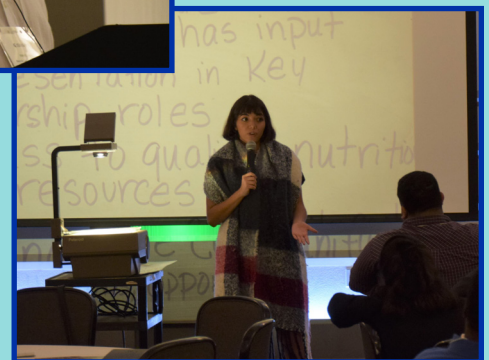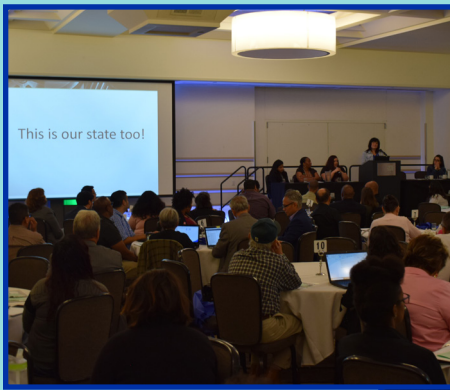# Promoting Latino and African American Collaboration through Dialogue and Engagement

Hosted by
The Julian Samora Research Institute
and
African American and African Studies
Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI

A Summary Report of the Black-Brown Dialogues Summit II: Expanding Community
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MICHIGAN STATE
U N I V E R S I T Y

University Outreach
and Engagement
Julian Samora Research Institute

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The Julian Samora Research Institute is committed to the generation, transmission, and application of knowledge to serve the needs of Latino communities in Michigan, the Midwest, and the nation.

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Preface

The Black/Brown Dialogues summit series, initiated by the Julian Samora Research Institute and African and African American Studies at Michigan State University, was designed to foster dialogues among Michigan's Latina/o and African American communities, as well as other marginalized communities, to work together to build a more just, equitable, and inclusive Michigan. The goal of the first summit, held in November of 2017, was to identify and discuss the most pressing issues facing Latina/o and African American communities (a report from that summit was published in February, 2018, and contains a summary of the proceedings along with the outcomes of the daylong event; it is available on JSRI's webpage: https://jsri.msu.edu/dialogue).

The second summit in the series was held in September of 2018 and focused on identifying a unifying vision to guide continued collaboration between these communities; the proceedings of the second summit are outlined in this report. The final summit in the series is planned for September of 2019, with the objective of identifying sustainable organizational models beyond those of coalitions to promote the inclusion of these communities' views and voices in the pursuit of an equitable and inclusive Michigan.

The theme of the second summit was "Expanding Community." It brought together members of Michigan's Latina/o, African American, Arab American, Native American, and Asian American communities to collectively envision a better, more equitable and inclusive society, not just for our own communities, but for all residents of Michigan and of the United States. As Alan Sandler (2000) argues,

> Visioning is more than painting an idealistic picture of the future—it is a process of evaluating present conditions, identifying problem areas, and bringing about a community wide consensus on how to overcome existing problems and manage change. By learning about its strengths and weaknesses, a community can decide what it wants to be, and then develop a plan that will guide decisions towards that vision (p. 216).

Sandler further argues that visioning should be an inclusive process that gives voice to a diverse body of community members while also emphasizing their interconnectedness. He states, "By including residents, businesses, nonprofits, local officials, and other community members in a process that empowers them as a whole, visioning also reinforces the idea that people do in fact have a say in their collective futures, and that they also have a responsibility to each other" (Sandler, 2000, p. 217). These principles guided the visioning process at the summit, the results of which are detailed in this report.

Under the current federal administration, the need for a new vision of society is more imperative than ever. As Elizabeth "Betita" Martínez writes, "Transformation will elude us until we envision our society in very new ways" (1998, p. xvii). For Betita, transformation means accepting the fact that the United States was "born racist"; she states,

> We need a vision, then, in which we abolish the prevailing definition of the United States as a nation with a single, Euro-American culture and identity. Then we must re-imagine it as a community of communities that recognize their inter-dependence and relate on the basis of mutual respect (1998, p. xvii).

Her vision also includes moving beyond a Black-White binary in addressing structural inequality, while still acknowledging "the centrality of the African-American experience in any analysis of racism" (Martínez, 1998, p. 6). She writes,

We urgently need twenty-first-century thinking that will move us beyond the Black-white framework without negating its historical role in the construction of U.S. racism. We need a better understanding of how racism developed both similarly and differently for various peoples, according to whether they experienced genocide, enslavement, colonization or some other structure of oppression. At stake is the building of a united anti-racist force strong enough to resist White Supremacist strategies of divide-and-conquer and move forward toward social justice for all (Martínez, 1998, p. 6).

