

Young Black Changemakers and Their Everyday Fight for Racial Equity



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AIMS

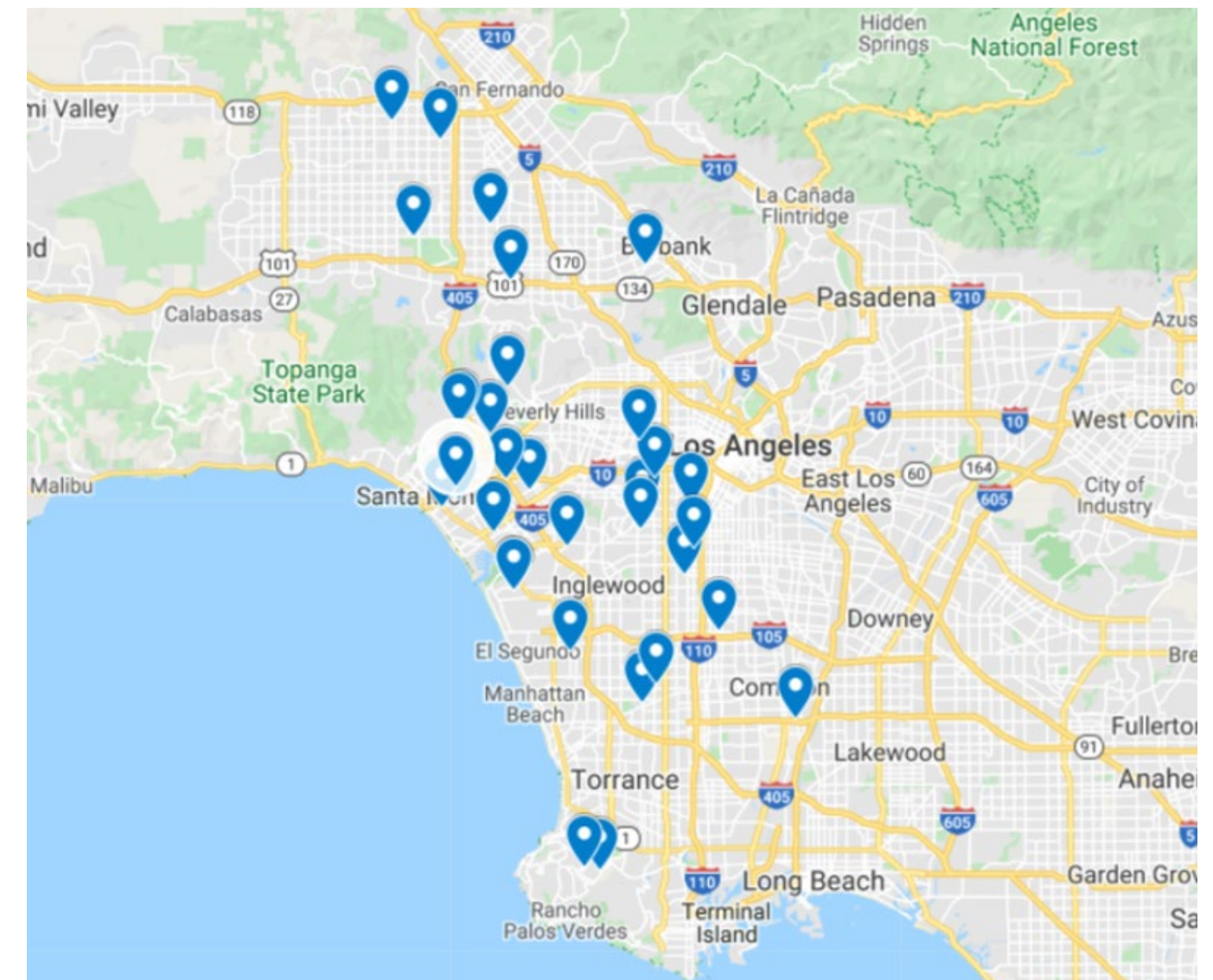
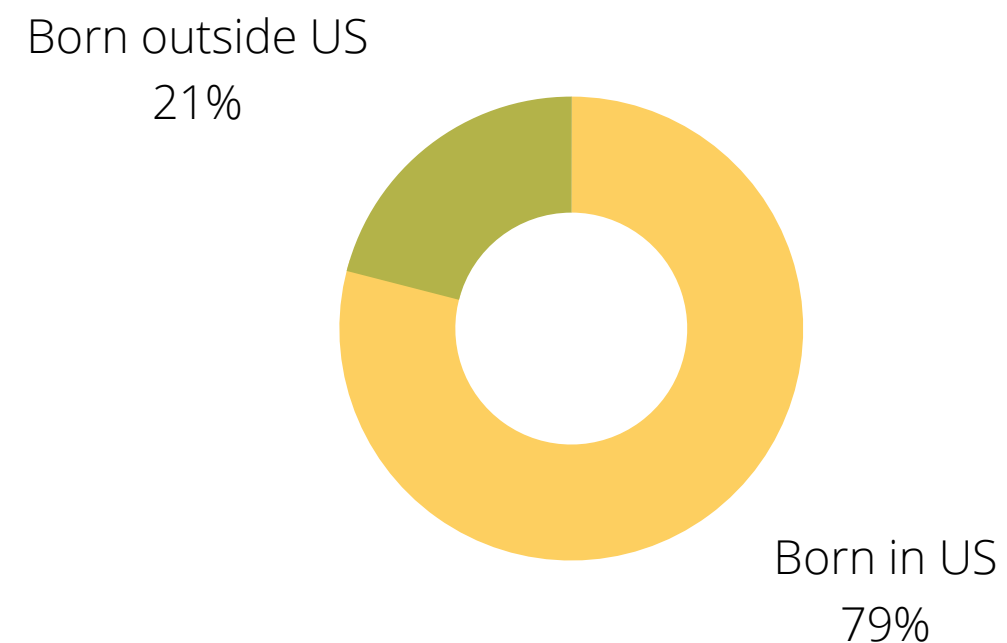
Our qualitative study of young Black changemakers - i.e., highly civically engaged Black youth - aims to illuminate the ways that Black youth work to advance racial justice and make lasting change in the Black community.

