason as to why they haven't done this before is because of linguistic and cultural differences, however, they decided that they must support each other during hard times. They hope to work together again in the future, especially with their youth, whether that be through sports, prayer networks, or other ceremonies-- as long as both communities are in solidarity with one another and have faith that their unity will make a difference.

44. ["RECAP: Black and Brown Communities Unite!"](#) **by Alliance San Diego. May 25, 2017.**

In 2017, Alliance San Diego and American Friends Service Committee, joined together in a 3-hour long dialogue to speak about how the Black and Brown communities can join forces of resistance. This forum meeting was in honor of the death of Anastasio Hernandez-Rojas, a San Diego Resident who was killed by border agents in a horrendous way. Black and brown community members came and shared their own personal experiences with law

enforcement and talked about how things could be better. They also provided ideas on how both communities could work together to make sure they continued in solidarity with one another due to similar police brutality issues.

45. [“Activists, Brown and Black, Unite for an Event of Art and Healing”](#) **By Jenee Osterheldt. The Kansas City Star. February 24, 2016.**

Two local activist organizations joined forces to create a community art and healing event in Kansas. Both organizations, One Struggle KC and Una Lucha KC, want to encourage artistic expression in the form of activism. This event was funded by the Rocket Grant. Writer Jenee Osterheldt stated that both black and brown communities need to come together to demand equality and justice, and a perfect way to do this is through art because it can communicate their shared struggles. Volunteered activist said that everyone has a voice to share and understanding and listening to one another can be key within the black and brown community when facing adversity and inequality.

46. [“Afro-Latinx Festival”](#) **February, 2019. MOLAA: Museum of Latin American Art.**

In an attempt to celebrate the cultural diversity of the African influences in Latin America, MOLAA is hosting an Afro-Latinx Festival for all. This event is done to rejoice in the Afro-Latinx culture, looking at both identities and coming together as one community. Through music, food, and laughter, both black and brown families can unite and celebrate the Afro-Latinx community.

47. **“Building Black and Brown Unity Through Listening Exercises”** **By Jessica Azua (Texas Organizing Project) and Kayo Beshir (Tennessee Immigrant Rights Coalition)**

This presentation focuses on tools that can be used to start a dialogue on building black and brown unity through respect, love, and understanding. Sharing stories is said to be a powerful tool because it helps connect people to one another. Healing circles are encouraged within the black and brown community because it provides participants a safe space to share their stories, thus creating unity. While using these tools, it's important to practice one's listening skills, empathy for those sharing and being thankful for the stories being shared. Lastly, this presentation focused on making sure that we remember to stand up for everyone who is being impacted, regardless if it affects you personally or not, because this will make the black and brown

community stronger-- unifying into one and battling the fight towards justice together. (See Attachment)