Although written over twenty years ago, Betita's words resonate strongly with many of the ideas put forth during the summit, as this report will show, and may help to guide the continual process of visioning a better, more equitable and inclusive Michigan. The visioning activities that structured the summit, detailed in the pages that follow, represents a necessary first step in this process.

Rubén O. Martinez, Director
Julian Samora Research Institute
Michigan Strate University

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Executive Summary

Over 90 summit participants from across the state gathered in East Lansing to participate in a daylong process of developing a vision for a more equitable and inclusive Michigan. The following core questions guided the process: 1) What does a just, equitable, and inclusive Michigan look like?, 2) How can we work together toward creating such a society?, and 3) Is there need for an organization? What would it do? The results of this process are outlined in this report.

What does a just, equitable, and inclusive Michigan look like?

Answers to this question focused on issues of access and the elimination of barriers. Equitable access to educational, health, and food systems were identified as essential, as were institutional and governmental representation and criminal justice reform. As a prerequisite to a just, equitable, and inclusive Michigan, one group argued for a public acknowledgment of the complicity of all state institutions and structures in the marginalization of people of color.

How can we work together toward creating such a society?

Participants indicated a need to build relationships across communities and to identify our commonalities and shared histories. This process will require having difficult conversations with members of other communities in order to address internal prejudices and biases. Participants also emphasized a need to elevate more people of color into leadership positions in education, government, business, and the legal system. Finally, participants advocated for resource sharing and partnerships among organizations representing different communities of color.

Is there need for an organization? What would it do?

A possible outcome of the summit series is the creation of a sustainable and innovative advocacy organization that moves beyond traditional models of short-term and limited collaborative engagement. Participants were mixed in their responses to the question of whether such an organization is necessary. Groups in favor of a new organization suggested that it could take the shape of a hub where all organizations could come together in dialogue, or else as a think tank that advocates on behalf of communities of color. Other groups advocated for a collective impact model to harness the strengths and resources of existing organizations.

Introduction: Moving Beyond Additive Models in Black-Brown Collaborations

Divisions among ethno-racial minority groups have historically hindered community development and societal progress. With the different groups tending to pursue civil rights separately from other groups, they have not generated the scale of influence that could bring about greater progressive social change in society. Despite living within a racialized society in which the dominant group employs similar mechanisms of domination across groups, Latina/os and African Americans—the two largest racial minority groups in the country—have seldom developed lasting relationships and alliances that enhance their capabilities to promote a non-racialized society through structural and organizational changes at the community level.

To this end, the Julian Samora Research Institute and African and African American Studies successfully launched a series of Black Brown Dialogues through two statewide summits. The first summit, which had as its theme "Working toward Common Ground," was held in November of 2017 in East Lansing, Michigan. It hosted a mix of community members, organizational leaders, foundation officials, graduate students, and researchers in a daylong series of dialogues about the unique histories and social contexts of both groups. Participants identified common challenges facing Latina/o and African American communities in Michigan and examined contemporary barriers to effective collaboration.

Most importantly, participants identified critical areas for collective actions. Specifically, participants identified common issues as well as steps for moving both communities forward. In particular, the first Black-Brown Dialogues Summit set in motion a process that recognizes the importance of intergroup dynamics between the groups and ways by which to build on the commonalities of their collective histories in the face of persisting institutional systems of racism.

Although this was a one-day event, the summit became the first major step in facilitating Black-Brown collaborations. Over 80 summit participants identified and rank-ordered the following issues as key challenges for African Americans and Latina/os in Michigan, and provided initial suggestions for addressing them (which are included in a report, available online at: https://jsri.msu.edu/dialogue).

The following are the top ten core issues identified by summit participants presented in rank order:

1. Education

2. Healthcare/Mental Health

3. Cross-Cultural Communication/Collaboration

4. Community Empowerment/Economic Development

5. Civic Engagement/Political Clout

6. Voter Suppression

7. Criminal Justice Reform

8. Anti-Blackness

9. Trauma/Historical Crimes against Humanity

10. Immigration

In order to address the issues outlined above, we organized a second statewide summit and invited academics, community representatives and activists, university leaders and students to continue the dialogues by drawing on the outcomes of the first summit as a guiding framework to formulate next steps. Our aim is the establishment of a sustainable, innovative advocacy organization or network that moves beyond traditional models of collaborative engagement (e.g., coalitions, alliances, etc.).