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WHO WE INTERVIEWED

One-on-one virtual semi-structured interviews with 43 youth

- 13 different orgs
- 37 different high schools





ANALYSIS

Step 1: Transcribed interviews

Step 2: Created codes through inductive, multi-phase consensus-building process

Step 3: Engaged in focus coding, inter-coder reliability checks and analytic memoing

Step 4: Analyzed themes across codes by memo-writing

Step 5: Refined themes through extensive group discussion and reflection

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.

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FINDINGS



Racial Justice Motivations

Youth described feeling duty and responsibility to make lasting change for the Black community

Everyday Racial Justice Work

Youth engage in everyday fights to be seen, heard, and treated equally in schools and communities

Racial Justice Movement Participation

Through community-based and school-based organizations youth challenge racial inequality

We have to help our own people, because no one else is gonna help us...As a Black person, it is my duty and our duty to lift up our own community. – Camille

I have a sister. She's nine months old right now and I don't want her to grow up in [the] society that I'm growing up in right now, where she has to see these things and fear for her life every day fear for she can't go outside and jog. – Amir

I feel like as a Black girl it's part my job...to be civically engaged and let people know like, 'It's okay. We're going to get through this.... it's going to change, but we have to do something in order for it to change –Her

RACIAL JUSTICE MOTIVATIONS



A big part of why I stay [in a political group run by conservative white students] is because... like, you know, I'm helping other kids see things that, you know, they would never even think to see, but I can't even really blame them because, like, there's certain things that being a Black boy, you know, in America, like there's certain things that we'll have to deal with that, you know, the other kids will just never have to deal with. So, so to be that, you know, person, you know, to bring that to light and kind of like spread that awareness within the group when it comes to like any discussion they're having. Um, Yeah, I can see how, like it's it definitely can change, like people's perspectives on what's really going on. –Tom

EVERYDAY RACIAL JUSTICE WORK



I want to be kind of that force of comfort and relatability for other Black youth who may not be able to, who may not feel comfortable getting involved in an activity that's 98% white or they're the only Black face in the entire room. I want to make sure that I'm there to demonstrate how, no matter what skin color you are, you can become a leader in whatever you want to do. –Mia

EVERYDAY RACIAL JUSTICE WORK



I felt like we got our voice out to the community, to everyone else. So they know like that we actually care. And that we're not just trying to go to school just to go to school... I don't want us to go through all these budget cuts and we not have books and all this stuff. I just want to, I want to have the same opportunity. So we have, so we have a better chance at doing what we want to do in the future. – Quinn

RACIAL JUSTICE MOVEMENT PARTICIPATION



I was sitting in class [with two other Black girls]. Everybody else in the class was [white] ...And it was one boy and he had said the N-word. . .So, I told him “You can’t just go around saying that type of stuff.” And he was like, “Or, what?” ...

I brought it up to the school and they were like, “Oh, well, we’ve never had to experience this, and we’ve never had a child of color come out and speak out about this.”

So, then I asked some of my friends around lunchtime. I asked them if they’ve ever experienced stuff like that and they were like, “Yes.” And I was like, Okay, well, we can start a group.” And I was like, Black student union. Duh. – KJ

RACIAL JUSTICE MOVEMENT PARTICIPATION





Implications and Conclusions

- Pursuing racial justice is embedded in the everyday activities of Black youth and is central to their civic engagement and development and thusly must be central to research with this community
- Organizers and practitioners who work with youth need to emphasize healing opportunities, safe spaces, and authentic allyship in work with Black youth

THANK YOU

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