Traditionally, such organizational frameworks are usually based on additive or coalition models. Specifically, these models of engagement, which tend to be single-issue based, are organizational modes that end once they reach a specific goal. That is, they tend to be comprised of different organizations and their representatives that engage in limited and secondary forms of advocacy and/or action. We propose to seek an alternative approach—one based on a unifying vision for a better social order grounded in the premise that this is our society too—which shapes and informs public policies through collective action and systematic policy input and influence. Accordingly, with the goal of shifting public opinion, influencing policy discussions, and shaping public organizations' behavior, it pursues a better Michigan from the bottom up.

Expanding Community: Welcome and Overview

The second summit had as its theme "Expanding Community" and was kicked off by Dr. Rubén Martinez, Director of the Julian Samora Research Institute at Michigan State University, who welcomed participants and provided introductory remarks. After reviewing the objectives and outcomes of the first summit in the series, he introduced the following objectives for the second: expanding community, envisioning a better Michigan, and exploring sustainable collaboration. He then discussed the distinctive but not divergent histories of African Americans and Latina/os in the United States, highlighting shared histories of racial divisions of labor, segregation, lynching, poll taxes, intertwined civil rights struggles, and subjection to a neoliberal order. Noting that diverse human populations are increasingly on a convergent course across national and global structures, he pointed out that racial and ethnic minority groups in the United States have increasingly been brought deeper into the orbit of the dominant group, its policies and practices.

Demographics

Dr. Martinez then provided demographic profiles of Latina/os and African Americans in Michigan, highlighting the fact that Latina/o and African American populations are relatively young compared to the White population. As of July 2017, Latina/os accounted for 5.1% of the population of Michigan, African Americans for 13.8%, and Whites 75.2% (U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division). However, 35.9% of the Latina/o and 25.3% of the African American population were under the age of 18, compared to 19.5% of the White population, while only 5.8% of Latina/os and 12.3% of African Americans were 65 or older, compared to 19.0% of Whites (U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division). Latina/os had a median age of 25.7 years old and African Americans 34.1, compared to 43.3 for Whites (U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division).

Dr. Martinez also noted that while Latina/os are often viewed as an immigrant population,

in 2016 almost 80% of Michigan's Latina/o population was native born, whereas only around 25% of Asians were native born (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates). That is, although Asians accounted for only 3.2% of the overall population of the state, they comprise the state's largest immigrant population (U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division).

Dr. Martinez further highlighted disparities in health, education, and socio-economic status between Michigan's Latina/o and African American populations and the White American population. In terms of health, in 2016 African Americans and Latina/os had significantly higher rates of infant mortality (12.75 and 9.22 per 1,000 live births, respectively) compared to 4.58 for Whites (NCHS National Vital Statistic System, Mortality).

In 2016, Latina/os and African Americans in Michigan had significantly lower levels of educational attainment than White Americans, with 29.4% of Latina/os 25 years of age and older, and 15.4% of African Americans having less than a high school degree, compared to only 8.3% of White Americans, while only 16.7 of Latina/os and 16.8% of African Americans held a college degree or higher, compared to 28.5% of Whites (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates).

In 2013, the most recent year for which these official statistics were available, 58% of Latina/o and 68% of African American 12th graders in Michigan were below basic proficiency in mathematics, compared to 27% of White students (U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2013 Mathematics Assessment). In 2015, 44% of Latina/o and 70% of African American 8th graders were below basic proficiency in science, compared to 20% of White students (U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2015 Science Assessment); and in 2017, 27% of Latina/o and 44% of African American 8th graders were below basic proficiency in reading, compared to 19% of White students (U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2017 Reading Assessment).

Finally, in 2016, 25.9% of Latina/os and 33.18% of African Americans had experienced poverty in the previous twelve months, compared to only 12.3% of Whites; for children, the disparities were even higher, with 32.6% of Latina/o and 47.0% of African American children experiencing poverty, compared to only 15.8% of White children (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates). These population characteristics, Dr. Martinez stated, demonstrate that Michigan has a long way to go to become an inclusive state.

From Social Democracy to Neoliberalism

Finally, Dr. Martinez discussed the societal shift from social democracy to neoliberalism that has occurred over the last half century. Social democracy takes as its basic values freedom, equality, justice, and solidarity; it recognizes that people are not free if they do not have access to the basic resources necessary to survive in a given society. A social democratic model encourages citizen participation in democratic processes and tempers market mechanisms through state intervention and regulation. Social democracy emerged under the leadership of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and prevailed until the presidency of Ronald Reagan, who was elected in 1980.

It was under President Reagan that neoliberalism took institutional hold. Neoliberalism, which is commonly described as free market fundamentalism, takes as its basic values radical individualism and limited government. Neoliberalism emphasizes economic freedom as the

unfettered pursuit of personal economic interests, free from government regulation and "interference." It proposes business models as the most effective approach for the operation of institutions and to address societal problems, with market logic imposed on nearly all features of our lives. Its opposition to collectivism is manifested in the denial of institutional racism, attacks on affirmative action and Ethnic Studies, and broad support for the private over the public good.

The outcomes of the shift from social democracy to neoliberalism have been increased income inequality and wealth gaps, deteriorating city and state infrastructures, declining investment in and outcomes of K-12 education, and the creation of a school-to-prison pipeline and a dramatic increase in the number of disconnected youth. This shift has also been accompanied by a number of repressive measures, amplified under the current Trump administration, including voter suppression, attacks on democratic institutions and the free press, a return of overt racism and White nationalism, and human rights violations carried out openly.

Dr. Martinez concluded by noting that the future of the state and of the nation is bound up with the tightly interwoven futures of Latina/os, African Americans and other ethno-racial minority populations. Although the population may change, the future of democracy need not fade. Democracy does not belong to one group, but is a political idea that belongs to us all. He stated that Latina/os and African Americans believe in and defend the values and principles of a representative democracy, and stressed the need for an educated citizenry and the promotion of civic and political engagement if Democracy is to be preserved.

"Black-Brown Unity, Our Interconnected Journey"

Following the opening remarks, Jerry Tello, co-founder of the National Compadres Network and Director of Training and Capacity Building, delivered the first address of the day. A key theme in Tello's address was the intergenerational struggle against racism and discrimination. He opened by talking about his father, a normally proud man with a naturally loud voice, who would shrink and bow his head when in the presence of White Americans. As a child, Tello could not understand why his father would shrink in public, but as an adult came to understand through an incident on an airplane on his way to a speaking engagement. Seated in an exit row, Tello was approached by a flight attendant prior to take-off and asked if he spoke English, to which he responded by asking the flight attendant why she had not asked anyone else in the exit row if they spoke English. When the flight attendant threatened to call security, Tello found himself shrinking like his father had. He argued that these intergenerational struggles against discrimination have produced a legacy of wounded men and women in communities of color.

As a corrective to intergenerational trauma, Tello emphasized the importance of collective memory and advocated for a more expansive definition of kinship. He shared a story of a childhood friend eating at his house and his mother calling his friend "*mijo*" (short for "mi hijo," meaning "my son"), an extension of family beyond blood relations; as Tello said, "Anyone who ate at our table was family." Tello extended this notion to suggest familial bonds between communities of color, rooted in traditional ways of knowing and being. He furthered stressed the importance of passing on our interconnected histories, struggles, and movements as a means of resistance against dominant narratives that seek to divide communities of color. He contended that we must know who we are as communities because otherwise dominant groups can define us in whatever ways best serve their own purposes.

"Women of Color Speak: Intersecting and Divergent Issues Impacting Women in Communities of Color"

Next, Angela Reyes, Director of the Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation, led a panel discussion of women from the African American, Latina/o, Arab American, and Native American communities. Panelists included: Lacy Dawson, Field Director with Michigan Voice; Ashley Tuomi, CEO of American Indian Health and Family Services; Gabriela Santiago-Romero of We the People and Girls Making Change; and Rima Meroueh, Advocacy and Community Engagement Manager with ACCESS. Reyes opened the panel by highlighting the role of women of color as agents of change in the present moment, noting successes in electoral politics as well as collaborations among women of color that drive progress at the community level.

Reyes then presented a series of questions to the panelists, first asking each to share the most pressing issues facing their communities. Tuomi spoke of attacks on Native American sovereignty through the taking away of treaty rights and the termination of tribal status, which she described as "paper genocide." Dawson identified police violence against African American communities, as well as an attack on Democracy under the current White House Administration. Both Santiago-Romero and Meroueh spoke on issues related to immigration and deportation. Meroueh also identified the marginalization of Arab communities within discussions of communities of color, while Santiago-Romero identified sexual assault as the most pressing issue for Black and Brown girls and young women.

Reyes next asked the panelists to address stereotypes facing their communities. Meroueh noted that the views that her family or husband have to give permission for her to speak at public forums and/or that she is representing their ideas instead of her own undermine her agency Santiago-Romero addressed issues of heteronormativity within Latina/o communities, as well as stereotypes about Latinas' sexuality. Tuomi spoke of Native Americans as an invisible minority due, in part, to diminished Native appearance through governmental policies of assimilation and intermarriage. Dawson addressed the limited range of emotions Black women may exhibit in public, noting that expressions of rage or passion feed the stereotype of Black women as angry, and that even the more supposedly positive stereotype of Black women as strong limits recognition of their sensitivity.

Panelists were also asked to discuss how the #MeToo Movement impacts women of color. Dawson noted that the #MeToo hashtag was coopted from Black women, and that the unique struggles of Black women are now largely ignored in the Movement. Meroueh observed that Arab American women must confront how the Movement will impact the community as a whole when Arab men are already demonized in the U.S., adding that the same is true for all communities of color. Tuomi contended that issues affecting Native women also are largely ignored despite estimates that one in three Native women experience some form of sexual violence (likely an underestimate due to underreporting), with disproportionately high rates of murdered and missing women. She identified jurisdictional questions and the difficulty of prosecuting non-Native men on reservations as key barriers to addressing violence against Native women. Santiago-Romero noted that Latinas may be unwilling to report sexual assault due to a fear of blame within a patriarchal culture. She also highlighted a lack of access to therapy and other structures of support for women of color.

Finally, Reyes asked the panelists to address common issues among women of color, as well as challenges in working with other women of color. Santiago-Romero stressed the importance of Black and Brown women working together, fighting for the whole community. Tuomi discussed the difficulty of finding the time and energy to work together, and of staying on top of issues in other communities; these on top of the exhaustion that comes from doing the necessary work in one's own community. Meroueh emphasized the importance of identifying common issues and doing better at addressing them together. Dawson advocated for women of color creating a movement that brings along others, as well as a need for more bonding, not just over trauma but over wins, as well as through cross-cultural sharing and collective healing.

"The Imperative of Social Fabric"

Following the panel discussion, Donald Weatherspoon, PhD, offered remarks on the importance of a strong social fabric for maintaining healthy communities. Dr. Weatherspoon drew upon his experience of providing programming to inmates who had been tried before their 18th birthday and were sentenced to life in prison. In particular, he shared a story of a man who, at 17 years of age, had engaged in a three-day spree of drinking and drugs with another man and a woman that ended with the two men killing the woman and stealing her car to flee. In trying to understand the risk factors that had landed this man in prison, Dr. Weatherspoon identified the lack of a social fabric and sense of belonging, as well as the lack of a mentor or role model, as critical determining factors. In offering a warning to his peers, according to Dr. Weatherspoon, the incarcerated man said that the lack of a social fabric and of positive role models left him weak in the face of hard choices. From this example, Dr. Weatherspoon argued for the importance of dialogue between African Americans and Latina/os, as well as other communities of color, in reestablishing the social fabric necessary for youth to be strong in the face of adverse challenges impacting our communities.

"Progress is a Collective Thing"

Ismael Ahmed, Associate Provost for Integrated Learning and Community Partnerships at the University of Michigan, Dearborn, delivered the final address of the day. Ahmed began by dispelling the myth that "we," as people of color, will become the majority in the United States by the year 2020. Addressing the question, "Who is 'we?,'" Provost Ahmed stated that African Americans will not become the majority, nor will Latina/os, Asian Americans, Arab Americans and Native Americans. While people of color may soon surpass White Americans in terms of total population, he argued that the notion of a collective "we" incorrectly assumes that we will all agree on an agenda, all vote the same way, all think alike and be alike. The truth, he said, is that we, as disparate communities with shared histories of oppression, have to figure out what it is that we can do together, and do together well, to move forward together.

Tracing the history of Arab communities in the United States, Ahmed noted historical connections between Arab Americans and other communities of color, dating back to the arrival in 1528 of a Moroccan slave named Estevanico, whom Ahmed called both the first Arab American and the first African American. Predominantly arriving from North Africa, many as slaves, Arabs in the United States were initially designated as African, but with the later arrival of large numbers of immigrants from Lebanon, at the time under Ottoman rule, Arabs were redefined as

Asian and thus subject to the Chinese Exclusion Act. Finally, in the 1930s Arabs became legally defined as White, although Ahmed noted that despite this legal designation, Arab Americans are still viewed as people of color in the popular imagination. These examples demonstrate Arab Americans' interconnected histories with African Americans and Asian Americans and, although not specifically mentioned but implied in Ahmed's address, Latina/os.[1]

Ahmed then traced his own family history back to Lebanon, Egypt, and Yemen as an illustration of the socio-political history of Arab migration to the United States, with particular focus on his grandmother and mentor, Aliya Hassan, a pioneer in the Arab American struggle for civil rights. In addition to her work as a private investigator and a civil defense director, Hassan was an activist who helped establish the Federation of Islamic Organizations, organized Egyptian seamen into the Seafarers International Union of North America (SIU), and led the first demonstration at the United Nations in support of Egyptian nationalism and an end to colonialism. During the 1960s, she worked to build unity between Arab and African American Muslims, debating unsuccessfully with Elijah Muhammad, but making an impression on Muhammad's student, Malcolm X. Hassan was responsible for arranging Malcolm X's pilgrimage to Mecca and his meeting with Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser, and she hid him out when Nation of Islam members sought to kill him, and washed his body when he was murdered.

Ahmed shared his own history of activism—working with Students for a Democratic Society, the Black Panthers, various labor organizations, and with the Arab American community in Dearborn—to raise his final point: that successful social movements work from the ground up. Though history remembers the leaders such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Ahmed argued that King, as great a leader as he was, was not the Movement. Looking at those persons working behind the great leaders reveals instead that movements are made of thousands of people moving from the ground up. This, Ahmed argued, is how social change happens.

The Summit Process

The summit was designed as a dialogic process to facilitate constructive discussion among participants at the event. This was accomplished by facilitating two general working sessions, one in the morning and one in the afternoon.

In the morning session, "Getting to Know You," participants were asked to discuss two questions with others at their table. The questions were:

- What misconceptions about members of the other group(s) have you had and why?

    o How did or how can you correct them?

- What are the key commonalities among groups that can serve as a basis for long-term collaboration?

The afternoon session asked participants to engage in a visioning activity with their tablemates by collectively answering three questions:

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[1]Mexican Americans were also legally designated White between 1850 and 1920, with their classification changed to "Mex" in 1930, and back to White in 1940 due to protests by Mexican American communities. Still, they are regarded as a distinct (inferior) race by many Anglo-Americans.

- What does a just, equitable, and inclusive Michigan look like?

- How can we work together toward creating such a society?

    o Identify the scope and primary areas of activity (e.g., organizing, policy agendas, knowledge production, partnerships, etc.).

- Is there need for an organization? What would it do?

Representatives from each table then reported their group responses to the plenary group. Responses are summarized thematically below.

What does a just, equitable, and inclusive Michigan look like?

In response to this question, the working groups focused largely on questions of access and the elimination of barriers. Reflecting the priorities identified at the previous summit, nearly all groups addressed issues related to education, including equitable access to educational systems, equitable funding for all schools, and culturally inclusive/representative curricula. Several of the table groups also identified access to healthy food as key to a just and equitable Michigan, with some pointing to the prevalence of food deserts in low-income communities of color, while others mentioned clean air and water as related questions, raising the issue of environmental racism. Equitable access to healthcare was another key concern for several groups.

The elimination of barriers to full participation in public life was also a central theme in the responses to the prompt by the working groups. Participants identified as important the representation of communities of color in government and other societal institutions and the inclusion of people of color in leadership roles. Criminal justice reform was another concern identified by multiple groups, as was economic justice and equitable access to employment. Other issues identified were language barriers, voter suppression and threats to voting rights, gerrymandering, and lack of access to government-issued I.D. cards.

Acknowledging inequalities in the various areas addressed by other groups, one group argued that a just, equitable, and inclusive Michigan requires that state institutions publicly assume accountability for their role in perpetuating racial inequality and make restitution. This group called for "the public acknowledgment of the role of all state institutions and structures of their complicity (via intentional or unconscious bias of past and present representatives) in the marginalization of people of color." For the state "to right past wrongs," they argued, it must "provide equitable economic reparations for all people of color in proportion to contributions made to the development and maintenance of the American economy and rights denied as American citizens based on a system of white supremacy operationalized through past racist land, law, and labor policies and structures."

How can we work together toward creating such a society?

A common theme that emerged in response to this question was the need to build relationships across communities and to identify commonalities and shared histories. Relatedly, multiple tables also stressed the importance of confronting internal prejudices held by people of color, as well as the need to engage in difficult conversations with members of other communities of color as part of the process of addressing such prejudices. Several table groups further emphasized the

necessity of addressing collective trauma and historical injustices.

Another common theme was the need to elevate more people of color into leadership roles and positions of authority. For instance, some tables advocated the recruitment of more teachers of color, while others called for greater representation of communities of color in government and corporate and legal fields. An interrelated theme was the importance of holding leaders accountable to members of their communities.

Finally, participants from multiple tables identified the creation of partnerships between organizations representing different communities of color as key to working together toward common goals. Such partnerships would also enable the sharing of knowledge and resources across communities, another point raised by multiple groups, as well as promote greater community autonomy.

Is there need for an organization? What would it do?

The objective that frames the summit series is the development of relationships among communities of color that will enhance their influence in shaping the direction of society. Ultimately, that may include the establishment of a sustainable, innovative advocacy organization that moves beyond traditional models of short-term and limited collaborative engagement. The working groups' response to these questions were mixed, with four tables saying such an organization is necessary, four saying it is not, and three either saying they were unsure or not providing a direct answer to the question.

Those who responded that a need does exist for a new organization offered similar ideas relative to what this organization should do. One table suggested the creation of a hub where all organizations could come together and have a seat at the table, and that would ensure checks and balances. Another table suggested a think tank—perhaps called the People of Color Policy Center—that would advocate on behalf of communities of color; this table also stressed accountability to the communities the organization would serve by building input from communities into its structure, values, and guiding principles.

A different perspective offered is neatly summarized by this statement from one of the groups: "Do we need an organization? No, we just need to organize." Rather than creating a new organization, participants from these tables advocated for a collective impact model in which the strengths and resources of existing organizations are harnessed to achieve collective goals. A network of existing organizations could be established to foster partnerships and collaboration, and to serve as a repository of information that can be shared throughout the network. In a sense, this view also calls for an organization, but with a different structure.

Next Steps

Dr. Rubén Martinez concluded the summit by emphasizing the need for communities of color to claim ownership of the society in which we all live. After all, institutional structures were built by people, and can therefore be changed by people. Echoing a common theme that emerged over the course of the summit, he stressed the importance of intergenerational support in the struggle to build a more equitable and inclusive society. Drawing from the work of Roberto Mangabeira Unger, he further argued against the concentration of capital among the few so that we can

harness the innovation that is inherent in most of us and in our communities. In closing, he asked how participants can sustain the Dialogues and develop an organizational vehicle that promotes collaboration by African Americans, Latina/os, and other communities of color. While coalitions have historically been single issue-based and largely unsustainable over time, the challenge for the next summit, he contended, is to envision a distinct model that brings us closer to realizing a better society in Michigan and the nation.

Suggested Readings

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Appendix A:
List of Participants

Lorena Aguayo-Márquez	Lee Gonzales	Rhonda Powell
Ismael Ahmed	Jessica Gutierrez	Veronica Quintino-Aranda
AC Alrey	Jesus Gutierrez	Ariadna Ramirez Guerrero
Vanessa Alvarez	Alfredo Hernandez	Angela Reyes
Maximo Anguiano	Diana Hernandez	Laura Reyes Kopack
Agustin V. Arbulu	Sofía Ramírez Hernández	J.R. Reynolds
Ralph Arellano	Rubbie Hodge	Jeno Rivera
Paul Babladelis	Sheila Hursey	Rodney Robinson
Wendell Barron	Maria Ibarra-Frayre	Nino Rodriguez
Tania Bermejo	Barbara James Norman	Henry Sanchez
Daniel Boggan	Roberto Jara	Gabriela Santiago-Romero
Gayle Branch	Victor Jimenez	Cady Short-Thompson
Janie P. Brooks-Davis	Alisha Lauchie	Kelly Simmons
Jimmela Byrd	Linda Lee Tarver	Donald Snider
John J. Castillo	Kyle Lim	Curtis Stokes
Sergio Cira Reyes	Felipe Lopez Sustaita	Sherry Thomas-Cloud
Suzanne Coleman	Guillermo Z. Lopez	Karlin Tichenor
Lacy Dawson	Gema Lowe	Francisco Tinoco
Deb DeLeon	Marvin McKinney	Sonja Trent-Brown
Patricia Edwards	Natalie McQueary	Ashley Tuomi
Maria Enriquez	Rima Meroueh	Quentin Tyler
Lizette Esquivel	Lissette Mira-Amaya	Claudio Uribe Garcia
Mark Fancher	Kimberly Mendez	John Valadez
Gabriella Favela	Gwen Moffitt	Adrian Vazquez
Juan Flores-Soto	Consuelo Morales	Lauren Watkins
Dale Freeman	Yesenia Murillo	Dave Weatherspoon
Cindy Gamboa	Raven Odom	Don Weatherspoon
Mariza Gamez-Garcia	Tamara Orza Ramos	Lex Zavala
Francisca Garcia	Gloria Palmisano	Jorge Zeballos
Joe Garcia	George Pena	Asa Zuccaro
Sandra Gaytan-Tinoco	Gabrielle Peterson	
Filiberto Gomez	Bill Pickard	

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Appendix B:
Task Force Members

Glenn Chambers	Nabih Haddad	Monica Reyes
Richard Davila	Rubén Martinez	J.R. Reynolds
Deb DeLeon	Marvin McKinney	Osvaldo "Ozzie" Rivera
Mark Fancher	John Norder	Donald Weatherspoon
Leslie Gonzales	Angela Reyes	

Notes

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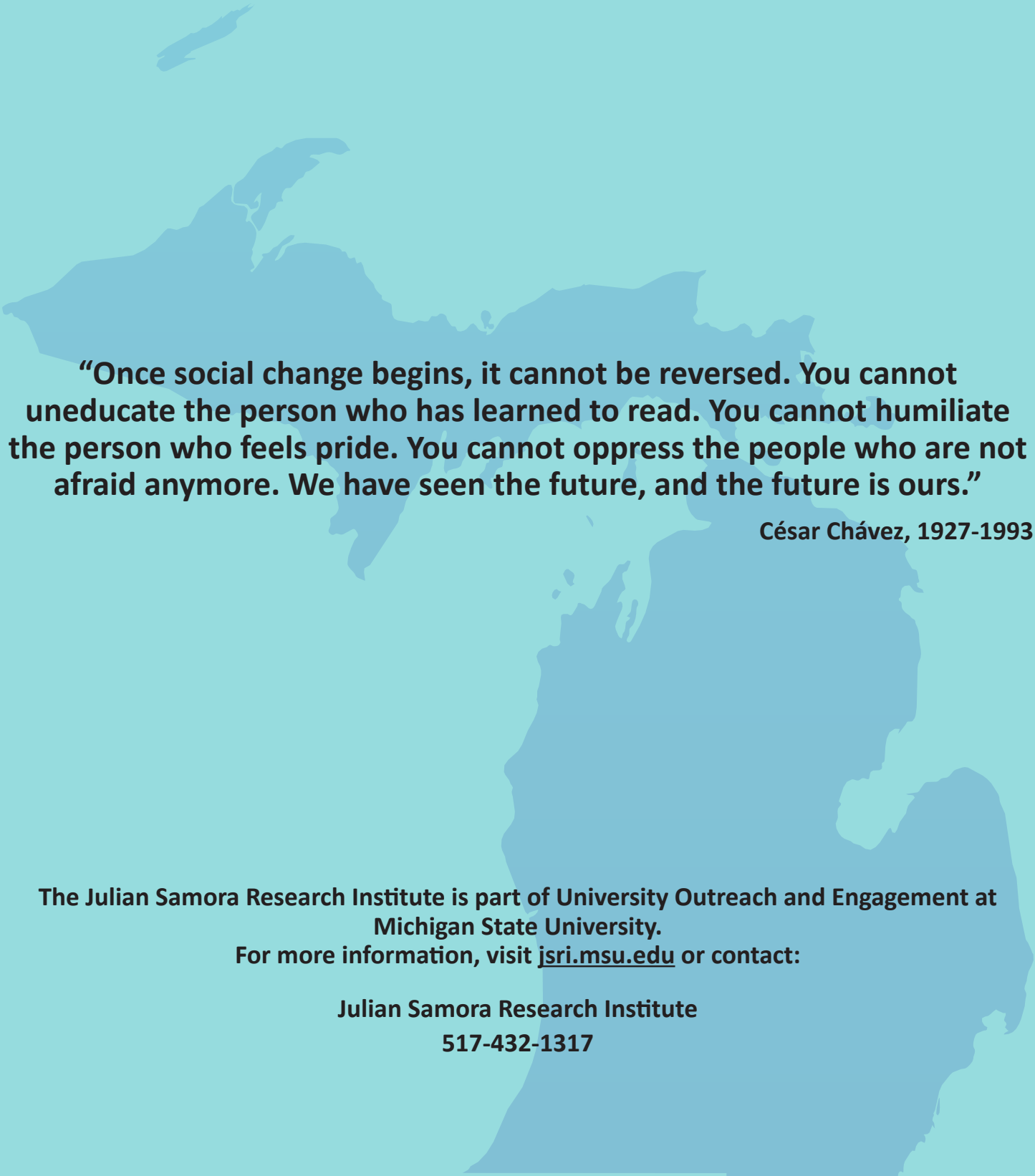Office for Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives

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"Once social change begins, it cannot be reversed. You cannot uneducate the person who has learned to read. You cannot humiliate the person who feels pride. You cannot oppress the people who are not afraid anymore. We have seen the future, and the future is ours."

César Chávez, 1927-1993